



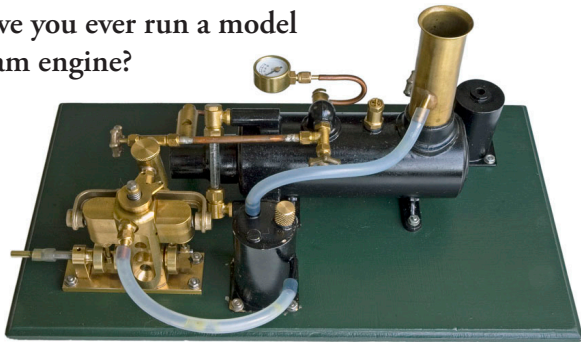
NEWSLETTER

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Ensign's report 1st November 2011

It was great to have a visit by members of the Benalla Model Boat Group on our last sailing day (23rd October). The scenic venue of the Benalla Lake appears to have favoured the evolution of a staunch band of sailing enthusiasts, whose power models are used mainly for recovery of becalmed yachts!

Have you ever run a model steam engine?



There are all sorts of things you need to do, such as squirt fluids into its various orifices (pure water into the boiler, gas into the gas tank, steam oil into the displacement lubricator, machine oil onto the bearings). Get the levels right. Then you need to light the burner. Use a *long* match!

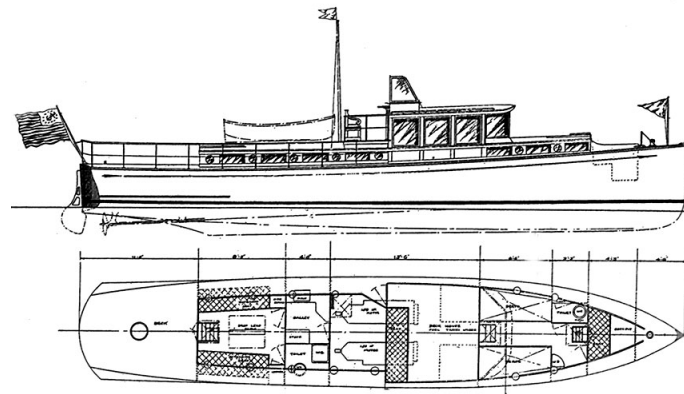
When sufficient pressure is showing on the gauge, you can open the steam cock, a lovely miniature handwheel, so hot it will instantly blister your fingers. The engine will vomit up an oily sputum, then, with luck, start to run and perhaps even generate a little power.

All too soon, it will be running down again. You must open the drain cock on the bottom of the lubricator so that it can spit a gob of hot yellow snot onto your hand. Then you need to pump out the effluent tank, where most of the engine's vital fluids have combined to form a small toxic lake, in need of careful disposal. (The rest has been atomised into a fine mist that now coats all surfaces within a 1.2 metre radius.)

All the while the engine has produced a weaker plume from its funnel than any self-respecting electric smoke generator and less power than a clapped-out Mabuchi with 2,000 circuits of the lake on its clock, at a cost ten times greater than the combined purchase price of both, batteries included. This is known as *The Magic of Steam...*

Vamoose - a 1928 commuter

The drawing shows the design of this wooden boat as it appeared in the February 1928 issue of *The Rudder* magazine.



It formed the basis for my CAD drawings to 1:16 scale, which result in a model 1048mm x 192mm and some 5.4kg displacement. Commuters were fast boats whose sole function was to get their wealthy industrialist owners to and from work with speed and comfort.

The model is of conventional construction with Lite-ply frames, balsa planking and fibreglass sheathing. The central cabin or 'stateroom' presented a problem as its large windows demanded internal detail, and providing this put the squeeze on available space for the running gear. To maintain balance, I had to cut away the floor at the rear of the cabin to allow the drive battery to make use of the space under the three-quarter width divan seat.

Vamoose nearing completion in July



Most of the construction time went into the panelled mahogany cabins, which took far longer to build than the hull. The model has twin shafts and motors and a built-in speaker housing. This currently only provides a horn sound but I may fit a digital engine sound system in due course.

Completed as a scratch-building project for *Model Boats* magazine, the model debuts this month in their Winter Special.

