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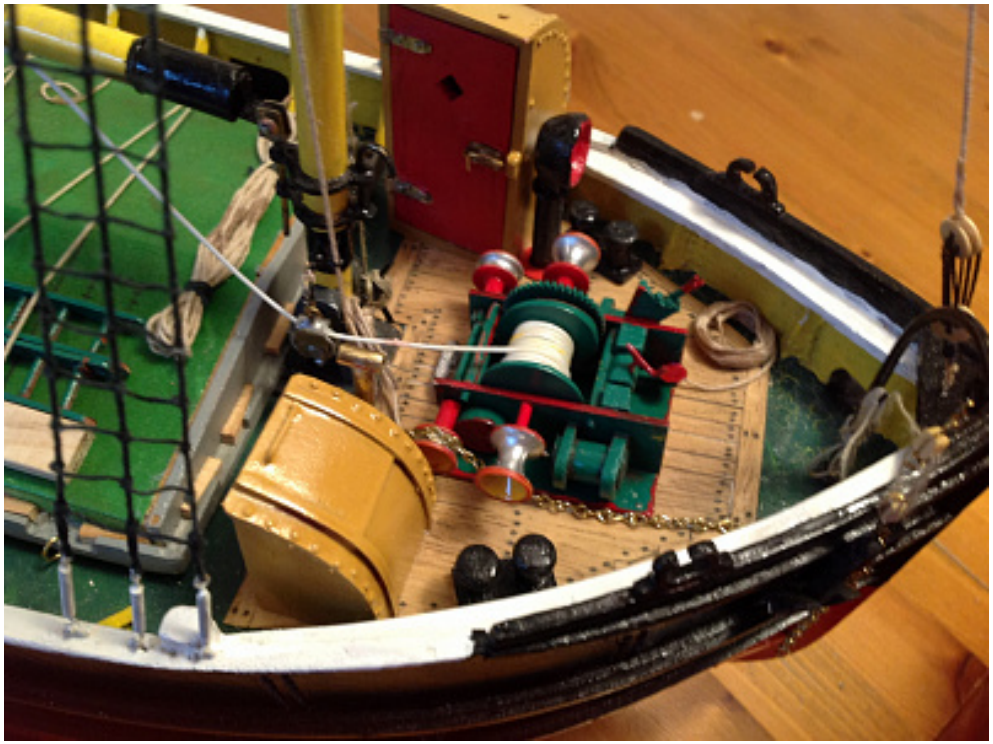
Clyde Puffer. Scratch Built.

by Hillro



7th Apr 2019

Clyde Puffer. Scratch Built.

This was my first scratch built model. I intended to use as much recycled material as possible. Have a habit of raking in skips, etc. The Clyde puffer is a type of small coal-fired and single-masted cargo ship, built mainly on the Clyde , and which provided a vital supply link around the west coast and Hebrides of Scotland. Built between 1856 and 1939, these stumpy little steamboats achieved an almost mythical status thanks largely to the short stories by Neil Munro. Due to the poor road network up the West coast of Scotland these ships were vital in supplying the settlements with stores, coal, wood, etc. They also played a major part in the islands whisky industry by providing coal, grain, etc and exporting the whisky to Glasgow. One unique part of the design was its flat bottom allowing it to be beached supplying settlements without piers or jetties. These ships helped to cause their demise by supplying road stone to improved road network. The name puffer came from a smaller scale ship built use on the Forth and Clyde Canal. Driven by a single cylinder steam engine the exhaust was piped into the funnel. The canal was a ready supply of fresh water removing the need for a condenser. Hence the "puffing" . The sea going version required a condenser removing the puffing element but the name stuck.

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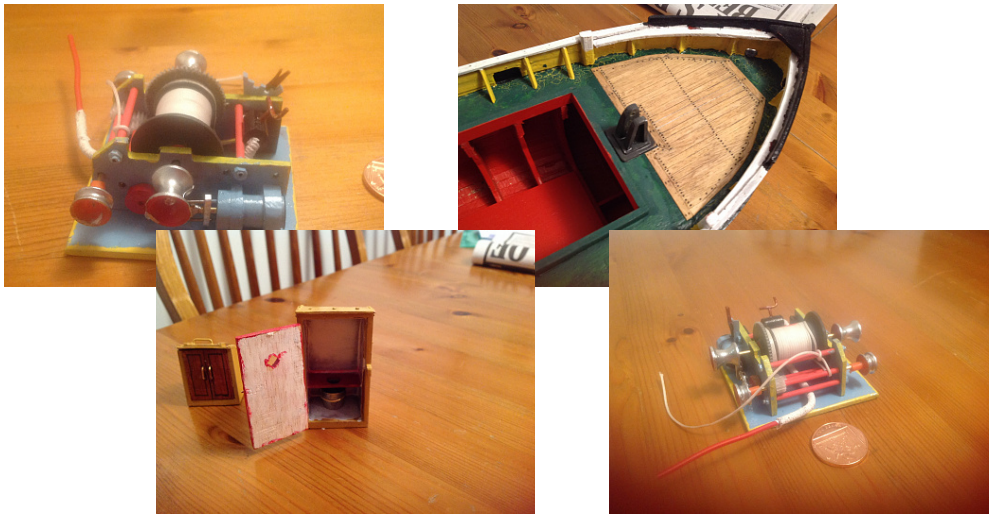
Fore deck equipment

The fore deck was planked with lime strip. The deck winch was made from plasticard, brass rod, heat shrink sleeping, etc. The toilet and companion way made from bits from the scrap box. A sewing thimble made the toilet bucket. Note:- the crew quarters is below this deck indicated by the chimney.



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Steering Mechanism

I thought of a few ideas on how to make the rudder servo controlled. However I thought i would stick to using the chain drive. You can see from the pics I manufactured a square tube with a slot in the top. From wood made a block that would slide freely inside the tube. I anchored the chain to either side of the block using ring nails. A drive pin was put through the slot into the block. The servo and drive mechanism fitted onto a base plate which fits into the hull. Four pulleys were fitted to deck and plastic straws used as guides. Effectively this works like the real thing.

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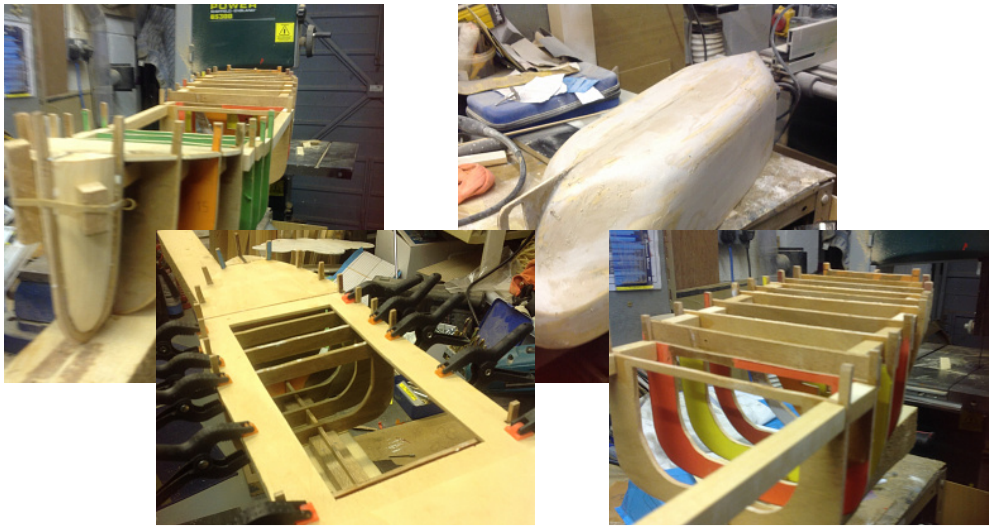
Hull Construction

After a bit of research found plans for the hull on EBay. Delivered on a CD, Frame sections and keel printed out and stuck on to plywood. Using a scroll saw cut them out. This hull is built from the keel up. The keel was secured to a 75x50mm batten. Frame then glued to the keel. Spacers were cut and glued at deck level. Decks fitted and hull planked from just below deck level, working down each alternating side. The hull was then shaped and smoothed. A coating of car body filler and then a rub down and painted with an undercoat.



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Hull Details

To make the hull look like it made from riveted plates, I plated the hull using card cut as required and glued to the base hull using Waterproof PVA glue. Then the rubbing stakes fitted. To simulate the rivets I used brass round headed pins hammered into the hull. This was done to the water line. The rudder was made from brass, etc. The Puffer used a tiller type rudder hung over the stern. The drive mechanism was chain from the wheel house. More details later. A prop tube was fitted. The hull was then undercoated, top coated with red and black gloss.

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Superstructure

The superstructure was made from Birch ply. The bridge made from mahogany strips, ply etc from the scrap box. The funnel made from 25mm plastic electrical conduit and bits of coupling to form the rings. The port holes from plastic tube glazed on the inside with clear plastic. Hand rails from copper wire soft soldered as required. To make the steering mechanism look the part was made from brass chain, plastic drinking straws