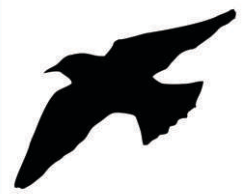


# Scale Ship Modelling

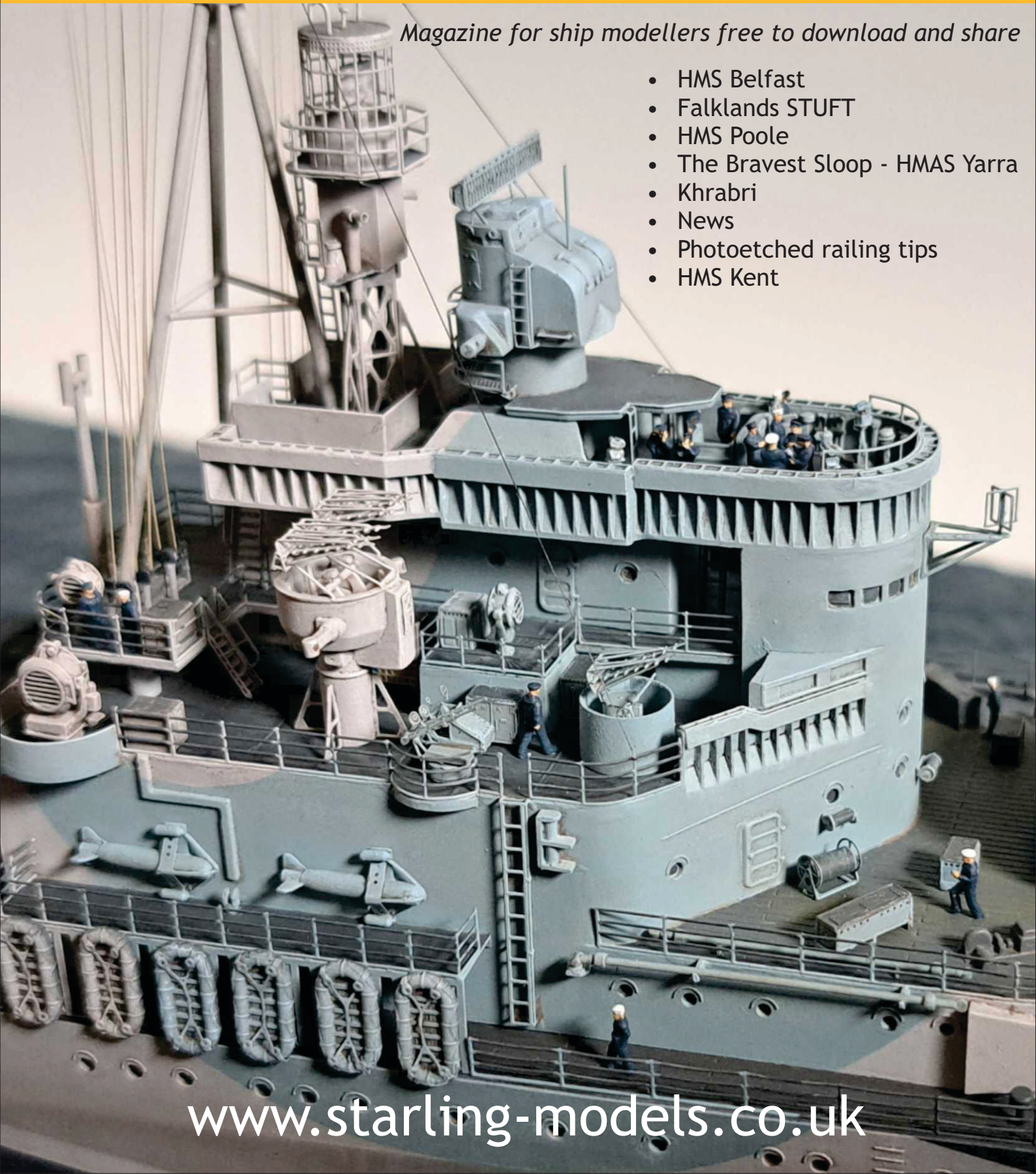


Starling Models

Issue Number 2

*Magazine for ship modellers free to download and share*

- HMS Belfast
- Falklands STUFT
- HMS Poole
- The Bravest Sloop - HMAS Yarra
- Khrabri
- News
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- HMS Kent



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# Scale Ship Modelling

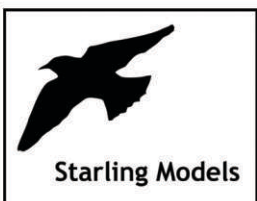
## with Starling Models

Welcome to the second issue of Scale Ship Modelling.

The first issue was very warmly received so thank you all those who took time to comment, it has certainly shown that it was worthwhile and there is a desire for a dedicated ship modelling magazine. With this issue we will continue with the mix of modelling, historical and news articles along with what will be a regular tips and tricks section. I hope you find it interesting and informative, many thanks to all those who have contributed and given their time freely.

I hope to use these newsletters not only to inform and hopefully entertain, but also from time to time to give a little insight into the business of model making, or more specifically, the life of a small business involved in producing and selling model kits. Most people probably aren't really aware of how kits are made, the processes involved, the amount of time and effort required and who actually does it all. This will all be for future issues but suffice to say that for most of you, it's probably not what you think it is. Until next time, enjoy your modelling!

Mike McCabe



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Image: Artists' own completed model

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# 1/350 HMS Belfast

*By Christian Bruer*

It was 50 years ago in 1973 when Airfix released a first injection moulded scale model of the famous light cruiser HMS Belfast. Generations of scale modellers built and still build the kit. Friends of the larger scale 1/350, had to wait until 2013, when Trumpeter released a brand new HMS Belfast.

Trumpeter's HMS Belfast was the first injection moulded kit of a Royal Navy cruiser in that scale. I promptly ordered the kit and was really happy from the very first view, to have all the precisely moulded parts on my desk. But a second view removed the scales from my eyes about a lot of mistakes. A lot was written about it, so I don't want to go into too much depth and will give only a short overview about the main mistakes. Briefly, these include the dimensions of the forward funnel, additional pins along the hull, mounting of the central 6" gun tubes, second hawse pipe on starboard (correct for 1942 configuration), and a lot of simple execution of additional parts like the catapult etc.



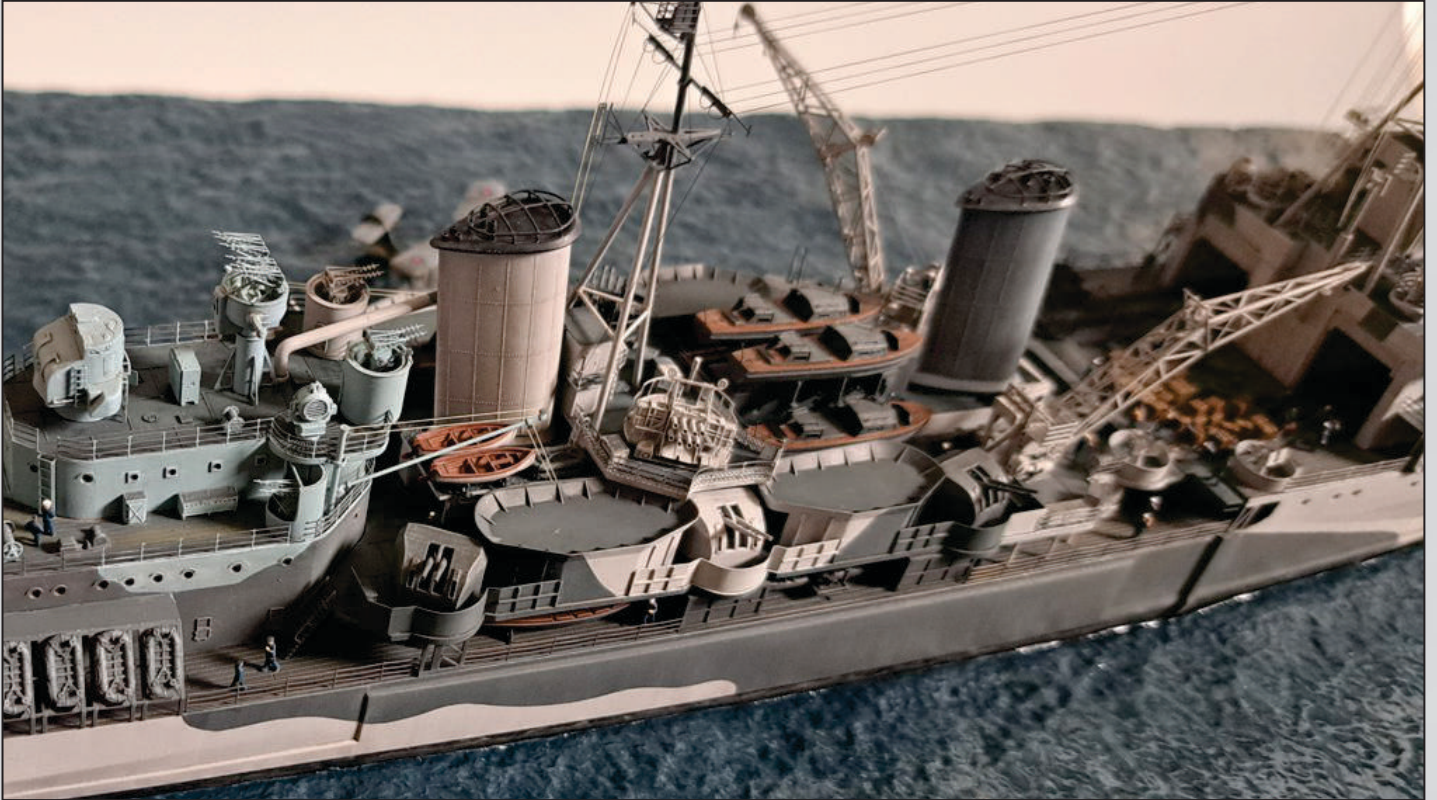
However the mistakes in some areas should not restrain someone from building the kit. There are dedicated photoetch sets, aftermarket parts, and a lot of extra details, mainly 3D printed available now to build a most correct replica of that fine cruiser.



In fact I start building the kit in 2013 and bought most of the aftermarket parts during that period of time. I used the Flyhawk Super Detail Set, White Ensign PE Set and a lot of extra parts for armament, Lights, deck details etc. from North Star Models. 3D printed parts of today's quality were a dream at that time. Other parts, like the 6" gun mounts are simple parts from Shapeways enhanced by scratch built details. Flyhawk's extensive Super Detail Set contains PE parts for nearly every part of the ship. Some are add-ons', others replace whole compartments of the kit parts. Adding and building all the brass took some time and needed a lot of patience, to make it as good and clean as possible. Large deck areas needed to be covered with PE parts and most filigree parts must be assembled into 20mm Oerlikons, quadruple PomPoms, HA directors etc.



Luckily I also had the White Ensign PE set at hand and so I was able to choose the best parts out of each set – like the catapult for example, which was much better detailed by White Ensign Models.



Once I finished all the work on plastic and brass I start researching the camouflage scheme. Although Belfast is one of the most famous ships of her time, there are only a few photos available in books and World Wide Web. My friend Frank Spahr planned to build HMS Belfast out of the old Airfix kit, so we had some close discussions about the pattern and colours to use. Because of different circumstances I protracted the build of the kit and I first started the paintwork in 2017. Since a long time ago I only use Vallejo acrylics and because of missing exact colours for the Royal Navy colour system I needed to mix the paints by my own. For sure it would have been easier to use other brands having the specific colours in their program but I have a mind of my own.



The pattern was painted using an airbrush. For masking I used a profile printed in scale 1/350. Masking tape was cut according to the contours sketched on the profile. It went one much easier than expected and the whole paintwork was done in a week. All small parts are also painted by airbrush. Most difficult was not to mix the parts because of five different colours to paint. Small details and all the decks are painted using a hand brush.

Upon I finished the paintwork, I had another long break in building the kit, before I came back to finish it at the end of 2022. On the basis of an already finished building and painting process of the hull, sub assemblies and small parts, more or less only weathering effects, final assembly, crew and rig needs to be done.



According to photos Belfast was a clean ship. In one photo it can be seen, that the crew is repainting some areas of the hull. So I decided to add only a slightly weathering effect using oil colours. A basic filter with dark gray oils thinned with lighter fluid was applied and followed by streaks of bright gray and white streaks along specific areas of the hull. The same procedure was executed on the upper works. The final assembly of all the sub assemblies and delicate parts needed a good planning and a steady hand. Using glue on painted and finished parts is always a nightmare, but everything went on quite well, also the most filigree parts, the fore and main mast.





In the end around one hundred figures found a place aboard, showing the crew in different activities. Because the display shows the cruiser at anchor in an inlet short before leaving for the next mission, the crew is busy storing goods, hoisting the ship plane or just taking a souvenir picture.

At last the rigging was done using brown stretched sprue for all halyards and Lycra rigging thread for stays and antennas.

The base was made of a Styrofoam board shaped using a rotary steel brush and covered with additional layers of wall paint in a stippling motion. The surface was painted in several shades of blue and blue gray and covered and sealed with some layer of high gloss varnish.

HMS Belfast found her place now on the base and was presented for the first time at the scale modelling show Euro Model Expo in Lingen Germany at the end of March 2023. I attend to the competition and was proud to win the gold award in Master Class scale 1/350 and larger. Happy Modelling, Christian Bruer



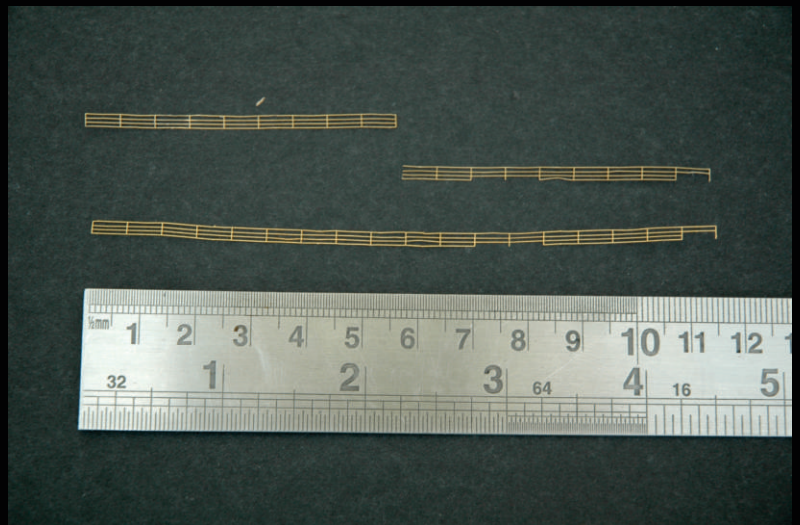
## Using Photoetched railings

One of the main attractions of ship models is their visual complexity. They are certainly far more complex than aircraft or armour models but this does require parts to be made in materials far finer than can be reproduced in plastic, and less fragile than 3d printed resin. Photoetch is the method of choice here, as parts can be made down to a fraction of a millimetre in thickness, yet have enough strength to be workable with care. One of the main uses for these parts is railings, although it can be justifiably argued that even with very small part thickness in 1/700 especially they are still overscale. Leaving these parts off altogether though does tend to make a model look oversimplified.

By following a few basic principles and with a little practice using photoetched railing can become less of a challenging part of building your ship models.

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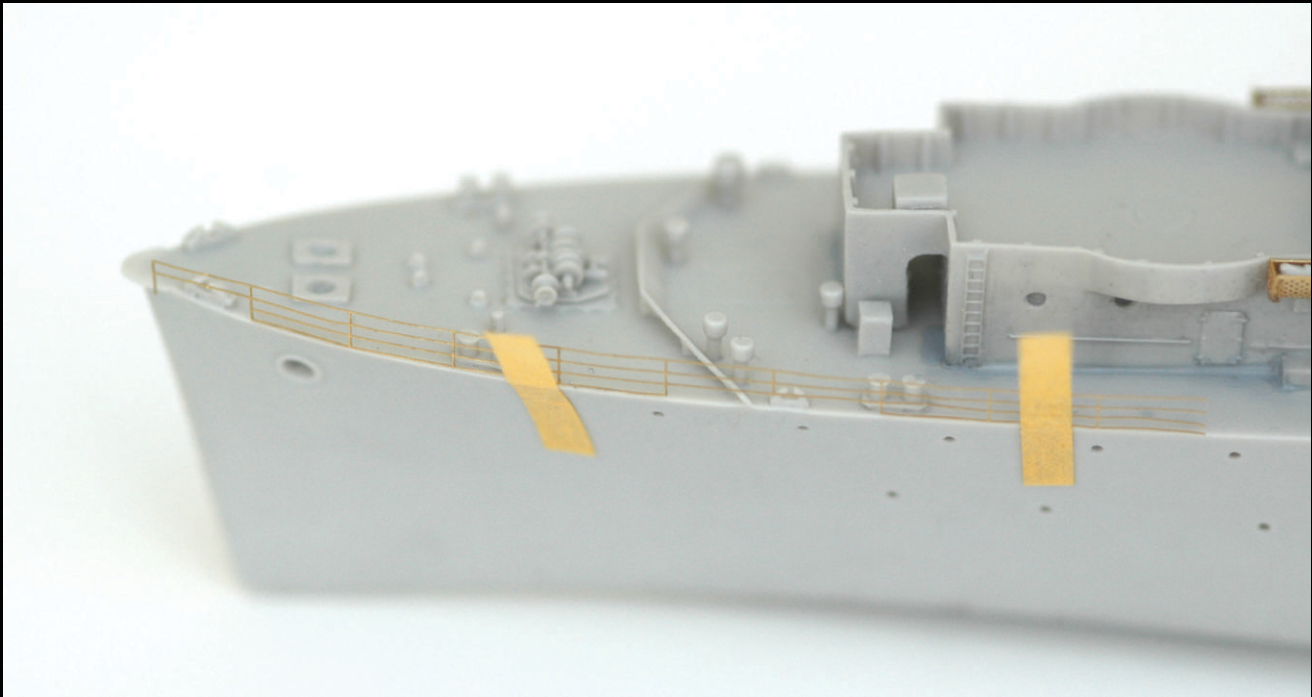
Railings are best handled in sections of around 6cm, any larger and this can become difficult to manage. More importantly when working on a resin model in particular, warm temperatures will cause the metal parts to expand slightly, often enough to cause the railing to buckle and even come free of the model.



Place the cut rail section in position on the model and using a cocktail stick, dab a small amount of CA (super) glue onto the model where one end of the railing is to be fixed. Position the part onto this and leave this to set, this will only take a few seconds.







With your fingernail or whatever you find most convenient, nudge the rest of the rail into position on the deck edge. Now using some thinned PVA glue, brush this along the back edge of the railing and leave to dry. The PVA has enough strength to hold the railing in place and will not leave marks along the front edge of the railing. As it retains some elasticity when set, it will allow for some expansion and contraction of the metal parts to prevent them buckling.

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This is adapted from the book **Modelling Naval Ships in Small Scales**, which contains many more hints for modelling in 1/700 and 1/350 scales.

The book also includes sections on tools and equipment, building plastic and resin models, adding extra detail, use of photoetch, painting and weathering, making a seabase, rigging and much more.

Available from Starling Models and signed by the author for £16.99.

## MODELLING NAVAL SHIPS IN SMALL SCALES



Mike McCabe

# HMS Poole - Starling Models Bangor class minesweeper 1/350 build by Rob Matthews

For every one Royal Navy Capital ship with its impressive guns and firepower there were literally dozens of smaller “utility” vessels that were tasked with necessary but highly unglamorous duties such as minesweeping. The Bangor class vessels designed as inshore minesweepers early in the war were such. Mine warfare had been a significant issue in the first World War and was to prove equally important in the second. The Bangor class vessels were cramped and had poor seakeeping qualities but nevertheless formed part of Britain's vital response to the ever-present German mine threat.

Kudos to Starling models for producing the model in 1/350 of this rather unloved class that was built to literally “plough” the sea so as to keep vital waterways open. After receiving mine I determined to model HMS Poole in the later stages of the war that had some differences from the kit as provided. The colour scheme was “Light Admiralty type” and is illustrated in this Imperial War Museum collection photo below.



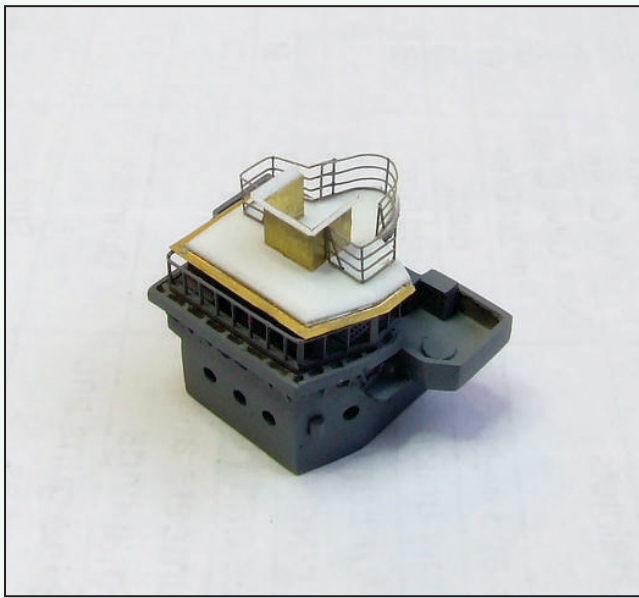
The major differences from the kit were:

- Carley float platforms aft
- A Flying bridge on the enclosed bridge house
- Main mast moved forwards
- Addition of bridge 20mm Oerlikons
- “Square” sides on the superstructure leading down to the sweep deck rather than scalloped as per the kit

Work commenced with thoroughly washing the resin hull and then filling some of the kit portholes and adding others as per HMS Poole's configuration. Every kit can be improved and despite the high level of detail on the hull there are no plate lines. These were added by masking off and spraying over with a heavy spray of Mig Ammo One shot primer, simple but effective.

The rear Carley float platforms were built from plasticard and the etched deck pieces fitted. The scalloped superstructure sides were carefully cut back and “squared”.

The Bridge had the etch window frames fitted, roof added and then spare scrap etch was used to construct the “Flying bridge”. Spare railings were then added and fine cigarette paper soaked in dilute PVA glue was used to drape the railings.



The vessel was painted with Sovereign Colourcoats that spray beautifully. Masks for the flowing camouflage pattern were cut using Tamiya tape. The pennant numbers were made using masks from Maketar that allowed the letters to be superimposed on the camouflage background. Additional Depth mark decals were obtained from the Starling Models accessory sheet as Poole had 3 sets each side.

The wood decks were painted using Lifecolor paints and then AK wood wash was applied.

Rigging was done using Infini 40 dernier lycra thread that attached to "Bobs Buckles" originally designed for WW1 aircraft, but double up as fabulous rigging anchors in 1/350 scale.



Final detailing was completed with 20mm Oerlikons being fitted to the bridge sides and a 27ft whaler substituted as was the anchor, which appeared slightly oversized.

The base was cut from medium density Styrofoam, an insert cut to fit the hull. A small padlock clasp was then used to “indent” the surface to create waves. The base was painted and then varnished using Liquitex high gloss with the wavelets being created using AK “water foam”.

The Starling kit admirably celebrates the Bangor Class and the scene depicts this workhorse at anchor temporarily resting from it's invaluable “ploughing”.

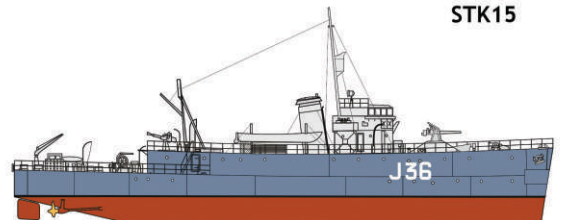


The model was built from our 1/350 Bangor class minesweeper kit HMS Rhyl, available at £69 from [www.starling-models.co.uk](http://www.starling-models.co.uk)



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# HMAS Yarra, the bravest sloop

By Filipe Ramires

## The Ship

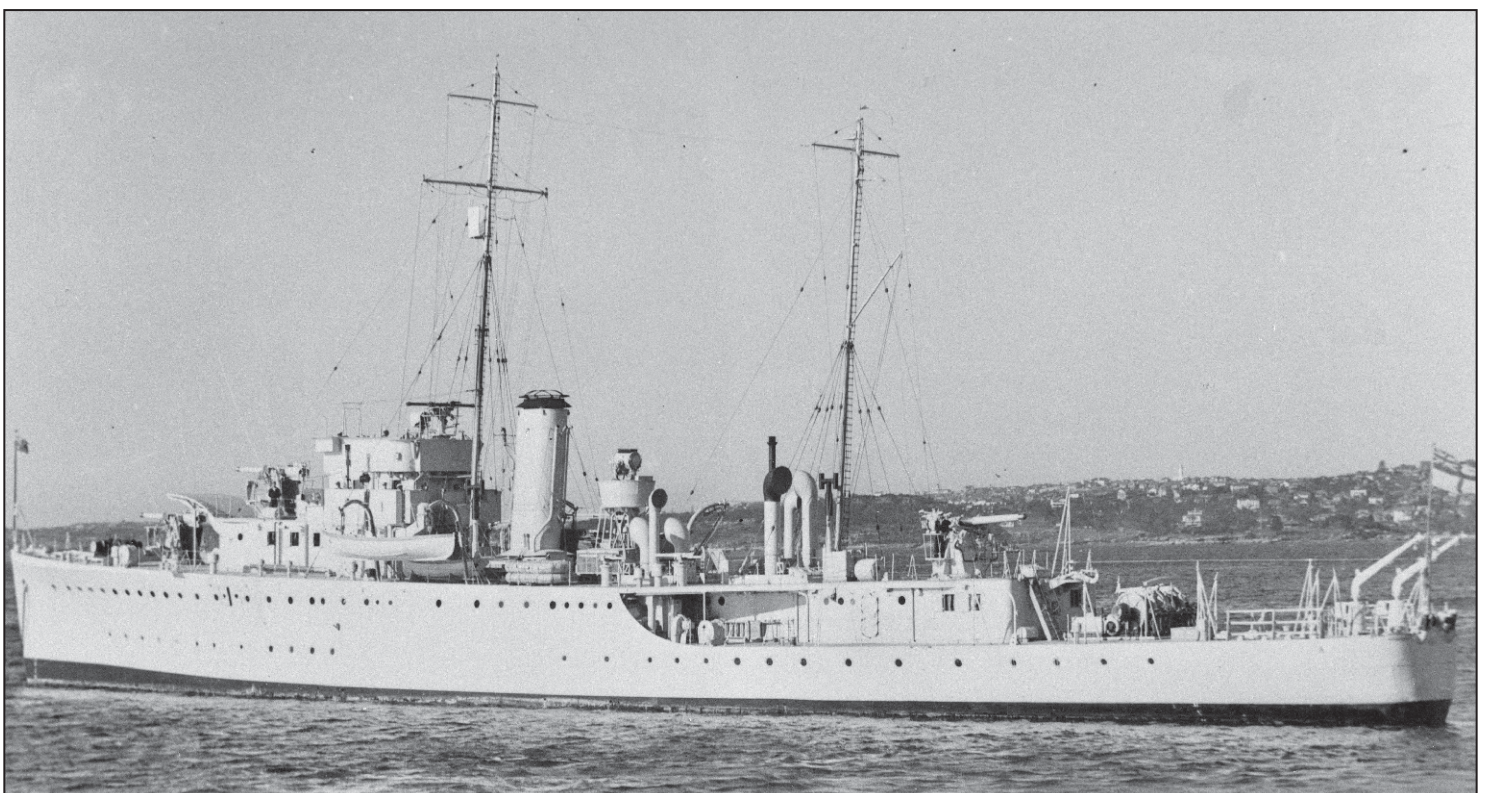
Most of the warships that are immortalized in contemporary naval history are usually big and powerful capital ships, sometimes a few renowned destroyers or skillfully commanded submarines. Seldom does a small warship like a sloop make it to the famous fighting ship list. Australia and its century old Navy take pride on having one of those sloops on the most famous naval combatants list. This was the little, but nonetheless valiant, *HMAS Yarra* and this is a brief introduction article about her.

Second of her name at the service of the Royal Australian Navy, the *Yarra* was a unit of the *Grimsby* class sloops. These ships, 13 in total, were a class of small ocean escort ships designed and built during the 1930's to replace the aging types that survived World War 1. Eight ships were built for the Royal Navy, 4 for the Royal Australian Navy and 1 for the Indian Navy. Four of these ships were lost during the World War II and one actually still exists today as an headquarters ship (*HMS Wellington*). The class was a very successful design of a warship and proved its worth during the conflict, having their units conducted a vast array of military operations with distinction, sometimes paying the ultimate price.

*Yarra* was built in Sydney, Australia and commissioned to the RAN on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1936 after a two-year building period. She was a modern ship for her time. With 266 feet in length, displacing 1500 tons in full load capacity at a maximum speed of 16,5 knots, complement of 100 crew members, and packing three dual-purpose 4-inch guns plus some lighter weaponry, she was the best that a sloop could represent at that moment. Her service record, during the 6 years that she served the RAN, stands as one of their finest.

## The war begins

September 1939 brought the war again to the European continent and following the steps of Britain, France and other Commonwealth nations, Australia would soon join the fight against Germany. As expected, the RAN ships were then mobilized to war status and assigned to tasks attributed to them by the Admiralty. *Yarra* started her wartime activities by running escort and minesweeping duties for troop convoys going from Australia to the Middle East. The sloop therefore operated within Australia's waters up to late August 1940.

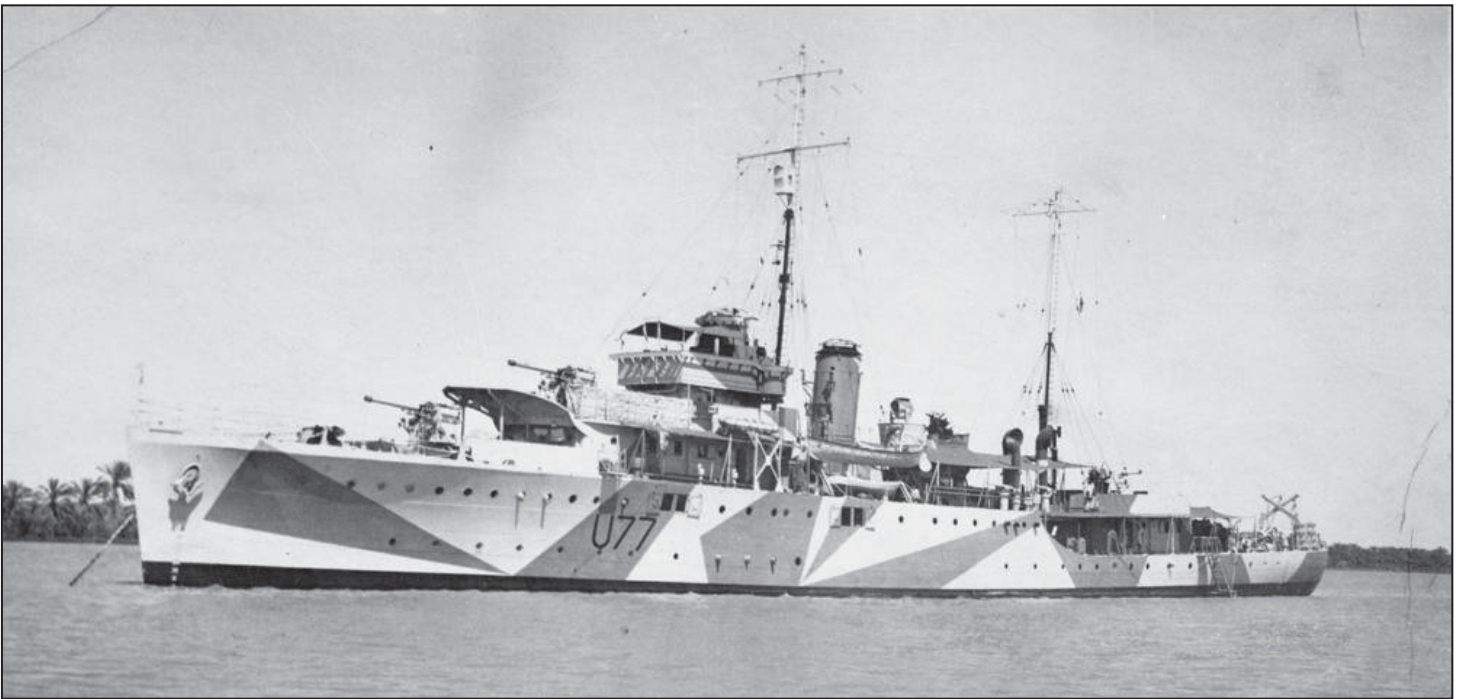


### Middle East and Red Sea assignments

After a short refit *Yarra* departed to the Middle East as well and leaving her home shores for the last time. Based at Aden *Yarra* would from now on start to be in direct contact with the enemy more often, but fortunately for *Yarra's* crew nothing too exciting. The reconnaissance flights and even sporadic air raids by the Italian Air Force were little more than a nuisance. The sloop was now integrated on the blockade force preventing reinforcements or supplies to be delivered to the Italian forces located on the Red Sea area. This sort of boredom lasted until mid-October but then on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October, when escorting a convoy together with *HMS Kimberley*, *HMNZS Auckland* and *HMNZS Leander*, a small skirmish developed with two Italian destroyers that after trying to intercept and attack the convoy were chased out by the strong escort. The fight started with an unsuccessful torpedo attack by the enemy, of which *Yarra* had to dodge one of the inbound torpedoes, this soon developed into a stern chase with the Italian destroyers running to the safety of their base after being hit a few times by *Yarra's* main guns. Eventually one of the destroyers, the *Francesco Nullo*, ran aground and was sunk by *Leander* and *Kimberley* which in return suffered some moderate damage at the hands of the defensive shore batteries. So ended the first of many important actions that *Yarra* would be involved on the months to come.

The situation on the Red Sea soon turned favorable to the Allies and *Yarra* was therefore assigned to convoy escort duties and calling at other harbors of the region like Aden, Kamaran Bay and Port Sudan without much trouble or action to see apart from the occasional air raids and dhow interception. The Red Sea station was maintained until mid-March 1941 and soon the sloop was called to Bombay for a small refit.

It is important to note that since the beginning of the war *Yarra* had received a Vickers 0.5 quad AA gun plus a couple of depth-charge throwers and others ASW and guns director equipment. She still retained in her early war career the four 3 pdr guns which were eventually landed in exchange of two 20mm Oerlikon guns. In September 1940 the ship was painted in a disruptive camouflage scheme of medium and dark greys with white or black bow waves plus dark grey-green decks. She would retain this configuration until her final demise.



### The Iraq and Iran expeditions

Following her Red Sea tasks *Yarra* was assigned as a supporting ship to the operations taking place in quelling the pro-Axis Iraq uprising in April and May 1941. The sloop was integrated on a seven-warship task force, plus some troop transports, and participated on the landings of Commonwealth troops in Basra area. After carrying troops and providing fire support to the landing zones, fighting back occasional air attacks and doing small incursions, *Yarra's* expedition in Iraq ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May with the signature of the an armistice with the local powers.

Next in the line of trouble was on the other side of the Persian Gulf. Afraid of a German *coup* attempt in Iran both the British and Soviet governments placed an ultimatum with Iran's authorities which, met with no satisfaction, triggering a preventive operation to take control of the country. Operation *Countenance* was put on the move and *Yarra* once again was part of it. This time would prove to be a bit more messy than Iraq. Iran had a small Navy composed of a couple of sloops, a few gunboats and some auxiliaries mostly located near Abadan, a port and naval base, which were the main targets for the impending Allied troops landings. At dawn of the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1941 *Yarra* sneaked out into the junction of Shat al-Arab with the Karun River to take on the anchored Iranian ships. Completely unaware of the presence of the Australian sloop, the Iranian ships were in rapid succession hit by the 4 inch and 3 pdr guns from *Yarra* at practically point blank range

The sloop *Babr* (Iranians flagship) was soon on fire and half sunk in shallow waters. Some small arms fire started coming from the shores but it was rapidly put out by the Vickers quad gun. The two anchored gunboats were quickly made aware of their chances of survival and soon stopped any hostile action towards *Yarra*. Boarding parties soon followed and took over both ships. The expedition to take over Abadan and Khorramshar was completed without much more trouble. The Iranian Navy was dismantled at her berths, the ports and naval bases conquered and even a handful of Axis cargo ships captured in the surrounding areas. *Yarra's* final action on the Operation *Countenance* was the capture of the fleeing Italian ship *MV Hilda* that was able to escape the landing and combat area. The sloop was able to come about the target ship on the Persian Gulf but by that time the merchant's crew had set their own ship on fire which led to a more problematic capture by the Australians. Even then, despite the adversities, *Yarra's* boarding party was able to capture the ship, put out the fires, make some repairs and put it on a tow. They went to Karachi with their prize where they arrived on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September. Another prize was taken by *Yarra* from Kuwait to Karachi on the following week, this time the *Barbara*. And after all this action the sloop's crew was entitled to some rest and they spent much of the rest of September ashore.

### Into the Mediterranean

*Yarra* left Karachi mid-October 1941, her new destination was the Suez Canal followed by the Mediterranean. It was on this occasion that the 3 pdr guns were landed in exchange for the two Oerlikon guns. These guns boosted the sloop's close-range AA capacity. She remained in the Suez area for one month and then went to Alexandria where she joined other Australian warships like *Hobart*, *Napier*, *Nizam*, *Norman* and *Nestor*. Alexandria was at that time the Eastern Mediterranean main base for the Allied navies therefore it was packed with all sort of warships. The small Australian sloop was momentarily integrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> Destroyer Flotilla and was assigned for convoy escort duty. This was to be a tough task for Tobruk was the destination of the convoys.

The first convoy for Tobruk in which *Yarra* was part of left Alexandria on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November. They arrived without much trouble at the destination which showed them how lucky they've been so far. Tobruk was a besieged port town and destruction reigned everywhere including several ships sunk in its waters, sign of strong enemy opposition to any efforts to bring supplies and reinforcements to the Allied forces stationed there. Air raids were frequent and deadly plus U-Boats were known to often be on the waters around Tobruk. Anchored on the harbor area *Yarra* would be on watch and fending off air attacks the very next few days. It was an immensely busy and strenuous time for her crew. The sloop would continue to be part of the Tobruk Express convoys until December 1941. No ship was lost in her charge in the 6 convoys she made part of despite the best efforts from the *Luftwaffe* in sinking her and the ships of the convoys. She survived this with light damage from a bomb near miss plus she was credited with shooting down 4 enemy aircraft.



November 1941

### War in the Pacific

The Japanese brought the war to the Pacific on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December. With this many of the RAN ships positioned on the European Theatre were called to support the war operations closer to the homeland. *Yarra* left Alexandria on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December headed to new action area. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of December the sloop stopped at Colombo where she found several and different types of crews and Allied ships. Among them many survivors of the ill-fated Force Z that soon let them know how perilous was this new area of operations. Tanjung Priok, Java, was reached on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January and it became clear, with the arrival of so many warships, that they were in for another big fight. The tasks of escorting convoys from Java to Singapore were undertaken and soon the twin-engine Japanese bombers made their presence felt. In late January 1942, it was a daily event in Singapore for formations of dozens of such planes to come pay a visit, landing their bombs anywhere on any suitable target. Unlike the previous convoys she escorted these new ones from Java, Sunda and Banka Straits, to and from Singapore were always eventful with recurrent air strikes from the enemy, still no ships were lost in her charge.



However, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February, on her way to Singapore again with a troop transport convoy, a heavy attack by no less than 27 enemy aircraft took place when just 12 miles off from Singapore. Despite the best efforts of the escorts the transport *Empress of Asia* was hit by some bombs and was soon on fire. The ship was disabled and after seeing that the rest of the transports were safe in port *Yarra* stayed with the damaged ship and proceeded to evacuate no less than 1804 troops from the stricken ship with a further 470 picked up from the water during the entire rescue operation. There were some 3000 troops on the *Empress of Asia* and due to the actions of *Yarra* and other rescuing ships only 30 personnel were lost. During this time one of the bombers strafed the sloop but little damage was inflicted. At least one bomber was credited to *Yarra* during the attacks.

All efforts to relieve Singapore were in vain and the island fortress fell on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 1942. *Yarra* was back to Java on the 10<sup>th</sup>. These were grim times for the ABDA Forces, Malaya and Borneo were lost and now the Japanese were moving in to take Java. Regardless of how much bravery shown, the Allied efforts to contain the Japanese advance were in vain and soon the final blow would be dealt in the Java Sea Campaign. This would result in a massive exodus from the Dutch East Indies in which many ships were caught on the open sea by superior Japanese forces.

#### Yarra's last stand

The Australian ship continued with her usual convoy escort role but now from Java to elsewhere but the Dutch East Indies. The sloop would take her charges to the still supposed safe area after the Sunda Strait and return to Tanjung Priok to take on more ships under her protection. The intensity of the air strikes increased and rumors were around that strong Japanese Forces were on their way to land in Java. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of February of 1942, with the Battle of the Java Sea taking place just a few miles north, the order was given to evacuate Java. All ships capable were to flee the doomed island. Amid the chaos *Yarra* was put in charge of a small convoy with 3 tankers, 1 depot ship, 2 minesweepers and another sloop, with destination as Tjilatjap, the main port on the southern coast of Java and the nearest to Australia. One of the tankers ran aground during the journey and had to be left behind during yet another air strike. After passing the cramped Sunda Strait, full of ships going South fleeing for their lives, the odds become more favorable that the convoy would eventually make it to Australia. Fate however had a different intention for them. Warned that Japanese forces were already closing to Tjilatjap the convoy received orders either to sail to Colombo or to Fremantle, the latter being the closest at hand. Some ships dropped the convoy and by now, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, *Yarra* was in company of the tanker *Francol*, the depot ship *Anking* and the small minesweeper *MMS.51*. The next day the first sign of danger arrived in the shape of a Japanese float reconnaissance plane shadowing the convoy. Shortly after, two lifeboats were picked up with survivors from the Dutch ship *Parigi*. That night a submarine alarm developed leading the sloop to drop a few depth-charges as a precaution. Anxiety must have been high aboard for it was just a few days off before they could reach the safety of the shores of their country and yet there was a perilous way to go through before that.



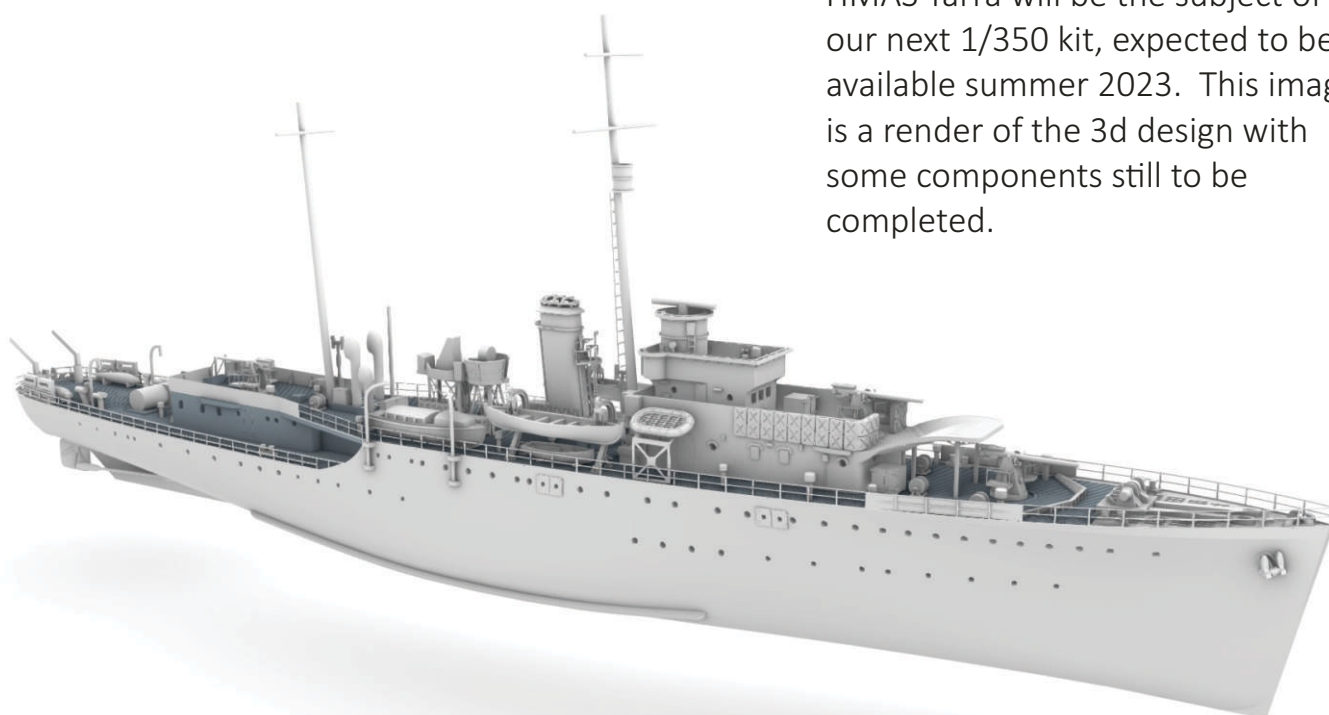
Yarra early 1942

Early morning on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, breakfast was being served, when the alarm bells went off and the crew went to Action Stations. Soon after salvos of heavy shells started to fall around the Allied ships. A powerful Japanese naval force of 3 heavy-cruisers and two destroyers, led by Admiral Kondo, had intercepted the convoy and were now firing at them. This is the most feared situation for any escort commander, to be faced by a strong and much superior enemy naval force. There was little that could be done and *Yarra's* fate, and of the entire convoy for that matter, was sealed. But not without a fight. Under heavy fire *Yarra* put out an enemy report, laid a smoke screen to try and protect the convoy long enough to allow it to scatter, then charged the enemy with all guns blazing in a final gallant effort. It was nevertheless a one sided action, the sloop had a top speed reduced to 14 knots when the enemy could easily do 30. The enemies' firepower was overwhelming both in number of guns and calibre. Progressively the little sloop was hit by 8 inch and 5 inch shells. Her structures were demolished, the hull perforated, the main guns silenced one by one until just one of them was still firing. She was wrecked from top to bottom and at 0700 hours that morning the order to abandon ship was given, just thirty minutes after the action had started. Thirty-four survivors made it into the water or found any floating debris they could, since all the ship boats were shot to pieces by the enemy shelling. The other three ships met the same fate within the next half hour, with the remaining 4-inch gun of *Yarra* firing at the enemy until the end.

### Conclusion

The little but most valiant sloop finally sank at 0800 hours of the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1942 at a position 230 miles south of Tjilatjap. Of the survivors, of the initial 34 only 13 survived from a crew of 151 souls. No officers survived the sinking. The remaining survivors were rescued by the Dutch submarine *K XI* and eventually they all made it to Colombo on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, only on that date did Australia know the fate of *Yarra*. Considering the small number of survivors and the lack of accounts or sources to support her final actions *Yarra* initially received little official recognition. In 1944 with the publication of an official booklet about her and after the war with the testimonies of the survivors of the other ships of convoy further information and details were provided about the sloop's final actions. Only in 2011 was the case of the *Yarra* reevaluated and the ships company received proper recognition for their final deeds. The ship's crew therefore received a Unit Citation Gallantry for their actions in protecting and saving the troops from the *Empress of Asia* and for their actions on their final stand against the overwhelming enemy force. It was also decided back then that the name *Yarra* would always be listed among active RAN ships and today the fourth *HMAS Yarra* serves Australia as a Huon class minesweeper.

Adapted from *HMAS Yarra 1936- 1942, the Story of a Gallant Sloop* by Arthur F Parry, Naval Historical Society of Australia Ebook 2020



HMAS Yarra will be the subject of our next 1/350 kit, expected to be available summer 2023. This image is a render of the 3d design with some components still to be completed.

# Imperial Russian Gunboat Khrabri

by Mike McCabe from the Combrig 1/700 kit







# A Falklands STUFT story

by Don McKeand

I blame Mike McCabe. In 2012 he suggested that we commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Falklands conflict with a display at the IPMS show in Telford. This got me researching and I was astounded at the number of merchant ships that were Ships Taken Up From Trade (STUFT) for the campaign. Everyone else was understandably building the warships involved, so I decided to add another dimension to the maritime element of the campaign.

A display on board the Headquarters ship of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners (ex-HMS Wellington) whetted my appetite especially as it was also a book launch for a book on STUFT entitled “They could not have done it without us”. So it was decided my contribution would be models of some of the STUFT ships. As I had plans for Geestport, Europic Ferry and Wimpey Seahorse, they were the original trio. They are all scratch built in 1/700 scale.



Europic Ferry



Geestport

Fast forward to 2022 and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary was now looming and I had read a lot more books on the subject and acquired a lot more plans. I had also built a model of the ferry Norland and I got in touch with Keith Thompson who had been Assistant Purser on Norland in 1982 He had featured in the book “All in the Same Boat”. Keith liked the model and invited me to a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration he was arranging in Hull. This was the spur to get building.



Norland

Three tugs, five trawlers and the Norland herself were all requisitioned from Hull, so that was the initial focus. The display went down really well and introduced me to many of the crew members from United Towing, North Sea Ferries and the Royal Navy 11<sup>th</sup> Mine Countermeasures squadron which had operated the five trawlers as minesweepers.

Further shows in 2022 meant I added to the list of STUFT models and had further opportunities to meet people who had served on merchant and naval vessels in the Falklands.



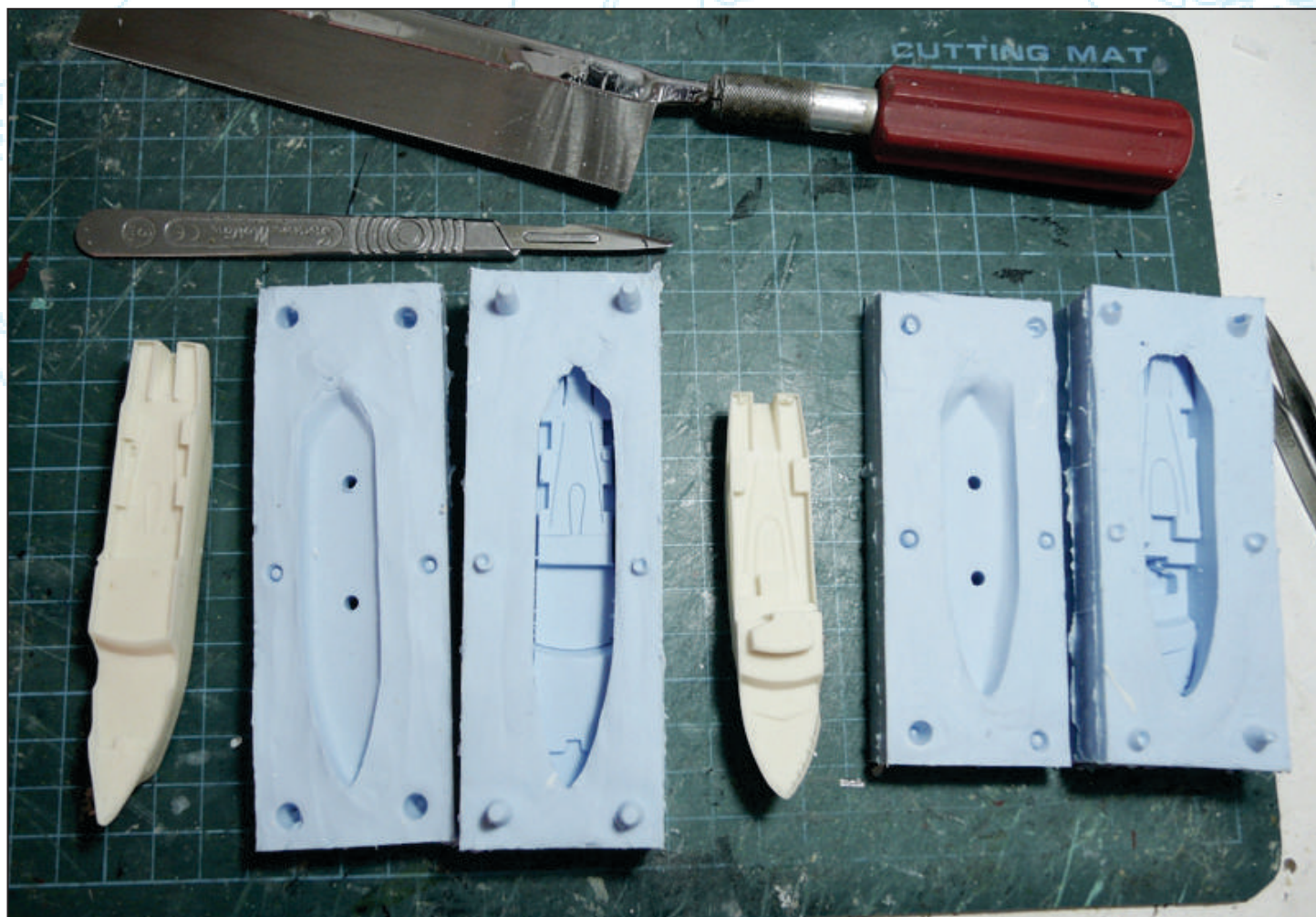
The 'Ellas'

It is difficult to pick out favourites among the models, but the minesweeping trawlers do stand out for me. The five ships were Northella, Cordella, Farnella (near identical sister ships) and Junella from the Marris fishing fleet and Pict from the United Trawlers fleet. After a number of e-mails and phone calls I found that the Tyne and Wear Archives had builders drawings of Junella and Cordella which had been built by Clelands of Wallsend. Pict was more of a problem as she had been built by Brooke Marine in Lowestoft.



The drawings arrived just over a month before the show in June, so it was a high pressure job to get them ready for the show. As three of them were almost identical, I decided that time could be saved if I made a mould for the hull and cast three copies in resin. As I wanted to show them in rough seas with part of the lower hull showing I made the masters with full hull, whereas I normally make waterline ships. This meant I had to evolve my own method of casting full hulls which would be another first.

The masters for the hulls were made from polystyrene sheet as a framework which was then in-filled with Milliput and carved to shape. While I was about it I also made a mould for Junella even though I only needed one of that ship, just in case there was a last-minute disaster. This proved to be a surprisingly far-sighted decision.

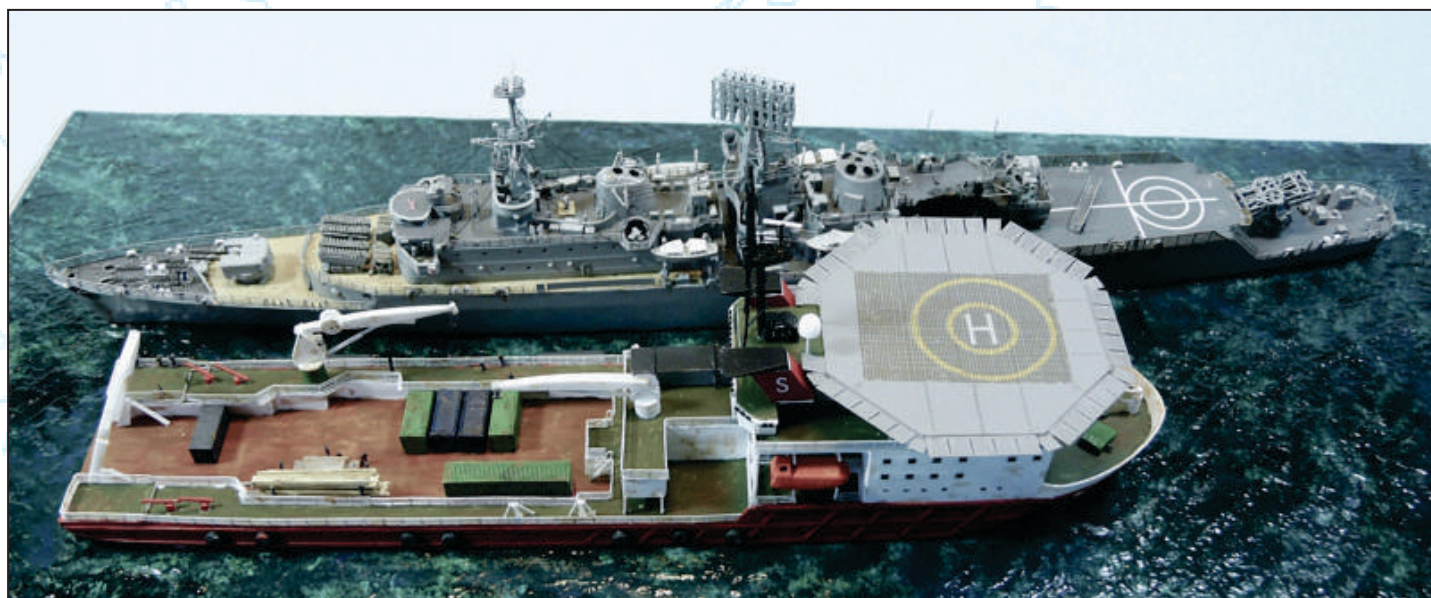




The three resin cast hulls and the master for Junella were then detailed with superstructure, trawl winches and net gantries. The base was made from dense styrene foam carved to shape. The diorama was finished with just days to spare, and attracted a lot of attention. This was because, unknown to me, the 11<sup>th</sup> MCM squadron were holding their reunion in Hull that weekend. Then the questions began - "why only four?" After explaining the problem with obtaining drawings of Pict umpteen times, I was invited to their reunion that evening where I heard many tales of their exploits. I was concerned that I would have to plead artistic licence for having the models so close together, but was reassured that they had got that close when passing the Extra Deep Team Sweep gear between the vessels. I thought that I may have overdone the weathering but was told that was virtually impossible as the trawlers became very weather beaten.

The outcome of that evening was that I promised to make some replicas of the models for some of the crew members -so the mould of Junella would get used after all. It still left the problem of Pict, but I was sent a lot of unpublished photos of her from the people I had met and was able to put together a useable drawing to make a model of her.

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Another favourite was the diorama which involved the repair ship Stena Seapread, again because of the personal contacts that arose from it. I wanted to show Stena Seaspread at work, but as merchant ships do not figure much in the catalogues of model manufacturers, scratch building is the only option for those without a 3D printer. The drawings in the book "Merchant Ships at War" book are quite detailed, but spread across two pages. To make them suitable for model making, the plans were scanned into my computer and the mis-aligned elements manoeuvred into a coherent whole on one sheet using Photoshop. The work continued with simplifying the drawings to remove unnecessary lettering and lines which would be confusing, although care is needed here to know which lines to remove, and which to keep! Finally the drawings were cropped to the exact length of the ship and the whole file re-scaled to the 1/700 scale length of the vessels using the Photoshop software. Multiple prints were made of the plans so that some could be cut up to provide templates for building the model.

At an early stage of planning the diorama I needed a ship for Stena Seaspread to be working on. There were a number of possibilities, but when the Starling Models HMS Glamorgan became available, the choice was a no-brainer. Glamorgan gave sterling service bombarding shore targets, and it was while withdrawing from one of these missions that she was hit by a land launched Exocet missile. The missile hit the flight deck and exploded near the hangar entrance, blasting a hole in the deck, blowing the port Seacat launcher overboard and starting a serious fire in the hangar fuelled by the fully armed Wessex helicopter inside. Thirteen crew were killed, but the ship was saved by an outstanding piece of damage control. The book "Ordeal by Exocet" by Ian Inskip gives the details and is well worth a read. She was able to get alongside Stena Seaspread where temporary repairs were made to make her seaworthy to return to the UK. There was a shortage of stainless steel filler rods for welding and I was told by crew members that stainless cutlery was used as a substitute!



I have a soft spot for the County class destroyers, seeing a number of them over the years, but modelling them has always been beset with the problem of how to make a convincing representation of the complex Seaslug launcher. Consequently one of the first things I looked at when I opened the kit was the 3D printed Sea Slug launcher and I was very impressed by the way it was represented. This augured well and the quality of the rest of the kit was up to the same standard. It was a pleasure to build, with everything fitting well and dedicated photo-etch making the railings much easier to apply than trying to make generic railings fit a scratch build. The instructions were extremely clear, and following them made the build free of unpleasant surprises. The quality of the resin castings and the 3D printed details was excellent.



The only problem was the damage. It seemed wrong to mangle a perfectly good kit, but it had to be done. There are several good photos of the damaged ship and the hole on the deck was not difficult to represent by drilling a hole and shaping the edges with a scalpel. The hangar doors were destroyed and the roof was buckled upwards in the fire.



The only way to show this was by hollowing out the hangar with micro chisels and then using heat on the resin component to bend the roof and hoping not to destroy the item. Fortunately this went well and some detail of the interior was added with galleries and broken pipes and wires. The flight deck netting in the vicinity of the blast was suitably distorted and the fire damage represented with brown, black and orange paint.

The sheer variety of ships requisitioned made for an interesting collection, and I have not finished yet! So far, as well as the ships mentioned above, I have made the troop and PoW carrying Norland (twice as I gave the original one to Keith Thompson). The tugs Salvageman and Yorkshireman appear in a diorama towing the crippled submarine ARA Santa Fe and Irishman appears in another diorama towing the damaged supply ship ARA Bahia Buen Suceso. The island supply ship St Helena acted as mother ship to two Hunt class mine hunters which took over from the requisitioned trawlers, so they appear together in another diorama. The hospital ship Uganda with the “ambulance ship” HMS Hecla go together on the same base. The Sealink ferry St Edmund acted as accommodation ship, the tanker British Trent, despatch vessel Iris, supply ship Baltic Ferry and container ship acting as aircraft ferry Contender Bezant were all made as individual models.



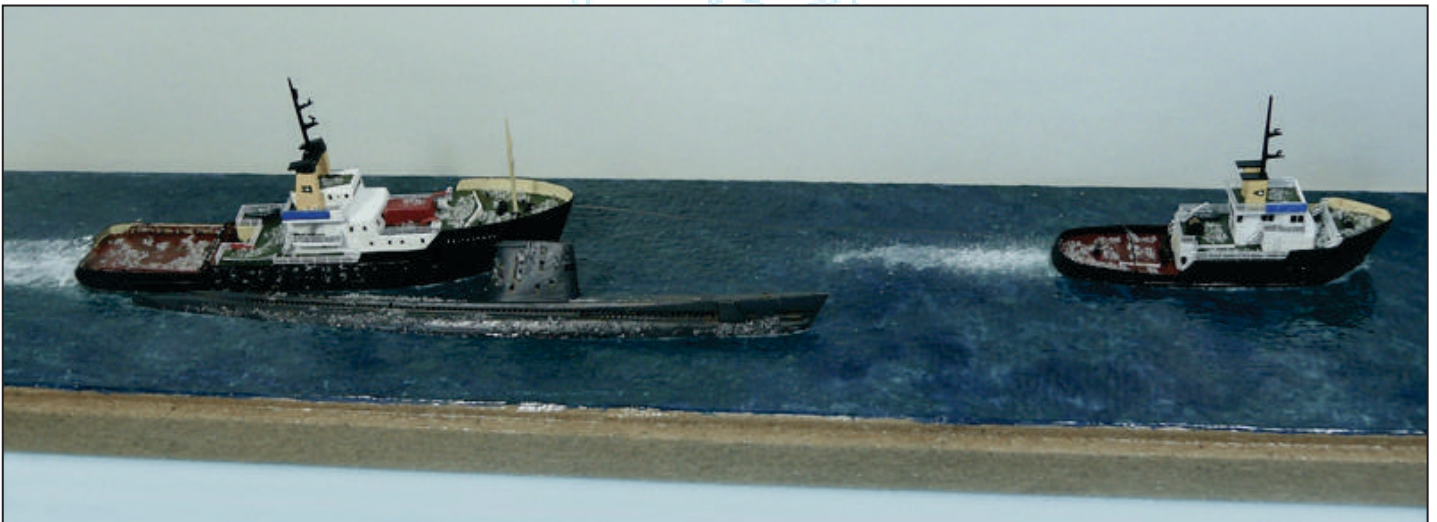
Uganda and Hecla



St Helena Refuelling at Sea with HMS Ledbury and HMS Brecon



British Trent



Yorkshireman and Salvageman towing Santa Fe (converted from Hobby Boss USS Balao)



Baltic Ferry



Contender Bezzant



Irishman towing the damaged Bahia Buen Suceso



Iris



Sealink St Edmund

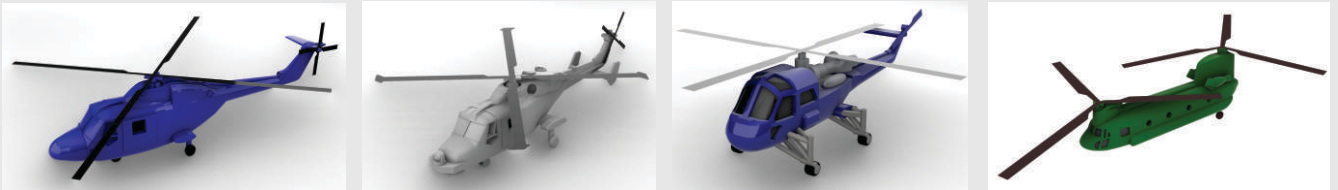
*Note : All the models in this article were scratchbuilt by Don except where noted, the vehicles and helicopters apart from the chinook are Starling Models items.*

# The Voicepipe

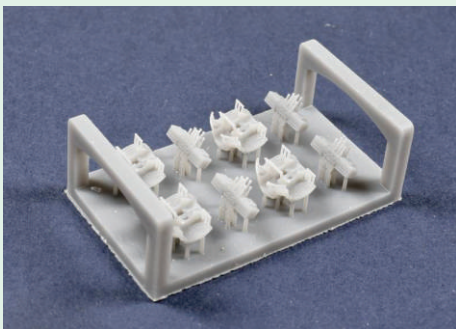
## News for Spring 2023

### 3d printed accessories

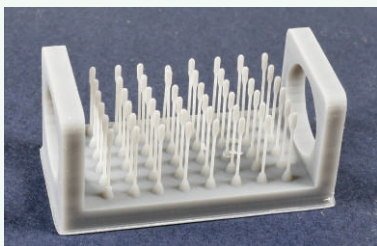
Four helicopter sets are now available, these are Lynx, Wildcat, Wasp and Chinook. All have photoetched rotors, the first three sets have four aircraft in each, the chinook has two with one having an open cargo door.



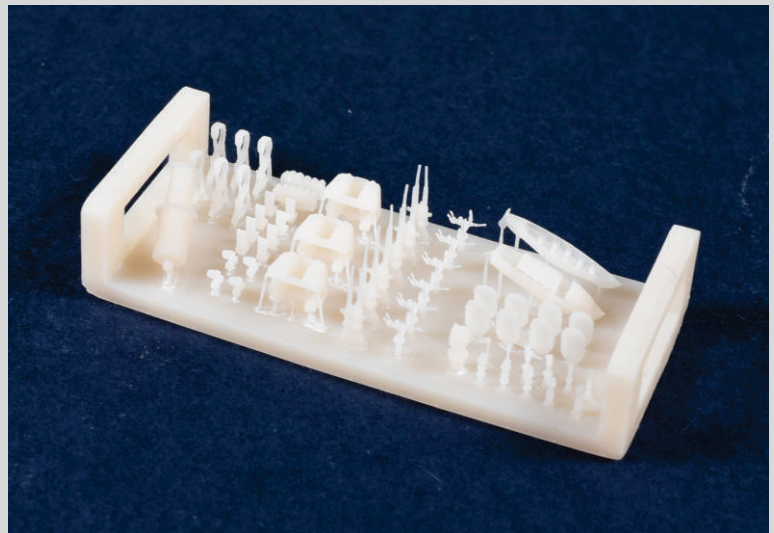
Three new weapon sets in 1/600 scale are now available, these are eight barrelled pompoms (below), the four barrelled version and twin 4" guns on Mk XIX mounts.



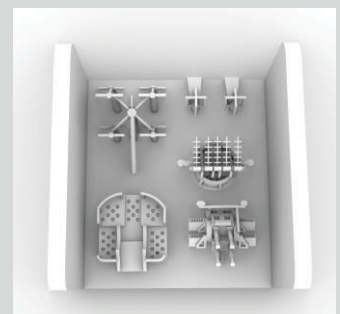
You will never need those unconvincing etched oars with these 1/350 3d printed versions!



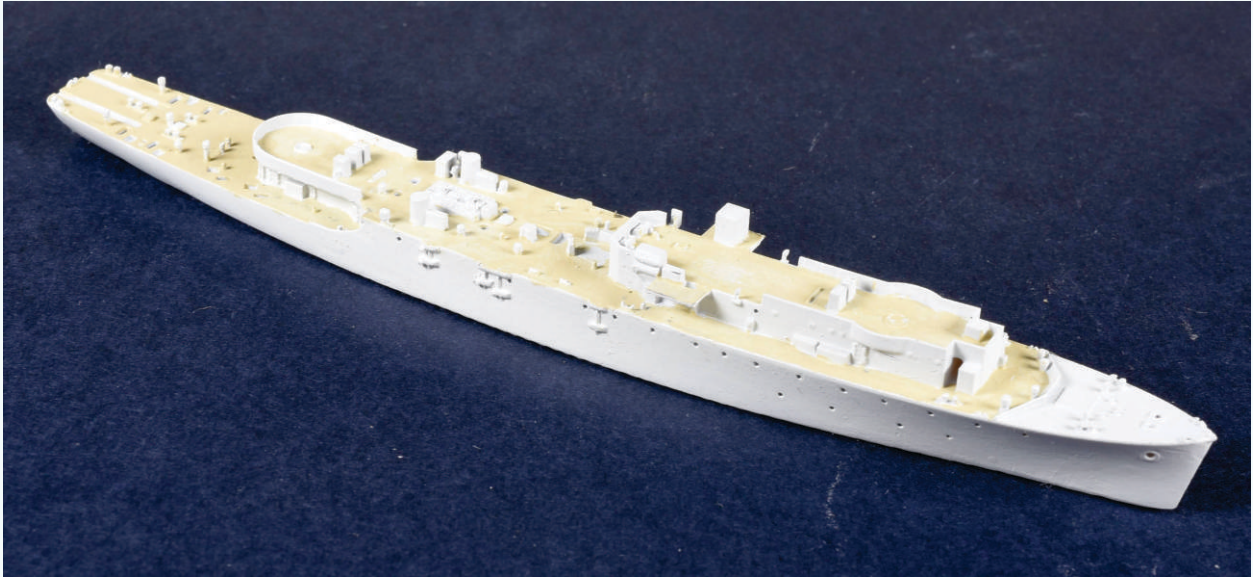
IBG has six 1/700 Hunt class destroyer escort kits in their catalogue, they are good but could benefit from some additional or finer detail. Just released is a two part set to do just that. This contains upgrades for weapons, boats and other small parts.



The second of the 3d printed sets includes a four barrelled pompom, gun director and radars. At £12 this is an inexpensive way to upgrade the IBG kits.



All three of our 1/700 River class frigate kits are now available, these are Royal Navy HMS Lagan and HMS Rother and Royal Canadian Navy HMCS St Stephen. Below is the in progress Lagan which has the deck and hull partly painted. No parts have as yet been added to the hull, which comes as a 3d printed part as shown.



## In the pipeline

### Kits

The next kit release will be the Batch 1 County Class guided missile destroyer HMS Kent as in 1976. More details on the following pages, this is expected in May.

Following that in summer will be the 1/350 HMAS Yarra kit.

Some kits are currently being reworked and upgraded with 3d printed parts for gradual release during the course of the year. These include the HMS Amethyst kit and the Atlantic Models HMS Ark Royal, HMS Starling and HMS Swift.

### Accessories

An upgrade set for the IBG destroyer kits is in progress, this may end up being two sets allowing the Tamiya E class destroyer kit to be included.

The accessory range will continue to be expanded and will include some 1/350 items. Due for release shortly in 1/700 will be a set of Royal Navy Ww2 gun directors, F-35 Lightning II and more diorama accessories.



Flyhawk have announced the release of a 1/700 kit of the German Ww1 cruiser Emden. This is an optional full hull kit and appears to be released only in the deluxe version. No price as yet but we hope it will arrive in stock in the next few weeks.



## Models built to Commission

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Competitive rates

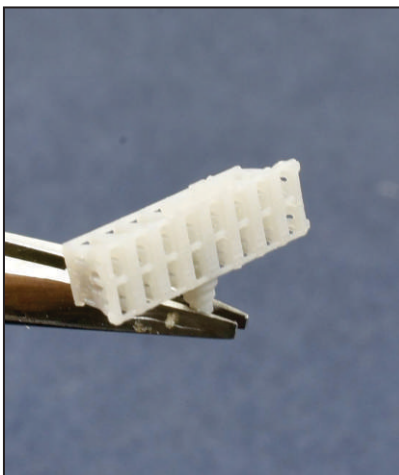
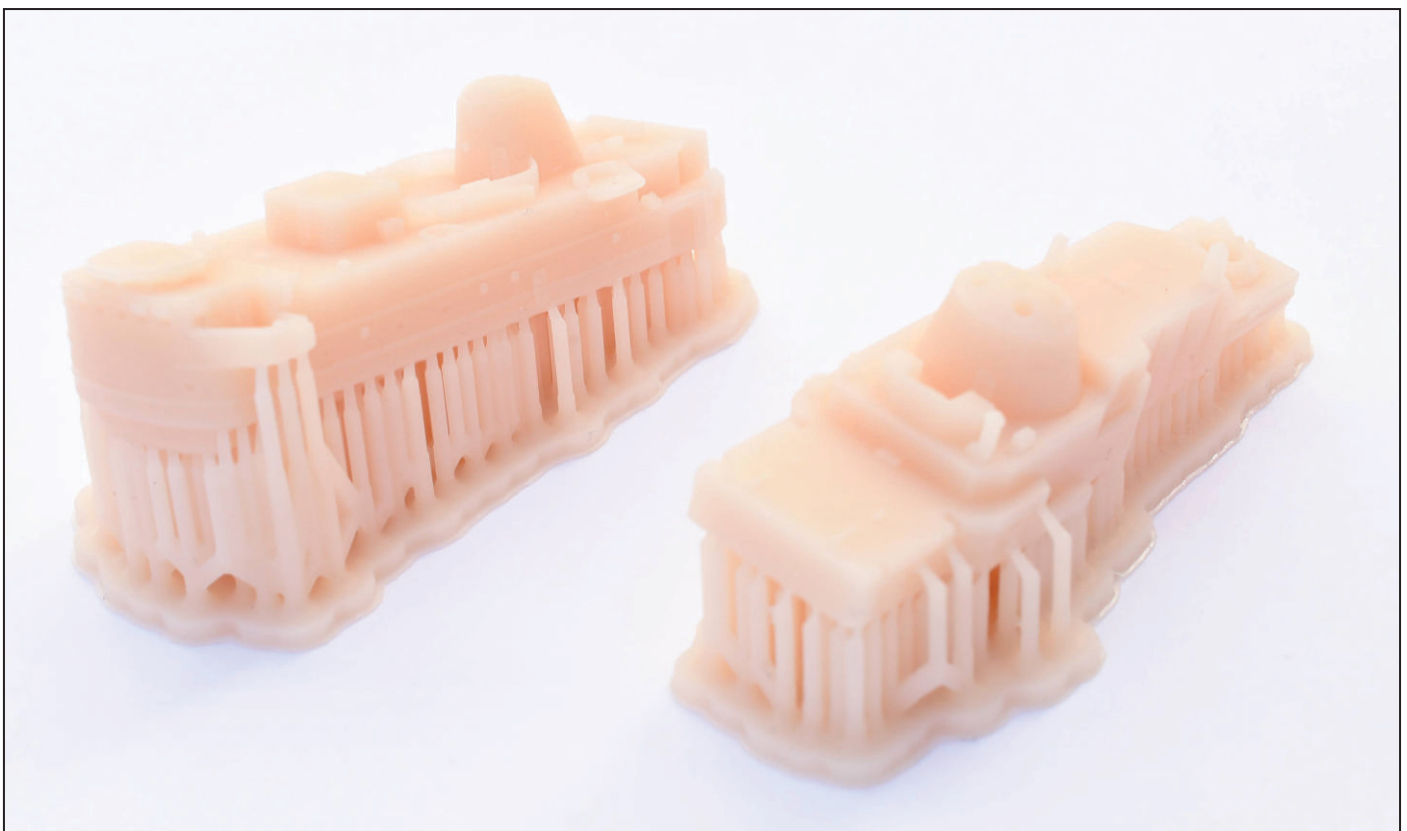
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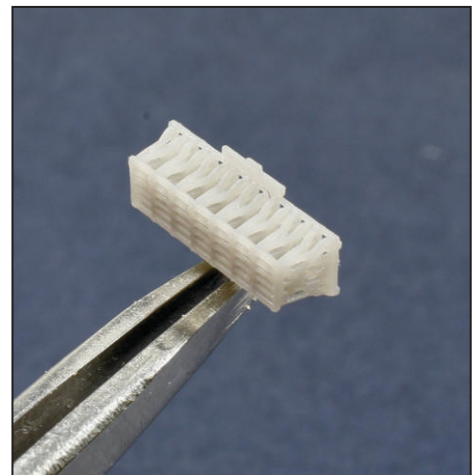
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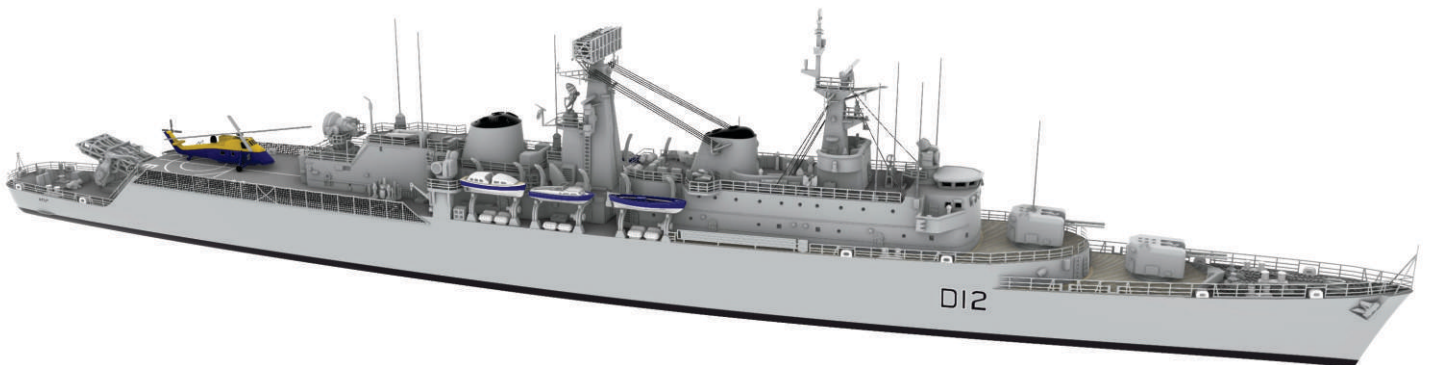
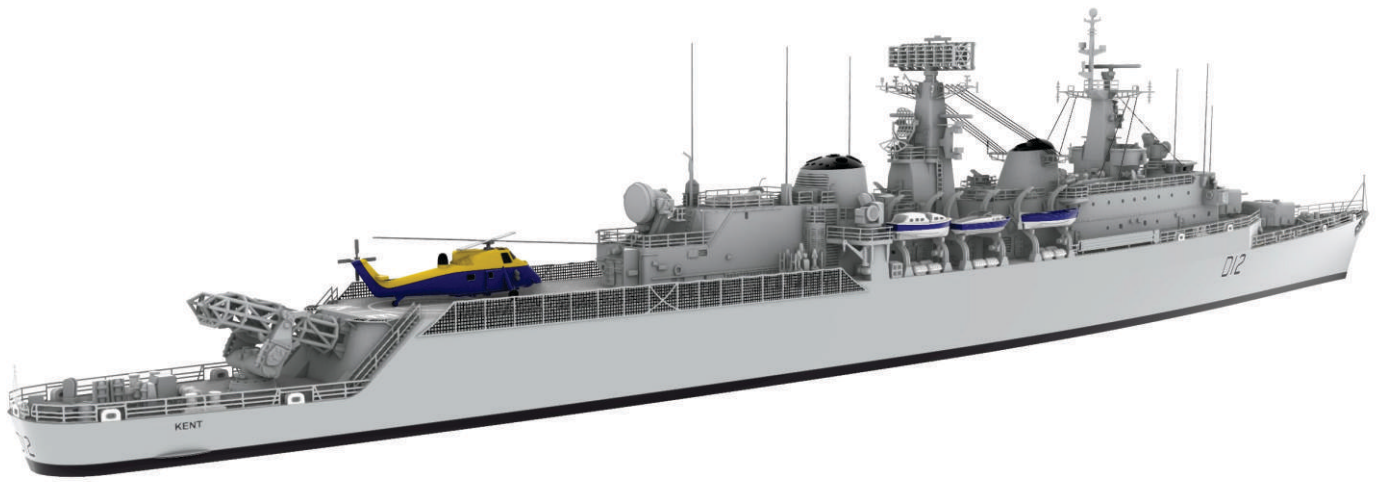
# County class guided missile destroyer HMS Kent 1976

*The subject of our newest 1/700 kit is HMS Kent as in her 1976 fit with two twin 4.5" gun mounts. This features a resin cast hull with all other parts 3d printed or photoetch. All of the renders are taken from the kit design and coloured accordingly. Decals are included for all of the batch 1 County Class. The kit is expected to be available in May.*



The kit includes a 3d printed Type 965M radar along with many other small parts. As a change from the previous Glamorgan kit, the foremast and yardarms will be one complete 3d printed part to make assembly easier.







# HMS Kent - 1/700 profiles

