SCUTTLEBUTT

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANBERRA MODEL SHIPWRIGHTS SOCIETY

Established 21 April 1988. Incorporated 16 January 1991.

OBJECTIVES: To foster and maintain interest in building model ships, boats, associated fittings, gear, equipment, armaments and relevant items and structures and the pursuit of excellence in this field.

March 2026

Committee Members 2025 – 2026
President Neville Miller. Vice President Grant Dale. Treasurer Peter Hateley.
Secretary Peter Gaisford. Assistant Secretary Bill Atkinson.
Committee Members Tony Merriott, Robert Hodsdon.
Public Officer Ray Osmotherly. Liaison Officer Max Fitton.
Webmaster Steve Batcheldor. Editor Brian Voce to December 2025
Elizabeth Hodsdon from January 2026

MEETINGS
Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month except December, commencing at 10am.
New venue from February 2026, Southern Cross Club, corner of Bowman St and Catchpole St, Macquarie. ACT 2614.

NOTE: The AGM will be held on 21 April , followed by the general monthly meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It was great to see so many members and their partners at the Christmas Lunch at the Murrumbateman Pub in December. I believe that a great time was had by all.

I'm looking forward to an exciting year with the new meeting place at the Jamison Southern Cross Club. We had our first meeting there on 17th February. This venue also provides a place to socialise after the Monthly Meetings where partners can get together as well for lunch.

A big thank you to Elizabeth for taking on the role of Editor for Scuttlebutt. Please send in your stories no matter how small or large, and don't forget to add some photos.

It would be great to see the progress on your builds, as well as any finished models. I have been unable to work on my Arab Dhow due to personal reasons. I'm hoping to have it finished for the Expo in September.

If you have been to any other Expos we would love to hear about it.

Itwould be great if someone takes over the President's role at the next AGM in April, as I have a very busy year in front of me and cannot be fully committed to the position. I hope to be back on track by April next year.

The Canberra Boat Festival is on again this year at the Canberra Yacht Club on the 11th and 12th April. It's well worth a look on the Saturday.

Happy building,
Neville Miller.

A JOURNEY TO BUILDING ATTACK CLASS PATROL BOAT MODELS.

Steve Batcheldor.

I have had an interest in warships of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) since I was young and I regularly dreamed about building models of some of these ships one day. Over many years I collected photos, drawings and details of a variety of post WW11 RAN ships that I hoped to put to use in constructing some models.

Early on I realized that the main problem with wanting to build models of modern RAN ships is that it is almost impossible to obtain model kits for most RAN ships. Very few plastic kits are available and even then those models tend to be of older ships. The only way that I was going to be able to fulfil my dream was to scratch build the models at some point.

I started building model ships in my early teens but most of my early attempts were quite simple models based on free plans from model magazines or small wooden or plastic kits. Throughout the 1980's I did progress to building a couple of larger models suitable for radio control (RC) but I still had not attempted to build any models of RAN ships.

Most of my model ship building was done in isolation with no one to lean on for advice or building techniques. In the late 1980's I did find a model boat club to join and this certainly opened my eyes to the different ways that model ships could be constructed and the different materials that could be used.

In the mid 1990's Task Force 72 (TF72) scale model ship association was established and I attended the first regatta held at Wentworth Falls. The opportunity to see a fleet of RC model warships all in the same scale operating on the water was the motivation that I needed to make a start on my dream of building some RAN warships.

I immediately joined TF72 and started to consider what type of 1:72 scale models of RAN ships I would like to make. I soon decided that I would start with a few of the RAN smaller ships and slowly build up to some of the larger vessels as I improved my model building skills. After some consideration, I thought that I would start with an Attack Class Patrol Boat.

The Attack Class Patrol Boats were a class of 20 small coastal defence ships, 32.8m in length and 100 ton standard displacement. All ships were built in Australia and were operated by the RAN between 1967 and 1991.

I had a model makers plan and enough relevant information on the Attack Class to make a start on a 1:72 scale scratch-built model. How hard could it be, it was only a small model and I felt that I had a good understanding of a way ahead at this point.

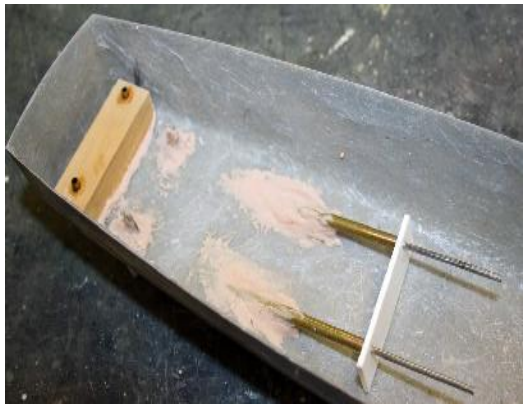
Over a few months I made a wooden hull by gluing several layers of 19mm pine wood together and carving the hull to shape in the bread and butter style of construction. The wooden hull was coated in numerous layers of enamel paint with each layer being sanded smooth until I was happy that all of the defects had been removed. My wooden hull was then used to make a fibreglass mould. The mould was then used to make a fibreglass hull. What a great start, I thought that I was well on my way to making a great little RC model of a RAN ship.

In the following months I scratch built the deck and superstructure from styrene sheet then made and fitted the propeller shafts and rudders. I had made the superstructure and part of the deck removable for access to the inside of the hull. I also built up the deck fittings for this ship from styrene and brass wire. After being painted the model was looking like a patrol boat, so I decided to put it in the water before going any further.

My original 1:72 scale Attack Class Patrol Boat model.

Wow was I disappointed. Something that I had not considered was the displacement of such a small model The model sat a little deep in the water as it was and I had no motors, radio gear or batteries fitted. It was very clear that this model was not going to be a suitable RC model ship. While my model could float, it would never be powered as there was not enough buoyancy to carry the required internal components. While disappointing, this was actually a good lesson and set the line in the sand for my future models. Any model ship that I wanted to make into a functional RC model at 1:72 scale needed to have a larger displacement than the Attack Class Patrol Boat.

New Attack hull – A hull and some parts ready to start construction.



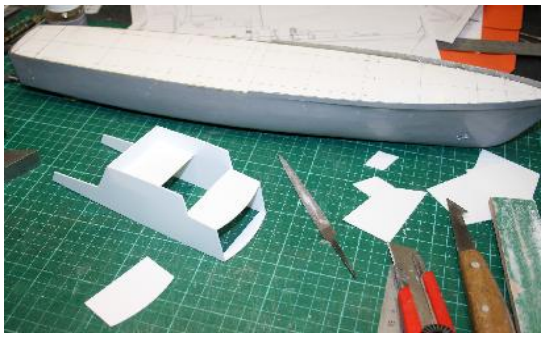
New Attack shafts. Shafts and rudder posts Were the first things fitted to the hull.

In the following months and years, I did move on to build my own little fleet of small RAN ships but I did make sure that they were all a little bigger than the Attack so that they could be functional.

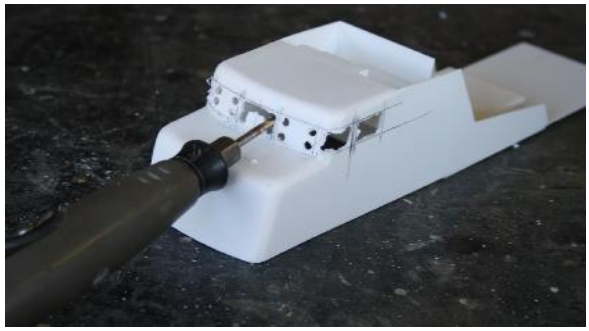
In recent years I have revisited the Attack Class Patrol Boat and have a few partially finished models in various scales under construction at the moment. I have 3D printed static models in 1:700, 1:350 and 1:150 scales. I have also progressed on a new 1:72 scale model, this time with much lighter construction of the hull and superstructure. My hope is that with the modern micro size radio gear and small brushless motors I may just be able to turn this one into a functional model.

I have also recently made a new fibreglass hull at 1:50 which should make a good RC model.

My original little model of the Attack Class Patrol Boat, while not being a complete success, was the start of over 30 years of building a fleet of 1:72 scale models of RAN ships. I think that I have exceeded my goal of building a few models and I still have plenty of motivation to construct many more models of RAN (and other Australian) ships in the future.



A styrene deck was fitted and the superstructure was built up from styrene sheet.



Windows were cut out with a small drill bit in a Dremel.

3D printed and styrene parts were made and fitted to the model.

New Attack paint – everything is given a coat Of primer.

The various Attack models that I have at present.

Some of my RAN fleet, in this case the five generations of RAN Patrol Boats on the water.

BRIAN VOCE RECALLS
A TROPICAL VOYAGE WITH THE RAN

In the late 60's I started in one of the best jobs available to a young journalist. Maybe it didn't seem that exciting in some ways because my new client was the Royal Australian Navy which was then probably at its lowest ebb in public esteem in the lingering wake of the Melbourne-Voyager collision.

My new job was in the public relations branch of the then Department of Navy and it seemed I had elected to join a team with a seemingly impossible task – to make the Navy look good again.

In the period I was with Navy – first as deputy director of Navy PR and later as the Director – I think we did actually get some runs on the board and by the time I left, the Navy was enjoying something of a revival, but this is not about that long and wearisome journey. It is about some of the fun stuff I got to enjoy along the way.

One advantage of our seemingly impossible task was that the Navy and the Department did not renege on providing us with the resources we sought to fund some of the ideas we thought would help the cause. Every case had to be argued of course, but we in fact enjoyed a lot of support. One of the big items was travel as the Navy going about its business did not stay in one place for long.

As part of my job I got to go to sea on numerous occasions in a variety of ships, usually accompanied by one of our photographers. Ships I travelled in included the flagship, the aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne, her sister ship HMAS Sydney which was then transporting troops to and from Vietnam, Daring-class and River-class destroyers, the Charles F. Adams class destroyers and others. My most pleasant memory though is in one of the smallest ships then operating, one of the Attack-class patrol boats – HMAS Aitape.

This cruise consisted of wandering around the coastal seas of Papua-New Guinea on some sort of goodwill cruise at a time when Australia was training PNG sailors in operating the patrol boats, five of which were being handed over to the PNG Defence Force. Its captain was LCDR Sam Bateman who later took Aitape far up the Sepik River on a voyage of discovery.

My companion on the trip was Phil Hobson, who had been with Navy PR as head of the Photographic Unit long before I joined. He was an Army veteran and had been carried out of enemy territory down the Kokoda Track in a fevered state, doggedly clutching his prized Japanese sword. This trip was special to Phil.

We joined Aitape in Port Moresby and were assigned a couple of bunks. These were small ships – so small in Navy terms that the ships' crests were scaled down to what the Navy considered an appropriate size. Just over 100 feet long, there was not much room anywhere. I vividly remember that when the captain, executive officer, Phil and I gathered in the wardroom it was very cozy indeed.

And so the cruise got underway. We wandered up the east coast, calling at various ports and islands on what might have been termed 'flying the flag'. The crew was a mix of Australian and PNG sailors. The seas were benign and crystal clear and the passage smooth. I remember gazing down from the deck at one point and watching banded sea snakes swim lazily aside as we glided over coral depths.

We sailed past settlements ranging from small to not so small villages. At some point we called into a more established area which boasted a patrol officer and it turned out we were expected to dine with that official and his wife that night. Sam explained that we should not go empty handed and

through Naval stores we were able to purchase an appropriate ration of gin for the occasion.

We were made very welcome and after dinner and many gins, we got to dance with the patrol officer's wife and each other as well.

We eventually made it to HMAS Tarangau – more often referred to as Manus, although geographically the base was separated by a small body of water from that island.

We were just two degrees south of the equator and it was hot and humid. While there, a Naval family invited us to go with them to a favoured swimming location. This was a magical experience for me and using borrowed snorkling gear, I spent a wonderful hour gazing down on a wonderland of tropical reef and marine life.

It was a fitting end to an offbeat tropical escape and a return to the realities of my Canberra base, including telling Australia about one little aspect of Naval life*

*Despite my light-hearted memories of the reported voyage, the Navy patrol boats provided their Navies with a range of capabilities, including search and rescue, seaward defence, coast watching, target towing and boarding operations, including at times operations which were recorded in Reports of Proceedings with just a few carefully chosen words.

A youthful Brian Voce, with a PNG sailor in the background.

Brian on Manus Island, coconut trees and all.

If these stories from Steve and Brian have aroused your interest, there is an Attack Class Patrol Boat, HMAS Advance, at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney. She is still in working order. The museum is open daily from 1000 to 1600.

PRODUCT REVIEW
DESKTOP MINI TABLE SAW Peter Gaisford.

I was recently tempted to purchase online, a combination mini machine that promises to be all things to all tasks. Having now done some work with it my conclusions are that it is very useful if working with small pieces of wood is your hobby. It has a footprint no bigger than a music cd case and is ideal for whittling away on a desk where space is at a premium. The machine is 24 volt via a small transformer, which enables you to vary the speed in six steps, from slow to a high speed whine that will disturb other dwellers. The saw blades are swappable via an allen key, from toothed steel that is good for wood or plastics, to carbide disc for cutting bone or soft metals, but care must be taken to not push work through as heat builds up quickly. There are two drives off the side. One for a flexible Dremel type shaft, which fits all the various drills and grinding bits we all own. The other side has a drill chuck which I clamped the supplied Perspex sanding disc to, with Velcro for the various abrasive pads for smoothing and shaping wood. All in all, an impressive machine, which will not replace a bandsaw or fret saw, but complement it. Not bad for quarter the cost of high end Proxxon machines, but multi-functional as well. Available online from various sites vis Ebay- Ptovzon or MxBaoheng. About $200.

Something to give you a laugh. Submitted by Max Fitton.

Extract from Bravemouth

(Pamela Stephenson. Bravemouth, Living with Billy Connolly. Headline. P73.)

Perhaps the bejewelled Virgin Mary heard Billy's prayer and intervened, for at the end of April a miracle occurred. Billy finally got his boat. A 19-foot sailing boat called Drascombe Lugger, a generous early birthday present from his manager Steve, turned up at the marina. To finally receive such a beautiful, longed-for prize filled him with ambivalence as well as gratefulness.

'It's absolutely gromphibberous.' Just like Lear, he was beyond words. Interestingly, he was also beyond action. Even though he knew it was sitting rigged and ready for him on the water, Billy could not bring himself to venture dockside for several days, since he struggled with the belief that it was really his. When he finally saw its gleaming black hull and pearly sail, it took his breath away. It was a glimmering, real-size version of the toy yacht his father had brought home from the war in 1943. For Billy nowadays, such boats symbolise unfettered giving, innocence and freedom, a hugely powerful combination.

'I think I'll call it *Wee Jessie'* he announced, studying the operational manual.

'I thought all boats had to be female,' I demurred. In Scotland, a Jessie is a derogatory name for an effeminate man.

'Exactly. Same difference. I heard about a catamaran called *Les Balls de Chien* or *Dog's Bollock,* but I agree boats should have female names. I think *Dolores* would be a great name for boat, if only it didn't mean "sorrow".' (Billy once wrote a song called 'Dolores, Get your sweet Arse Over Here.)

Silence. Long moments of bewilderment, and frustrated sighing.

'Fuck. Listen to this.' he read out loud from the manual.

"Secure the throat gringle to the clevis pin in the jaws at the lower end of the gaffyard." I winced.

'There's worse. Read this...' I peered over his shoulder and read: "Insert the bumkin from aft."

'That sounds bad.' He shook his head. 'Probably something you get done for, if you tried it in the harbour. Nope. I won't be doing that till I'm way out at sea.'

The crew enjoyed a very pleasant pre-Christmas lunch at the Murrumbateman Pub.

Photo supplied by Neville Miller

3D Printing for Building Model Ships and Parts.

Steve Batcheldor.

I have been using 3D printed parts on many of my model ship builds for a few years now and it has changed the way that I go about making my models. Whether I am customising a wooden kit or completely scratch building a model, I have found that 3D printing can be a very useful tool that can produce just about any model part that you can think of. I am now finding that I am using 3D printing more and more, not just for model parts but sometimes for entire model ships.

I acknowledge that the 3D printing is not for everyone as it requires a different set of skills to more traditional model ship building, but it is really just another set of tools that can produce excellent results. Like having any tool though, you need to develop the skills to use the tool over time if you hope to produce good results.

There are some interesting benefits to 3D printing that can be handy when building ship models such as:

- Highly detailed very small parts can be produced far beyond what could be made by hand.
- Rapid prototyping of new custom parts where designs can be changed and reprinted quickly if required.
- Multiple identical parts can be printed easily once a part is designed.
- Parts can be scaled up or down and printed in various sizes.
- Models can be created of subjects that major kit manufacturers do not offer.

I purchased my first 3D printer in 2016 with the intent of being able to print a few of my own small parts when building my model ships. While this sounded like a good idea at the time, it has not been an easy process as there is a lot to learn if you want to be able to draw and print your own 3D parts, particularly if you want to learn to draw your own 3D parts.

The hobbyist 3D printers available 10 years ago were quite basic in construction and required constant maintenance. These early 3D printers were only able to produce crude plastic models or parts with little detail. The printed parts often required a good deal of post printing clean up, filling and sanding to get something useful. 3D printing technology has improved significantly in recent years and there are now numerous 3D printer options available for the home that are able to produce amazingly complex parts or models that generally require far less post printing processing.

One of the biggest steps forward for 3D printing in recent years has been the availability of resin 3D printers for home use. These printers can produce high quality small resin parts that would be impossible to make by traditional modelling methods. The accuracy and repeatability of these resin 3D printed parts really does add a new dimension to ship modelling.

I have had a resin 3D printer for about six years now and I am continually amazed at the sort of parts that I can produce, Everything from bollards, fairleads, anchors, rigging blocks, cannons, cowel ventilators up to very complex modern anchor winches, naval weapons and propellers can be printed at home in a short amount of time. Of course, it is not as easy as pressing the go button on the printer. There is considerable time spent developing the 3D drawings required to be able to print each part.

Some parts can be relatively easy to draw but other complex items can take many hours to draw.

Resin 3D printers are quite different from the plastic filament 3D printers. While both types of printer produce parts layer by layer, the resin printers use a vat of liquid resin and layers of resin are hardened by ultraviolet light. Resin printers are great but they are very messy and you really do need to wear protective gear when dealing with the resin and the newly printed parts. Once a print has finished the parts are still covered by liquid resin and this has to be washed off with Isopropyl Alcohol, then the whole part has to be subject to more ultraviolet light before it can be handled safely. Even with some of these issues, resin printers are worth the effort.

To highlight the accuracy of home 3D printers, the plastic filament printer generally creates layers 0.2 to 0.3mm thick while the resin printer layers can be between 0.01 and 0.05 mm thick. What this means is that resin printed parts are much more accurate and much smaller parts can be 3D printed.

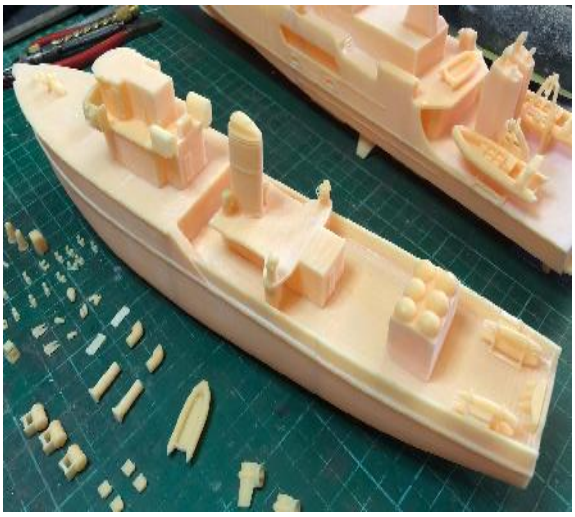
There is certainly a place for both types of home 3D printer in the workshop and I use both types regularly. My plastic filament printers are now generally used for larger items like hulls or superstructures etc while the resin printers are used for all the smaller detailed parts for my ship models. Attached are some potos of the sort of model ship parts that I have 3D printed.

A resin 3Dprint just finished of some models of the Krait.

3D printed models of the Krait still on the build plate. Printed in 3 different scales 1:150, 1:350 and 1:700

4 resin models of the Krait printed at 1:72 scale.

Resin printed Ferry models at 1:350 scale.



A Ton Class Minesweeper and some parts ` all 3D printed in resin at 1:150 scale.

A variety of resin 3D printed parts for a ferry At 1:72 scale.

The propellers and Kort nozzles 3D printed in a tough resin for 1:72 scale.

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You can read more about Steve's use of 3D printing by re-visiting his story “Steve Batcheldor Gets into Mass Production”, about making ferry models in the March 2025 Scuttlebutt.

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THERMOPYLAE
Frank Harrington.

Thermopylae was a famous clipper ship from the golden age of sail. She was built in 1868 by Walter Hood & Co in Aberdeen, to a design by Bernard Waymouth of London. She was designed for the China tea trade, and engaged in fierce competition with Cutty Sark. Thermopylae set record runs for a sailing ship, and her record of 63 days to Melbourne still stands. She was built as a composite steel frame with oak and teak planking and with a great spread of sail. She became known as 'The Greyhound of the Sea'. Ultimately replaced by steam, she turned to the Australian wool trade, and later transported coal. She was bought by the Portugese navy as a training ship in 1895. On 13 October 1907 she was sunk by torpedo and gunfire off Cascais, Portugal.

Frank has scratch-built a 1:48 model of Thermopylae. Photos below.

Frank Harrington, aka Francis Silva, is one of our country members. He lives in the township of Cudal, in the Central West of NSW. His home and workshop is the former historic bakery. Frank is both a model ship builder and marine artist.

"Ship Thermopylae" The famous tea and wool clipper Thermopylae off the coast of NSW. Painting by John Allcot F.R.A.S., OBE

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At the 2025 Expo someone brought a 'started' model of Endeavour. Robert Le Lievre has taken it on. He brought it to the January meeting to show his progress on the model.

Visit the society website at https://canberramodelshipwrights.org.au We seek content for the website – everything from photographs of your models through interesting web-links and chat.

The society also has a Facebook group to promote the society and to attract new members. So please feel free to post items on the page and share it with your friends.
https://www.facebook.com/canberramodelshipwrights.

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Editorial

My thanks to all who have contributed to this issue. Any typos are my fault. Contributions for the next issue will be welcome. Please send to me at elizhod@gmail.com.

This has been a big learning experience. Learning that the two publishing programs I have are too old. They are OK for greeting cards and certificates etc but not the newsletter. Also learning that our computers are too old to download a new publisher program. Windows 11 or later required. The best we can do is Windows 10. Result is that the layout leaves a lot to be desired. Hopefully that will improve with time as I gain more practice.

Elizabeth Hodsdon.