



MAY 2026 NEWSLETTER

GLOUCESTER & DISTRICT MODEL BOAT CLUB

www.gdmbc.co.uk

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OBITUARY

Michael Bridgeman (Mike)
1938-2026

It is with a heavy heart I write the following Obituary.

Many of us senior guys have boated with Mike Bridgeman for many years but I am sorry to say Mike passed away on Monday, 20 April 2026. Following a short stay in hospital he was cared for by his wife Jean, his daughter and a team of carers at home and died peacefully there. The Club pass on its condolences.

Mike joined the Club in 2002; he was also a member of the Cotswold Model Yacht Club. Sailing was his real passion and soon he became a staunch sailor at Ploddy. He was skilled at setting up a yacht to suit the conditions; his tactical skills matched his setting skills. Mike realised the Club had a strong boating fraternity in which he soon participated. He also sailed at the Docks, Saul and Over. Prior to joining the Club Mike's hobby was model flying. Mike and Jean were keen walkers. In addition to being members and leaders of two local walking clubs they enjoyed many holidays overseas.

Mike served on the Committee and became the MYA Secretary. He wrote several

articles for the Newsletter mainly about yachts, model and full size. During Covid shutdown the Club produced a weekly sheet called the Warbler and he wrote a four part series entitled "My Part in the Cold War" recalling his experiences as an RAF Policeman when doing National Service in Germany during 1956/58. It was very entertaining, even Jean found some facts she had never known about.



Mike had been a keen photographer since he was a boy and along with his collection of vintage cameras he had an extensive collection of pipes – he was known as Mike the Pipe. On steering competition days at Over he would stand on the far bank, notepad in one hand and control of his pipe in the other. The smoke would drift down onto the water making it difficult for the competitors, with eyes like bean stalks, to see the buoys! Mike we will miss you.

Mike was a private man. At his request the family will respect his wishes for a pure cremation service only. Please reflect upon our times with him.

Ted Tedaldi



The Gloucester and District model boat club attended the fiftieth anniversary show of the Sodbury Vale MRC held under the Concorde at Filton Aerospace Museum on 14 March. The Show consisted of mainly model railway layouts but other models clubs were in attendance along with vintage buses and traction engines plus many trader stalls. GDMBC Members had full access to the Museum and a pleasant day was had by all.



The *Bessie Ellen* is pictured in Gloucester Docks preparing to sail on her first holiday charter for 2026. She was delayed leaving because ships come out of Tommi Nielsen's dry dock stern-first and need to be turned before sailing down the canal. Have you guessed, she became stuck in the mud.

Built in Plymouth, Devon, in 1904 by William Kelly, *Bessie Ellen* is one of the last surviving West Country trading ketches from a fleet that once stood at nearly 700. *Bessie Ellen* lived through an era when working sailing ships were an everyday sight in English ports and harbours

Friday 17th April in heavy rain she slipped her moorings to commence her voyage to Troon. She probably moored overnight at Purton before entering Sharpness Docks to catch the 10 am tide. She made her way down the channel on a very big tide for her first call at Lundy Island. On the way down she dropped off her pilot in the Portishead area.

She is a two-masted Gaff rigged Ketch built in Plymouth 1904. She is 35m o/l with a beam of 9m, weighs 87tons and is built entirely of wood. When working she mainly carried clay, peat and salt.

She came to Gloucester for Tommi Nielsen's dry dock in the Autumn of 2024 and attempted to sail out in April 2025. The failure of High Orchard Bridge -- despite all promises -- could not be lifted for her to sail. She had to remove her two masts and rigging to leave Gloucester.

After a season's sailing she returned to Monk Meadow waiting to go into Tommi's dry dock. Unfortunately, once more lack of dredging, rain and floods kept her out of the yard. Her master and Tommi's men set to work on her early this year. She came out of dock, stern first and tied up alongside the *Kathleen* and *May*. She had to about turn to prepare for her voyage. Have you guessed? She got stuck on the mud, eventually she tied up and final preparations were carried out. She left for another season's holiday sailing around Scotland before returning to Newlyn in Cornwall for summer sailing.

Ted Tedaldi

Hi Club members.

I intend to run the Motor Boat trophy once again.

For the first event, I have been asked to run it in conjunction with the first Club Fun Day on Sunday May 3rd. I am not too sure how this will work out but we can give it a trial. I hope to start about 10.30-ish. The first event will be similar to the previous event. The course will not be difficult and you can hit what you like. But I hope it will be interesting enough to keep the brain active. The course will give a chance to those with poor eyesight. Depending upon the number of skippers, I would like to have a run at two courses.

This sentence is a bit open; I hope to run three events. The timings are as yet undecided but I will give good notice. I might also alter the format.

John Hamer has promised good clean water. So far we have no drought although the water level is dropping slightly. There are no gigantic water leaks closing Gloucester; the temperature is just about right for boating and with a nice gentle breeze, it will be a good day.

Hope to see you on Sunday May 3rd,

All the best TED



BEEN THERE, DONE THAT!

Have you ever walked into a museum and been suddenly hit by the familiarity of *'I've seen that before?'* That happened to me recently when an (old) friend treated me with a visit to the Great British Car Journey interactive Museum at Ambergate in Derbyshire. The first thing that grabbed my attention at the entrance was the Austin Seven Ruby in which I had (self-taught) learned to drive, and passed the test (first time – hand signals, double de-clutch). *"Wow! Surely I am not that old!"* Sorry Graham. Yes you are. End of boast.



A few of the memory lane cars available for pre-booked visitors to drive

If you learned to drive in a British car, you are almost certain to find an example of that particular vehicle on show, sparkling, polished and just asking you to jump in and re-live old times. You can do that too at this five year-old museum, which is based in an ex-factory building with a large outside manoeuvring area and an undercover store for more cars of a suitable vintage. At two-week intervals, museum visitors can book to jump into memory lane and drive a vehicle of their choice; for a small fee, of course.



Sadly, This Bath-built 1922 Horstmann (£500) is unavailable for visitors to drive

The museum is owned by Richard Usher who joined Auto Windscreen as a salesman and ended his career there by owning it some years later. Being a connoisseur and collector of British cars, the result was this museum, located in an area known for beautiful scenery and with a long industrial history. The coal mines have gone, but the tourists are back.

Few of the roughly 150 cars in the museum are (yet) really valuable, but many of those on display have huge nostalgic appeal (e.g. Graham's Austin Seven Ruby) to many.

Of course, a few of the cars are important, such as Lord Baden Powell's Rolls-Royce with which he towed a caravan as he toured visiting Scout Camps and Jamborees. Incidentally, the 'Roller' was bought for him by Scouts around the World, each giving 1d (One pre-decimal penny. Remember?). Yep, we're all getting old.



Lord Baden Powell's R-R on which the Spirit of Ecstasy was replaced by the Scouts' Fleur de Lys'



This storage container has been installed at Over by kind permission of the Canal Trust. It was purchased in February 2026 with Club funds and a legacy left to the Club by our late member Barry Phillips. It is to hold tools and equipment used by the Gloucester and District Model Boat Club. The acquisition and delivery was arranged by our harbour master John Hamer. Here, Mike Holliday opens the doors to reveal the useful capacity of our new acquisition.

BBC Coverage of Club Sailing day at OVER on 25 March

Hi Ted, Sandra and the rest of the GDMBC crew!

Thank you so much for hosting us last week – for showing your fantastic vessels and indulging our questions on the Royal Navy.

The piece ran on Sunday, and you can watch it here -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m000dk0p/politics-west>

I also includes some comments in this online article -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq59g12d6plo>

Many thanks again, and do keep us posted of anything you have coming up in the future.

Best wishes,

Esme Ashcroft

Political Reporter



Models on show for the BBC



Models on show for the BBC

A short notice to the Club from BBC Gloucester requested: 'Any chance of a get together at Over for boating and comments on the British Naval force?' They came, they saw and once the introductions were over it was down to requirements. Esme asked to interview members about their opinion of today's Royal Navy. The interviews and filming would be edited and were to be broadcast on Sunday's *Points West* political programme.

The afternoon weather was perfect. Members arrived with various naval craft, Russian and U.S, home-bred Navy vessels, a few commercial craft and a sailing Scandinavian Folk boat. Esme Ashcroft from the BBC and a cameraman spent a fair time in discussion with Rodney about his sailing craft. They filmed and interviewed most of the Naval boat owners. Mike Price's boats, all scratch-built and big, are impressive. Mike talked through his Russian *Karakurt* small missile corvette and then his *USS Arleigh Burke* destroyer of which at the moment there are 67. Filming various craft and a bit of history was followed with members' opinions. The day went well with two hours of action and many retakes.

The programme opened with shots of Mike Price's *Aegis* class guided missile destroyer *USS Arleigh Burke* sailing sedately at Over. Esme then introduced the programme full face opening the programme and chatting to the viewers between Russian and American naval vessels. There followed a scenic view of our members controlling their models afloat.

David Exell fired the first interview salvo with "it's just a joke; no money has been invested in the Navy for many years and all we have is one destroyer". Mike Price reiterated David's sentiments. Mike Lane, our health and safety officer calmly stated that "We are an island and should have one of the largest Navies in the world but we actually have nothing, in other words we are defenceless". Edward Tedaldi added to that, adding that all our forces are in the same state.

Mike then upped the anti: "We should all do National Service; this would probably get a lot of lazy buggers off the streets". Ted now closed the interviews stating that the Club had more Naval ships than the British Royal Navy.

We all appeared to enjoy the experience, many comments have passed back through various connections. David, the two Mikes and Ted have not been seen for a while; rumour has it that they are in the Tower.

TED TEDADLI



Club Members Robert Hinton, Mike Hallam and Don supervise the GDMBC table on Sunday

On 25 and 26 April GDMBC members manned the Club table at the Gloucester Docks 'A Weekend by Water' event. Members reported useful visitor footfall on Saturday, while Sunday was quieter but with a steady trickle of curious children and their parents. The event Canal and River Trust official leaflet says a programme of cultural, heritage and community activities and events are being planned for a celebratory year.



Gloucester and District Model Boat Club

Events Calendar for May and June 2026

If you intend to sail at any of the club's venues, please ensure that you have read the Club's Constitution, Appendices and the Risk Assessments before sailing. This is for your safety and the safety of others.

It also ensures that the Club's insurance is valid.

Please ensure that your details are on the ICE database, before sailing, you never know when they may be needed !

Regular Club Activity

Day	Time	Date	Location	Description
Tuesday	1pm-3pm		Saul	Club day any model
Tuesday	6pm-Dusk		Docks	Club day any model
Wednesday	1pm - Dusk		Over	Club day, mainly motor boats but yachts welcome
Friday	1pm - Dusk		Over	Club day, mainly yachts but motor boats welcome
Friday	1pm - 4pm		Saul	Club day, any model
Sunday	10am – 1pm		Docks	Club day, any model
Sunday	1pm - Dusk		Over	Club day, any model

Over is not available on other days without prior arrangement with H&GCT management

Organised Events

Day	Time	Date	Location	Description
Friday	1.45pm – 3.15pm	1 May	Over	Micro Magic racing
Sunday	10am-	3May	Over	Fun Day +Motor boat trophy
Friday	1.45-3.15	15May	Over	Micro Magic racing
Sat Sunday	9.30 -5	16/17 May	Castle Coombe	Steam Fair
Sunday	10am	17 May	Ploddy	IOM racing
Sunday	10am -	24 May	Ploddy	IOM racing
Friday	1.45pm-3.15pm	5 June	Over	Micro Magic racing
Sunday	10am-	14 June	Ploddy	IOM racing
Friday	1.45pm-3.15	19 June	Over	Micro Magic racing
Sunday	10am -	28 June	Ploddy	IOM racing

Please be considerate when parking, especially by launching areas. Leaving space for less mobile members.

At Over, the area by "slipway" is for Blue Badge holders or unloading / loading only.

When operating "Faster" models, please keep away from other users, to prevent swamping, etc.

Please be aware of waterborne diseases, cleaning hands regularly, especially before having refreshments.

If an incident occurs, boating activities are to halt until the situation is under control, etc.

Caution to be taken when retrieving a stricken model. Always get assistance from another member.

Your safety and enjoyment of Club activities are the Club's main concern.

If you have any concerns about Safety or Club activities, raise it at the time or contact the Club's Secretary.