

Ferret

For those of a certain vintage **Ray Wood's** latest will conjure fond childhood memories of lazy summer holidays, peanut butter sandwiches and boating in the park. Can you really resist its charm? We think not...

The old adage that nostalgia isn't what it used to be is, apparently, not true at all! The fact is, certain gentlemen (and possibly ladies) of a particular age are still very much attracted to the classic Keil Kraft EeZeBILT boat range. I made at least two as a schoolboy in the 1960s and loved them to bits. Simple and quick to build they were primarily designed as starter kits for free running, using a basic low-powered brushed electric motor

coupled to a dry cell torch battery with only an adjustable rudder for guidance. These were not designed for radio control. Two basic sizes of EeZeBILT boat were available with four models comprising the larger 14 to 17" series and a further three making up the smaller sub-11" range. The smaller boats were the Terrier motor torpedo boat, Otter tug boat and Curlew cabin cruiser, each presented in a brightly decorated box with an exciting artist's

impression of the model as it might look if it were a full-size vessel. All hugely tempting for an impressionable school boy with money to burn or a birthday coming up.

A3 MTB

It was at the Model Engineering Exhibition that our recently departed editor (Graham) suggested an R/C design based one of these appealing little models, the idea being that it should fit on a sheet of A3 paper such that it could be printed across the centre spread of the magazine. In effect, a cheap, quick and easy to build model that might not only appeal to all us nostalgia seeking Keil Kraft fans, but also to newcomers, youngsters, and people who might be seeking a straightforward first build.

Now, as luck would have it, I'd recently completed a Vosper Thornycroft MTB 71 at 1/24th scale from the maker's drawing and, since the character of this craft really appeals, I thought it would make an eminently suitable subject on which to base my A3-size model. In practical terms the paper size



DATAFILE

Length: 15" (381mm)
Beam: 4.75" (120mm)
Weight: 15oz (0.43kg)
Motor: 280 brushed
ESC: 10A brushed
Battery: 2S 7.4V 1100mAh LiPo

allows a length of 15" to which I applied a beam of 4.3/4" for the sake of stability and to allow the model to comfortably carry the weight of the drive battery, speed controller and radio.

Construction

As you can imagine, the material list is minimal for this one starting with two balsa sheets of 1/8 x 3" and two of 1/16 x 3". The deck (D1) and the chine (C1) are made in two parts, joined with temporary tape, balsa cemented together, then pinned flat to the

building board until dry. Note the deck cut-out for the main access hatch and, in the 1/8" bulkheads, the cut-outs for hatch rails, these from 1/8 x 1/4" obechi strip. If the deck cut-out is handled with care it can be the exact fit for the hatch cover later in the build.

As you'll see from the photos, the hull is built inverted, the deck pinned down to the board and the bulkheads 1

- 4, ST1 and the transom, glued into position. Next the chine sheet C1 can be added, making sure that the cut-out for the motor and coupling is allowed for. The 1/8" keel (K1) is also cut to the outline on the plan and the doublers K2 and K3 cut to the slightly smaller dotted line to allow for the 1/16" bottom skins to sit in a rebate. You'll need to make a slot in the keel to suit the stern tube which is 5" long on the prototype and 1/4" diameter. Similarly the doublers will need to be recessed with a round file or glass paper, after which they can be glued on either side of the tube and keel and the assembly glued into the centreline

of the chine sheet. Once this is done the triangular segments of the bulkheads can be glued both sides of the keel.

Your hull will now be ready for sheeting which means that all the bulkheads, deck and chines can be smoothed with a flat sandpaper block to received 1/16" balsa sheet. This is applied to the hull bottom surfaces first, from bulkhead 1 back to the transom. Once dry the sheeting is rubbed down to receive the side skins in the same manner but this time starting at the stem (ST1) and working rearwards to the transom.

The bow is formed from soft block which





ABOVE: The appeal of the Keil Kraft EeZeBILT series was a durable simplicity with just the right level of detail to give a stand-off-scale impression of the craft.

RIGHT: She's a very seaworthy little boat given her size, although you may need to drain the bilges on a rough day.

is carved with a sharp knife and sanded to blend into the sheeting. Spray rails of 1/16 x 1/8" balsa are attached to the chine and, in common with the full-size, allow our little boat to plane much drier. Now is also a good time to add the deck-level rubbing strips (from the same material) and to drill the rudder tube hole before fitting a cut down commercially-available rudder assembly, this glued in place using some 5-minute epoxy. While you're at it, put some epoxy around the stern tube too and, when set, give the complete hull for a good sanding down, being careful to keep the spray rails and rubbing strips sharp. A couple of coats of sanding sealer and the hull's ready for painting (see later note).

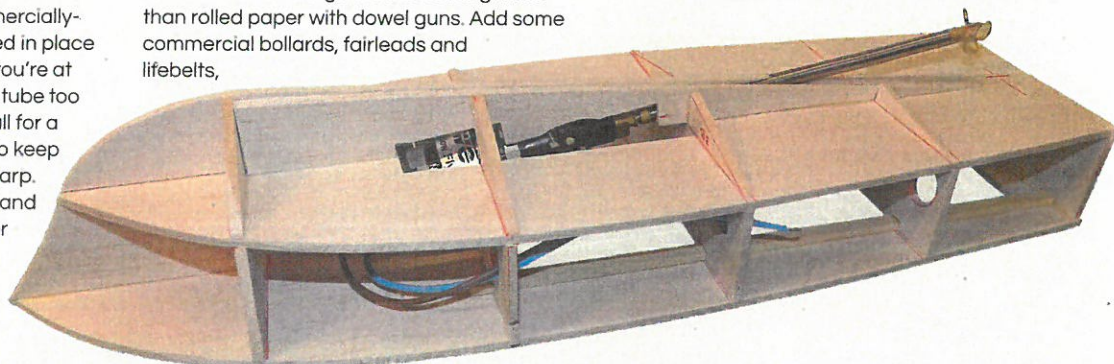
RIGHT: This is the kind of model you can start one weekend and have sailing the next.

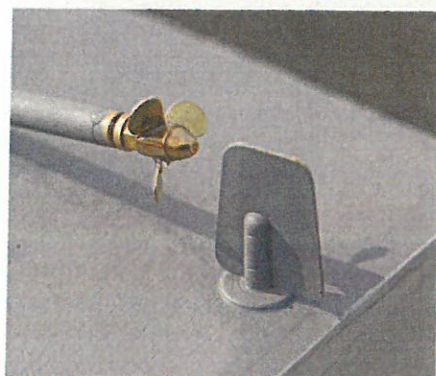


Superstructure & fittings

The wheelhouse and companionway are very simple block balsa items with thin sheet ply or cardboard sides. The depth charges and torpedo tubes, meanwhile, are 3/8" diameter balsa dowel, glued on small obechi blocks, whilst the machine gun tub is nothing more than rolled paper with dowel guns. Add some commercial bollards, fairleads and lifebelts,

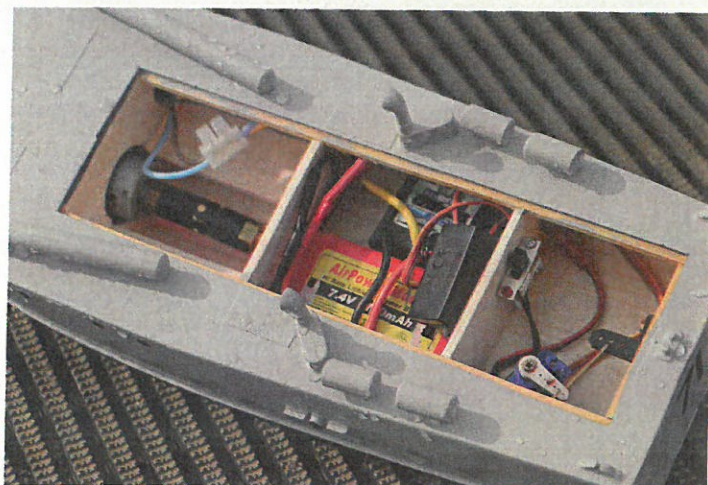
sprinkle with a few ventilators, a flagstaff and one or two other bits and she really does start to look the part. I think the mast over the cockpit is a nice feature, created with 1/8" dowel and a bit of thread. I like to have some crewmen on board too and at approximately 1/48th scale this isn't too much of a problem.





ABOVE: EeZeBILT boats were never intended to be Class-A scale models so forget all about glass cloth. Sanding sealer, tissue, dope and paint is the most you'll need.

LEFT: I spent far too much on this brass three-blade propeller; don't feel obliged to follow suit.



RIGHT: As you can see, there's plenty of room for all the R/C equipment.

Painting & finishing

When applying sanding sealer to the wood, do make sure you rub this down with some fine grade wet 'n' dry paper (used dry) between coats. Also, if you deem that extra strength is required, the hull can be covered with heavyweight Modelspan tissue, doped on. My boat was sprayed with Halfords automotive grey primer, then brush painted with a lighter satin grey from the Humbrol range. For a belt and braces job (which should, to be honest, be considered essential)

BELOW: On calm water this little model is going to be spectacular to watch - I can't wait!



coating the inside of the hull with sanding sealer or dope will protect it from water which finds its way into the bilges in a chop. And it will, for remember that this is a small boat.

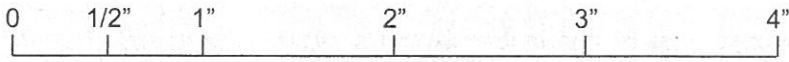
Engine & radio room

There's no need to make this any more complex than necessary, indeed a simple 280-size motor driving a 25mm 3-blade brass propeller provides ample motive power. I've

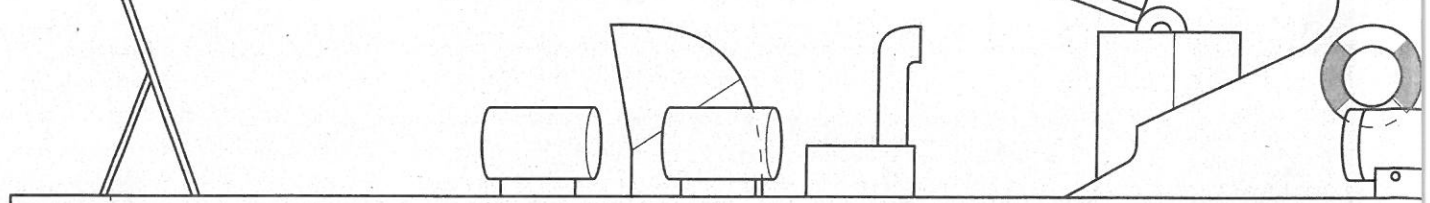
hooked it all to an Mtroniks speed controller (with BEC) and a 2 cell 7.4V LiPo. The steering servo and rudder linkage is located in the rear compartment but, of course, if more room is needed the centres of the bulkheads can be opened out to suit.

On the water

Launch day dawned bright, sunny and breezy at the Chantry Model Boat Club beside Bluewater Shopping Centre in north Kent. I needed a pre-photo shoot run to make sure all was well before I met with Graham and his telephoto lens. The conditions were fairly rough for a small craft, however Ferret handled the swell quite well and whizzed around with a good turn of speed, planing easily and manoeuvring with ease. All was well and so a second voyage was arranged with Graham at his local water. I was hoping for flat calm but unfortunately conditions were similar. Nevertheless she handled things well, got thoroughly soaked, yet remained in control the whole time. Plenty fast enough on the cheap, brushed 280 motor she'll keep youngsters on their toes at the helm and on flat water I'm convinced she'll be fairly spectacular to watch.



SCALE BAR



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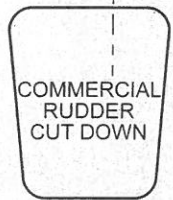
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RUDDER SERVO

SCALE EXHAUSTS

ESC

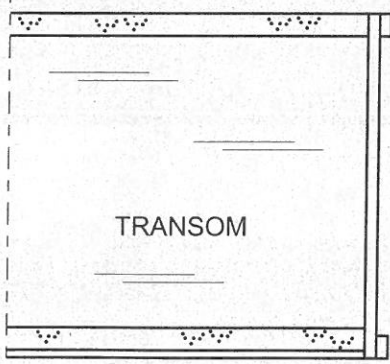
BATTERY
2 CELL LiPo 7.4V



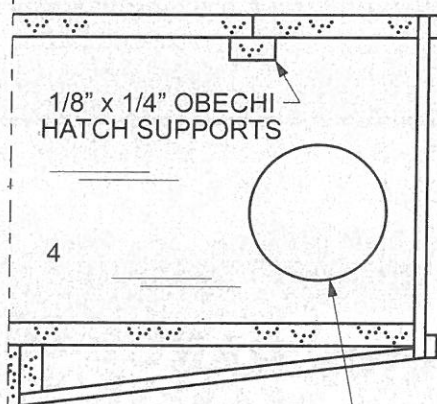
COMMERCIAL
RUDDER
CUT DOWN

25mm 3-BLADE
BRASS PROP

5" STERN TUBE
4mm THREAD



TRANSOM

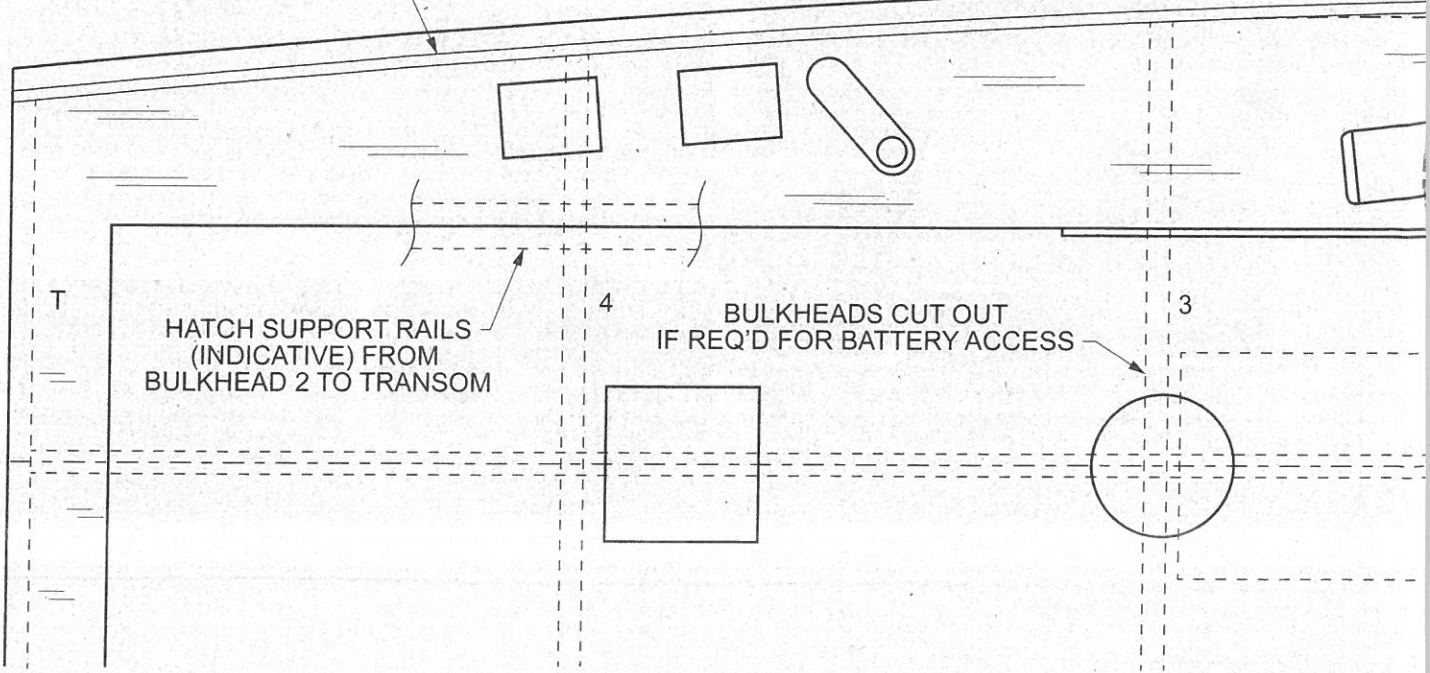


1/8" x 1/4" OBECHI
HATCH SUPPORTS

WIRING ACCESS
OPENING

HUGO CO
OR SIM

SHEETING TO SIDE & BOTTOM
1/16" Balsa, GRAIN VERTICAL



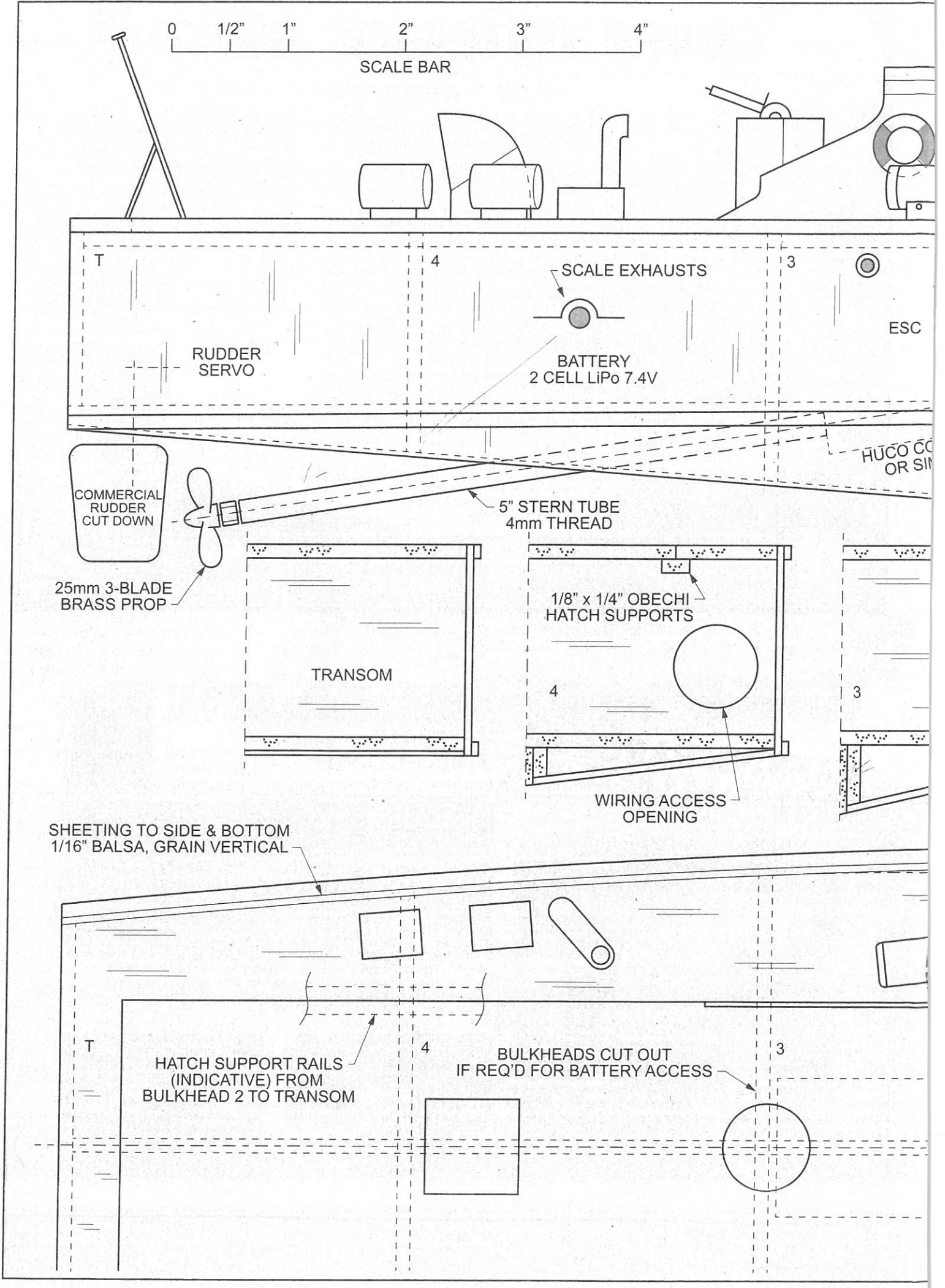
T

4

3

HATCH SUPPORT RAILS
(INDICATIVE) FROM
BULKHEAD 2 TO TRANSOM

BULKHEADS CUT OUT
IF REQ'D FOR BATTERY ACCESS



FERRET MTB

DESIGNED BY RAY WOOD

