

Small Radio Control Boats

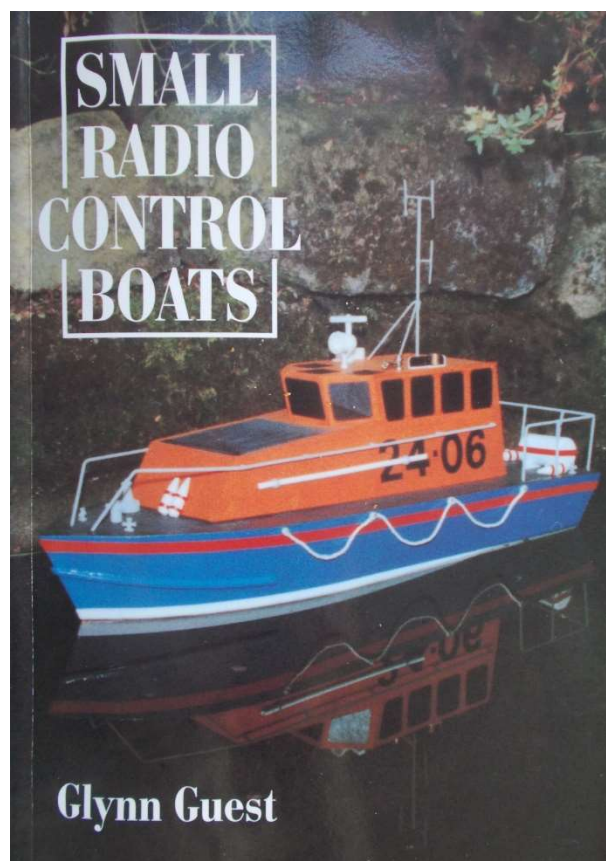
By Glynn Guest

First published in 1998, this edition 2005 from Argus Special Interest Books

An A4 sized soft back book of some 90 pages.

Radio Control equipment has advanced in leaps and bounds meaning the feasibility of fitting small lightweight and reliable control is now very practicable.

Traditionally control components were large heavy and bulky, required large hulls to accommodate the size and weight. This book leads the reader through some simple easy to build much small hulls and superstructure with appropriately sized controls. Glynn shows how hulls as small as 38cm (15") given his experience in this field, you can rely on the clear and simple instructions. He gives wise advice on scaling, reminding the reader that an up-scale of 2x will result in a craft 8x the weight!



He uses mainly Balsa wood and card for construction. For the novice he explains how to select your wood to avoid inferior sheets with twists, curves and bends that would cause problems on building. How to cut and join for maximum strength and effect of both Balsa and card.

Simple techniques are given for making sanding blocks, glue selection and techniques to obtain the strongest adhesion and support is explained.

Moving on to propulsion good advice is given on selecting the motor and wiring to minimise the RF inference generated that if not eliminated could lead to reliability issues later. Motor mounting, prop shaft fitting and even how simple it is to make your own, likewise with the rudder system. Installing the servos and receiver to ensure uniform control is explained as well as safety tips to avoid getting poked in the eye!

The range of designs include Arcady, a traditional style tug. Talisman, a traditional style fishing trawler. Knocker White, the iconic river Thames 'Whites Towage of London' tug. YSD 11 the American 'Yard Ship Derrick' boat with the option to include a 1/72 scale aircraft on the deck. Bredette a fast RNLI lifeboat of the Bredette class, this has a hard chine design to allow operation at higher speed as expected from this type of craft. Jenny Sue the classic North American pusher river tug, interestingly you have option to build this without a rudder with control of this craft via two reversable motors/propellers so might appeal to our esteemed Military Tank builders! For the adventurer, you can also add a scale river barge and couple them. ATCH the American landing craft used to ferry troops and a helicopter particularly in the Vietnam war (Armoured Troop Carrier Helicopter), and again it gives you the flexibility to include a 1/48 scale helicopter. Guardian a twin hull design popular with the US Coast Guard and has a helicopter deck. Propulsion is by two motors/propellers, steerage can be either with two rudders or rudderless and the use of engine speed and reverse control. The final design is a bit special, so most would categorise these types of boat as a 'slow and ploddish' here Glynn has thrown in a surprise with the Electron a small high speed planning hull that will hold its own against the commercially sold kits, he does advise that care should be exercised when attempting to sail this boat close to other slower boats as it only has one speed setting, yes one...flat out.

Each model contains full size plans to permit accurate cutting of each part be it Balsa or card, steps are given as to how to proceed with the construction, placement positions for batteries, motor, servos and receiver are given, at the conclusion of each design a summary sheet gives a materials list covering construction, batteries, motors with a colour scheme to achieve a realistic finish.

For the dedicated builder, this may seem a bit basic, but for the starter these designs and instructions offer a quick and simple solution to anyone who can trace and cut Balsa and card to end up with several very smart and sailable vessels that would entertain both old and new alike. For the inquisitive, this might offer an inroad to a new hobby that will provide many hours of enjoyment both building and sailing.

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Tony Ashgrove, December 2025