

# CLUB OF THE MONTH

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🇬🇧 GREAT BRITAIN



**BMBC in attendance at the Bournemouth Model Show**



**An active scene at the home water at Basingstoke model boat lake, the best for 25-30 miles**



**One of over 30 models by the club's Chairman, Jack Sharp. An exquisite WWII Vosper HSL**

## BASINGSTOKE MBC

The Basingstoke Model Boat Club (BMBC) was founded in the late 1980s, with the founding members being born in the 1930s. Two of the original members, Alan Wells and Charlie Redford, are still taking an active interest in the Club. This generation learned their modelling skills at a young age, before TV, the Internet and computers that have today's generation of children glued to the computer screen and unable to handle a sharp modelling knife, let alone create a model from a kit or plans.

The Basingstoke model boat lake was constructed in 1970s as part of the new town development. Immediately prior to this it had been a water meadow and the end or start of the Basingstoke Canal, which had fallen into disrepair following the collapse of the Greywell tunnel at Odiham. The new park was welcomed as an additional area of open space with the two water features being a special attraction. Just yards from this vibrant town centre, 48 miles south west of London, young children are drawn to the two lakes to fish for sticklebacks and admire the model boats that are sailed throughout the year.

Today, the park remains hugely popular with groups like the BMBC and is maintained to a high standard by Basingstoke & Dean local authority. 2010 saw the park win the Green Flag award once again. A very friendly and welcoming club, members come from 25 miles and more to what is believed to be the best model boat lake around.

Though the pond is sheltered and shallow-safe for children, it sits in a low ground position, causing the wind to swirl and making it unsuitable for serious yacht racing. That said, in recent years there have been a growing number of model yachts, with one group of members renovating vintage models that are attractive to watch under a gentle breeze.

The club boasts modelling skills at all levels. Much of the expert modelling falls into two categories; those already mentioned

creating exact replica models and those where modellers buy off the shelf model kits and complete them with expert painting and improvements to the kit to make them look real. Jack Sharp, the club Chairman, symbolises the expert modeller with around 30 models, most of which are WWII replicas with amazing detail and performance on the water. Several have been built from photos alone. Only now, when his house is creaking with models has he stopped, save for renovations to models built tens of years ago.

Brian Stevens is one of the club's experts in constructing kits to the ultimate level, which he says takes his mind off of running a demanding business.

Gordon Philpott, club Secretary, churns out hand-crafted models on a regular basis, from his custom workshop, taking around three months to construct a new model. Using heavy timber framed hulls, his vessels sail really well through the water and many club members have bought and sail regularly Gordon's former models.

The club meets regularly throughout the year, attend numerous exhibitions both as exhibitors and to meet like-minded modellers and have developed relationships with other clubs in the area, often leading to meetings at each other's ponds or club rallies.

In 2010, the club faced the challenge of bringing young members to the club. Whilst modellers over the age of 40 find lost skills and interest in model boating it is really hard to get today's youngsters, the 'computer generation', to join the club and it is feared that the senior members may be the last generation capable of making such amazing models.

A great facility, easy access and friendly welcoming members, the club is well supported and popular. After the loss of a number of senior and long serving members in recent years it is growing once again adding a new younger age of members who are enthusiastic about this relaxing hobby. The club's website is at [www.basingstokembc.co.uk](http://www.basingstokembc.co.uk) **MMI**