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NEWSLETTER

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Ensign's report 1st January 2012 *A Happy New Year to all!*

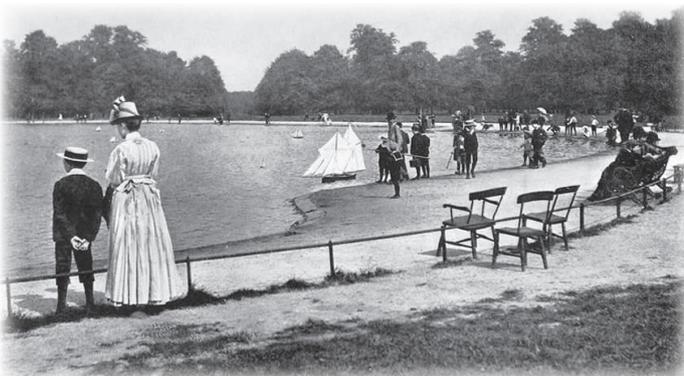
I can't resist reproducing this from a lovely old book of 1897:



The Round Pond, Kensington (London) circa 1895

“One of the prettiest sights on a summer's day in London is that presented by the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens. On its tranquil waters may be seen a whole fleet of model yachts of every size and description, some of them shaped and finished with most extraordinary delicacy, and often sailed with consummate skill by their owners.... It is safe to predict that the pretty little vessel in the foreground is carrying too much sail even for the Kensington “Trades’...”

Curiously, I have come across another version of the picture (below), which I think is the original photo. In the book version, the photographer has added a chair to the foreground (the shadows appear wrong) and given the lady onlooker a more expensive outfit! Can you spot any other differences?



Nevil Shute - the modeller's novelist?

Some of you will know that before he became a best selling novelist, Nevil Shute, whose full name was Nevil Shute Norway, worked as an aeronautical engineer alongside Barnes Wallis at Vickers on the design of the R100 airship and later founded the aircraft company Airspeed Ltd.

Trustee from the Toolroom, his final book, was written shortly before his death in 1961 from a stroke. I highlight it here because it is, to the best of my knowledge, the only novel that has ever been written to feature a model-maker as its chief character.



Keith Stewart is a modest man living in a small flat in whose basement he has set up a workshop where he indulges in his hobby of model engineering and writes regular articles for the magazine *Miniature Mechanic*. The story has him become involved in an attempt to recover his niece's lost inheritance, leading to a sailing quest in the Pacific. At every stage, Keith is able to enlist the help of model enthusiasts the world over because of his recognition as a writer for *Miniature Mechanic*. If only it worked like that!

Miniature Mechanic was no doubt inspired by the real magazine *The Model Engineer*, and Keith's articles by the like of those of Edgar Westbury, who wrote much on the design of model internal combustion engines. The story is a simple one in Nevil Shute's straightforward style, entertaining enough perhaps, but coming across as a little naive by today's standards. It is out of print now but you should be able to find a second-hand copy or borrow one from a library (or me).

Model portraits -1

Here is the first of a series depicting members' models, reproduced with a little image manipulation as I see fit (it is after all the editor's privilege, and I have just renewed my artistic licence). This is Bob's model of the PS *Canberra*.

