

# THE TRAINING BRIG

by Ian R. Stair

This is the first of a new series of drawings and articles featuring interesting seagoing craft of all types. The fine drawings will build up into a wonderful collection and they can also be used by ship modellers as working drawings. If you like the idea, write a postcard to the Editor and let him know what types you would like to see dealt with in forthcoming issues.

THE training brig's chief claim to posterity is due to its being the last type of sailing ship to be used by the Royal Navy. Even without this distinction, the beauty of the two tall square rigged masts rising over the black and white hull would endear the type to all ship lovers.

Brigs were used by the Navy from early in the 18th century, but the first true brig to be built as a warship was the 'Alert' in 1775, designed by Sir John Williams.

In the early 19th century the frigates which had been the Navy's jack-of-all-trades had become quite large warships

and many odd duties performed by His Majesty's small ships fell to the sloops, brigs and cutters. Of these the brigs became increasingly popular and they were built in large numbers during the eighteen-thirties and forties.

These brigs were used for scouting and 'showing the flag' in all parts of the world. This is now referred to as 'gun-boat diplomacy' and many stories could be written on the work they did in the suppression of the slave trade.

During 1844, an experimental squadron of brigs was formed, with vessels of different hull form. The results of this experiment could not have been of much use to the Navy as the days of the sailing warship were numbered.

In appearance these brigs were similar to the accompanying drawings except that they would not be fitted with davits and boats at the sides.

In 1846 the iron brig 'Recruit' of 12 guns was built at Blackwall, London, and this had the distinction of being the only sailing vessel built of iron for the British Navy.

As the Navy became a fleet of steam ships, the larger sailing warships disappeared, but a number of the brigs carried on as training ships and it is in this role that they are chiefly remembered today. Their tall masts were a familiar sight in Plymouth Sound and around other naval ports until the early years of the present century.

## The Model

The lofty rigs made the brigs very 'tender' vessels to handle and the crew had to be very alert in squally weather to

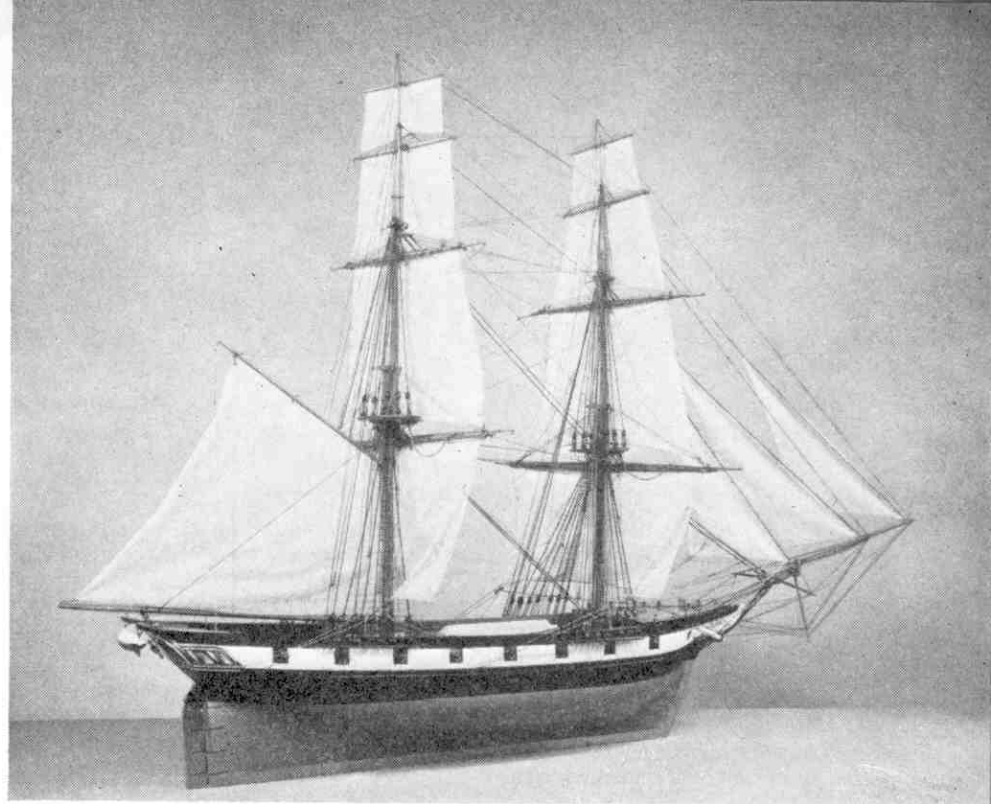
prevent disaster. If you make a scenic model, mount it on a fairly calm sea, or only set the topsails and topgallant sails, plus the headsails and gaff sail.

The drawings show a typical training brig at the turn of the century. The rigging has been greatly simplified to avoid confusion for those wishing to make a small display model.

Compared to most models of this type the brig presents few problems, the main one being the deep bulwarks. I suggest the hull be made in four main pieces as shown in the sections:—Hull, deck and the two bulwarks; the fitting of the last two to the deck piece must be carefully done. This method also enables the deck and insides to be finished before assembly. After the glue is firmly set, the outside is finally rubbed down. The deck fittings are all quite simple, but make sure the main stay is securely fixed to the deck before fitting the fore-castle deck, as it will not be possible to do so afterwards.

The choice of wood you use depends a lot on the tools available, but if you have a coping saw, a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch chisel and heavy model maker's knife, I would recommend a close grained wood. A joinery timber now in common use is Parana Pine; this is not too hard to work, and it takes a good finish. Balsa and obechi need too much work in grain filling to obtain a really good finish for small scale work.

Colours not mentioned on the drawing are: inside bulwarks—yellow ochre; guns, bitts, gallows, capstan and yards—black. Masts, deck and other deck fittings, including gun carriages—natural wood. Ship's boats—white with black rubbing strakes.



This fine model of H.M. brig "Fantome" (1839) can be seen in the Science Museum London. (Science Museum negative No. 27120) A photograph showing the deck fittings is also available from the museum (negative No. 3420)

