



**Article published in Marine Modelling, May 2013.**

**Scimitar Yacht, Nostalgic reunion. Author: Chris Bowler.**

Phone call jogs memory of former sailing days.

Like many in things in life this story began with a phone call along the lines of:  
*"Where can I get a 27 meg radio these days? And what batteries will I need?"*

It was my good friend Patrick Ward who many years ago, along with the late Geoff Chick, I had a brief but enjoyable foray into the competitive world of Marblehead yacht racing. We chose to run Moonraker yachts designed by the late Tony Abel and marketed through Nylet, then based in Fordingbridge, Hampshire.

My immediate response was : *"What for? That's a bit outdated now."* Patrick and I had become friends through model boating and went on to become volunteer helpers at a local water sports centre instructing youngsters on GP 14s and later, Laser dinghies.

### **Memory Bank**

The subject of the call was a Nylet Scimitar that I had long dismissed to the memory bank back boiler. I had built it in the spring of 1979 as a kit review for a magazine

and sailed it a few times. It was about then that I reverted to my first modelling interest of aircraft and Pat was still into yachts so, to make room in my workshop, I offered it to him and he had stored it ever since. He sailed it a few times and then it was tucked away in the attic while he pursued full size sailing inshore and ocean going.

We had a long chat about it and he said: "*Well it was sitting there in the attic gathering dust and I thought it was about time something was done.*" He had decided to bring it back to life and had been thinking about installing new radio. I suggested that he use 2.4GHz as that gave greater frequency security as he would in all probability be sailing on a private lake, he wouldn't have to worry about affecting nearby waterborne modellers or anglers. That was decided and we left the conversation there.

### **Progress**

Work continued on the Scimitar mainly involving checking the joints and placing the hull into the fishpond for a 'leakage test' that it passed with flying colours. This kit was, I think, one of the first to have an aerofoil streamlined mast, where the sail fitted into a groove and was slid to the top and anchored with a hook. The original radio hatch was used as was the 6.5 kilo keel. This was detachable, unlike the Moonraker, and retained with a moulded in bolt that passed through the hull housing and secured with a sizeable knurled nut. The rudder was made with a foam core and fibreglass cladded outer surface. This too was in good condition and used again. All the rigging was original as were the sails. The sheets were replaced but all original pulley blocks were still in working order and were used again. A piece of thin bungee cord was used to tension the sheets. So far so good, Patrick now had a serviceable hull and rig and just needed to add radio and batteries.

### **Meeting**

As coincidences go our next meeting a great example. I had decided to nip up to Swindon for some urgently needed bits for a biplane project (SV Stampe, since you ask) that I been building for many months and could just about see the completion of!

There was I standing in Swindon Model Centre enduring the usual banter and in walked Patrick. I had recommended the shop to him and suggested that Jan may have a second hand (should that be in modern speak, previously loved?) radio set. Indeed he did, and imagine my surprise when it was a HiTec Optic 6 that a flying friend had just traded in unused for an upgrade. I could guarantee the provenance of the unit. After a short course on the mysteries of 2.4GHz and 'binding' etc. off he went to install it in Scimitar, along with NiMh batteries for the winch.

### **No Rain**

In late January, one day dawned bright and sunny with light breezes and no rain, Patrick called to say that this was the day! I duly rocked up at the lake, via flooded roads and paths, to find him busy with rigging and setting up the Scimitar. Problems with the rudder meant that it didn't lock into place. The meant it couldn't be tightened without going solid. The rudder tube needed the top taken down about 3 mm so it was a quick trip back home to get a hacksaw to make the necessary adjustment. Once done it was launched carefully, all the slipways were under water as the lake was at a really high level. The revitalised 10-Rater and sailed really well. Until a turn was called and it went the wrong way. Oops! Servo needed reversing. That set off

another conversation re radio as Patrick carefully sailed it back to make the adjustment. He wasn't sure if he had the right kit with him to change the rudder arm around. He hadn't used modern radio remember, so we had a reference to the radio handbook to check the methodology and did a quick reverse and trim to neutral check and off we went again.

The Scimitar really looks the part, hardly creating a wake, and with the original set of sails still looking good appeared quite striking on the water.

We had a sailing session of well over an hour with each of us having a go on the sticks and enjoying the pleasures of model yachting. The only snag was a stalling winch, but this was rectified on the trim program and found to be more of a mechanical problem than radio. Subsequently Patrick changed to more efficient guides on the radio hatch and reduced the tension on the sheets as the bungee originally chosen was a bit too strong. So now we wait until some decent weather and no doubt it will give further hours of pleasure. It may also be that as Patrick is an instructor at his club the Scimitar may be used as a practical teaching aid for new sailors.

### **Footnote**

When we sailed model yachts we used to visit Nylet and I thought they may be interested to hear what we were up to. They are still very much in business with a host of products for model boaters. They were always very helpful and accommodating to us and this is Frank Parsons reaction to hearing about the resurrection of a Nylet model:

*Well, my goodness me, a name from the past!! How very nice to hear from you after all this time, and with a bit of history about your/Pat's Scimitar.*

*Really good to see the pictures of her, she looks very well. I find there is a very strong resurgence in the older and vintage yachts. We are making more sails in cotton these days, going back to the 30's, 40's and 50's style and replicating the kind of work my father was engaged in at that time."*

Now here's the thing - do I get up in the attic and see if my original yellow Moonraker is up for a restoration job or do I let it rest? Time will tell!

*Nylet wish to thank Marine Modelling International, and the author, Chris Bowler, for permitting us to reproduce this article.*

(More pictures see next page).

