L. Ashwell Wood - a king of the cut-aways

If I had ever noticed the artist's signature in the corner of the cutaway views that accompanied many of the “How it Works” sections of the books and magazines I read as a young boy, the chances are it would have been that of Leslie Ashwell Wood.

A British illustrator, L A-W’s work first began to appear in the late 1930s when he produced cover art and illustrations for Modern Wonder magazine. During the war, the government made use of his services to provide instruction manuals and leaflets that explained how the new weapons of war worked. Most of this work was printed in a photographic style monochrome. After the war he illustrated a great many of the technical and science books published by Odhams Press Limited.

On the 14th April 1950 the first issue of the mould-breaking English comic The Eagle appeared and within its pages were the first of hundreds of colour cut-away illustrations that L A-W was to produce for this comic. Occupying prime space across the centre-fold it was, after the adventures of spaceman Dan Dare, one of the most popular features, and continued well into the 1960s.

L A-W also produced illustrated books explaining the working of machines, aircraft and just about every other type of technology to a world that was still interested in mechanical engineering. I have of course chosen to show just a couple of his nautical subjects here.

Addendum

I’ve always found it fascinating to browse old magazines for their inventions, especially when brought to life by dramatic cover artwork. What can we see here? Some sort of airscrew-driven catamaran with rollers on the left - not sure what the intention is there. Is a boat, is it a plane? The craft on the right can’t seem to decide, but it has a really nice padded leather seat.

Ensign’s report 1st January 2015

There’s not much happening on the model boat front this month, so let’s digress a little.

Popular Science magazine - 82 years ago

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(below) SRN6 Hovercraft, 1960s

(below) Ocean-going tug