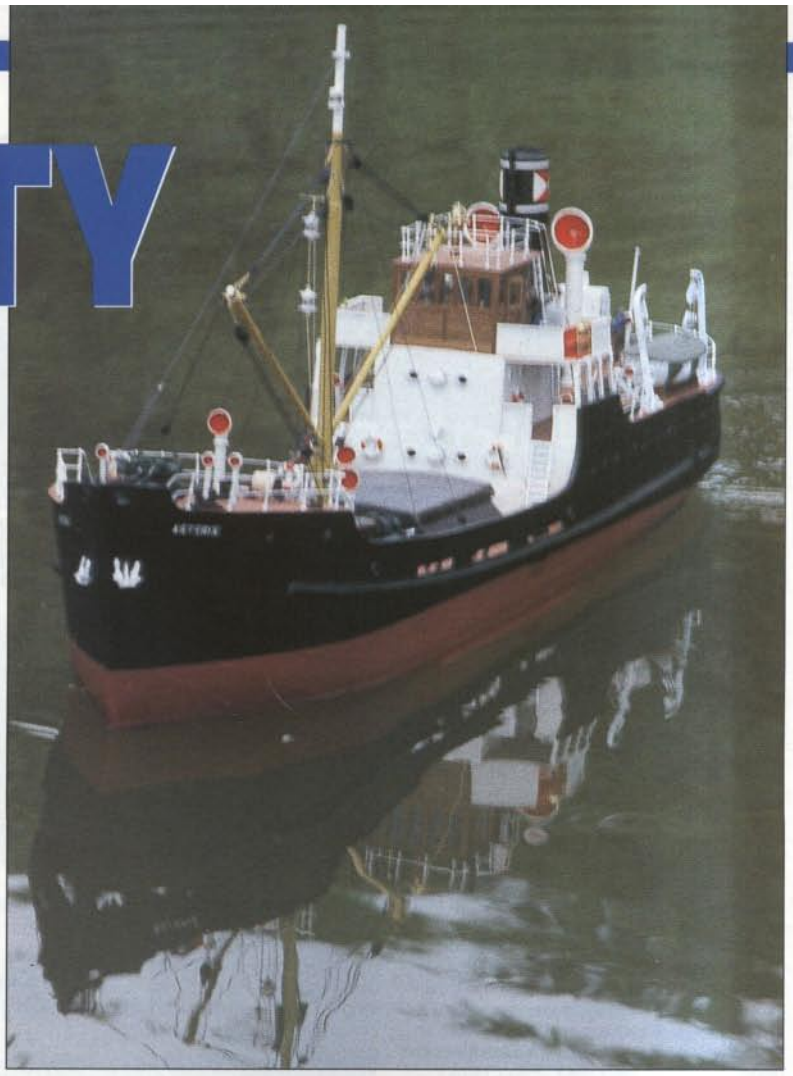
CLANITY

Mount Fleet Models' Classic Coaster - Admiralty No. C642

Reviewed BY TOM GORMAN



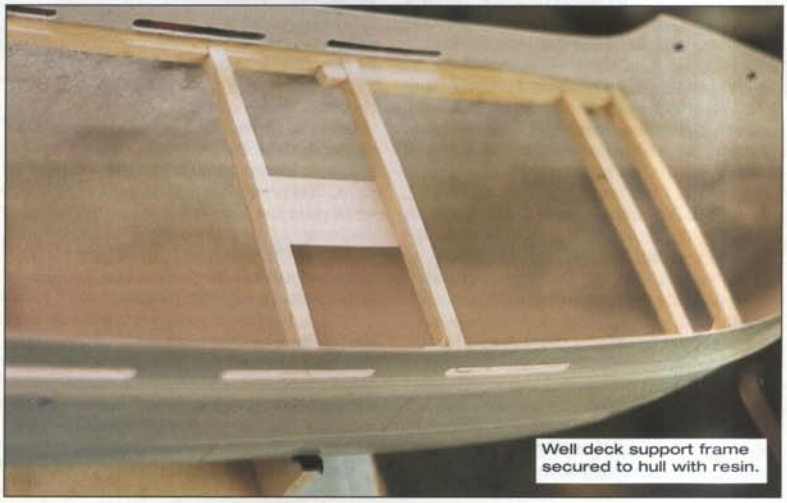
Having previously built a number of model ship kits produced by Mount Fleet Models and Frank Hinchliffe, I was delighted to be asked to build and revue *Clanity*, a World War Two coastal steamer built for the Admiralty and numbered C642. This is typical of many steamers operated by H.M. Forces, and small shipyards round the country built them all. W.J. Yarwood & Sons (1938) Ltd., of Northwich in Cheshire built the ship upon which this kit is based. Launched in July 1946 and completed in December 1946 she was registered in London. Her career with the Admiralty spanned ten years and in 1956 she was purchased by F.T. Everard and re-named *Clanity*. Finally she was broken up in Antwerp in September 1969.

As this ship was one of a number built during the War years, and similar ships were placed in private ownership or management during those years, the model builder has the chance to build in small changes and to paint the ship in colours that make it unique to him/her. Correctly as supplied, however, the model should be finished in Admiralty grey and black. I decided that I would use modellers' licence and paint the model in the colours of the company for whom my father served for almost all his working life. That company did not, to my knowledge, ever own any coasters but that was part of the pleasure in building.

The kit

The kit duly arrived in a huge box, so large that there was no space in my small workshop to hold the carton. Consequently the contents were removed and carefully placed on shelves and in small drawers and the carton was relegated to salvage. Over the next few days, while other work was finalised in the workshop, I read the instruction manual carefully and spread the full size drawing out on my board. I do believe in reading instruction books, they are provided to help and not to be ignored. My colleague, however, believes in carrying on regardless and only looking at the instructions when all else has failed; he sees no point in reading when I can tell him after I have done so. It works too!

It must be stated that this kit is not really suitable for the novice or complete beginner to start on, in fact, I would suggest that this kit would best be built by one who has completed a similar project from Mount Fleet. There are some aspects of the instructions that leave the builder needing experience to solve. The finished model is one of the best I have yet completed and quite worthy of taking its place in a glass case among some of my others. However, this one is not a static model but a working one outfitted with electric motor, batteries and radio control equipment and I am indebted to Frank Hinchliffe for his help and advice as building proceeded.



Well deck support frame secured to hull with resin.

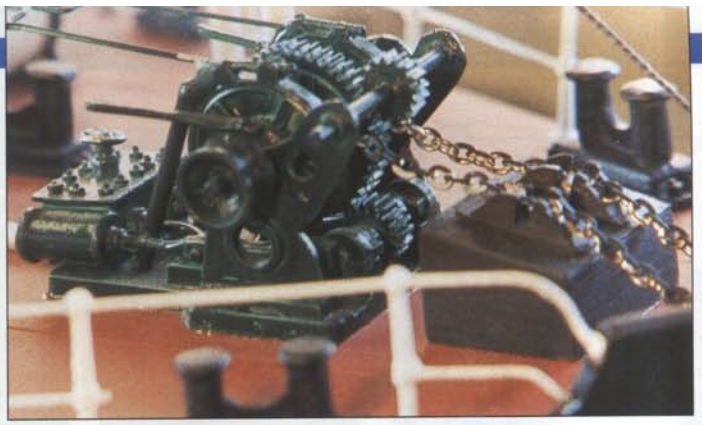
Top:Propeller shaft with coupling and rudder stock with upper bearing sealed to hull with filled and catalysed resin.

Above: Well deck in place, note wash port openings cut through hull sides.

Right: Quarterdeck framing fitted at stern and deck plating in place over plywood decks.

The hull

As instructed, the grp hull was thoroughly washed in warm water and detergent and allowed to dry, it was then lightly sanded with 400 grit wet & dry abrasive paper to key subsequent painting. Examination of the plate detail on the hull showed a couple of small blemishes which were sanded away. Following this cleaning the hull was laid on kitchen paper and set aside until a suitable stand could be made. It is important to keep the hull clean after washing as fingermarks and other dirt will prevent good paint adhesion later. The stand was constructed from 10mm thick plywood purchased from the local timber yard as a scrap piece. The ends were covered with felt material and the finished stand was given a couple of coats of clear varnish.



The underside of the hull was covered with bubble wrap plastic and set upon the stand while further work was carried out. Under some conditions I would have painted the hull, at least in primer, before proceeding further, but on this occasion painting was left until after the main decks were laid. The reason for this is that the stern (quarter) deck finishes flush with the hull sides and the decks are 'plated' with fine art card, which also needs to be painted. As decks and the anti-fouling colour of the hull are both red oxide in colour it was easiest to paint once the decks were laid.

Running gear

The first task on the hull was to install the propeller shaft followed by the rudder and its stock. The hull at the stern is clearly marked for the propeller shaft location and the position was first drilled out using a small drill after which the hole was checked for accurate centring. This hole was then enlarged using progressively larger drills and finally finished with a round file until the shaft could be inserted but was a tight fit. Careful measurement using the propeller shaft supplied together with a double coupling brought the location for the drive motor beneath the position where the bridge deck of the hull would be. This was not wise, in my opinion, as access to the motor would be severely restricted. I therefore cut the supplied shaft down to an overall length of 150mm and refitted the bush from the redundant piece of outer casing into the cleaned end of the piece now needed. Using this shorter shaft allowed the motor to be sited within the detachable section of the deckhouse and gave good access for servicing. It is always sensible for the modeller to verify locations for equipment before proceeding too far; fitting a motor, engine or battery in a position where access is restricted by permanently fitted decks is silly. Any item of control equipment that needs to be either serviced or easily removed for attention is best fitted under suitably detachable hatches or superstructures where possible. Such hatches must, of course, be as watertight as possible to prevent water from causing problems inside the hull.

As can be seen from the photographs, the inboard end of the propeller shaft was supported in a block of timber secured to the hull with polyester resin and the outer end was sealed to the hull in the same way. Before the propeller or motor coupling was fitted the inner shaft was removed and the outer casing filled with fine grease. After replacing the inner shaft, the coupling was fitted to the inner end and the propeller to the outer. To prevent water leaking up the shaft despite the grease, the locknut at the propeller and the bush at the inner end coupling were carefully pulled up close to the spacing washers until there was no end float but the shaft still turned freely. Washers are needed between the propeller and the shaft casing and between the coupling bush and the shaft casing to transfer the thrust from the propeller to the hull of the model and prevent stress being imposed upon the motor or engine bearings. In the case of a full size ship, special thrust bearings are fitted between the shaft(s) and the engines for just this purpose.

Having set up the shaft and allowed time for the resin to cure, the coupling was fitted and the selected motor was tried in place upon a temporary bedplate. Alignment of motor shaft, coupling and propeller shaft is of paramount importance in a working ship model. While a single coupling will allow a degree of mis-alignment a double coupling is the better arrangement; it is wise to align the elements of the drive accurately in any event as a truly straight line drive imposes least loading on the drive equipment. Often the load produced by an out of true drive train will flatten the batteries or cause a motor to fail. Furthermore, when using an electric motor, it is sensible to fit a reduction gear between the motor and the propeller shaft as this will reduce the load on the motor and allow the propeller to run close to scale speed. In the case of this model a very slow running electric motor (10 poles) was found in the workshop and this was fitted without the need for a reduction gear. However, the motor used was very large by comparison with those found in the model shop and was a rare acquisition some years ago.

As stated above the alignment of the units was carried out with care and the bedplate for the motor was finally secured using catalysed polyester resin.

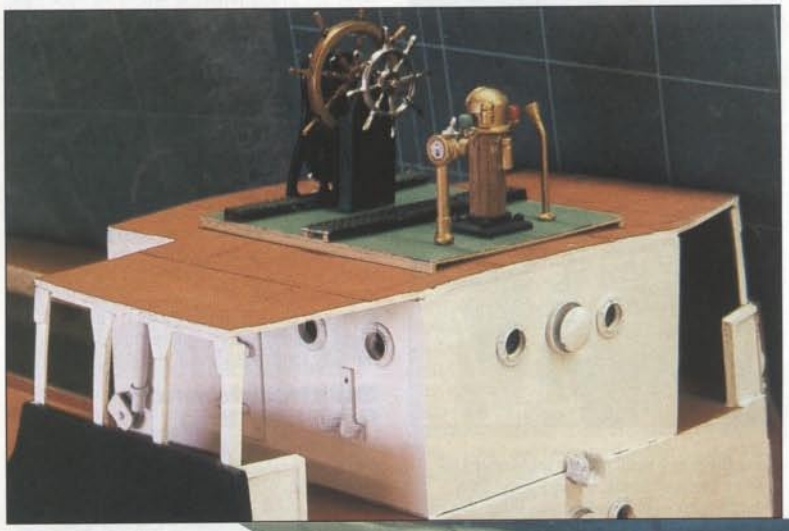
The propeller supplied with the kit was cast in white metal and, in the past, such cast propellers have been carefully balanced by

Top left: Detail of deck plating showing tops of hawse pipes forward.

Top right: Close-up detail of anchor windlass on forecastle.

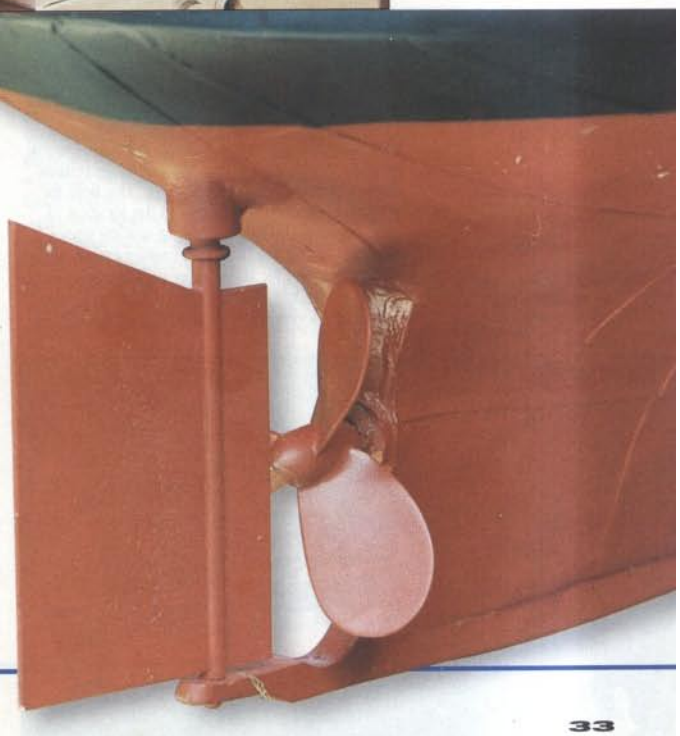
Far left:Steering wheels and steering engine positioned on wheelhouse floor.

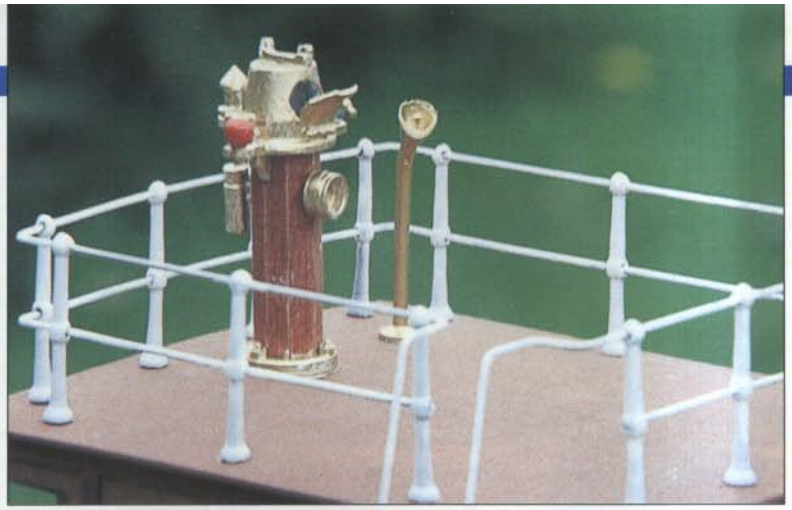
Left: Binnacle, telegraph and voice pipe in place on wheelhouse floor.



Left: Wheelhouse floor and fittings on bridge deck.

Below: Rudder and propeller 'as fitted' including weed collected on first outing.





Top: Wheelhouse top showing weatherproof binnacle, rails etc.

Above: Midships section of well deck showing mast foot, derrick swivels etc.

Wheelhouse with roof access ladder etc.

fitting them to a shaft on two knife-edges to find the heaviest blade. Careful filing then trued the propeller before it was fitted. On this occasion I was unable to balance the cast propeller after some hours of trying and it was rejected in favour of a three-bladed brass unit that I had in stock.

The rudder provided was also of white metal with the stock cast in place, it was only necessary to clean a little flash from the casting and to treat it with three coats of white primer before it was ready for installing. The hole for the rudderstock was drilled in the location of the hull and the upper bearing casting was located inside the hull. The casting carrying the lower bearing for the rudder was next carefully fitted to the keel and secured with countersunk head BA screws once it was aligned. Using the brass tube supplied for both upper and lower bearings and with the rudder in place, the upper casting was sealed to the hull and the brass tube bearings were glued in place using Superglue. The alignment of rudder and bearings is equally important for good control, as is the alignment of the drive components. With a heavy, large rudder I always use a closed loop system between the tiller and the servo to reduce the loading on the servo and to ensure easy motion.

Deck supports and coamings

Fitting deck supports, beams etc. then followed and requires little description; all were fitted as instructed in the manual. To attach the timber parts to the grp of the hull I used catalysed polyester resin which gives a particularly strong bond. For gluing timber to timber aliphatic PVA adhesive was used extensively; this adhesive was also used, slightly diluted, to fix the card plating to the timber decks. The work of cutting out the ply parts for the main decks was straightforward and easy, care being necessary to sand the edges to fit the hull curves. The coamings for the two main hatches were fitted as detailed in the instructions. A little difficulty was experienced in getting the forward end of the raised quarterdeck to lie true but it was eventually secured as can be seen in the pictures. The fine art card provided for the deck plating was cut into suitably sized plates and glued down, after which, once the glue had set, given two coats of sanding sealer. The deck edges round the stern (quarterdeck) were carefully sanded flush with the plating.

Bulkheads and first painting

The bulkheads of the quarter and forecastle decks were prepared next but were not fitted permanently until the deck painting was done. To allow as much drying time for the paint as possible the spraying of the hull and decks was left until late one Friday afternoon. Three coats of acrylic, red oxide from Halfords were applied, allowing about one hour between each, to cover the entire hull and decks. After each coat was applied the surfaces were examined for faults and rectified before the next coat. The hull was then placed in a tent of sheeting and left over the weekend.

On Monday the hull was once more examined and then set up on the workbench to allow the water-line to be drawn with a soft pencil held in a clamp on a block set to the correct height. With the hull held firmly and supported at the bow to bring the water-line parallel to the work surface, the pencil and block were drawn round the hull to clearly mark the required line. The lower hull was masked off to the drawn line and covered with paper and the decks were similarly masked off. The masking tape used was of fine quality and well rubbed down to prevent any chance of the paint leaching through. The upper section of the hull was then given three coats by spray can of acrylic black primer, once more from the Halfords' range. The hull was again protected from dust by a tent of sheeting and set aside. The reader will appreciate that I work during the normal week Monday to Friday and tend to have weekends free, whereas the usual modeller will work in his/her spare time at nights and weekends. The model, once painted, should be left as long as possible as indicated.

Waiting time

The kit contained a number of small kits to make up such items as the anchor windlass, winches (2), skylights, funnel etc., and work proceeded upon these in turn while the hull lay for the paint to dry out properly. Spray paints take a considerable time for the volatile contents to dry out and for the paint coatings to become hard enough to handle. A warm dry atmosphere is needed and a couple or, better still, three weeks should be allowed before the hull is handled. If earlier handling is necessary then the paintwork should be protected with soft cloth pads where the hull touches its supports.

So time there was to build up the anchor windlass which proved to be an excellent set of cast parts, the finished unit is illustrated and, when finished and painted, was set aside to be fitted later. The winches and the lifeboat davits were also made up from the parts provided, painted and set aside. A fine exercise, which occupied a couple of evenings for me, was the building of the two binnacles; one to be fitted on the flying bridge and the other inside the wheelhouse.

The steering engine with its shafts and wheels was also built and prepared and here there was a wheel found to be missing. A phone call had the part on my doorstep the following day and the unit was assembled. The small wheel was in normal service on these ships and was connected to the steering engine; this was usually a steel wheel. The larger wheel was for emergency use when the steering engine was out of service and controlled the rudder by hand. This wheel was usually of timber construction with brass fittings and bindings.

Painting the steel wheel was easy using black paint with an added mix of aluminium to give a steely effect. The white metal 'timber' wheel required more treatment. Initially it was spray painted with white primer after which it was given two coats of yellow spray filler. Once the paint had dried it was brush painted with dark mahogany spirit stain and allowed to dry. The timber effect of this treatment is quite remarkable.

After letting a week or so pass for the stain to dry well the front and back faces of the wheel were very carefully brush painted with gold paint to simulate the brass banding. I am fully aware that there is a brass paint available but this really needs a white undercoat in order to show up well, the gold paint gives a much more pleasing finish in my opinion and shows well through the windows of the wheelhouse.

Back to the hull and fittings

By the time the small kits of winches, windlass, davits etc. had been completed and painted the hull paintwork had the required degree of drying time and it was returned to the workbench for further work to be carried out.

The bulkhead for the forecastle, having been outfitted with the cast parts, was carefully fitted and sealed to the sides of the hull and to the decks. The bollards were assembled from the

Detail of forecastle deck showing ventilators etc.

Far left: Detail of lifeboat falls.

Left: Bridge from port side illustrating supports and access ladders.

parts supplied and painted black before being fitted to the foredeck. The hosts of ventilators were assembled, primed and painted white, after which the cowls were brush painted red - all of these vents, in the three sizes, being mounted on timber strips using double-sided adhesive tape for spray painting. The required number of ventilators were fitted to the foredeck as were a number of fairleads and mushroom pattern vents, each being painted black before installation. The deck was drilled for the anchor hawse pipes that were made from lengths of brass tube to run from the holes in the hull near the bows to the deck. The fittings for these pipes were installed followed by the anchor windlass, which has already been described.

The anchor cable (chain) was assembled from the links supplied and painted white; the anchors were assembled using Superglue and also painted white. Once the paint had dried each anchor complete with cable was drawn up into the hawse pipe and the cables were fitted over the windlass and secured through holes into the deck. With a working model it is important to ensure that the hawse pipes are sealed carefully to the hull and deck and that the holes leading to the chain locker beneath the windlass are also sealed to prevent the ingress of water. Heavy weather can sweep water over the bows of a model and enter the hull if all is not made watertight.

To complete the foredeck the required number of rail stanchions were carefully fitted into small holes in a length of scrap timber, painted white and allowed to dry before being put to use. The wire supplied for the handrails was then bent to suit each location, each top and middle rail being carefully matched. The holes for the stanchions were drilled in the appropriate places and the rails assembled by threading the stanchions on to the wire and then gluing the stanchions in place. The top rails at each side of the after end of the foredeck curve downward to form the handrails of the companion ladders.

At this point I deviated from the kit. The companion ladders supplied were of cast white metal and very heavy, making them obviously over scale. I had a supply of Plastruct in the workshop which were much nearer scale size and these were substituted. Although quickly described, making rails is time consuming, it is necessary to be accurate and to take care, as the rails on a model are very highly visible and need to be neat to avoid being unsightly.

It must be said that the cast fittings for this model required very little in the way of trimming or filing, there was virtually no flash and the castings were clean. As recommended in the instructions all castings were given two coats of white primer initially but they also benefited from a buffing with a fine brass suede cleaning brush before the paint was applied.

Hatch covers

The next task was the building of the two hatch covers from the timber and castings supplied. Here again I deviated from the instructions and photographs by finishing both hatches with simulated tarpaulin covers. The assembly of the hatches from the timber parts was relatively straightforward although some trial and error sanding was necessary to ensure that the sides conformed to the camber and sheer of the decks. For assembling the timber parts, aliphatic PVA white glue was used and each hatch was allowed a minimum of 24 hours for the glue to cure. The small, cast angles that carry the securing bars and wedges needed to be carefully fitted into small holes measured off and drilled round the perimeter of each hatch. This is a somewhat complex operation but very necessary. To complete each hatch a cotton handkerchief was cut to fit over the top and down each side to the position of the little angles. This was treated with a dilute solution of PVA and placed over the hatch top. Small bars of 1.5 mm x 3.0 mm strip wood were used to wedge the cloth in place in the angles and the assemblies were set aside to dry thoroughly before being suitably painted. It goes without saying that the hatches were built initially over the coamings of the hatch openings to be a neat fit to prevent water from entering the hull, and also to prevent the hatch covers from being lifted in windy conditions.

Moving aft, the bulkhead for the raised quarterdeck was completed and fitted and the companion ladders were installed on both sides of the unit.

Bridge

The forward section of the quarterdeck had been plated and over this was built the accommodation block below the bridge. This was made from the plywood parts supplied, suitably painted and fitted with portlights, vents etc. The bulwark sides at this position were sanded on the inside before the decks were laid, and at this time the capping rails were fitted, made from grooved timber along each side of the well deck with cast curved pieces to cover the curves fore and aft. These parts were primed and painted black using a small brush. The side pieces at the tops of each of the well deck companions, port and starboard, were made from small pieces of 1.5 mm plywood capped with the grooved timber supplied. These were treated with sanding sealer and painted white by brush after they were fitted and the wire handrails of the companions were attached.

Before proceeding to the bridge, the cowl vents, gooseneck vents and lifebelts with their holders were fitted and secured with Superglue, as access, once the bridge was fitted, would become restricted. The areas on both sides of the superstructure were carefully examined for any faults before any work on the bridge was attempted. In this area too, at the bulwarks on either side, would be fitted the bridge supports of cast white metal. I debated whether to fit these supports before building the bridge but decided to leave them for later fitting. While work proceeded upon building the bridge and laying the grounding for the wheelhouse, work was also carried out on the engineroom casing, funnel, skylight etc., this section being removable for access to the drive equipment.

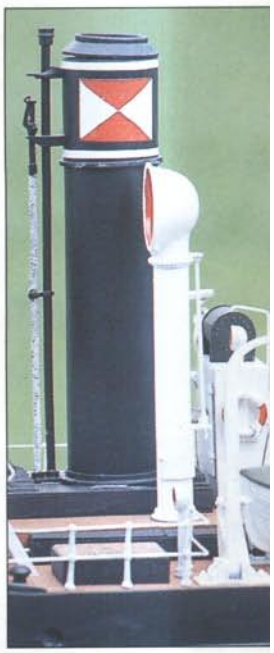
Much time can be saved when building sections of a model by proceeding sensibly and doing a series of jobs progressively so that, while waiting for paint or glue to dry on one piece, work can be done on another. This was the method used for the quarterdeck. The wheelhouse was assembled from the printed ply parts in more or less the designed manner except that the forward end should have been curved to match the end of the main deck and this was not either made plain nor catered for within the parts supplied. This did not detract from the model once it was completed and there was little that could be done about it without reconstructing the whole piece using new parts. The walls were built up first in accordance with the instructions and the insides were painted white, the outsides had been stained with spirit stain called Peruvian mahogany and varnished. A brace was made to fit across between the sides to support the roof and curved to match the camber of the ends of the wheelhouse.

The floor of the wheelhouse was cut from the ply supplied and tried in place, it was then fitted with curved supports to conform to the camber of the bridge and glued down to the bridge deck which in turn was fixed firmly to the superstructure using the beams supplied. The white metal supports for the bridge wings were painted white and glued in place with Superglue after which the bridge curtain plates were fitted and painted. As previously described the steering engine and steering wheels had been prepared and they were now fitted on the floor of the wheelhouse. In addition the voice pipes and binnacle were fitted together with the pipes that fed steam and took condense to and from the engine. These pipes had been cast to include simulation of the asbestos cord lagging that would have been used on the full size ship and they looked particularly well once they had been painted white and slightly dirtied.

Everyone makes mistakes and mine came next, I made the roof of the wheelhouse from two layers of 0.8mm plywood glued together while clamped by rubber bands to a suitably curved piece of scrap timber. The model was almost completed and ready for testing on the lake when I discovered the piece of printed plywood that should have been used for the wheelhouse roof! It had become hidden in the clutter on the workbench. The wheelhouse walls were next fitted with transparent glazing which was fixed in place with thin strips of double-sided adhesive tape, being very high up on the model this method of fixing was deemed to be adequate. Lower down where the glazing could be in contact with water washing over the model an alternate form of fixing would have been desirable.

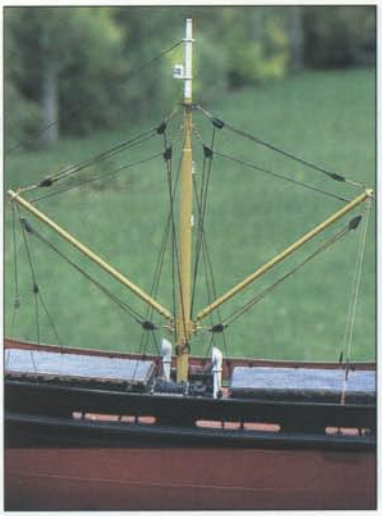
Steering chains

Down either side of the superstructure below the wheelhouse, port and starboard, are fitted tubes to carry the steering chains and cast pulleys guiding the chains from the steering engine to the main deck. These parts were provided in the kit and fixed to match the drawings although, at this point, the main general arrangement drawing did need some thought to translate the location of the parts correctly. Once they were painted and fitted



Funnel with tall ventilators viewed from port side.

Far right: Port lifeboat in davits and illustrating engineroom skylight behind.



General view of mast and rigging.

they did look right and seemed to match the photographs. There were cast chequerplate covers to be made up and fitted on the bridge at each side of the wheelhouse to match up with the steering guide pulleys and the steering engine inside the house.

Lights

The port and starboard navigation light boxes were made up from the printed timber parts and painted in preparation for fitting. It should be noted that these boxes were painted red and green respectively which is correct for the period of this ship. Furthermore there were two lamps for each box and each box had a division board, the lower lamp was electrically illuminated whereas the upper lamp was of the oil lit pattern. These lamps are correctly displayed in the kit and need to be fitted with their moulded lenses and painted before being installed in the boxes. Each box, when completed, was glued in place on the bridge wings.

At this point I again deviated from the kit instructions. Round the perimeter of the bridge I should have fitted stanchions and guard rails, suitably painted and fitted with canvas screening from the model aircraft cloth provided. While I had successfully used this system on the tug Cruiser I felt that solid rails (bulwarks) of thin ply painted white would be more attractive and this was done as can be seen in the photographs. The companion ladders leading to the bridge were made from the ladder material previously mentioned and fitted with wire handrails painted on completion. To finish the bridge the cowl vents were glued in place.

The roof of the wheelhouse was glued to the structure and held firmly with small weights until the glue had set after which it was painted and allowed to dry. The previously made and painted binnacle and voice pipes were located and secured with Superglue and the positions of the handrail stanchions marked and drilled. There was a small discrepancy relating to these rails obvious from the drawing. In all other locations the top rail was extended to form the handrail of the access ladders but at this point the drawing indicated that the middle rail should be extended for the ladder handrails. This was an error by the draughtsman of which I was quite sure and examination of the drawings of many other coasters of similar period led me to believe I was right. At the time I was unable to contact Mount Fleet so I proceeded to make and fit the stanchions and rails as I thought correct and as can be seen in the photographs.

View of well cluttered quarterdeck.

Engineroom casing

Attention turned to the engineroom casing, funnel etc. Here I built a small coaming round the opening in the deck and built the detachable casing over the coaming. The two channels with chequerplate tops that carry the steering rods and chains down each side of the engineroom casing were built to the instructions and painted black before being fixed permanently on either side of the casing. These, in theory, help to locate the engineroom casing and should help to prevent water entering the hull. They certainly assist in locating the casing but whether they help keep water out is yet to be determined. The casing itself was formed from a piece of 4.0mm thick marine plywood with the sides extended by strips of 1.5mm ply to sit over the coamings. The ply was suitably primed and painted before any work was carried out on it. The instructions suggested that this casing be built upon a piece of styrene but I felt that the plywood would give strength for a part that would be removed and replaced at fairly frequent intervals. The steam capstan that had previously been made and painted was located near the stern. The engineroom skylight was built up from the printed timber parts provided and suitably painted. Here a classic error occurred, the glazing was fitted by my colleague using Superglue before I could prevent it and, of course, the glazing became opaque within a few hours. Unfortunately at the time of taking the photographs the glazing had still to be replaced thus it shows up poorly.

The funnel was a comparatively easy exercise using the cast parts supplied to fit over the polystyrene pipe provided. Once all the parts were fitted and the glue had set the funnel was sprayed with yellow primer filler followed by satin black both from the Halfords' range of acrylic car finishes.

The red and white triangle design was first done with acrylic paints on thin tissue paper and then glued in place with PVA adhesive; the white lining was carried out using tapes from the Graupner range. There is much to be said for painting designs for funnel casings, lettering for hulls etc., on to thin tissue paper and then gluing these to the model. It is not always possible to obtain rubdown letters or decal designs to precisely fit the model or the period. Often, in fact, I draw and paint the required design at a large scale and have the resultant picture in colour reproduced by a good colour copy shop to the required scale; this is not as expensive as one might think and often solves a knotty problem. Finally the engineroom casing was drilled out in way of the funnel location and the funnel was fitted firmly to the casing using two-part epoxy cement.

The funnel guys were made from black cord, which had been passed through a block of beeswax to lay the threads. The opening for the funnel need not have been done except that I wanted to fit a smoke generator; although in the final event the smoke unit was not fitted, there is still the space and means to do so in the future.

On this section of the engineroom casing are a number of small cowl vents of two sizes and these, having been previously prepared, were secured using small pieces of 1.5mm brass rod fixed into the bottom of each vent and through suitable holes drilled at each location. A medium quality Superglue was used for attaching these and the other small parts round the casing. Mention must be made of the large cowl vents located on either side and just aft of the funnel. These should have been constructed from cast white metal cowls and styrene tube with cast metal fittings. The cast cowls were particularly heavy and not truly circular and were replaced by two that were formed in styrene sheet of 1.5-mm thickness. A former was turned in hard wood to match the inside diameter of the cowls, and a small square of 3.0mm plywood was drilled out to give a hole of the outside diameter of the cowl. A piece of 1.5mm thick styrene sheet was taped carefully to the plywood square and the styrene heated using an electric paint stripper gun until it was visibly softened, whereupon the cowl shaped former was pressed through the soft styrene and the plywood to form the cowl shape. After a few minutes to allow the styrene to cool it was possible to remove the tape and cut the cowl from the square of styrene and then to repeat the operation to form a second cowl. Using two-part epoxy the cowls were attached to the plastic tubes provided in the kit after they were shaped to receive them and, once each had cured fully, the cowls were cut away in way of the tubes so that they could be functional. Cutting the holes in the styrene cowls was not easy and required a degree of patience, but perseverance and a selection of small drills and needle files completed the job. The finished ventilators can be seen in the pictures, they were secured into pre-drilled holes in the engineroom casing using two-part epoxy. I am certain that the white metal units would not have been so neat or acceptable.

Lifeboats, davits and 'rope'

Work then proceeded to complete the raised quarter deck by fitting the lifeboat davits on either side in their appropriate locations, making up and fitting the boat chocks and preparing the rope falls and blocks. The blocks are beautifully cast in white metal and were cleaned up where necessary with needle files followed by painting white as instructed. I always open up any holes in such fittings with either a drill of suitable size or with a small tapered reamer. This to ensure that the cord will run freely and that there will be no problem in threading cord through blocks or deadeyes when carrying out the rigging.

The lifeboats are supplied as mouldings and require little work other than the required painting. Each was to be covered when fitted and thus there was no need to detail the interiors.

The rope grab loops are always a source of concern, as, if made from cord, they will not hang neatly unless glued throughout their whole length. Such is generally a messy business so that in this case rope loops were made from stranded copper wire fixed in place before the hulls of the boats were painted. It is a simple matter to strip some domestic electric cable of its fine copper cores and to use these to make stranded 'rope'. I drill four small holes in a small piece of thin plywood and clamp the plywood in a bench vice. One single strand of copper wire is led through each hole and the four ends twisted together and soldered for security, the four strands (each about 4ft long) are next gathered into the chuck of a hand drill and secured. Drawing the wires fairly taut the drill is next turned slowly and the wires twisted to form a 'rope'. Once the required turning has been done and before detaching the wires from the drill it is necessary to maintain the tension on the 'rope' and to solder each end for about 10mm in length. The resultant rope can then be taken from the drill and cut from the plywood former. This 'rope' makes excellent grab ropes for lifeboats and is also very suitable for making up standing rigging, such was used for the standing rigging of this model.

To continue with the lifeboats, once the grab ropes had been fitted and the paint had been allowed to dry, the canvas covers were applied using the model aircraft cloth supplied in the kit. This material is ideal for this duty, it is easily fixed in place with the heat from a clean soldering iron used quickly and gently and the method of making the covers is described in the instruction manual. The finished boats were glued to the chocks and allowed time to dry before the falls were 'roped' up and tied off to the cruciform bollards provided.

Stern grating

The stern grating was assembled from the four pieces of cast grating supplied and the plywood parts exactly as detailed in the instruction book. To allow it to stand clear of the deck at the stern it was mounted upon four legs made from sections of four rail stanchions and it was also fitted with the socket into which the jackstaff would go before being painted black. Four small holes were drilled in the stern of the quarterdeck to accept the feet of the grating. Beneath the grating was located the cast tiller and its boss which had been prepared previously and painted. The guide pulleys for the steering chains were painted and fitted in the correct locations and the steering chain carefully threaded through from the ends of the steering rod covers to the centre of the tiller unit and secured with Superglue. Once the glue had set the deck was protected with scraps of paper and the chain picked out with black acrylic paint using a fine brush.

The quarterdeck was completed by fitting the coal hatches and other small fittings followed by the guard-rails made in the same way as the previous rails using the stanchions and wire provided. The work on this deck was checked carefully and any small faults, particularly to the paintwork, were rectified at this time.

Mast

Returning to the well deck the mast was fitted into a pre-drilled hole between the hatches. During the construction of the deck a block of softwood was glued below the deck to give the mast a substantial base and this was drilled to the diameter of the mast after the deck had been plated and painted. The mast was sanded and shaped from the dowel provided and had the cast fittings glued in place before it was painted. This is quite a complex unit and time is needed to ensure that all the cast parts are correctly identified and that their appropriate locations are marked off. The derricks were also made from the dowel supplied and fitted out with the necessary cast parts before being painted.

Winches

The winches which had been built and painted were to be located on either side of the mast and I was disturbed about this as the ropes coming from the blocks that swivel just beneath the derrick pivots run at a severe angle to the drums of the winches. The winch drums run parallel to the fore and aft centreline of the ship and I had not seen winches located this way before. By chance a week or two before reaching the time for fitting the winches I had the opportunity of visiting a coaster in the King George dock at Hull and had a long talk with her master. He advised that the winches were not incorrectly fitted with drums running fore and aft but that a guide pulley block for each winch would have been swivel mounted on the deck in front of each drum to take the rope from the derrick swivel. Provision for this was not made in the kit nor was any such arrangement mentioned. I thus used two small blocks from those supplied and the roping of the winches can be seen in the photographs.

Rigging

The standing rigging for the mast was, as previously stated, made from stranded copper wire painted black and fitted to the cast rigging screws and mast as instructed. It is always necessary to look at the masts of a model from all directions when drawing standing rigging taut as it is very easy to pull a mast from the true vertical or rake if one is not careful. The running rigging was fitted as indicated in the drawing using the cord supplied in the kit and the cast metal blocks and fittings. It must be said that, technically, it is incorrect to show the model as it is shown with the rigging of the derricks in place unless the ship is entering a harbour or berth preparatory to unloading or loading. At sea the blocks and running rigging of the derricks would be dismantled and stored until the ship approached its berth. One must, therefore, assume that the model is approaching harbour.

The insulated pipes supplied were painted and fitted across the decks to the winches and finally the cowl vents located close to the mast and hatches were fitted. To complete the model all the lifebelts and their holders were secured where necessary. The only omissions at this stage were the provision of rigging between the mast and the funnel and the whistle cord. Fitting such items would make removal of the engineroom casing unit difficult and I needed to get the model on the water and photographed to meet a self imposed deadline. I am aware that it is possible to make arrangements to have such cording made detachable and it will be fitted in due course. Also yet to be completed are the depth marks fore and aft on the hull and the painting in of the Plimsoll line details.

R/C and ballasting

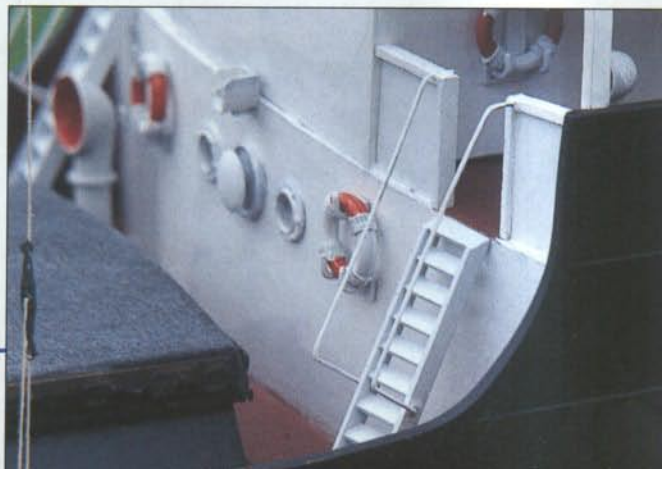
The fitting of the radio equipment – two channel and the application of ballast in the form of lead sheets glued up the inside sides of the hull from the keel was done in the usual way by placing the model in the domestic bath and balancing the loading carefully. As big models are invariably very heavy if fully laden, I decided to depict this one in an only partly laden situation, thus she rides high in the water at the bow and somewhat lower at the stern as is correct for an engines aft vessel.

Trials

Eventually she was taken to the lake and full sailing trials were carried out. As is the norm for single screw ships she was not easily steered when running astern but reasonably good when running ahead. Too large I fear for regular sailing over a regatta course, at least by me. I am not the best model ship navigator on the scene, I suppose there must be some modellers who will have none of my difficulties when sailing a model round a course. Even in choppy conditions she sailed well and shipped very little water over the decks, remaining dry inside after a couple of hours of test sailing.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would say that at £350.00 this kit, though expensive, is fully up to the mark and the contents of the kit justify the price. The kit is not intended for the novice builder or, indeed, for anyone with little experience. The instructions leave quite a lot to be desired and give little direction to those modellers who have had but one or two simple models behind them. It is, however, a kit to challenge the experienced builder who will get a great deal of satisfaction in completing it. I certainly did.



Detail of quarterdeck bulkhead.