

DARING CONVERSIONS

by Ian Whitehead



THE 'Daring' class destroyers were designed as an enlarged 'Battle' class at the end of the second world war, to embody techniques and lessons previously learned, and two flotillas were ordered. The end of hostilities came before they were launched and one flotilla was then cancelled. The remaining eight boats were launched between 1949 and 1952, and are the largest destroyers ever built for the Royal Navy, displacing 2,800 tons. Indeed, due to their size, they were described as 'ships of the "Daring" Class' for a time, being neither destroyers nor cruisers. They have now reverted to the destroyer classification, and it is interesting to note that each of these ships cost as much as HMS *Warspite* when she was first completed. Due to the changing tactical concepts employed by the navies of the world today, they are probably the last true destroyers commissioned into the fleet, but their small ship tradition will be carried on by the frigate.

The names selected by the Ships Naming Committee for this class were those of the 1932 'D' class destroyers, which were decimated in World War 2 after adding many new honours to the roll of famous engagements and campaigns in which their predecessors took part. *Diamond* is the fifteenth naval vessel to carry the name, and her honours range from *Armada*, 1588, to *Greece*, 1941, where the fourteenth *Diamond* was sunk by aircraft during the evacuation.

The 'Daring' class is armed with six 4.5 inch guns, which are automatically controlled, in twin mountings, together with varying numbers of 40 mm AA guns. A Squid anti-submarine mortar is mounted on the quarter-deck and ten 21 inch torpedo tubes in two pentad mountings were originally installed. The torpedo armament has, however, been reduced in some ships and removed altogether in others.

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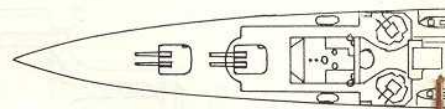
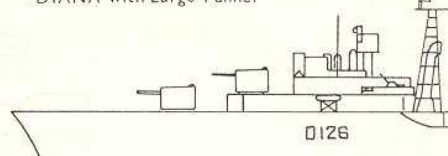
In spite of their size these ships are very manoeuvrable and are excellent sea boats. They proved their capacity for performing a large variety of duties, leading to the ordering of a further half flotilla for the RAN. Three were laid down in Australian yards and commissioned between 1957 and 1959, the fourth having been cancelled. The Australian units were named after the 'V' and 'W' class destroyers of 1918 which were transferred to the RAN, and formed the 'Scrap Iron Flotilla' which saw arduous service in the Mediterranean and other theatres of war. In February, 1964, HMAS *Voyager* (D04) and the carrier HMAS *Melbourne* were involved in a tragic collision and *Voyager* foundered with heavy loss of life. As a replacement HMS *Duchess* (D154) was loaned to the RAN where she still serves.

The Australian units were equipped with Limbo instead of the Squid carried by the RN vessels and only five torpedo tubes were fitted to bring them in line with the British boats.

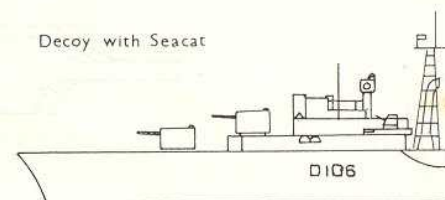
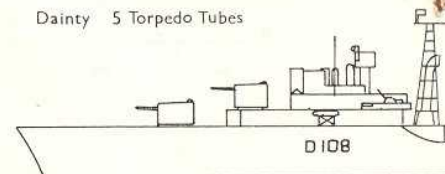
In 1959 the Admiralty decided to arm the class with Seacat AA missiles and the aft pentad torpedo tubes were removed and a deckhouse built over the tube space to provide extra mess accommodation. In *Decoy* (D105), *Diamond* (D35), *Diana* (D126) and *Duchess* (D154) this deckhouse was covered by a platform extending the full width of the ship and supported outboard by light stanchions. The aft twin 40 mm guns were removed and the ones in the bridge wings reduced to singles. In 1963, the decision on Seacat was reversed and only *Decoy* ever received the missiles, which were landed in 1964.

Recently, *Dainty* (D108), *Daring* (D05), *Defender* (D114) and *Delight* (D119) have had their forward torpedo tubes removed and the space plated in to form a deckhouse. During this refit, the bridge was also modified and a new type of radar director fitted.

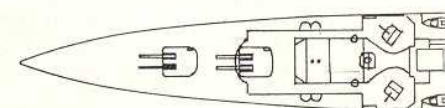
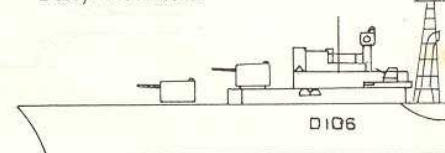
DIANA with Large Funnel



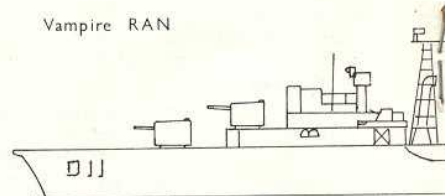
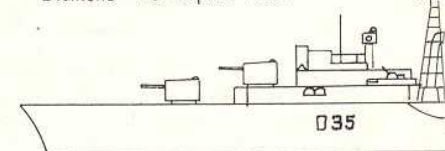
Dainty 5 Torpedo Tubes



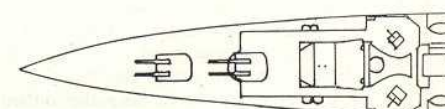
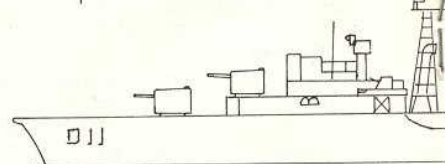
Decoy with Seacat



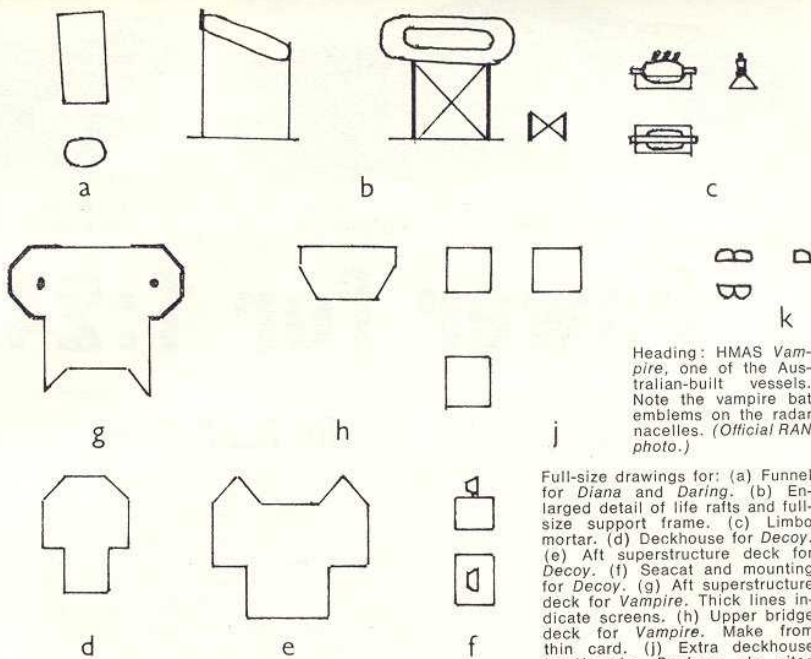
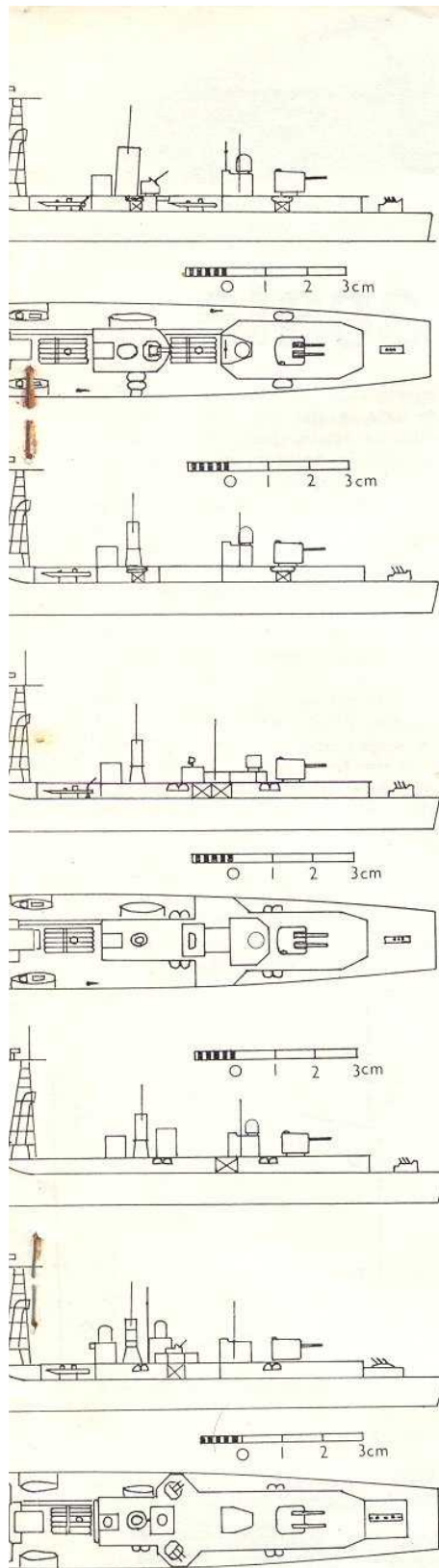
Diamond No Torpedo Tubes



Vampire RAN



AIRFIX magazine



Heading: HMAS Vampire, one of the Australian-built vessels. Note the vampire bat emblems on the radar nacelles. (Official RAN photo.)

Full-size drawings for: (a) Funnel for Diana and Daring. (b) Enlarged detail of life rafts and full-size support frame. (c) Limbo mortar. (d) Deckhouse for Decoy. (e) Aft superstructure deck for Decoy. (f) Seacat and mounting for Decoy. (g) Aft superstructure deck for Vampire. Thick lines indicate screens. (h) Upper bridge deck for Vampire. Make from thin card. (i) Extra deckhouse for Vampire, Duchess, etc, sited aft of second funnel. (k) New pattern life rafts.

Duchess was fitted as leader and carried four 3 pdr saluting guns on 'X' gun deck together with a small deckhouse aft of the second funnel. This deckhouse is now in each ship of this group. In an early attempt to improve the appearance of these ships, the second funnel in Daring and Diana was enclosed in a raked casing, but this was removed in 1957. There are thus eleven Daring class ships to model and variations of several of them. None of the conversions is difficult and they make ideal subjects for newcomers to this side of the hobby.

The first one involves the alteration of the after funnel to produce Daring or Diana up to 1957. The funnel is made to the pattern given, from balsa or large sprue section. If wood is used, it should be given a coat of sanding sealer and rubbed down with flour paper before painting. In this connection, it is difficult to match a paint mix to the grey plastic, and a better job is produced by painting the whole model. A certain amount of fine detail can be added to enhance the model and catwalks fitted between the islands come into this category. They are made from card 1½ mm wide x 18 mm long and fitted to the port side of the islands after first cutting away the guard screens in the appropriate place. I also removed the life rafts carefully from their present mouldings, chamfered the inboard edges slightly and reset these in the same place with the outboard edges supported by light frames made from stretched sprue. Reference to the

diagrams will clarify this point.

I also added whip aerials to the bridge, funnels and after superstructure and these were made from nylon toothbrush bristles cemented in place, as indicated in the drawings. The bridge and aft superstructure mountings for these aerials are moulded into the model and I drilled into these with a No 76 drill to hold the bristles more firmly.

To model the 1959 version, it is necessary to omit the aft torpedo tubes, and continue the island aft to 'X' gun deck by adding card bulkheads 18 mm long x 3 mm high. This should now be covered in to complete the deckhouse and the model completed as previously outlined.

The AA armament may be retained or reduced to single guns mounted in the bridge wings. If the latter arrangement is adopted, the deckhouse roof should be extended for the full width of the ship to the drawing given. Diamond, Diana, Decoy and Duchess were modified to this design as preparation for the installation of Seacat missiles. Supporting frames at the ship's side are made from stretched sprue following the plans, and these are inserted at the points where the platform is at the ship's full width. To model Decoy with the missiles, the Seacat launcher is added, with its screen on top of the mounting structure which was carried by all four of this group. The mounting is made from ¼ inch balsa to the given pat-

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tern, and the launcher was taken from a *Devonshire* kit, but a good replica can be produced from a quadruple pom-pom as in *Cossack*, or alternatively, from scrap. The bridge also requires some modification to reproduce its contemporary state. First, all the thick circular vertical projections are removed, and then an upper deck of 10 thou card is added, supported on stretched sprue, in line with the diagrams. The old type radar is not fitted, and to represent the present pattern, I fitted a surplus *Tiger* director to the support in the kit, having first removed the director.

This layout is similar to the RAN ships which also mount only five torpedo tubes. The roofing-in of the aft tube space is, however, different, since the twin AA guns are mounted either side of this deck, and singles in the bridge wings. They also retain the old type radar for the time being. The Squid should be replaced by Limbo and card screens extending aft from the shelter deck installed round this weapon. It is proposed to equip these units with Ikara missiles in the near future, and this will necessitate removing 'X' turret of twin 4.5 inch guns.

If a contemporary model of *Dainty*, *Daring*, *Defender* or *Delight* is wanted, the forward torpedo tubes should also be omitted, and the space 'plated in' as previously described. The bridge and director should also be modified as for the last conversion.

For all these later models, say 1959 to date, the old pattern of life rafts supplied with the kit should be removed, and the newer pattern fitted, November, 1967

I had a supply of these remaining from a *Tiger* conversion, but they can be modelled from scrap. They are positioned in accordance with the illustrations. The models can now be finished in light Admiralty grey.

The RN pennant numbers are of the usual style, as supplied with the kit, and I used the $\frac{1}{4}$ inch black 'Yeoman' sheets of transfers to mark my models.

The RAN has recently changed its

style and the numbers are carried immediately aft of the anchors just below the deck level. The strokes are finer than before, being executed in white with black blocking in a similar manner to the US Navy. Black lettering with careful lining out can produce quite a realistic effect, or alternatively, white Yeoman lettering with the black blocking added with a fine pen before fixing is effective. Black paint thinned down for pen use is recommended.

Vampire (D11), *Vendetta* (D08) and *Duchess* can be treated thus. If the modeller does not wish to tackle this, the old style and position of numbers will represent the ships at an earlier date.

Below, top to bottom: Models of HMS Diana, HMS Decoy, with Sea-cat missile launcher, and HMAS Vampire, show the considerable differences in appearance between ships of this class.

