

Getting under way with model boats

THE BRITISH, so we are told, have an in-bred love of the sea and all things nautical. To judge by the increasing congestion around our coasts resulting from the continuing small boat ownership explosion—there is a lot of truth in the statement!

But full size boats are not cheap and even if we could all afford one of our own, most of us would still be faced with the problem of transporting it to the water. Just imagine all those Bank Holiday traffic jams with every car towing a boat trailer!

None of these discouraging facts, however, daunt the real marine enthusiast, many thousands of whom find an outlet for their seagoing aspirations through building and sailing model boats of all shapes and sizes.

Undoubtedly the most popular approach to the model boat building business is by way of a good kit, many of which are quite inexpensive. There are dozens to choose from, but to begin with you should pick one of the semi-prefabricated ones. Several manufacturers produce these and fairly representative is the *Keil Kraft Ee-Ze-Bilt* series, which cost 13s 8d each—less motor.

Ee-Ze-Bilt models average about 16 in long and are of all balsa construction. There is no carving of any kind to do, the designs eliminate all block wood parts and consist entirely of sheet balsa.

All the parts are die-cut and merely require pressing out of their respective sheets, after which assembly can begin without further delay.

Some care is needed when separating the die-cut pieces from the surrounding wood. It is often best to break away the waste wood from the parts rather than vice versa and this technique is quickly acquired.

Do not worry too much if you accidentally split one or two pieces. Just remember to repair the fracture with balsa cement before proceeding further. Never use PVA white glue on a model boat. This adhesive is not fully waterproof and should be avoided. After removal from their panels, all the parts should be 'cleaned up' with the piece of sandpaper supplied with the kit.

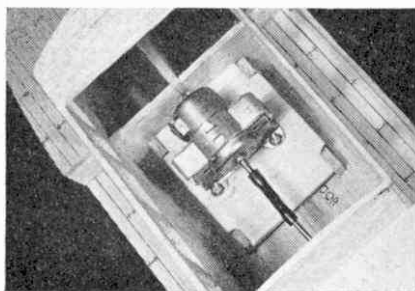
Assembly of *Ee-Ze-Bilt* kits is quite straightforward, so much so in fact that a full size plan is not required. The clear, stage-by-stage perspective sketches printed in the instruction leaflet are completely adequate.

Except for the *Cresta*, all the *Ee-Ze-Bilt* range of kits come complete with metal propeller, shaft, and stern tube assembly ready to accept any of the economically priced 3 to 4.5 volt electric motors. A wide range of these is handled by *RipMax Limited*.

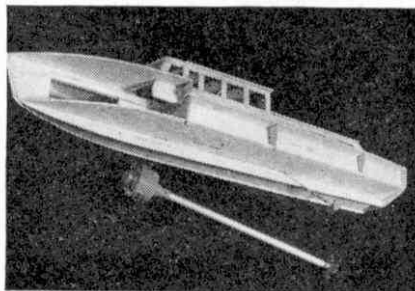
Alternatively, you can buy a completely assembled motor, stern tube, and very efficient propeller all lined-up and ready to install. The *Elmic Thrust Pak* is one of these and costs 16s 3d complete.

The *Ee-Ze-Bilt Cresta* is, unlike the rest of the series, designed to use an electric outboard motor. For this, the makers recommend the *Elmic Sprite*, which is surprisingly realistic and is geared just like the real ones!

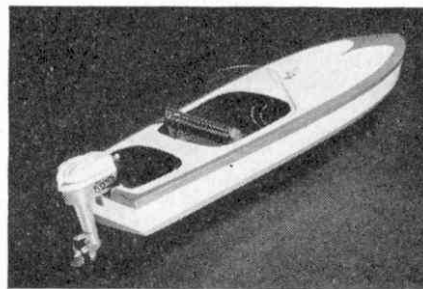
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Because of the disproportionately high battery weight which it must carry, the *Cresta* powered with the *Sprite* will not 'plane' as its prototype does. Any small weight economies that can be made, either in the battery or the hull, will be visibly reflected in increased performance. The *Sprite* outboard costs 21s and, although this may sound expensive, it is worth remembering that it is only a minute's job to swap the entire unit from one hull to another. Thus you can have a whole fleet of outboard motor boats and yet require only one motor!

Eventually, of course, you will want to tackle something a bit bigger and more powerful. A very popular 'second model' is the *Veron* Police Patrol Launch.

This model is built basically on the same principles as the *Ee-Ze-Bilt* range but introduces thin plywood for the hull skinning and other highly stressed parts. One or two blocks of balsa are also used to add strength and simplify the reproduction of some more complex curves. Despite these more advanced techniques the *Police Launch* is not at all difficult to build, all the many parts being beautifully die-cut from excellent quality material, making up into a most attractive scale model. The kit costs 49s 6d.

With a 27 in overall length, small diesel engines of between 1cc and 2 cc may be used for power and these enormously enhance the performance. Remember, when buying such an engine that it must be water-cooled and preferably equipped with a silencer. Most Local Authorities insist on the use of silencers with any model engines operated on their lakes and ponds.

A good example of a specially designed model marine diesel engine meeting all these requirements is the *E.D. Seagull* of 1 cc capacity which costs £4 4s.

An electric motor can of course be used in the *Police Launch* if desired, but battery costs for a motor large enough to give a really good performance are likely to be high if the boat is operated for any length of time. Miniature re-chargeable accumulators are highly recommended for such purposes. It should be noted that the *Police Launch* is an ideal subject for conversion to simple radio control employing one of the latest all-transistor lightweight outfits.

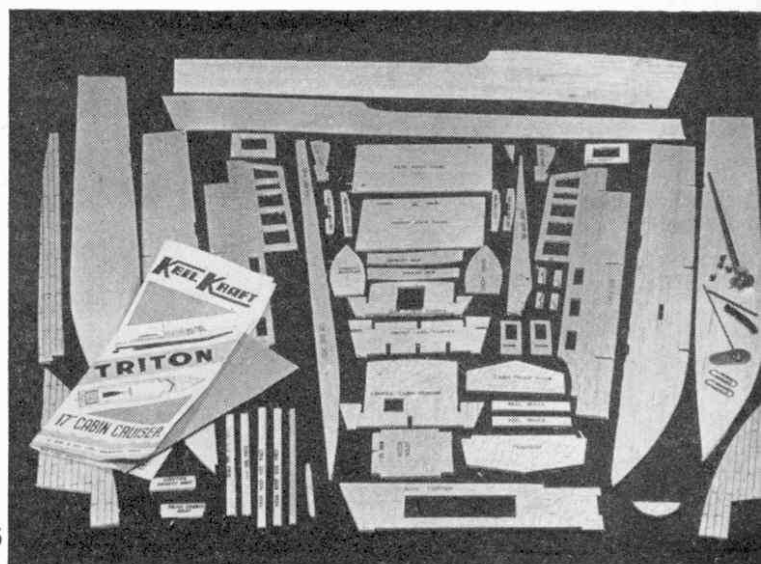
At the other end of the price and size scale, many of the small plastic scale model boat kits can be obtained complete with electric motors. These are most attractive when assembled, but generally speaking most of them are disappointing in operation, being on the heavy side and rather sluggish.

They have the advantage of highly detailed plastic moulded parts which, unlike wood, require no surfacing or waterproofing. All the builder's efforts can be concentrated on accurate assembly and a really good decorative paint job.

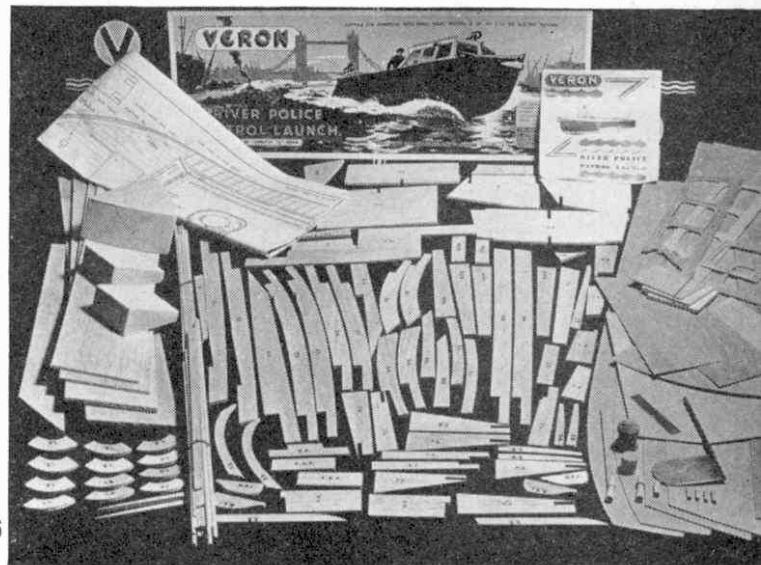
Cellulose dopes must never, of course, be used with polystyrene kits as these substances destroy the plastic parts. Always use one of the recommended plastic enamels.

Finally, do not forget the many excellent fittings and accessories which do so much to dress up a well made boat. Several manufacturers produce some really attractive ranges of deck fittings in metallised plastic, white metal or plated brass, depending on price.

Most comprehensive selections of these accessories are produced by *RipMax Ltd.*, *Yeoman Ship Fittings* distributed by *Alan Hales Ltd.*, *Mersey Marine fittings*—distributed by *Keil Kraft* and the *Web Model Fitting Co.* of 204 (R) High Road, Wood Green, London, N22.



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1 The completed plastic kit of the Revell *Marlin* sports fishing cruiser makes an unusual and attractive working model. Measuring approx. 8 in long and powered with a small electric motor, the complete kit costs 13s 6d (including motor).

2 Inexpensive *Kako* electric motor makes an ideal power plant for the *Triton*. This photograph looking down into the 'engine room' shows the flexible plastic drive tube connecting the motor shaft to the propeller shaft.

3 Side and bottom balsa skins are left off the *Triton* to reveal simple yet strong basic structure. Seen below the hull is the *Elmic Thrust-Pak*—a one piece motor and propeller assembly which is very suitable for this type of craft. It costs 16s 3d.

4 Outboard motor boats such as the *Keil Kraft Cresta* perform well with the ingenious *Elmic 'Sprite'* electric outboard motor. A perfect working miniature of the real thing, this unit costs 21s.

5 Part of the all-balsa *Keil Kraft Ee-Ze-Bilt Triton* cabin cruiser. As shown, less motor this kit costs 13s 8d.

6 More advanced, and introducing many plywood parts the *Veron River Police Patrol Launch* measuring 27 in overall, is nevertheless, of fairly straightforward construction because of the accurate die-cutting of the many balsa and ply pieces. It costs 49s 6d and may be electric or diesel powered.