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NEWSLETTER

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bmbg/>

Ensign's report 1st December 2011

I have been taken to task for what I wrote in our last newsletter about steam engines, and would like to put things right. It was pointed out to me that I could build my own steam engine, and save a small fortune.

Let's see... first, I'd have to get a lathe of course, and preferably a milling machine too. Then I would have to buy a whole lot more tooling than they came with, and various sizes of brass and other stock materials. I'd need a bench grinder to sharpen the tools. But my workshop is not big enough for all this, so I'd need a new one, and that would need a concrete slab, which would require a lot of digging and re-arrangement of the garden, but only after I had council approval for the larger workshop. Then I'd need to fit it out with benches and get it wired up. And then I could start to save a small fortune... having spent a large one!

Halvorsen 38 progress

Alan has been making solid progress with his model of the Halvorsen ASR/RAAF seaplane tender of WW2. A recent test of the basic hull showed its performance on two small brushless motors to be well up to the mark.



Note: the little alien guy in the driving seat is actually the 2.4GHz receiver!

Fletcher class destroyer

Another recent launching at the lake has been this Fletcher class destroyer by Vince, from (I think) the Lindberg kit.

The Fletcher class was America's most successful WW2 destroyer design.



Maribyrnong river cruise

For about the price of morning tea and a magazine, you can go on a two-hour cruise along the Maribyrnong with Blackbird Cruises, and I recommend you do so.



The captain has his fingers crossed - should we be worried?

Departing from a rustic landing in Footscray, the wooden ferry, of 1930s vintage and originally hailing from Lakes Entrance, takes you to the Canning Reserve and back again. There's commentary all the way upstream, and a chance to chat with the owner operators, Peter Somerville and his son Warwick, on the way back.

You are bound to learn something on the way, even if you think you know it all. Melbourne's west looks very different from the deck of a boat. The legacy of industrial activity, the machinations of developers, the skills of bridge designers and the needs of racehorses are all subjects for consideration. Take a cut lunch, there's no on-board catering.



You will of course want to know some technical details of the Blackbird. She is currently powered by a BMC diesel of the type used in London taxis, which after 25 years of operation has now had its first (of four permissible) stages of overhaul. The hull speed is some 9 knots and she has demonstrated 8 knots, convincingly winning the Yarra River race on the only occasion it was run. Cruising speed is around half that.

The Melbourne CBD under blue skies on the return.

