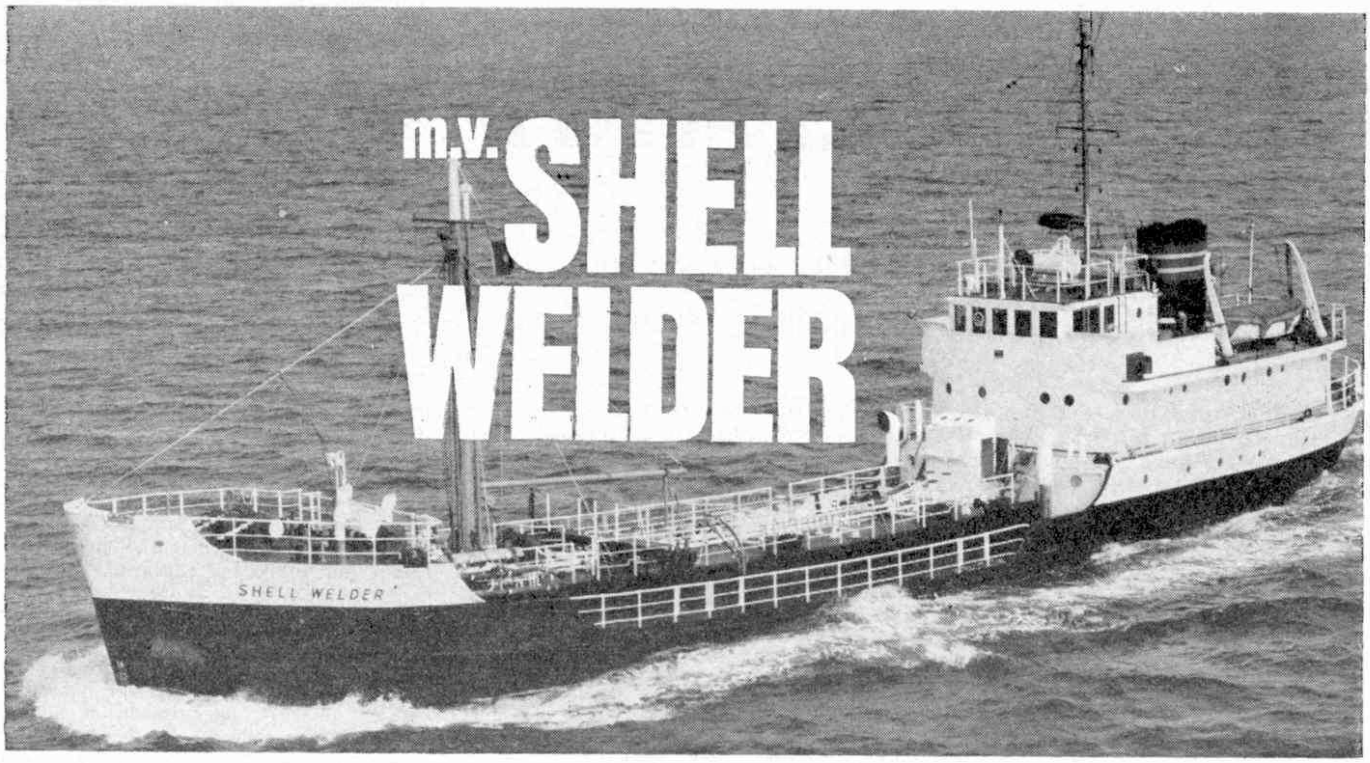
m.v. SHELL WELDER



Robert Gore gives hints and tips on how to construct this super model coastal tanker...

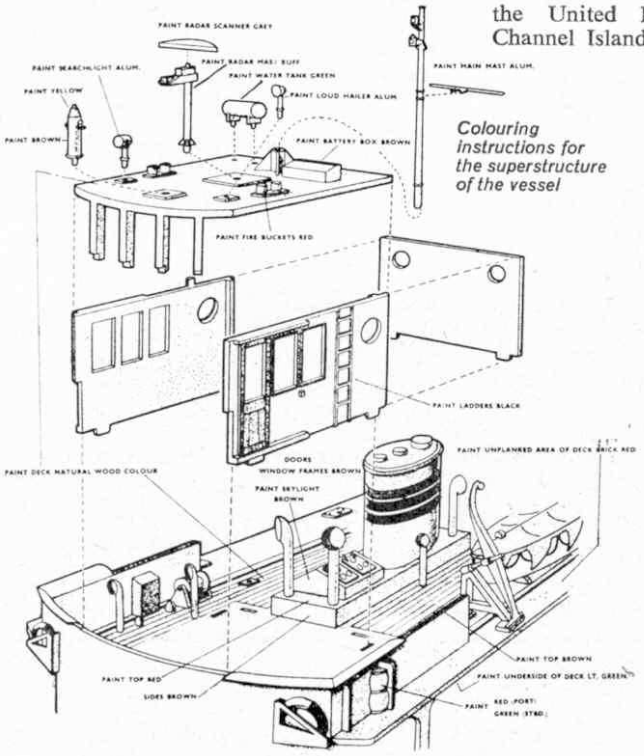
ALTHOUGH not so grand as the large ocean-going ships, the smaller coastal vessels can nevertheless still prove extremely interesting to model. This particular model by Frog, is of a coastal tanker of 569 tons gross, the m.v. Shell Welder. The actual ship, which is owned by Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd., was built to their special requirements at the Wallsend-on-Type shipyard of Clelands (Successors) Ltd., in 1955.

She is engaged in the transportation of refined oils, motor spirits, gas oils, kerosenes, etc., against which the interior of her cargo tanks are protected from corrosion, between her owners' main refineries and their waterborne depots in the United Kingdom, including the Channel Islands.

Should you live near the south-east coastlines or have spent a holiday there, there is a good chance that you have seen this attractive little tanker going about her duties. Many is the occasion that I have watched her in the Dover Strait, often on successive Saturdays. As far as I am aware, this is the only vessel in the world of this particular design, therefore, there are no sister ships.

Modern equipment

With such navigational aids as radar, Decca navigator, echo-sounder, radio telephone, she carries a cargo of some 550 tons in four tanks. The crew complement is sixteen officers and men. Propulsion comes from a six-cylinder



Colouring instructions for the superstructure of the vessel

The complete Shell Welder kit awaiting assembly

Crossley diesel engine, developing 570 b.h.p. at 400 r.p.m.

The overall length of the model measures 15½ inches, but as the real ship is 170 feet 11 inches long, it will soon be appreciated that the scale relationship between the real thing and the model is considerably larger than that usually found in models.

This gives the manufacturers a chance of producing in this fascinating model every feature down to the smallest detail. This is yet another reason why this kit is so interesting to assemble, with small parts such as valve wheels, lights, master compass, fire buckets, being large enough to be accurately reproduced and individually painted.

High-impact polystyrene is the plastic from which the kit is moulded and is in a basic white colour to suit a number of pieces, including the more difficult parts to paint, like the upperworks, whilst the remainder should be painted in accordance with the coloured box lid and written instructions.

The deck railings and anchor chains are of moulded polythene, rather more pliable than polystyrene, and so that they may be bent to shape without cracking.

Tricky assembly

It seemed that by gripping the uprights with a pair of tweezers at the level of the lowest rail, it was the easiest way of placing the feet into the holes provided on the deck. At first, they were inclined to spring out, but repeated replacement eventually overcame their obstinacy.

Black thread is suggested by the manufacturers as being suitable for the rigging. Personally, I preferred to use a brown and more rope-like thread, affixed by a small blob of adhesive. The red flag denoting the carrying of petroleum can be wrapped round a thread running from the yard to the base of the foremast. For more realism, this flag and the red ensign can be crumpled slightly to give a 'windswept' effect.

Obtaining a straight line at the meeting of the red and black paint on the hull is not easy. It may be helpful to mark a guide line in pencil first and when satisfied with its accuracy, you could stick one edge of Holdfast self-adhesive tape along the line.

Painting the model

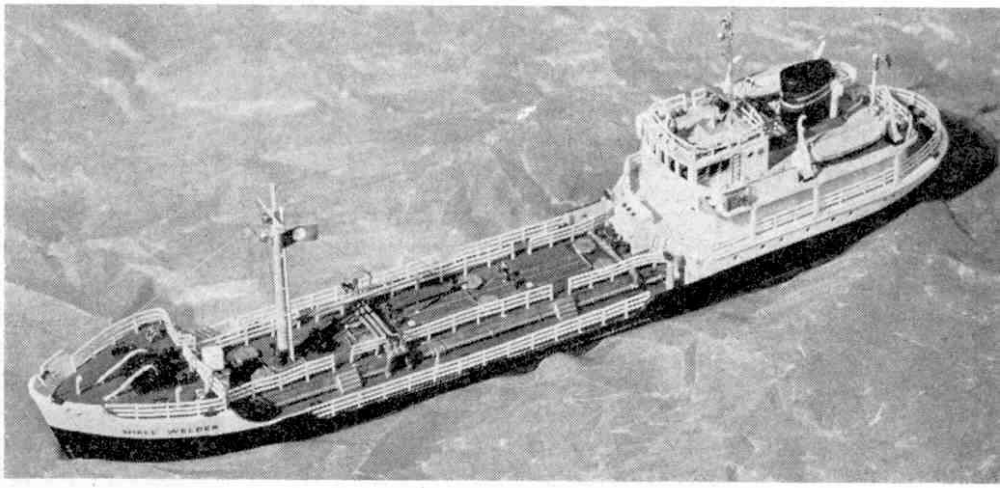
On painting the uncovered side with the appropriate colour, a reasonably straight line will be achieved. To deal with the other side of the line, you can carry out a similar operation, but be sure to allow the paint to dry thoroughly before applying the tape. The curvature of the bows and stern present a little problem for the placing of the tape and it may be necessary to make one or two adjustments or cut it to fit along the line.

The box lid shows different funnel markings from those on the transfer enclosed with the kit. However, at the end of 1963, the owners instituted a change of funnel colours for all their fleet and if you care to be very correct you can adopt the up-to-date scheme.

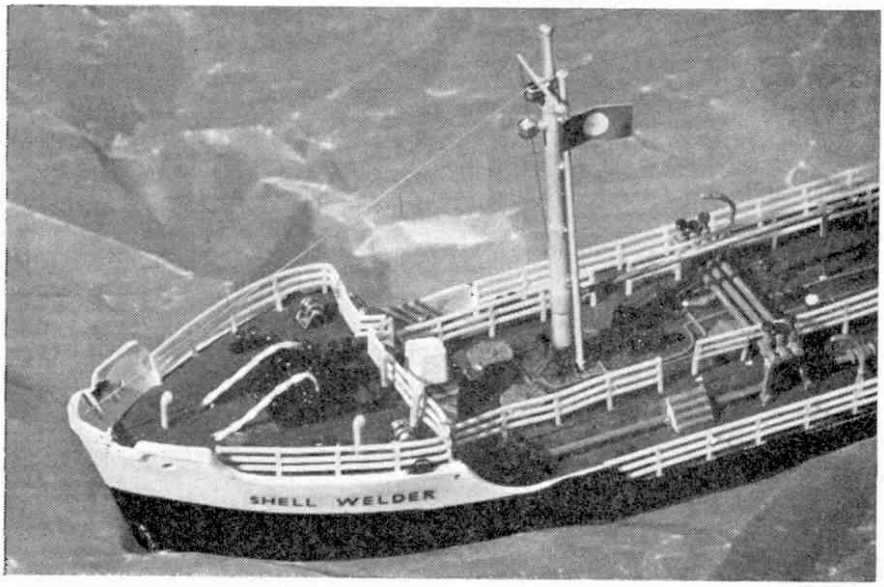
The new colours consist of a yellow between two white bands, each being exactly half the width of the yellow, on black. Similarly, as with painting the hull, a strip of Holdfast tape can be used to screen the white and yellow areas, painting the remainder black. After carefully removing the tape, when the paint is dry, cover both white band areas with tape and then paint the remaining band yellow. Pencil guide lines will help. Removal of the tape when the paint is dry should give you the new funnel.

For the fastidious, the following are the owners' specified colours where they conflict with those mentioned in the instruction leaflet or box lid: ventilators —both inside and outside—white, trunk (i.e. tank top) sides—black, steel decks—grey, fresh water tank—white. Another alteration concerns the radar scanner. The original seems to have been replaced by a slightly different design, elliptical in shape.

The completed model photographed on crumpled waxed paper to give a realistic background and wave effect



Close-up of the forecastle showing fine detail points



Lettering the hull

The name plate on the stand has raised lettering and, being of the same colour as the background, is not pronounced. If you colour this plate and letters with some distinctive shade to contrast with white, when dry, you can gently rub over the raised letters with fine abrasive paper, wrapped over a flat piece of board, thus removing the paint from the letters.

This splendid Frog scale model sells at 12s. 6d. and is obtainable at good model shops. In view of the concisely produced instructions, so lavishly illustrated with 'exploded view' drawings, I feel that there is little more to add.