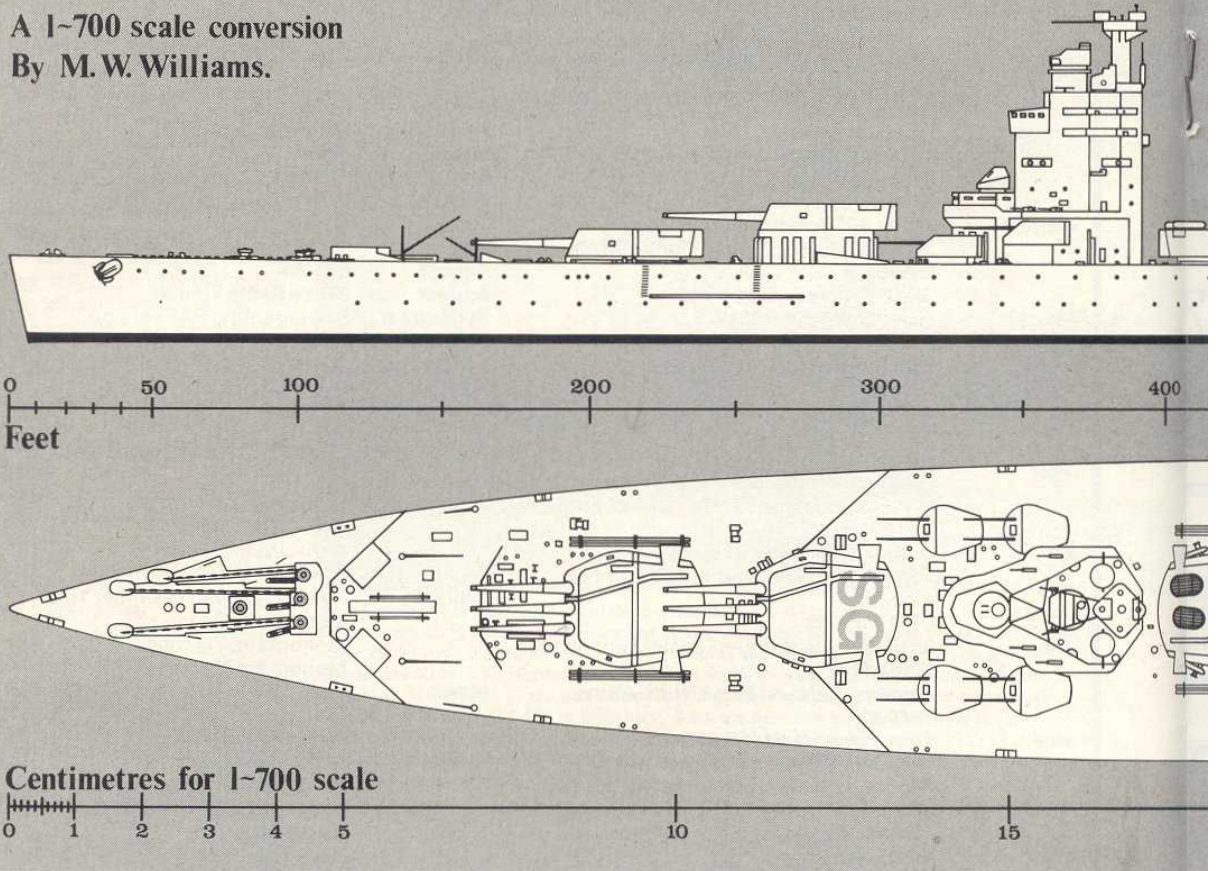


# HMS SAINT GEORGE

The cancelled battleship of the early twenties

A 1-700 scale conversion  
By M. W. Williams.



In the April 1981 issue of the *Airfix Magazine* I outlined the history of the cancelled British battlecruiser project of 1921, the G3 design HMS *Invincible*. In this short article I briefly described the Royal Navy's need for such a class of capital ships to counter those being built by Japan and America at this time. Although the Royal Navy had wisely decided to concentrate its building capacity on a program to re-equip its Battlecruiser Squadron there did exist in the early twenties definite plans to follow up this class of four battlecruisers, with a class of four battleships, to be laid down the following year in 1922. It is now these vessels, and in particular the modelling of an example of one of them, that this article will cover.

Although the battleships were to take second place in priority to the battlecruisers, there does exist a surprising amount of information regarding their planned specifications and layout, and it from these sources that this project is based.

This battleship design can be traced back

to November 1920, when the initial M3 design was presented to the Admiralty for inspection, as it turned out this particular design, one from the four then under consideration, proved to be the most satisfactory companion to the proposed battlecruisers. But even after its approval and before any thought of laying them down, this design was improved upon over the next year in the drawing offices, basically to strengthen her already considerable staying power, to eventually produce what turned out to be an evolved improved M3 which by November 1921 had become known as the N3 design.

Siegfried Breyer in his valuable reference work 'Battleships and Battlecruisers 1905-1970', has put proposed names to this class of super capital ships, they might have been named after the patron saints of the countries of the United Kingdom, namely the St George, St Patrick, St Andrew and St David. Although this nomenclature has been described as being doubtful, rather than proceed with this article describing

this subject as either the N3 or 'battleship' design, I have decided to retain these proposed names and to therefore bring a touch of identity to these ships.

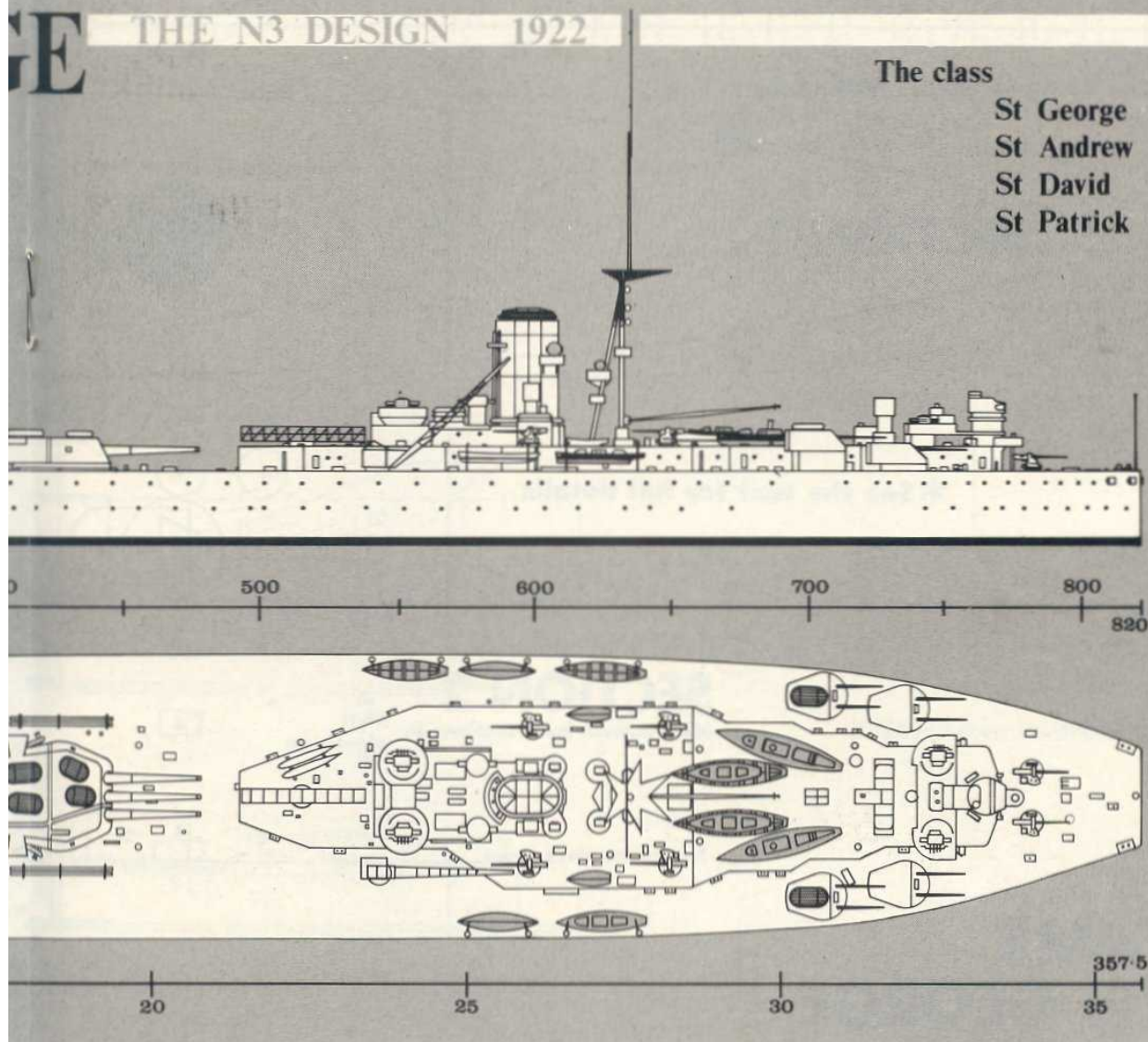
As already mentioned, the St George class would have been the battleship companion of the G3 *Invincibles*, these two collections of mighty ships were intended to greatly strengthen the core of the Battle Fleet, to finally create one capable of standing up to the growing navies of Japan and America.

The St George and her sister were destined to be of at least 48,500 tons displacement, measure 820 feet overall with a beam of 106 feet, and draw 33 feet of water. This massive structure would be driven to a maximum of 23.5 knots by a two shaft machinery installation capable of producing 56,000 SHP, and all this would be protected by a 15 inch sloped internal belt topped by an 8 inch armour deck over the vitals, to finally provide her with the best protection possible.

For offence, she was to be armed with

## The class

St George  
St Andrew  
St David  
St Patrick



nine 18 inch guns in three triple turrets, sixteen 6 inch guns in eight twin turrets, both of which would form the main armament of the ship, while her defence against aircraft would comprise of six high angle 4.7 inch single mounts and four of the planned new ten barrelled 2 pounder pom-pom mountings. Her torpedo equipment was intended to have been two 24.5 inch underwater tubes, finally there was to be provision for at least two aircraft to be carried and operated, for spotting and reconnaissance purposes.

All in all they were to have been a great asset to the Battlefleet, whose most modern units of the Queen Elizabeth and 'R' classes of 15 inch gunned ships were by the early twenties almost a decade old in basic design. But their construction and eventual service in the fleet was not to be. After the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference had come to its historic agreement, all the major new construction in Japan, America and Britain was halted and the number and even the size of future capital

ships was reduced. In effect this was intended to level out the strengths of the major battlefleets to a mutually agreed ratio comprised of ships of fixed specifications. For Japan this meant that they could only retain the two new 'Nagatos' from their programme to add to her fleet, while America was allowed three of the 'Colorado' class to join her fleet. All these latest additions possessed main armaments of eight 16 inch guns, which meant that after Britain had cancelled her entire G3 and N3 programme (because each was well over the recently agreed size for future capital ships) she was entitled to construct two smaller 16 inch gunned ships to counter those retained by Japan and America.

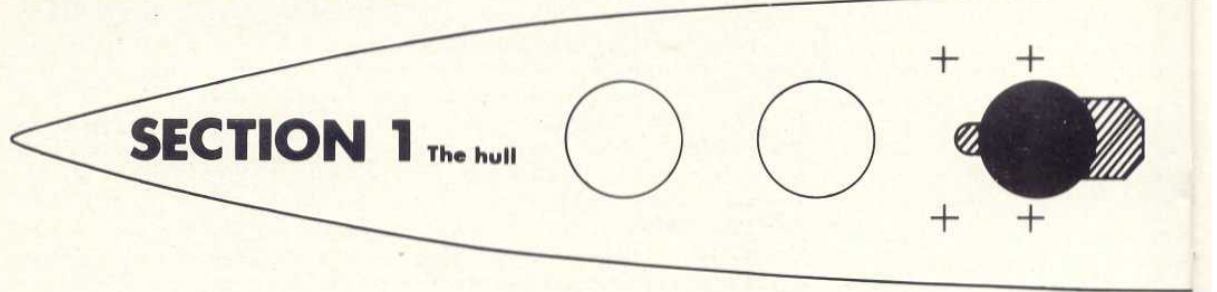
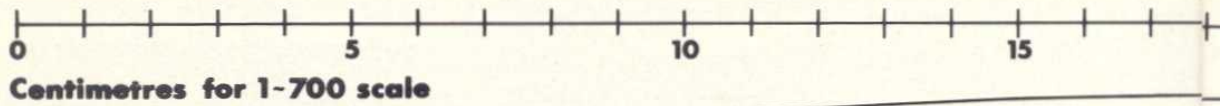
Primarily from the G3 Invincible, but also from the B3 St George design, evolved the reduced battleship design. This eventually resulted in the mighty Rodney and Nelson, both of which are modelled by Tamiya to the popular 1:700 collection scale, and which I will now employ to create an impression of their cancelled ancestor,

the N3, HMS *St George*.

**The conversion**

This conversion follows the same procedure and layout that I adopted for my earlier Invincible, but perhaps with one noticeable alteration in approach — I have decided to employ as much of the basic Rodney kit as possible and therefore retain as much of the excellent detail existing in these components, thus keeping down the amount of completely new scratch building required. This makes the entire project as simple as possible for anyone interested in creating an impression of this undeniably unique cancelled battleship. Again I will rely mainly on my artwork to convey an idea of the actual work involved. I hope that you will agree that this has been done, upon inspection of the main article 'final-appearance' drawing and the three sections of the conversion artwork.

One point I would like to mention, is my decision to use the existing 16 inch triple turrets to represent the new 18 inch

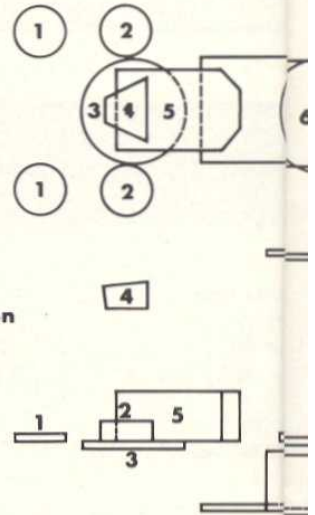


\* See the text for full details

## SECTION 2

New scratch built sections in ▲  
plan  
-  
elevation  
▼

Forecastle deck level →



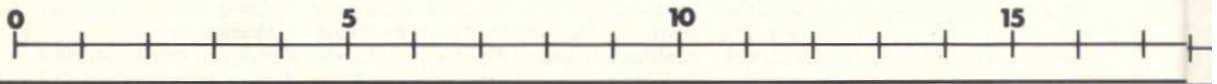
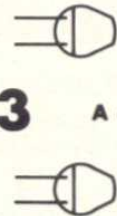
# HMS St GEORGE 1922

By M.W. Williams.

## SECTION 3

Nelson parts

A 6, 8.



mountings. Although the new items would have had a slightly larger gunhouse and barrette, they would still have had the same overall appearance and outline as the 16 inch ones.

The final artwork will also indicate some possible detailing of the subject, especially around the new amidships area.

**Section 1** deals with the major surgery required on the main hull. Remove 10mm of the stern and divide the hull as indicated, squaring off and cleaning up the cut surfaces afterwards. Also remove (in black) X barrette and the deck detail in the

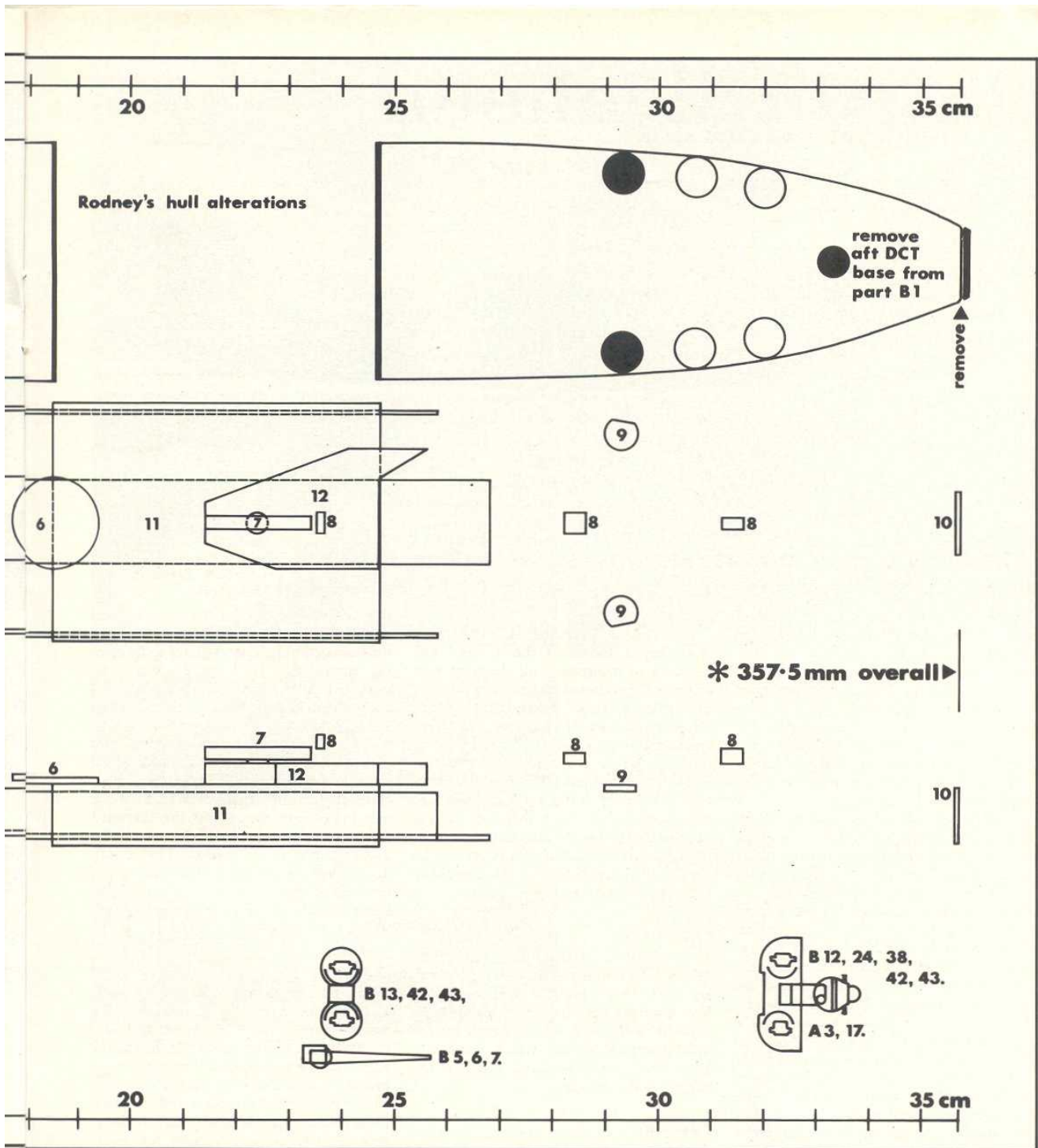
hatched area in preparation for the new bridge base and its position. The two 6 inch barbettes in P1 and S1 position are next, and then the after-director control tower base on kit part B1 should be removed prior to its being replaced with the DCT pom-pom arrangement from the Nelson.

**Section 2** outlines the new scratch-built parts required. It is *important* after the transom stern has been blanked off and the hull portions have been squared off and cleaned up level, the new midships extension (11, all internal supports, deck and sides) should all be constructed to enable

the hull to eventually measure 357.5mm overall.

Also indicated are the new 16 and 6 inch barbettes (1, 2 and 6), the new rear to the bridge base (5, plus cut back kit part B 25), bridge enlargement (4, which will replace B 13, 33 and 34), the extension (12) to the shelter deck part B1, the catapult (7), blanking off plates for the holes left by the removal of the old barbettes (3, 9), and some small structures to cover the largest redundant locating holes (8), and transom stern (10).

It will be of the greatest help to line up and finally fit to an existing item any new



scratch built part, to produce a perfect union.

Before proceeding with the Nelson parts required, in section 3, some mention should be made about the minor alterations to some of the Rodney's parts. These are B 12 and the entire funnel/ventilator structure, is to be moved further forward, after its locating pins have been removed. The mainmast and derrick now face aft, but the starfish part A 42 will still point forward. There is also some repositioning of the ships boats. All the above modifications can be clearly seen on my final St George artwork.

Section 3 involves the small number of parts needed from the Nelson, namely the four 8 barrelled pom-poms (used to represent the 10 barrelled versions planned for the G3 and N3s), two additional 6 inch mountings, the aircraft handling crane, and complete aft DCT installation. Although I did not attempt to scratch build these items and therefore avoid the expense of buying the Nelson for these parts, I suppose it is possible for those modellers more skilled than myself to do so.

Although I completed my St George in a rather inaccurate sprayed-on overall dark grey (just to finish off my model after I had

concentrated solely on the actual conversion and modelling the parts together), I would suggest that a far more accurate and certainly more pleasing overall finish will be obtained by making use of the Humbrol paint range. Using deck planking colour for the great expanse of wooden decking and naval dark grey for the metallised decks and superstructure, with black for the funnel top and boot topping and with a certain amount of minor detailed painting, you will eventually end up with a faithful impression of this proposed battleship of the early twenties, HMS *St George*.