

THE SEVENTH 'DEVONSHIRE'

Another Airfix cruiser conversion by Ian Whitehead
from the 'Suffolk' kit

THE 'County' class cruisers formed the backbone of our heavy cruiser strength during the 'thirties, and served with great distinction in the Home Fleet and the Eastern Fleet during the war. Their most famous action was probably the shadowing of the *Bismarck* in the Denmark Strait in 1941 by *Norfolk* and *Suffolk*, after the loss of the *Hood*. They also performed sterling service in their designed function of commerce protection. The *Dorsetshire*, *Cornwall* and *Devonshire* all fought successful actions against German commerce raiders, the latter destroying the *Atlantis* in November, 1941. The *Atlantis* had been at large for nearly two years and had sunk 22 Allied merchantmen, totalling nearly 150,000 tons gross.

The 'Counties' were subdivided into the 'Kent', 'London' and 'Norfolk' classes and, as well as the RN units, two further members of the 'Kent' class were commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy. The subject of the Airfix kit, *Suffolk*, can be readily converted into any of these vessels and Chris Ellis has already described the Trials Cruiser HMS *Cumberland* (February, 1966, issue). The subject of this month's conversion is a unit of the 'London' class, HMS *Devonshire*, which was one of four called for in the 1925 estimates. She was designed by Sir James Barrie, who followed closely the outline of Sir Eustace Tennyson D'Eyncourt's 'Kent' class of the previous year, and was the seventh ship commissioned into the RN to bear the name, which dates

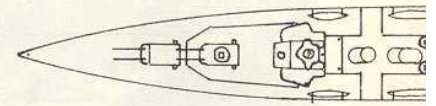
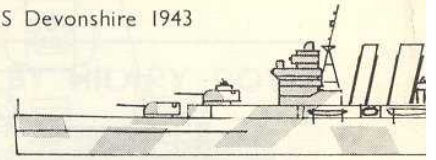
back to 1629. HMS *Devonshire* was laid down at Devonport Dockyard in March, 1926, launched in October, 1927, and completed in March, 1929, and was engined by Vickers Armstrong's Tyne yard.

The class was due for extensive re-fits immediately prior to the outbreak of war, but only the *London* was actually taken in hand. During the war, *Devonshire* served with the First Cruiser Squadron of the Home Fleet and in the Eastern Fleet. In addition to the successful action already mentioned, she earned the battle honours 'Norway 1940', 'Arctic 1941' and 'Diego Suarez 1942'. In May, 1945, she was at Copenhagen to receive the surrender of the German cruiser *Prinz Eugen*.

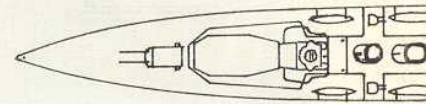
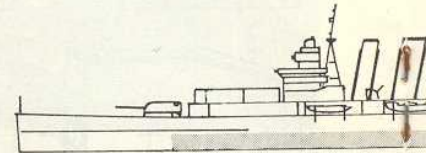
The following year saw *Devonshire* taken in hand for conversion to a Training Cruiser, and in 1953 she appeared at the Coronation Fleet Review as a representative of the Plymouth Command. Her days were by then numbered, however, and in December 1954 she was scrapped at Newport.

The conversion commences with the hull, which must be plated in right aft to give a flush deck where *Suffolk* was cut away. I used plastic card for this, set vertically to within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the stern, and allowed the cement to set completely before finishing off with body putty or Bondapaste right aft. A strip of Sellotape fastened round the stern is an excellent framework for this, and is easily removed afterwards. The putty should

HMS Devonshire 1943



HMS Devonshire 1953



be recessed to take the deck moulding, which is the next component to receive attention. The lower quarter-deck is cut off this moulding and refixed to make a flush deck. 'B' and 'Y' barbettes are removed and the resultant holes plugged with plastic card. Two thin strips of card are added round the edge of the quarter-deck and these are then filed till the quarterdeck fits the hull snugly.

If you are going to fit the deck to the hull at this stage, 'A' turret should be fitted before the final cementing. 'X' gun deck (part 20) is now added with the barrette removed, and strips of card 5 mm high cut and fixed vertically to the inside of the hangar recess. These run aft to the sides of 'X' gun deck, to form the bulkheads for the after superstructure deck. The middle upper deck (part 63) is reduced to the size and shape shown in Fig. 2, and a continuation of this deck is made from card (measurements from Fig 2) to meet up with 'X' gun deck. Quadruple torpedo

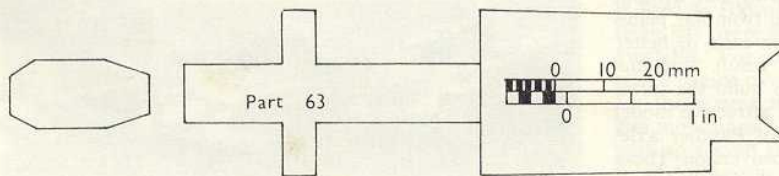
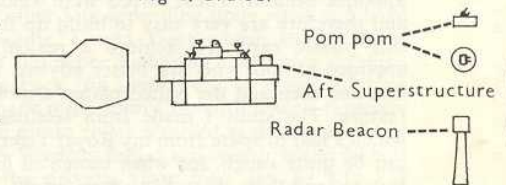
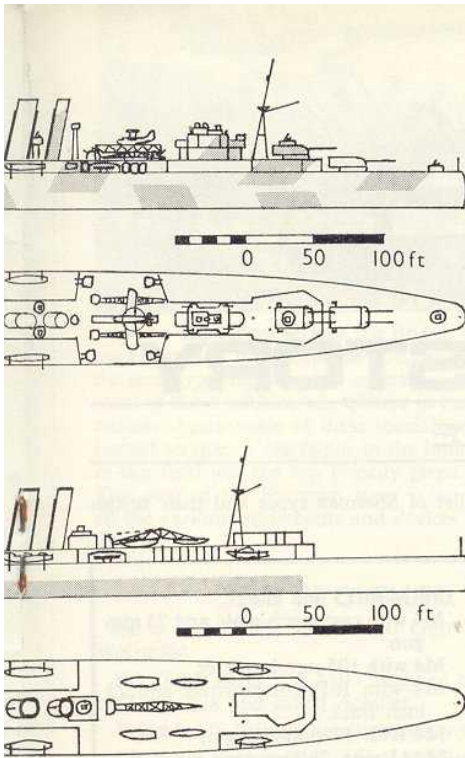


Fig 2. Deckhouses & Upper Decks for Training Cruiser

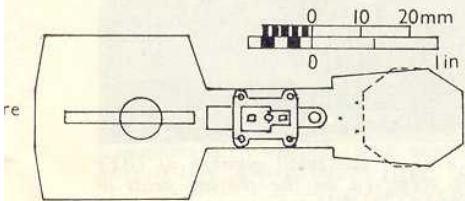
Fig 4. Cruiser





tubes are fitted before this deck is cemented in place and these are located on each side, 132 mm from the stern. I used spares from a *Cosack* kit but they could be made from scrap. The distinctive plating round these tubes, supporting the upper deck can be fitted at this stage and the dimensions can be obtained from the scale drawing Fig. 1 shows all the foregoing modifications, plus the next step.

The bridge is now started and the lower bridge (part 83) is cut down to a rectangular shape 8 mm wide \times 23 mm long, measured from the back of this part on the centre line. Two card sides are added to cover the resultant holes and part 89 is now added without modification. A piece of card is cemented to the front of these two components, as shown in Fig 3, which should be used as a guide to building up the bridge. Part 92 is now added, followed by 90 and 91, the latter requiring a piece of card adding at the rear. The assembly



March, 1967

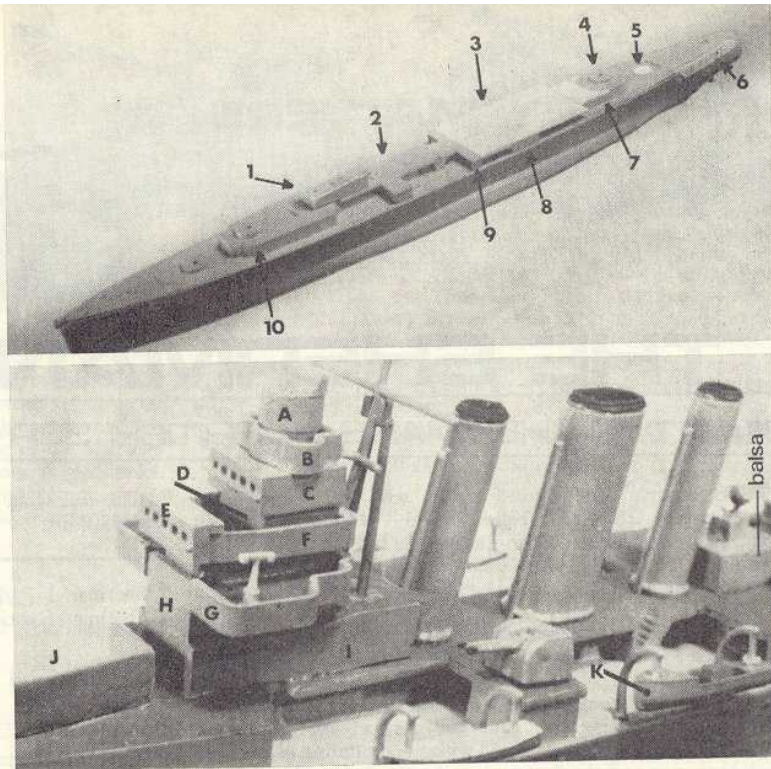


Fig 1 (top), key to numbers: 1—part 83 reshaped with card front; 2—part 63 reshaped; 3—extra card deck; 4—'X' barbette to be removed; 5—'Y' barbette plugged and smoothed over; 6—aft quarter plated in and quarter deck raised to give flush main deck; 7—card side screens; 8 and 9—screens and deck supports; 10—'B' barbette to be removed. **Fig 3 (above), key to letters:** A—part 94; B—top of part 93; C—part 91; D—part 90; E—copy front of part 91; F—part 92; G—part 89; H—card front; I—part 83 reshaped; J—balsa deckhouse; K—crest on ship's boats. Other constructional details for *Devonshire* as training cruiser and for World War 2 appearance given in figs 2 and 4 at foot of opposite page.

is completed by the addition of the top of part 93 which is reversed so that the flat edge coincides with the back of parts 90 and 91. The main director is now fitted to part 93 and a wheelhouse front to part 92. I used part 91 as a pattern and made this piece project $\frac{1}{8}$ inch.

The two deckhouses in 'B' and 'X' positions are now made from 3/16 balsa to the plans given in Fig 2. The funnels are fitted to instructions, and a small balsa deckhouse 11 mm \times 9 mm thick fixed immediately aft of the funnels. The searchlight platform (part 82) is mounted on top of this deckhouse with a 36 inch searchlight (part 105) fitted. Aft of the searchlight deck comes the crane, and only one is used for this model, mounted on the centre line. Two 4 inch gun mountings are carried, one each side on the deck abeam of the fore funnel. The masts I used were those in the kit but they are cut down as follows: foremast (part 108) to 33 mm, legs (part 109) to 19 mm overall,

mainmast (part 110) to 37 mm, legs (part 111) to 20 mm overall. Under the rear edges of the upper deck I fitted stanchions made from stretched sprue on the outboard sides, spaced at approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ inch intervals.

The boats complete the model and these are disposed as follows: two 32 foot cutters (parts 52, 53), two whalers (parts 61, 62) as in *Suffolk*. The motor boat and gig (parts 54 and 55) are placed outboard on davits abeam of the positions filled by *Suffolk's* 35 foot motor boats. These latter are carried abeam of the forward end of the crane and two spare whalers aft of these. The positions are shown in the scale drawing. The finish to the model was light grey with planking main deck and composition upper decks. The boats were painted brown with white covers, except for the two 35 foot motor boats which I finished in midnight blue with red rubbing strakes, white covers and brown decks. This was achieved

Continued on page 268

The seventh 'Devonshire' — continued

by painting in the order brown, red, blue and white.

If the cruiser in its fully armed version is preferred, the 8 inch guns are all mounted and Fig 4 is a sketch of the rear upper deck, which is quite different from the training cruiser. All the 4 inch guns are carried and the aft superstructure modelled as in Fig 4. Radar 'lanterns' are installed on the bridge top and on a small tower just aft of the rear funnel. Quadruple pom-poms from a *Cossack* kit are mounted on top of 'B' and 'X' turrets in screens. The catapult is needed for this model, although I used one from

an *Ajax* kit, complete with its circular turntable. Both cranes are carried and the layout of this ship can be seen in the other scale drawing. The aircraft can be used or omitted as desired. In 1943, the period chosen, this vessel was camouflaged and the design is given on the drawing. The basic colour appears to be light grey with sky blue areas. By 1945, 'X' turret had been landed and two quadruple pom-poms substituted. The camouflage now was a dark rectangle, probably washed out green, on the ship's side over light grey paint, and this outline is given on the training cruiser scale drawing.

The completed model of HMS Devonshire as a training cruiser in 1953.

