



The later 'Manxman'

This famous ship in her later days makes an ideal conversion project for a beginner to warship modelling; details and drawing by **R. W. Liddiard**

HMS *Manxman* was one of six ships of the 'Abdiel' class of fast minelayers, comprising the *Abdiel*, *Latona*, *Welshman*, *Manxman*, and two later but very similar ships, *Apollo* and *Ariadne*. The first three were lost during the war, and the last two scrapped post-war.

The last survivor was *Manxman*, launched in the Glasgow yard of Alexander Stephens and Son on September 5, 1940. She earned fame for her high speed run to Malta with much needed food supplies during 1942, and with a maximum speed of 36 knots, she was an obvious choice for the job. She was badly damaged by a torpedo in the Mediterranean in December 1942, and remained laid up under repair until 1945. Post-war, she served in the Pacific until 1947, when she was put into reserve.

1951 saw her recommissioned for duty in the Mediterranean. From 1953 to 1956 she was again in reserve, and was re-employed during the Suez crisis of 1956. After one year's service, the ship was laid up until refitted in 1962-63 at Chatham Dockyard for a new role — that of parent ship to coastal minesweepers. The refit, which cost £1 million robbed her of half her boiler power, reducing speed to 26 knots, and her main armament (originally of 4.7 inch mounts but later changed to 4 inch mounts). The major part of her mining deck was converted into office and store space, and additional superstructure was built aft. She served in this form in the Far East till 1968, when she returned to the UK.

After a period as a sea going training ship for engineering officers and ratings she was scrapped.

Main structure

This conversion details *Manxman* as a minesweeper support ship, and is, of course, based on the Airfix model of HMS *Manxman* in 1:600 scale.

Cement the hull halves (1 + 3) together, and cement the deck (4) in place.

Drill holes for the davits of the extra motor launch in the forward position on the

port side. Block up the holes for the 16 ft boat (61) and the holes for A and Y gun mounts. Remove all detail from the quarterdeck, from and including the gun splinter shields, aft. In doing this be careful not to lower the general level of the deck. Of the four hatches approximately 2 inches from the stern, remove the forward two.

Also remove the boss for 'A' gun, and the breakwater immediately aft of the two cable holders. This is a tricky operation to carry out without damaging the foredeck detail, and is best done with a very sharp chisel or thick bladed knife.

The breakwater is replaced by a much more substantial splinter shield made of plastic card. The shield is supported by triangular webs. On the curve of the stern, etch two minelaying doors, one to port and one to starboard. I'm not sure why Airfix left these two very important items from the moulding.

Assemble 'B' deck and superstructure (9, 10 and 11). Remove all detail from and including the gun splinter shield forward, not forgetting the blast shield at the fore end, overlooking 'A' gun. The surrounds of the wing AA gun platforms are best removed and replaced by thin card.

Assemble the bridge components (16 + 17) and cement to 'B' deck. Build up with plastic card the sides of part 16, so that it is flush with the sides of parts 9 and 10. Cover in the top of this assembly level with the lower projecting front of the bridge structure, part 16. Reference to the drawing should make this clear. Put plastic card sponsors on top of this unit, projecting from the bridge sides.

Make a deckhouse from card to the size shown on the drawing, and fit to the main deck immediately aft of 'B' deck. This replaces parts 67 and 68.

Replaces the aft superstructure (30, 31, and 34), and cut through the deck (34) where it narrows, just aft of the two crane locating holes. Fit this assembly to the deck and on the rear end of it build up a deckhouse as shown in the drawing. Note

Above: The actual HMS *Manxman* in 1968, a good side view which should be compared with the scale drawing. As a training ship *Manxman* had the spare LL magnetic sweep drums and the spare *Oropesa* floats removed from the quarterdeck, and other detail changes described in the text. The conversion can be completed as either a support ship or training ship (MoD).

the undercut at the rear end of the structure. Build up the fore end of the superstructure, leaving a cutout for the aft funnel.

The fore and aft funnels are unmodified, but the centre funnel is a bit too tapered at its rear end, so cut off the rear 1/16 inch of the funnel and reshape it.

The single Bofors gundeck is scratch-built, using the supports from part 64. The deckhouse which supports the mainmast is scratch-built, and the little conning position on top of it is one side of the light gundeck which appears between the funnels on the *Cossack* kit (if you've not got a spare *Cossack* part make it from a scrap of plastic).

The twin Bofors bandstand (45) can be original or scratch-built, but if you use the original it's not a bad idea to replace the rim with thin card or paper to represent the canvas wind dodger laced to the guardrails.

Details

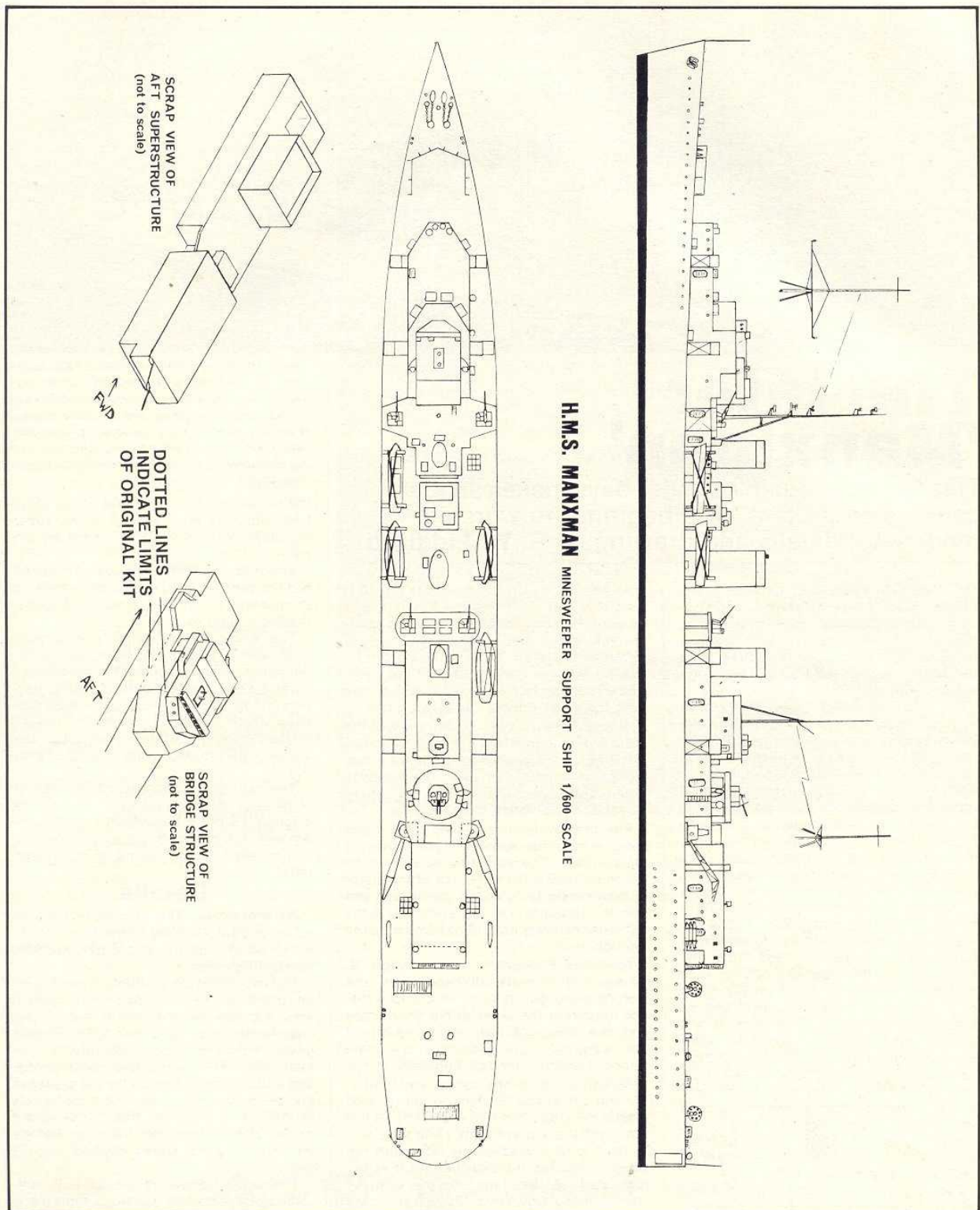
(1) Armament: The armament consists solely of light AA guns in the form of four single 40 mm Bofors and a twin Mk 5 40 mm Bofors mount.

The twin Bofors is available in the *Daring* kit, but if you haven't got one the bottom square section of part 67 with the corners chamfered at 45° and the sides thinned down, makes a good substitute for the main body. A 10 thou shield, sprue barrels and a little block of scrap for the breeches completes the mount. Note that the barrels of this gun are thicker than those of the single Bofors because the twin barrels individually have water cooling jackets around them.

The single Bofors are scratch-built consisting of a rectangle of card, a short piece of rod for the fixed base, an aimers 'cab' made from the scrap moulding that the kit parts are attached to, suitably trimmed down, a rectangle of 20 thou card standing on end to represent the ready use ammunition stowage and a sprue barrel which at this scale can be cemented directly to the inner face of the aimers' cab.

All armament supplied in the kit can be consigned to the spares box.

(2) Boats and rafts: The small boats in the kit are not used, but the other three are,



and another launch and gravity davits must be found. My launch came from the *Cos-sack* kit, and the davits from the *Hotspur*. These sets are fitted in the port forward position in the new holes drilled for them. The other three boats are fitted as per the kit instructions, although you might find it necessary to trim the starboard aft davits to fit them close in to the revised superstructure. Very thin sprue gripes around the boats go a long way towards enhancing

the appearance and realism of the model. The life rafts are of the modern inflatable type. They are arranged two per side of the forward superstructure, and two to port and one to starboard of the aft superstructure. The rafts themselves can be made from any scrap of suitable size, though mine came from a *Leander* kit, reduced in size as the ones from that kit are a bit too large. They are mounted on platforms which project from the superstructure out

as far as the hull sides. Sprue stanchions support the platforms above the deck. (3) **Ventilators and hatches:** Numerous hatches and ventilators appear on decks, mainly 'B' deck, gundecks and aft superstructure. Square section trunking topped by ventilators run up the sides of 'B' gun-deck and superstructure, starboard side: the deckhouse aft of the fore funnel; and on both sides of the aft deckhouse. The vents fitted directly to the decks are

cylindrical in shape, mounted on a smaller diameter 'stalk'. Grouped to port and starboard of the bandstand gun-deck are four of the original six small cowl type ventilators (36, 37, 39 and 40).

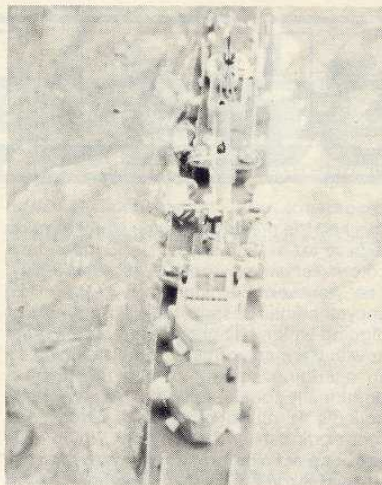
(4) Masts: The kit masts can be used, not forgetting to add the radar scanners to the foremast. The lower part of the foremast on my model is from the kit but the upper section, yard arms and bipod supports are made from thinner material. The mainmast is entirely new.

(5) Miscellaneous: Flagstuffs at the bow and stern are made of sprue, as are the stanchions supporting the single Bofors gun-decks, liferafts and rear, undercut end of the after deckhouse. The small davits near the paravanes are made from the same material, though fuse wire would do just as well. A couple of small pieces of scrap sprue on the bridge represent the compasses, and a slightly larger piece projects from the top of the centre funnel for an exhaust pipe. Searchlights in the bridge wings are kit parts 22 and 23 with the major part of the stems removed.

Two sets of Oropesas, stacked three high appear to port and starboard of the aft deckhouse. They're simply made from lengths of plastic rod with the ends tapered. The stack is made by cementing the three Oropesas together and adding two vertical pieces of sprue to represent the supporting structure frame. The two large drums on the quarter deck are made from plastic rod with 10 thou endplates of slightly larger diameter. Smaller coils, again of plastic rod are mounted on the quarterdeck and 'B' deck. The cranes are unmodified kit parts (79 and 80).

Strips of thin card cemented around the twin Bofor deck and mainmast supporting structure represent canvas wind dodgers. A similar strip suitably shaped makes an acceptable companionway on the rear face of the after deckhouse.

Bollards are made from scrap for fitting to the quarterdeck, and doors in the superstructure, where not already moulded, are



Above: Top view of author's model (set in a realistic sea base) showing all the detail changes recorded in the text. This is a simple conversion ideal for a first attempt at warship modelling. **Below:** Another fine view of the real ship in 1968 which should assist the modeller (MoD).

made from 10 thou card or paper.

Anchors are kit parts 49 and 50, and if a full hull model is to be made, propellers and rudder are fitted as per instructions.

To make your *Manxman* in final form, as a seagoing training ship, delete all armament, cranes, Oropesas, large drums, the port minelaying door and forward port and aft starboard launches and davits. Remove the two foremost life rafts and reposition them halfway along the rear deckhouse. Add a large derrick (similar to that aft on the *Hotspur* kit) at the stern, mounted slightly to starboard of the flagstaff.

You are left with plenty of spare parts from this conversion which will be invaluable for future use.

(6) Finishing: The following parts are light grey: hull sides, superstructure, funnels, forward splinter shield, lockers, cranes, Oropesas, main parts of gun mounts, davits, lower portions of masts. The following areas are brick red: all decks and hull bottom. These details are black: mainmast down to tripod, top 1/4 inch of fore funnel, boot topping. And these parts are white: life rafts, ventilators, yard arms and foremast from yardarms upwards, bollards, detail on foredeck, wind dodgers, radar scanners.

Paint the gun breeches and lower sections of barrels black, with a tiny dab of copper for the muzzle flash guard. Boats have white undersides and tops, blue hull sides and gloss brown decks. The large wire coils are dark grey with light grey endplates. Smaller coils are dark grey overall. Searchlights are black with silver faces.

A small square of paint on the bridge sponsons, dark red to port, dark green to starboard, represent the navigation lights. Medium grey horizontal lines on the doors show as shadows of panels. Similar stripes indicate steps on companionways.

Pendant numbers N70 on hull sides and stern are from Letraset, which I think are preferable to transfers as they don't leave a film round the number. The ensign is a piece of painted paper, though red and blue ball or felt tip pens make a good colouring medium. Portholes can be drilled, painted, or, as in my case, marked with pen and indian ink.

I have given the detail for this conversion very precisely since it is ideal for a beginner to warship work. If you've never tried to convert a warship kit before this is an excellent one to start with. My model was cut down to waterline, another easy option using an X-acto saw to cut round the basic assembled hull just below the boot topping line. If you collect 1:700 scale a similar conversion can be carried out using the Matchbox Waterline kit of *Ariadne* but she must have her superstructure changed to *Manxman* configuration as well.

