



# *Club Magazine*



**WINTER EDITION 2020**

**Luton & District  
MBC**

*... a club NOT just for boats ...*

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## **EDITORIAL**

# **A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL MAGAZINE READERS**



Cheer up folks its Christmas and time to celebrate, all is not lost, so I am told. Another calendar year is coming to an end and maybe a time to reflect on the past year regarding all the things we would have liked to have done had we not been confined to barracks for a lot of the time so to speak.

In an effort to boost the magazine content I have taken the liberty to reprint some short articles from the past relating to events that we have been unable to attend this past year, this should re-kindle the memories of our older members and should be informative as to what has happened in the past, to our new club members.

What does the future hold for us, difficult to predict at the time of writing this Editorial? The Prime Minister had just informed us that as of 5<sup>th</sup> November we were all going into 'LOCK DOWN'. The week previously the council leader Hazel Simmons indicated that the LUTON Covid rate was getting close to pushing us into the next level of LOCK DOWN, no need to worry now we are going into lock-down anyway until December and beyond should the 'Covid Infection Rate' not fall significantly

To date we had enjoyed a little relaxation down at the lake providing we stuck to the Club Rules (Published on the club website). So far, this arrangement seems to have worked satisfactory. Having been down to the lake on a couple of Wednesdays all seemed to be working and in order, everybody obeying the Club guidelines. Just before going to PRESS we were all informed that Luton (Bedfordshire are going into Tier 2.



I have been in contact with a Mr. Peter Le Sueur during the Covid Lock Down period. Peter is a member of the Welwyn Garden City Society of Model Engineers. I first met Peter a few years ago at the St Albans Model Engineering Show and our common interests are that we both enjoy converting plastic model boat kits into radio-controlled models.

He has recently sent me photographs of three of his latest models which I have taken the liberty of including in this edition of the Magazine, together with some text to explain what the models are all about.

Do hope you all enjoy reading the articles.

Happy Modelling

**ED**

# FROM OUR SECRETARY



After some thought, I decided it would be good to put down in writing, some insight into what, I and the committee do to run the club. I will break each person's job description down, and try to explain how we operate, especially under these circumstances. So here goes!

The committee consists of members elected each year from the membership. The positions available are:

**Chairman** (casting vote only)

**Treasurer**

**Secretary**

**Head of Plastics**

**General Committee Members** (two positions)

There is no one-person on the committee more important than the other, and at LDMBC, we run our committee in a different way than other clubs. For a start, you can see that we have no membership or health and safety officer. This is to keep the committee small and it's easier to fill the positions!

All committee members act as health and safety, reporting to the Secretary or Chairman. Also, unlike other clubs, our chairman does not run the club; he oversees the club as a whole. In our club, the Secretary does the bulk of the work, and has done for many years! So, let us breakdown the job roles.

**Treasurer - Mike Skuce**

You probably think the most horrible job to do overall, and your right. He is responsible for collecting all monies from subs and donations to paying all our bills. 3 years ago, we went over to full electronic accounting, this is updated regularly and we do an audit every 3 months, to check that what we have in cash at hand, plus in the bank matches our statements. He also inputs all data into the accounts and membership package, acting as part membership secretary. The accounts being all electronic make things much easier, as the package we have, was hand written by another club. We have then amended it to suit our club, which incorporates debits, credits, membership pages and our end of year statements. This cuts down on a lot of work, but it does have its own set of problems, the formula going wrong etc, but we have a set of cross check pages that we can see if something goes wrong.

**Head of Plastics - Tony Martin**

We have this position, as most of our members don't just do boats, but also plastic modelling, RC planes, trucks and cars. Drones, figures and railways! We get invited to a few IPMS shows and it's this position that sorts out the show and any problems, he is also our resident expert on airbrushing and resin moulding!

**Chairman** - Terry Martin

Probably the hardest job going in the club. It's this person's job to oversee all other committee members plus the membership. He keeps everyone in line, and has the final say on all voting matters. His word is the law in the club. He also has to keep the Secretary in line! If you're going to be told off, it's the Chairman who does it!

**General committee** - Graham Rumble and Peter James

We have two of these now, up from none 3 years ago. When we did away with the membership secretary, it was thought wise to make a general position available, to get a better overview from the membership. Their main job is to filter back information to the committee, and to try and give a balanced view at meetings.

**Secretary** - Pete Carman

In LDMBC, this position does the majority of work, from organising shows to talking to the Local Council. If something is happening in the club, it goes through this position. A lot goes on in the background that even committee members don't always get to hear about. Mainly to do with other clubs, councils and members of the public. All enquiries normally go to here or are forwarded to here. The enquiry is disseminated, then, if advice is required, it is sorted out. Mainly this is kept in the club, with the Treasurer and Chairman being consulted. If it needs to go to committee, then a meeting will be called lakeside where it will be quickly discussed and an agreement on how to proceed formulated. Sometimes, that's not even needed!

That's the main roles covered. There are other roles, which all play a major part within the club that most members don't even see! So, let's cover them.

**Magazine Editor** - Tony Dalton

The Magazine Editor receives all the articles for the club magazine, edits and checks them and then produces the files to be made into the magazine.

**Web Master** - Bob Vaughan

Bob wrote and looks after our website, updates it's and uploads the magazine from the editor. He also gets questioned about various aspects on the website from the Secretary who is just a pain in the bum. (Believe me he can be more than that on occasions. See the power I have. Bob)

**Heavy Transport** - Dave Seath

This is a person in the club, who for many years has helped moved tables tents and boats to shows and exhibitions in his car and trailer.

**Club Shop** - John Allen

The Shopkeeper runs and sorts out the club shop. He has his own float, and is basically responsible for sorting any new items to go into the shop, and to purchase anything which the clubs feels we could sell.

So, as you can see, a lot goes on the background. All committee positions are open on a yearly basis. If you fancy having a go at the committee or other positions, then

August is when we start looking to fill them! Don't be shy, full training will be given, and help and advice is always there.

Just a quick note, it is not true that if you do become a committee member you get a new car. Or go out for dinner at the clubs' expense. These are just rumours! Yes, you will see the Chairman eating, Head of Plastics asleep, the Treasurer wandering aimlessly doing pirate impressions and the Secretary running around here there and everywhere, but it's all done in fun and at our own expense!

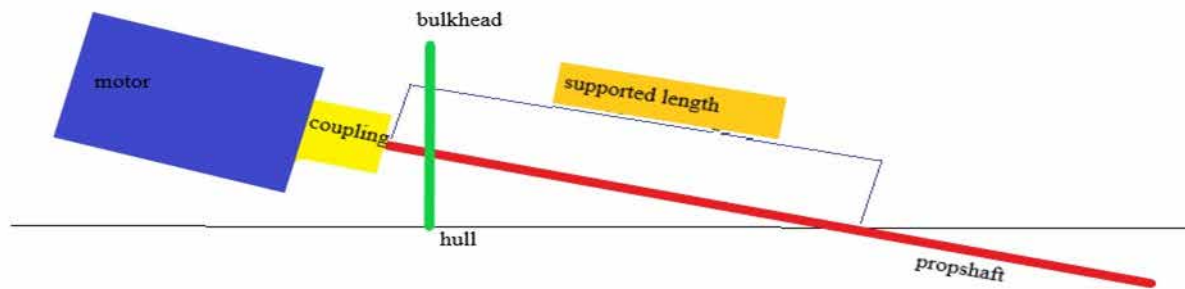
## COMMON FAULTS IN BUILDS



Over the last few months, I have noticed a few common faults in model boats. These are not necessarily down to the builder, but in a lot of cases, the kits and or plans! The simple fact is, kits and plans are only as good as the person that designed them, and there is a simple fix that if done at the beginning when being built, could save a lot of hassle later on. What I am talking about, is the simple and humble prop shaft! We all fit them, and in most cases, including myself, I'm sure we have all had this problem.



I'm not talking about motor alignment or couplings, but something called prop shaft whip. This is caused, when the shaft enters the hull, is glued in place, but is then not supported until the coupling! Various things can affect this also, including couplings and motor alignment. As can be seen in this diagram, the prop shaft enters the hull, but is unsupported until the motor mount. If the motor mount and coupling are out of alignment, this will cause the prop shaft to vibrate or whip. This causes several problems. The bearing nearest the motor in the prop shaft, will wear out prematurely, the prop shaft will also whip or move about down its length, causing glue failure at the hull joint, and in a very bad case, can tear the prop shaft out of the hull!



A simple modification at the build stage can easily fix this, and it's as simple as a bulkhead! If you fit the end of the prop shaft through a bulkhead near the coupling, then the problem becomes less pronounced, especially with bad alignment. As can be seen in the second diagram, this is the easy fix at the build stage. It's best to get the bulkhead about 1cm away from the prop shaft bearing, leaving room so you can access the couplings etc.

If you have a boat without a bulkhead, and an unsupported prop shaft, then you can always fashion a support under the prop shaft. My favourite way is to fashion a triangular piece of wood to fit in the area, then to epoxy it into the area, smearing epoxy over the top of the prop shaft.

Small note on prop shafts. You should always glue prop shafts in with epoxy glue, but the most common fault we see, is that the prop shaft is smooth, so it's always best to scuff the outside of the prop shaft before gluing!

If, for some reason you do need to replace a prop shaft, there are a couple of ways to get one out. First, take all the bits off, props, couplings etc so you are just left with the out case. You can get a block of wood and put it inside the boat against the bearing and gently hit it with a hammer, to see if the glue is old and will just let the prop shaft slide out. Another method is to get a set of mole grips and twist it out if possible, but this could damage the prop shaft. The last, and probably best method, and can only be used if the bearings are metal and not PTFE or plastic, is to use a soldering iron and to heat the tube, this in turn, heats the glue up making it soft so that the prop shaft can be extracted by either of the methods above.

Another problem I have seen recently was the actual motor was moving, this was not caused by loose bolts or screws, but by a simple plate motor mount that was moving at the right angle. These mounts are ok to use, but I like to support the rear of the motor with a wedge of wood, to stop this movement

**CLUNK**

# PETERS PLASTIC MAGIC



The following pictures are of three plastic models converted to Radio Control operation by Peter Le Sueur of the Welwyn Garden City Society of Model Engineers.



Russian Dreadnought Battleship MARAT

Soviet Dreadnought 'MARAT' (ex Petropavlovsk) Zevezda kit 1/350 Scale it is powered by four motors driving the kit supplied propellers and a scratch-built float plane (Heinkel KR-1) has been added and mounted to the top of 'C' Turret.

The Russian battleship Petropavlovsk (Russian: Петропавловск) was the third of the four Gangut-class dreadnoughts built before World War I for the Imperial Russian Navy, the first Russian class of dreadnoughts. She was named after the Russian victory in the Siege of Petropavlovsk during the Crimean War. The ship was completed during the winter of 1914–1915, but was not ready for combat until mid-1915. Her role was to defend the mouth of the Gulf of Finland against the Germans, who never tried to enter, so she spent her time training and providing cover for mine laying operations. Her crew joined the general mutiny of the Baltic Fleet after the February Revolution of 1917 and she was the only dreadnought available to the Bolsheviks for several years after the October Revolution of 1917. She bombarded the mutinous garrison of Fort Krasnaya Gorka and supported Bolshevik light forces operating against British ships supporting the White Russians in the Gulf of Finland in 1918–19. Later, her crew joined the Kronstadt Rebellion of 1921 and she was renamed Marat after the rebellion was crushed.

Marat was reconstructed from 1928 to 1931 and represented the Soviet Union at the Coronation Naval Review at Spithead in 1937. Two years later, she bombarded a Finnish coastal artillery position during the Winter War once before the Gulf of Finland iced up. Shortly afterwards, her anti-aircraft armament was upgraded. When the Germans invaded on 22 June 1941 she was in Kronstadt and provided gunfire support to Soviet troops in September as the Germans approached Leningrad. Later that month she had her bow blown off and sank in shallow water after two hits by 1,000-kilogram (2,200 lb) bombs (dropped by two Ju 87 Stukas, one of which was



piloted by Hans Ulrich Rudel) that detonated her forward magazine. She was refloated several months later and became a stationary battery, providing gunfire support during the Siege of Leningrad. Marat returned to her original name Petropavlovsk in 1943 and plans were made to reconstruct her after the war, using the bow of her sister Frunze, but they were not accepted and were formally cancelled in 1948. Petropavlovsk was renamed Volkhov in 1950, after the nearby Volkhov River, and served as a stationary training ship until stricken in 1953 and broken up afterwards.



French Liner SS FRANCE

1976 Airfix Kit of FRANCE 1/600 scale. It has four motors driving four 3D printed propellers. The hull fin has been extended by about 30mm or so to keep the vessel stable and upright.

SS France was a Compagnie Générale Transatlantique (CGT, or French Line) ocean liner, constructed by the Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard at Saint-Nazaire, France, and put into service in February 1962. At the time of her construction in 1960, the 316 m (1,037 ft) vessel was the longest passenger ship ever built, a record that remained unchallenged until the construction of the 345 m (1,132 ft) RMS Queen Mary 2 in 2004.

France was later purchased by Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) in 1979, renamed SS Norway and underwent significant modifications to refit her for cruising duties. She was renamed SS Blue Lady and sold to be scrapped in 2006, and scrapping was completed in late 2008.



RICHARD MONTGOMERY Trumpeter 1/350 Scale

SS Richard Montgomery was an American Liberty ship built during World War II. She was named after Richard Montgomery, an Irish soldier and officer. Montgomery originally served in the British Army and fought in North America during the French and Indian War, and in Pontiac's War. Montgomery served as a general in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War and was killed at the Battle of Quebec.

The ship was wrecked off the Nore sandbank in the Thames Estuary, near Sheerness, England in August 1944, whilst carrying a cargo of munitions. About 1,400 tonnes (1,500 short tons) of explosives remain on board, which continues to be a significant hazard.



Visible Masts of the Wreck of the 'RICHARD MONTGOMERY'

# **BLACK PARK MBC MEMBERS DAY OR SECRET SQUIRREL**



As some of you may remember, in September I was absent for the day on a Sunday. This was because I had been asked to go to Black Park MBC. Another member, Peter James had been asked by one of their members to attend, he had contacted me to ask a few questions, so we both decided to go. I had an ulterior reason to go.... I wanted to sail my Robbe Atlantis! The week before, I had booked off work, so the wife had me decorating the bedroom. I swear the bedroom was against me! The old wallpaper came away a dream, the painted lining paper decided otherwise, and blew when painted white, so I ended up having to take all the lining paper of the wall, emulsion the walls then painting it all sage green. In the meantime, the wallpaper my wife had bought for the feature wall, which was going to be climbing roses, was rolled up the wrong way, and had to be measured from the bottom up, making it a lot harder!! And if you hadn't guessed, my wife wanted the room decorated as a 1940's room! I started this on the Tuesday, after a busy weekend and finished Thursday at 8.30pm!

This left little time if anything was wrong with the Atlantis, which had not sailed for 2 years. So, Friday at 8am, I grabbed her out of the shed, opened her up and put the battery on charge, got a spare out and turned it all on. Nothing wrong with her at all! Checked the sails, a couple of small repairs to the running rigging and she was good to go. The rest of the day was spent running about doing errands, but Friday, I returned to another yacht, my Victoria. This boat had been damaged last time out 6 months ago, so I went about restoring her. The servo box inside had come unglued from the hull, so that was taken out, sanded, repainted, servos overhauled and checked then all put back in the hull and glued in. Rigging was checked, and some replaced where it had started to fray, but overall, still in good nick, although she still need painting, as the green gets lost on the water! Saturday morning was more running about, going to Houghton Regis for some bits, on the way back I saw sign for a yard sale.... I really should know better at my age, but hey ho. No modelling stuff!!! Thank god, but I did come away with over 300 books! All sorts. I dropped them off at home, then did a quick sort out, stored them in my shed etc. The afternoon was sort car and load up, which went surprisingly well, more running about and a quick trip to see Mr Dalton to pick up my radio I had been looking for, for about a month! I came away with 2 boxes of railway building that had been donated my John Lamkin. Tony had gone through and picked out what he could use on the club layout. Back home, I stuck the Victoria in the front seat, checked I had all the radios and batteries, my spares box for yachts, and I was all set to go.

Sunday morning was a bit nippy when walking the dog, so I had stuck trousers on to go out early, thinking I had put on my trousers that could turn into shorts. Wrong. Normal trousers, so I had to wear trousers on a day that was really warm! As usual I turned up before most peeps did, had a sandwich and a drink, then other people started

to turn up. Took my Victoria down to the lakeside, to find a millpond of a lake. Not an ounce of wind, and me with 2 yachts set my chair up, put the yacht on the water and watched it go nowhere!!

I was talking to an elderly gentleman called Bill who was local. His wife had bought him a Tid tug the previous year and this was its first time out. He put it in the water, and it also went nowhere fast. He was waiting for the club mechanic to come take a look, so I stepped in. he was trying to run a MFA geared motor with a 6v battery, and the motor was hardly turning over. First change the battery. Better, but not much. I noticed that he was pulling down to go forward on his TX. So sorted that out and it was much better, but still crawled around on full throttle, it also seemed to pulse. Now I knew this was a second-hand boat, not a new build, so I went to my car and got a 12v battery. This improved the speed no end, but it went faster in reverse than forward. Now what a lot of people do not realise, is that some boat speed controllers are 100% forward, but only 50% in reverse, and this was the case here. So, I swapped the leads to the motor over, reversed the switch on the Transmitter and hey presto, a happy bunny! Bill spent the next 3 hrs running the boat around, and his wife was happy as well! It was during this time that Pete James turned up with his wife and a person called John who had also come down from Luton to visit.

The rest of the day was spent sitting in the sun, watching 2 Robbe Atlantis on the water with numerous other craft, sunbathing and relaxing. Pete had bought another boat called Shirley Valentine off a Black Park member, so we got that on the water. He also at some point handed me the TX to his 1-meter yacht, and guess who managed to ground it 3ft from the bank and had to get his feet wet rescuing it! Fortunately, Pete being so new, he didn't have a camera handy!!! On a good note, even though we were the only outside members, there were nearly 40 people sailing on the day, so an excellent turn out. The café was open, but no sit in meals, but you could sit outside on the benches and eat. I spoke to their Chairman Jeff, who said we are more than welcome to come down anytime for a sail. I think we should take him up on that, and not wait for the open day next September. Black Park is an excellent huge lake, with good amenities, and when the weather is nice, a great day out. On a slightly different note, there were a huge number of doggies in the park. Also, where the boat club sail, they have signs up now not to ride bikes, and dogs to be on leads in this section as well.

As said, a great day out, I think we all really enjoyed ourselves! Some pictures follow below.



Pete's Victoria



Model of a JUNK sailing



LCM?



Excellent model of rowing boat out for an afternoon picnic



General view of the Lake with some models on the water

**CLUNK**

# THE MV WILHELM GUSTLOFF



75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of MV Wilhelm Gustloff by Soviet Union during WWII with the loss of over 10,000 lives which is a greater loss than the Titanic?

MV Wilhelm Gustloff was a German armed military transport ship which was sunk on 30 January 1945 by Soviet submarine S-13 in the Baltic Sea while evacuating German civilian refugees from East Prussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Estonia and military personnel from Gotenhafen (Gdynia) as the Red Army advanced. By one estimate, 9,400 people died, which makes it the largest loss of life in a single ship sinking in history.

Originally constructed as a cruise ship for the Nazi Kraft durch Freude (Strength through Joy) organisation in 1937, she had been requisitioned by the Kriegsmarine (German navy) in 1939. She served as a hospital ship in 1939 and 1940. She was then assigned as a floating barracks for naval personnel in Gdynia (Gotenhafen) before being armed and put into service to transport evacuees in 1945.

## Construction and naming

Wilhelm Gustloff was constructed by the Blohm & Voss shipyards. Measuring 208.5 m (684 ft 1 in) long by 23.59 m (77 ft 5 in) wide, with a capacity of 25,484 gross register tons (GRT), she was launched on 5 May 1937.

The ship was originally intended to be named Adolf Hitler but instead was christened after Wilhelm Gustloff, leader of the National Socialist Party's Swiss branch, who had been assassinated by a Jewish medical student in 1936. Hitler decided on the name change after sitting next to Gustloff's widow during his memorial service. After completing sea trials in the North Sea from 15 to 16 March 1938 she was handed over to her owners.

## Cruise ship

Wilhelm Gustloff was the first purpose-built cruise ship for the German Labour Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront, DAF) and used by subsidiary organisation Kraft durch Freude (KdF) (Strength through Joy). Her purposes were to provide recreational and cultural activities for German functionaries and workers, including concerts, cruises, and other holiday trips, and to serve as a public relations tool, to present "a more acceptable image of the Third Reich". She was the flagship of the KdF cruise fleet, her last civilian role, until the spring of 1939.

She made her unofficial maiden voyage between 24 and 27 March 1938 carrying Austrians in an attempt to convince them to vote for the annexation of Austria by Germany. On 29 March 1938 she departed on her second voyage carrying workers and their families from the Blohm & Voss shipyard on a three-day cruise.

## Rescue of Pegaway

For her third voyage she left Hamburg on 1 April 1938 under the command of Carl Lübbe to join the KdF ships Der Deutsche, Oceania and Sierra Cordoba on a group cruise of the North Sea. A storm developed on 3 April with winds up to 100 kilometres per hour (62 mph) that forced the four ships apart. On 2 April the 1,836 gross ton coal freighter Pegaway had departed Tyne under the command of Captain G. W. Ward with a load of coal for Hamburg. The storm washed cargo and machinery from her decks and as the storm increased in intensity, she lost manoeuvrability. By 4 April, it was taking on water and slowly sinking. At 4 am, the captain issued an SOS when the ship was 20 miles northwest of the island of Terschelling in the West Frisian Islands group off the coast of the Netherlands. The closest of the ships that answered the distress call was Wilhelm Gustloff which reached Pegaway at 6 am. She launched her Lifeboat No. 1 with a crew of 12 under the command of Second Officer Meyer. The oar-powered lifeboat was unable in the heavy seas to come aside Pegaway and looked in danger of needing rescuing. Lifeboat No. 6 with a crew of ten under the command of Second Officer Schürmann was then lowered. As it had a motor, it was better able to handle the waves. After first assisting their shipmates in lifeboat No. 1 to head back towards the Wilhelm Gustloff, Schürmann was able to reach Pegaway. One by one the 19 men on Pegaway jumped into the sea and were hauled onto Lifeboat No. 6, with both them and the crew of the lifeboat back at the Wilhelm Gustloff by 7:45 am. By now a Dutch tugboat had arrived but was unable to save Pegaway, which soon rolled to port and sank. Lifeboat No. 1 had been so badly damaged by the waves that after its crew had climbed up via ladders to the safety of their ship it was set adrift to later be washed up on the shores of Terschelling on 2 May.

## Anschluss

On 8 April 1938 Wilhelm Gustloff under the command of Captain Carl Lübbe departed Hamburg for England where she anchored over three miles offshore of Tilbury so as to remain in international waters. This allowed her to act as a floating polling station for German and Austrian citizens living in England who wished to vote on the approaching plebiscite on Anschluss (Union of Austria with Germany). During 10 April, 1,172 Germans and 806 Austrian eligible voters were ferried between the docks at Tilbury to the ship where 1,968 votes were cast in favour of the union and 10 voted against. Once the voting was complete, Wilhelm Gustloff departed, reaching Hamburg on 12 April.

After undertaking a further voyage on 14 to 19 April 1938, she went on an Osterfahrt (Easter Voyage) before her actual official maiden voyage, which was undertaken between 21 April to 6 May 1938 when she joined Der Deutsche, Oceania and Sierra Cordoba on a group cruise to the Madeira Islands. On the second day of her voyage, the 58-year-old Captain Carl Lübbe died on the bridge from a heart attack. He was replaced by Friedrich Petersen, who after commanding the ship for the remainder of this cruise left the ship until he returned to command it on the ship's final voyage.

## Condor legion

Between 20 May to 2 June 1939, she was diverted from her pleasure cruises. With seven other ships in the KdF fleet, she transported the Condor Legion back from Spain following the victory of the Nationalist forces under General Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War.

From 14 March 1938 until 26 August 1939, Wilhelm Gustloff took over 80,000 passengers on a total of 60 voyages, all around Europe.

## Military career



German soldiers wounded at Narvik being transported to Germany on Wilhelm Gustloff in July 1940.

From September 1939 to November 1940, she served as a hospital ship, officially designated Lazarettsschiff **D**. Beginning on 20 November 1940, the medical equipment was removed from the ship, and she was repainted from the hospital ship colours of white with a green stripe to standard naval grey. As a consequence of the Allied blockade of the German coastline, she was used as an accommodations ship (barracks) for approximately 1,000 U-boat trainees of the 2nd Submarine Training Division (2. Unterseeboot-Lehrdivision) in the port of Gdynia, which had been occupied by Germany and renamed Gotenhafen, located near Danzig (Gdańsk). Wilhelm Gustloff sat in dock there for over four years. In 1942, SS Cap Arcona was used as a stand-in for RMS Titanic in the German film version of the disaster. Filmed in Gotenhafen, the 2nd Submarine Training Division acted as extras in the movie. Eventually she was put back into service to transport civilians and military personnel as part of Operation Hannibal.

## Operation Hannibal – evacuation

Operation Hannibal was the naval evacuation of German troops and civilians as the Red Army advanced. Wilhelm Gustloff's final voyage was to evacuate German refugees, military personnel, and technicians from Courland, East Prussia, and Danzig-West Prussia. Many had worked at advanced weapon bases in the Baltic from Gdynia/Gotenhafen to Kiel.





Wilhelm Gustloff as a hospital ship, before being converted into an armed military transport. Docked in Danzig, 23 September 1939

The ship's complement and passenger lists cited 6,050 people on board, but these did not include many civilians who boarded the ship without being recorded in the official embarkation records. Heinz Schön, a German archivist and Gustloff survivor who extensively researched the sinking during the 1980s and 1990s, concluded that Wilhelm Gustloff was carrying a crew of 173 (naval armed forces auxiliaries), 918 officers, NCOs, and men of the 2 Unterseeboot-Lehrdivision, 373 female naval auxiliary helpers, 162 wounded soldiers, and 8,956 civilians, for a total of 10,582 passengers and crew. The passengers, besides civilians, included Gestapo personnel, members of the Organisation Todt, and Nazi officials with their families. The ship was overcrowded, and due to the temperature and humidity inside, many passengers defied orders not to remove their life jackets.

The ship left Danzig (Gdańsk) at 12:30 pm on 30 January 1945, accompanied by the passenger liner Hansa, also filled with civilians and military personnel, and two torpedo boats. Hansa and one torpedo boat developed mechanical problems and could not continue, leaving Wilhelm Gustloff with one torpedo boat escort, Löwe. The ship had four captains (Wilhelm Gustloff's captain, two merchant marine captains, and the captain of the U-Boat complement housed on the vessel) on board, and they disagreed on the best course of action to guard against submarine attacks. Against the advice of the military commander, Lieutenant Commander Wilhelm Zahn (a submariner who argued for a course in shallow waters close to shore and without lights), Wilhelm Gustloff's captain Friedrich Petersen decided to head for deep water which was known to have been cleared of mines. When he was informed by a mysterious radio message of an oncoming German minesweeper convoy, he decided to activate his ship's red and green navigation lights so as to avoid a collision in the dark, making Wilhelm Gustloff easy to spot in the night.

As Wilhelm Gustloff had been fitted with anti-aircraft guns, and the Germans did not mark her as a hospital ship, no notification of her operating in a hospital capacity had been given and, as she was transporting military personnel, she did not have any protection as a hospital ship under international accords.

## Sinking

The ship was soon sighted by the Soviet submarine S-13, under the command of Captain Alexander Marinesko. The submarine sensor on board the escorting torpedo boat had frozen, rendering it inoperable, as had Wilhelm Gustloff's anti-aircraft guns, leaving the vessels defenceless. Marinesko followed the ships to their starboard (seaward) side for two hours before making a daring move to surface his submarine and steer it around Wilhelm Gustloff's stern, to attack it from the port side closer to shore, from whence the attack would be less expected. At around 9 pm (CET), Marinesko ordered his crew to launch four torpedoes at Wilhelm Gustloff's port side, about 30 km (16 nmi; 19 mi) offshore, between Großendorf and Leba. The first was nicknamed "for the Motherland", the second "for Leningrad", the third "for the Soviet people", and the fourth, which got jammed in the torpedo tubes and had to be dismantled, "for Stalin". The three torpedoes which were fired successfully all struck Wilhelm Gustloff on her port side. The first torpedo struck Wilhelm Gustloff's bow, causing the watertight doors to seal off the area which contained quarters where off-duty crew members were sleeping. The second torpedo hit the accommodations for the women's naval auxiliary, located in the ship's drained swimming pool, dislodging the pool tiles at high velocity, which caused heavy casualties; only three of the 373 quartered there survived. The third torpedo was a direct hit on the engine room located amidships, disabling all power and communications.

Reportedly, only nine lifeboats were able to be lowered; the rest had frozen in their davits and had to be broken free. About 20 minutes after the torpedoes' impact, Wilhelm Gustloff listed dramatically to port, so that the lifeboats lowered on the high starboard side crashed into the ship's tilting side, destroying many lifeboats and spilling their occupants across the ship's side.

The water temperature in the Baltic Sea at that time of year is usually around 4 °C (39 °F); however, this was a particularly cold night, with an air temperature of −18 to −10 °C (0 to 14 °F) and ice floes covering the surface. Many deaths were caused either directly by the torpedoes or by drowning in the onrushing water. Others were crushed in the initial stampede caused by panicked passengers on the stairs and decks. Many others jumped into the icy Baltic. The majority of those who perished succumbed to exposure in the freezing water.

Less than 40 minutes after being struck, Wilhelm Gustloff was lying on her side. She sank bow-first 10 minutes later, in 44 m (144 ft) of water.

German forces were able to rescue 1252 of the survivors from the attack: the torpedo boat T36 rescued 564 people; the torpedo boat Löwe (ex-Gyller), 472; the minesweeper M387, 98; the minesweeper M375, 43; the minesweeper M341, 37; the steamer Göttingen, 28; the torpedo recovery boat (Torpedofangboot) TF19, 7; the freighter Gotenland, two; and the patrol boat (Vorpostenboot) V1703, one baby. 13 survivors died later.

All four captains on Wilhelm Gustloff survived her sinking, but an official naval inquiry was only started against Wilhelm Zahn. His degree of responsibility was never resolved, however, because of Nazi Germany's collapse in 1945.

## Losses

The figures from Heinz Schön's research make the loss in the sinking to be "9,343 men, women and children". Schön's more recent research is backed up by estimates made by a different method. An Unsolved History episode that aired in March 2003, on the Discovery Channel, undertook a computer analysis of her sinking. Using maritime EXODUS software, it was estimated 9,600 people died out of more than 10,600 on board. This analysis considered the passenger density based on witness reports and a simulation of escape routes and survivability with the timeline of the sinking.

## Aftermath

Many ships carrying civilians were sunk during the war by both the Allies and Axis Powers. However, based on the latest estimates of passenger numbers and those known to be saved, Wilhelm Gustloff remains by far the largest loss of life resulting from the sinking of one vessel in maritime history. Günter Grass said in an interview published by The New York Times in April 2003, "One of the many reasons I wrote Crabwalk was to take the subject away from the extreme Right... They said the tragedy of Wilhelm Gustloff was a war crime. It wasn't. It was terrible, but it was a result of war, a terrible result of war."

About 1,000 German naval officers and men were aboard during, and died in, the sinking of Wilhelm Gustloff. The women on board the ship at the time of the sinking were inaccurately described by Soviet propaganda as "SS personnel from the German concentration camps". There were, however, 373 female naval auxiliaries amongst the passengers.

On the night of 9–10 February, just 11 days after the sinking, S-13 sank another German ship, General von Steuben, killing about 4,500 people.

Before sinking Wilhelm Gustloff, Alexander Marinesko was facing a court martial due to his problems with alcohol and for being caught in a brothel while he and his crew were off duty, so Marinesko was thus deemed "not suitable to be a hero" for his actions. Therefore, instead of gaining the title Hero of the Soviet Union, he was awarded the lesser Order of the Red Banner. He was downgraded in rank to lieutenant and dishonourably discharged from the Soviet navy in October 1945.

In 1960, he was reinstated as captain third class and granted a full pension. In 1963, Marinesko was given the traditional ceremony due to a captain upon his successful return from a mission. He died three weeks later from cancer at age 50. Marinesko was posthumously named a Hero of the Soviet Union by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990.

# Wreckage



A porthole from Wilhelm Gustloff, salvaged in 1988, at the museum ship Albatross in Damp in 2000.



A model of Wilhelm Gustloff at the Laboe Naval Memorial

Noted as "Obstacle No. 73" on Polish navigation charts, and classified as a war grave, Wilhelm Gustloff rests at  $55^{\circ}04'22''\text{N}$   $17^{\circ}25'17''\text{E}$ , about 19 nmi (35 km; 22 mi) offshore, east of Łeba and west of Władysławowo (the former Leba and Großendorf respectively). It is one of the largest shipwrecks on the Baltic Sea floor and has been attracting much interest from treasure hunters searching for the lost Amber Room. In order to protect the property on board the war grave-wreck of Wilhelm Gustloff and to protect the environment, the Polish Maritime Office in Gdynia has forbidden diving within a 500 m (1,600 ft) radius of the wreck.

In 2006, a bell recovered from the wreck and subsequently used as a decoration in a Polish seafood restaurant was lent to the privately funded "Forced Paths" exhibition in Berlin.

# A BLAST FROM THE PAST



We have not had a chance of visiting the usual exhibitions or other clubs open days over the past year, so thought it might cheer us all up if I included some articles on exhibitions/events that we have attended in the past, hopefully it will bring back some pleasant memories in recalling what we do when not in the throes of some sort of lock-down.

## MILTON KEYNES 'MODEL KRAFT 2008'

An article by **Tony Martin** published in the Magazine - 2008 Spring Edition

This day started very early as it did last year at about 6.30am, The main difference this year was that we as a club were displaying a large quantity of our plastic Models (static and powered). After loading the car almost to the brim and having eaten a most needed breakfast and cup of tea James and I set off.



We were heading to a new venue this year at Stantonbury campus in Milton Keynes instead of the usual Bletchley Leisure Centre. I have to admit we arrived slightly later than

With everything set up and everyone refreshed it was time to have a good look around the show. The show was utilising three different levels of the Campus sports facilities. The sports hall and two levels of balconies filled with clubs, models and traders. I managed to keep my hand firmly away from my wallet even though I was tempted to part with my hard earned a number of times.



we had planned, we then had to work out which way to get in and where our tables were situated.

After finding them to be in a side room on the second floor, we endeavoured (with much puffing) to bring the stand and all the models up the two flights of stairs and down some narrow corridors to be put on display, whilst countless other clubs and traders tried to do the same!

The diversity and quality of the models on show always astound me, as with last year I was volunteered to help judge one of the classes in the open competition. So some two hours and 18 model dioramas' in many scales and set in many periods later, I returned to the stand shattered but happy!

We had a lot of interest in our models especially in Dave Abbots 1/35<sup>th</sup> Pibber (P.B.R) by the I.P.M.S Vietnam special

interest group who were taken aback by it as were many other people who didn't realise that plastic static kits could be transformed into radio controlled working models,



realise that plastic static kits could be transformed into radio controlled working models!

Four o'clock came into sight all too soon, we then had the task of assaulting the stairs and packing the cars up, which passed with no great problems!

Many thanks to all the club members who kept James occupied while I was away and for those who provided models for display and the man power to set up and break down!

In summary I would highly recommend this show to anyone and hope the pictures provided by Paul wet your appetite to come and see us or even come and join in the fun at Milton Keynes next Year!

Happy modelling - Tony Martin

## STEVENAGE LIFE BOAT DAY 2012



Article by John Morgan – Published in Club Magazine Spring 2013.

**A poor weather forecast** did not deter the turnout of either exhibitors or visitors. Indeed, Roland from Stevenage Boat Club (SBC) was concerned that, following many phone calls from model owners, there would not be enough accommodation for everyone. The public, young, old and even the fair sex, poured into the enclosure. For them to look and admire were over 25 model lifeboats, rescue boats and fire tenders, their owners travelling from Kent, Leicestershire and many places in between. The PA system kept everyone informed as to what it was all about.

**“How come there are so many life boats here, John?”**

**– Kay’s senior moment of the day!**

**There was a new harbour** in the water. A member of the SBC had seen the Luton dock at our anniversary bash and had asked for the construction details. It was its first outing and not yet finished but then, as with ours,

improvements and additions can keep us occupied for years!

**The sky darkened** and we all made a dash for the refreshments, but there was problem, the Martin family had gone walk about. We looked at Kay (our saviour last time), she looked at us but before a decision was made, our President put on the apron! Well now, was Dave A thirsty, or was he trying to impress his new lady, Maria over from Malta. The first cuppa, from the thermos, was on the cool side (not that we were complaining... much). I suggested that the contents were put back into the kettle for a re-heat. After some experimentation and cries of "don't tell me, I know how", Mr A. found the secret of the thermos and we were able to have hot drinks.

There was always plenty of activity on the water, including a demonstration of their fast electric boats. By mid afternoon, thunder was to be heard. The park emptied and our hosts decided to strike camp before we all got wet, which was achieved, just in the nick of time.



## MEMBERS MODELS AT WARDOWN PARK



The following pictures were taken by **Dave Thompson** and were originally published in the Club Magazine Summer 2013

Dave Thompson has over the last few years, amassed a collection of pictures of Members Boats sailing on our lake	
	
Ardent LK472 – 17/04/2011	Jennifer M - 01/04/2011
	
Kalle – 17/04/2011	LT59 – 17/04/2011
	
PT150 – 17/04/2011	PT1104 – 17/04/82011



	
<p>Yellow Submarine – 17/04/2011</p>	<p>Green Ferry – 21/04/2011</p>
	
<p>Gaji – 21/04/2011</p>	<p>Lady – 21/04/2011</p>
	
<p>Phoenix – 21/04/2011</p>	<p>Atlantic – 24/04/2011</p>
	
<p>Cabin Cruiser – 24/04/2011</p>	<p>Graemsey – 24/04/2011</p>

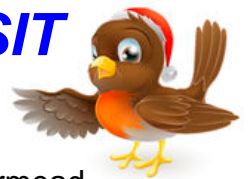


Graf Spay – 24/04/2011



Jezebel – 24/04/2011

## ***WATERMEAD REGATTA CLUB VISIT***



**By Lyndsey Martin** – Originally published 2013 winter edition

Whilst visiting Black Park this year we bumped into Lee from the Watermead Model Boat Club who invited us to attend their Regatta the following weekend. Being such short notice and the Mele on down at our lake we decided to attend that being all of us Martins, Pete and Mary and Jim. We set off on a very blustery overcast day, after getting lost once (don't trust Google maps) we arrived at about 10 o'clock to find Pete had set up the gazebo already! The lake is set in a very idyllic setting with lots of prestigious looking houses on the other side of the lake.

The day was well planned by the club with themed events on throughout the day. One of which was all the lifeboats out together, So Tony set sail with his German search and rescue boat Vegesack.



There was a small steering course set up close to the shore as well as the harbour. With a penguin infested iceberg to navigate. By the afternoon it became very cold and verrrrrrry windy, one large heavy-duty gazebo took flight and had to be rescued by club members. At which time we thought it best to strike camp before ours did the same. Other than the weather this was very enjoyable day, many thanks to the Watermead Club for their warm welcome. We would certainly recommend attending the next Event!

**End of Magazine**