A mid-1970s port quarter view of HMS *Devonshire*, showing the massive twin-launcher for the GWS 1 Seaslug beam-riding missile on the quarterdeck. (C&S Taylor)

DEVONSHIRE IN DETAIL

The Editor looks at improving HMS Devonshire, the first of the RN's 'County' Class destroyers

THE AIRFIX kit of HMS *Devonshire* was one the first warship models I ever made . . . some 30 years ago. The recent re-release of HMS *Devonshire* caused me to take a second look at the ship, especially when The Young Master was given one as a present.

Although this re-issue has been used to offer the four Aerospatiale MM-38 Exocet anti-ship missiles as an alternative fit to the B-turret in the second batch of ships in this class (with markings for HMS *Antrim* and *Glamorgan)* there is more to these ships than four missiles!

Moreover, the history of the ship heading the instruction sheet has not been updated in the process. It fails to note that *Devonshire* herself was de-commissioned in 1978 and used as a target for the BAe Dynamics Sea Eagle anti-ship missile trials and was actually sunk by a Marconi Tigerfish torpedo fired from the submarine, HMS *Splendid,* in 1984. But I am racing ahead of myself.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

HMS *Devonshire* (D02) was the foremost modern Royal Navy (RN) warship of her day. She was the first British guided missile-armed destroyer (or DLG in naval terminology) and the first to be powered by the-then revolutionary Combined Steam and Gas Turbine (COSAG) propulsion system. The first of eight ships of the *Devonshire,* or 'County' Class, *Devonshire* was laid down in May 1959, launched in June 1960 and completed in November 1962.

The other vessels in the class comprised: HMS *Kent* (D12), completed in 1963; *London* (D16), 1963; *Hampshire* (D06), 1963; *Antrim* (D18), 1970; *Glamorgan* (D19), 1966; *Fife* (D20), 1966; and *Norfolk* (D21), 1970. The latter four, known as Group II or the *Antrim* group, differed in several ways, notably by the substitution of the Exocet missiles in place of the B-turret from 1972 onwards. HMS *Antrim* and HMS *Glamorgan* subsequently served with the RN Task Force in 1982 on Operation *Corporate,* the re-taking of the Falklands Islands.

According to the noted naval historian, Antony Preston, the origins of the *Devonshire* class is quite interesting. In his book *Warships of the World* (Janes, 1980) he writes: 'Obsessed with the nightmare of the [Russian] *Sverdlov* cruisers roaming at will about the sea routes, the Admiralty designed a cruiser-destroying ship capable of 38 knots and armed with three 5in guns capable of firing 80 rounds per minute.

'It would in theory have used its speed to close and overwhelm a *Sverdlov* with a hail of shells . . . All that survives of this interesting if misconceived design was the machinery, for Lord Louis Mountbatten [then First Sea Lord] refused to accept a ship with no guided weapons for defence against aircraft.'

Yet it was the principal guided weapon itself, the Gloster Whitworth Seaslug GWS 1, which proved to be the ship's major drawback. A cumbersome, beam-riding weapon guided by a 'primitive' radar, its launcher weighed as much as a gun turret. Additionally, as its missiles had to be stored horizontally, much of the forecastle deck is taken up by a tunnel through which the missile must travel from the hoist to launcher at the rear. Later vessels in the *Antrim* Group had the Seaslug II with 'limited' surface-to-surface capability but the limitations of Type 901 radar made this a dubious claim.

The ship's weapons system

This aerial view of the *Devonshire* shows her at the Diamond Jubilee fleet review in 1977. Note the temporary light booms on the port side are for ceremonial purposes only. Of more interest to the modeller are the flight-deck markings. How steady is your painting hand? (C&S Taylor)

was completed by two turrets forward, each mounting a pair of 4.5in guns and a pair of quadruple Shorts Seacat GWS 22 air defence missile launchers, abreast of the hangar aft. All the ships embarked a Westland Wessex HAS. 1 anti-submarine helicopter (depicted in the kit), later replaced by the Wessex HAS. 3 version.

However, the ships themselves were considered superb sea-going vessels with excellent command facilities. The ship's operations room was on a par with the -then recently upgraded aircraft carriers, HMS *Victorious* (also in the Airfix range) and *Hermes*. The Royal Navy was often short of big ships and the 'Counties' often acted as flagships for task groups.

DISPOSAL

The fate of the 'Counties' is interesting. *Devonshire,* as noted above, was sunk as a target vessel in 1984, while *Hampshire* was scrapped in 1976. *Kent* became the Portsmouth-based Harbour Training Ship and was later cannibalised for spares for the exported ships. She is now up for disposal (presumably as scrap).

HMS *London,* however, was transferred to the Pakistan Navy in 1982, being renamed *Babur* (C84). The Seaslug system was removed in 1984 while, in 1988, the hangar was enlarged and the flight deck extended aft to take a Sea King helicopter. Also at this time the Seacat directors were replaced by twin 37mm AA guns, with a third twin 37mm system being installed on the quarterdeck, aft.

Two quadruple 23mm AA guns are mounted on new sponsons either side of the foremast, at bridge level, while a 20mm Mk.15 Phalanx CIWS (close-in weapons system) was fitted on the deckhouse once used for the Type 901 (Seaslug) radar.

The Chilean Navy eventually took all four of the Batch 2 or *Antrim* Group ships. These will be dealt with in next month's issue.

DETAILING DEVONSHIRE

Pressure of deadlines for my first issue prevents me from showing the usual illustrated, staged approach to this subject. However, by careful observation of the photographs of 'the real thing' and the following supplementary comments to the kit instructions, all should be clear. This will produce a model of the ship as she was first commissioned in 1962. The steps numbered refer to the kit instructions.

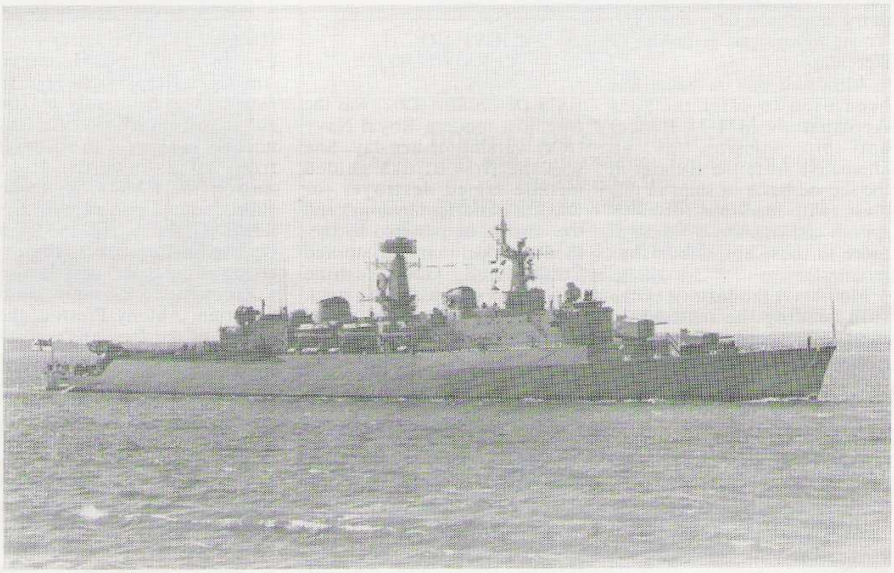
Step 1

As this covers virtually the complete hull and superstructure, this is best broken down into sub-stages.

Parts 1 and 2 represent the two hull halves, which should be cemented together and set aside to dry. The Young Master found it best to position the main decking (part 3) in place in order to get the correct alignment and to take the elastic bands he used to hold the parts together.

Once set, the hull should be rubbed down along the joint line and any small moulding deficiencies at the brow and stern (the 'sharp' and 'blunt' ends, respectively, for landlubbers!) filled with body filler and cleaned-up.

Care should be taken when placing the main deck (part 3),



A starboard view of the *Devonshire* in 1973 showing the single Type 965 'bedstead' radar on the mainmast, and the Type 277Q height finder and Type 901 missile tracker systems both facing aft. (C&S Taylor)

In 1977, HMS *London* was largely similar to her sister but had SCOT satellite communications receivers above her boats amidships. Apart from minor changes, the first four 'Counties' remained unchanged throughout their service lives. (C&S Taylor)

the quarter deck (part 4) and the missile door bulkhead (part 5) onto the hull. The young Master found he had a small filling job at the rear of the helicopter deck with the edge of the bulkhead. As this is flush on 'the real thing', then filler should be used and the whole sanded down smooth so, as one Eric Bartholomew used to say 'you can't see the join, Ern!'.

Parts 6, 7 and 8 make up the forward superstructure and should be assembled, with the joint lines, fore and aft , sanded smooth. Also in need of work is the top of the upper bridge, which should be sanded smooth and a new top, slightly larger so as to produce a small 'overhang' should be cut from plastic card and placed on top.

The rear superstructure is a one-piece item which can be cemented straight on to the main deck. Modellers with an eye for finer detail might consider removing the hangar doors (on the port side) and replacing them with folded (zig-zag fashion) doors from plastic sheet.

The remaining items covered in stage 1 of the Airfix instructions are the anchors (parts 77 and 78) and the two stands (parts 79 and 80). These are best left until after painting the main model.

Step 2

This comprises the propeller shafts supports (parts 60 and 70), the shafts themselves (parts 71 and 73), the propellers (parts 73 and 74) and the rudders (parts 75 and 76). Again, I would recommend leaving attaching these until after painting the hull.

Step 3

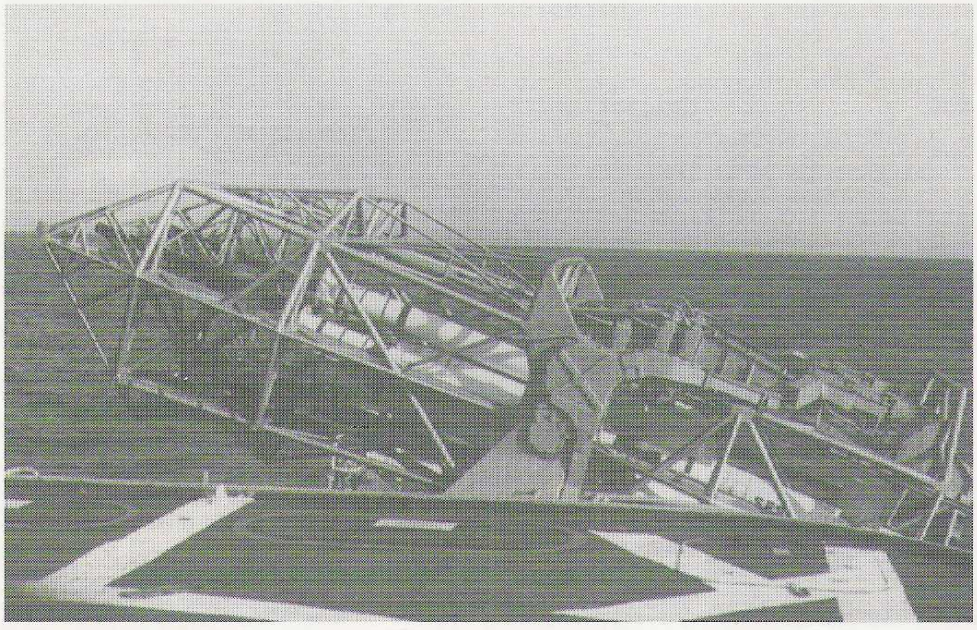
At this stage, the bridge wings (parts 10 and 11) are cemented into place. However, when done so, the forward edges of these sit proud for the front of the superstructure which, if you consult the photographs, is just not the case. The simple solution is to trim back the rear of these two parts by some 2mm, dry fit them to check your spacing and trim again if necessary before fitting. This small correction vastly improves the appearance of the model.

Parts 12 and 13 are the forward funnel halves and, once cemented, the joint lines should be smoothed down with either a file or wet-and-dry paper. The funnel top (part 14) should then be cemented into place. A similar procedure should be followed with the rear funnel (parts 15, 16 and 17). Once dry, the funnels can be located on the superstructure.

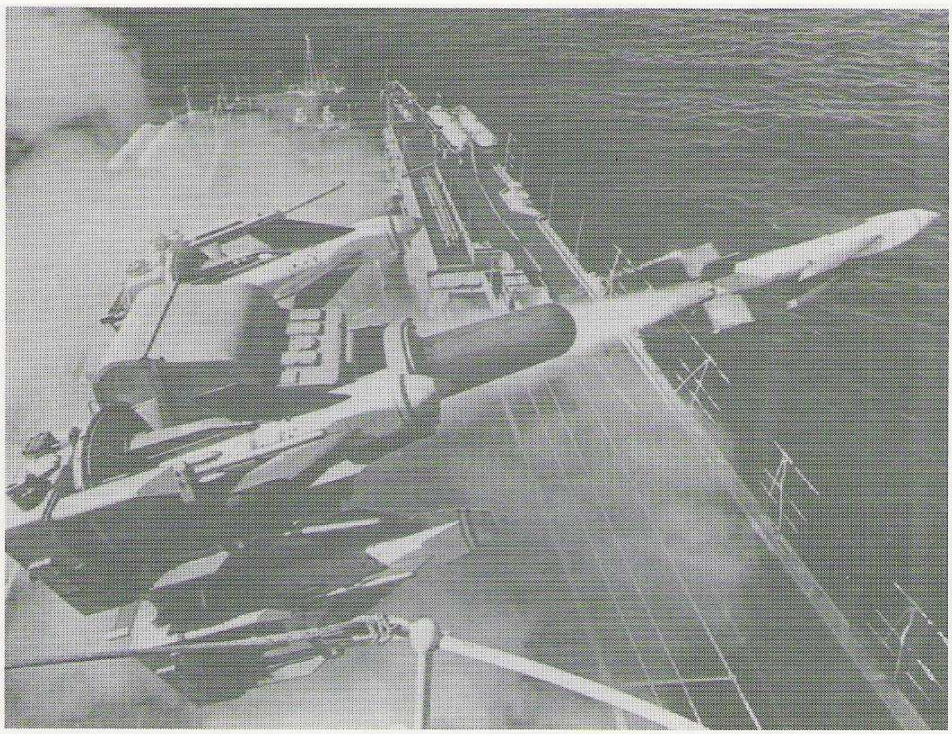
Step 4

At this stage, the Type 903 gunnery fire-control radar unit (part 18) can be located in place and attention turned to the foremast. After the base (part19) has been cemented to the upper deck, the two halves of the mast proper (parts 20 and 21) can be cemented together and, again the joint lines smoothed away.

We now reach the time in the modeller's career when he has to be brutally honest with him/herself. If you are prone to 'knocking bits off' during painting, then leave the wing radio antennas (parts 22 and 23) and the radar antennas (parts 24



A view of *Kent's* GWS 1 Seaslug in its launcher. The four solid propellant boosters can be seen clustered around the nose of the main missile, giving it a 'back-to-front' appearance. (Royal Navy)



Although this Seacat launch is from a frigate, the launcher and missiles are the same as used on *Devonshire* and offer some reference to improve the existing kit launchers. (Short Brothers)

and 25) until later. If you are confident you can affix these at this stage, put them on. The final touch is the upper mast (part 26).

Step 5

This begins with the main mast (parts 27 and 28) and, again, due to the vintage of the kit itself, the joint lines need smoothing. Locate this to the rear upper deck and, as above, if you fumble antennas during painting, leave the height-finding radar (part 29) and the radio antennas (parts 30 and 31) until later. The main Type 965M radar (part 32) will need to be cleaned-up to remove moulding marks before attachment to the top of the mast.

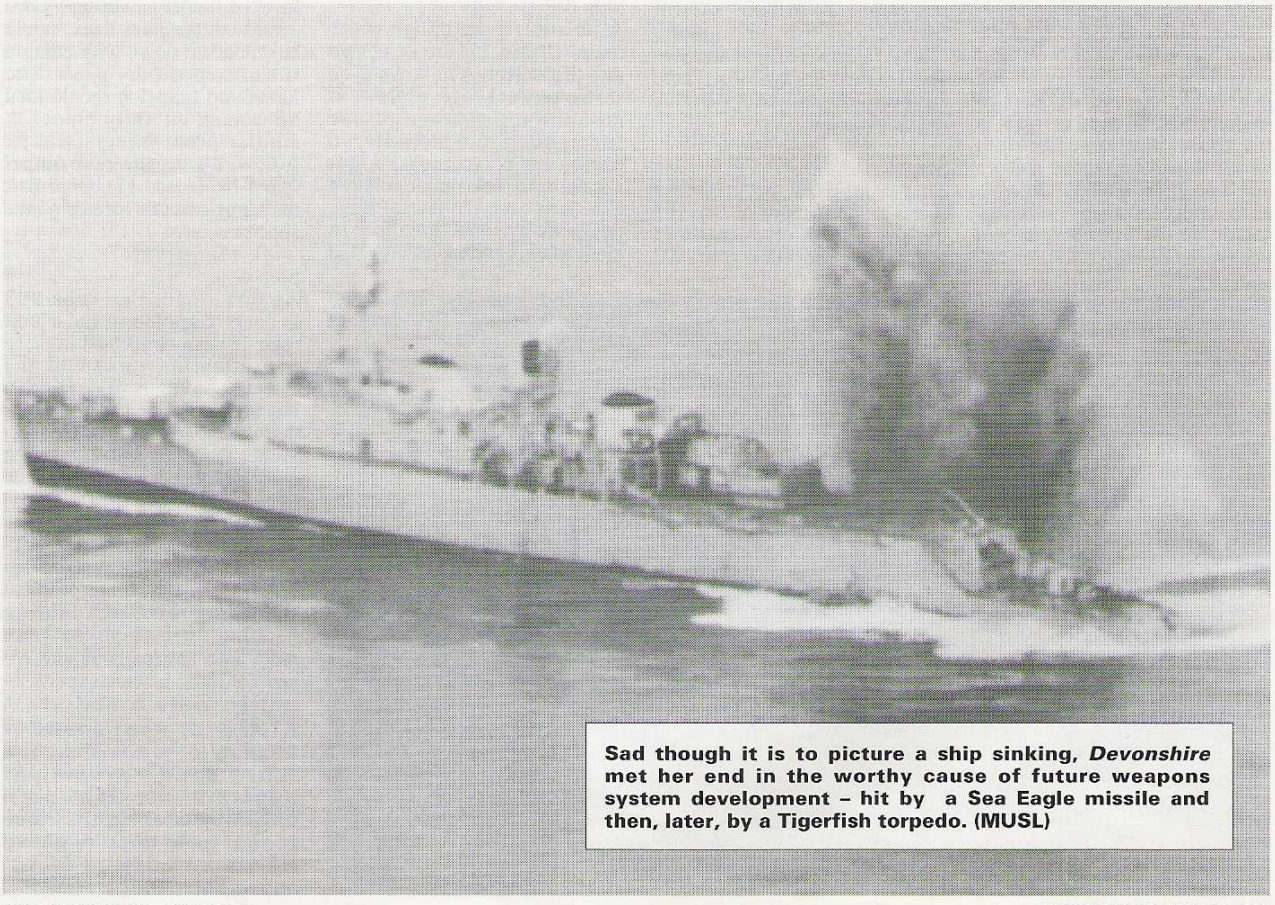
The two Seacat GWS 22 missile directors (parts 33 and 34) can be located as indicated. These elements of the Type 901 radar, used for Seaslug missile control, (parts 35, 36 and 37) should be cleaned up before assembly and location on the rear of the aft superstructure.

Step 6

This stage offers the modeller the choice of the four Exocet missile launchers (parts 81, 82, 83 and 84) of the B-turret (parts 41, 42 and 43) on the upper level of the foredeck. The Exocet option is only applicable to the *Antrim* batch ships.

For HMS *Devonshire,* the B-turret is required . The forward, A-turret (parts 38, 39 and 40) and B-turret should now be assembled. It is always a good move to neatly file the ends of the gun barrels after removing them from the sprue. If the modeller wishes to train the turret, they should be pushed, not cemented, into the locating holes.

The remaining elements of this stage (parts 44 through 58) relate to the ship's boats and divit mountings and the jackstaff (part 68) at the brow. It is wiser to leave these until after the hull and superstructure is painted.



Sad though it is to picture a ship sinking, *Devonshire* met her end in the worthy cause of future weapons system development – hit by a Sea Eagle missile and then, later, by a Tigerfish torpedo. (MUSL)