

# Sirius 600 Kit hovercraft

Built by Pete Dickinson



Following a disastrous accident to 'Drumbeat of Devon' one of my favourite model boats I knew that although repairable it would never return to 'show standard' and therefore needed to quickly replace it with something new.

As the only member of AWL not to have entered the world of model hovercraft I decided to introduce myself to this field of modelling by building a simple kit version.

Jag Ramjee the owner of Palaform was more than helpful after I explained what I wanted to do and supplied me with a full Sirius 600 kit with a separate lift duct and motor. The basic Sirius 600 only has a single thrust motor and uses a proportion of the air flow from the thrust motor to inflate the skirt and create the layer of air flow to lift the craft from the surface, whereas with the separate lift motor it is that that achieves the lift.

In an attempt to be different from my colleagues I asked Jag to supply me with a black kit rather than the usual white one. This turned out to be a slight error as during the construction you are required to temporarily mark the hull and deck and with a black one that isn't easy!



Fortunately I had the opportunity to talk and visit the designer of the Sirius 600 Fran Oakey who I knew well. Fran was surprised that the build instructions told me to site the lift duct near the rear of the deck as his design placed it at the very front. I decided to follow Fran's advice and built the kit as he had intended.

Very little of the basic build caused me any problems but when I reached the point where I had to fit the skirt I felt I needed to ask for help and contacted Tony Middleton, one of our members who had built many hovercraft in the past. In the end I was pleased that I did as we both struggled a bit to fit the skirt and in the end realised that one of the corner panels had been sewn around 5mm too narrow, which caused the skirt to wrinkle on that corner. Although this has cosmetic implications it doesn't cause problems with the operation of the hovercraft.



The kit supplied by Palaform contains a clear plastic screen to fit around the front of the open deck. Because of re-sighting the lift duct this required the inner part of the screen to be cut to clear it. Having done this I didn't like the finish and decided to spray the inside of the screen black to match the rest of the craft. In fact this enhances the overall appearance of the model considerably and after adding the yellow flashes that come with the kit I was very pleased with the result.

I have been very pleased all round with the quality of the kit from Palaform with the exception of the skirt issue and that the thrust propeller was not correctly balanced requiring some extra work to achieve a vibration free running.

Tony Middleton had suggested that I add a headlock gyro to the rudder servo as it would help to keep the craft running in the direction intended, which I duly obtained and fitted.

The two brushless motors have separate ESC's and I decided to run them both from a single battery. To this end I purchased two 4Ah 3s Li-po's so that I would have a spare when running.



For the radio control I utilised my Hitec Optic 6 sport, which was intended for electric flight and set it up to control the hovercraft as my colleagues had done for theirs.

The first trial run on water was where I discovered the imbalanced propeller but in spite of this the craft performed extremely well considering I could only achieve half thrust and since rebalancing the thrust prop the increase can actually move the craft across the floor without the lift motor running!

All I need to do now is master that rather strange method of directional control that hovercraft 'pilots' need to learn to avoid hitting into everything.