

# Seagull Addendum, Errata and Review

by Fred Harris and Ed Russell



Reasonable quality period photo depicting Seagull III A9-4 from 101 Fleet Co-operation Flight seen at RAAF Richmond in 1928.

Although it was established in the December issue of ModelArt Number 52 that the hull colours of the Seagulls were Brunswick Green initially and later Battleship Grey, space limitation precluded discussion of various marking differences between aircraft that are evident, particularly in the post refurbishment period. We also review the recently released, and very fine, Silver Wings 1:48 scale kit of the Supermarine Seagull II/III.

## But Firstly, An Errata

Unfortunately, the gremlins made a reappearance in our previous article with a number of small typographical errors noted.

- On Page 55, line 5. 1943 should read 1934.
- On Page 55, line 25. For section should read fore-section.
- On Page 55. Further research requires the caption to the photo of A9-5 to read circa 1934.
- On Page 56. Obviously, the captions for the Karaya and Silver Wings kits are transposed.

These were noted during the final proof reading stage and the printer advised but, for whatever reason, the printer failed to action the corrections prior to the printing of the magazine.

## Seagulls With Differences

The available photographs of Seagulls refurbished by Cockatoo Island Dockyard show that the nose number was of a rounded shape where applicable and thinly outlined in black. On the other hand, A9-3 and -5 were overhauled by the Air Force at Richmond and had squarish nose numbers, un-outlined. Similarly, for A9-8 which was refurbished at the Munitions Supply Branch. At a later date, A9-5 reverted back to the rounded shape nose number similar to those of the Codock aircraft and of the green hull era.

No photographs are available to determine if A9-3 also reverted back to the rounded form of nose number although there was no change to that of A9-8. These three Seagulls also differed from the Codock aircraft in that the white outer ring of the fuselage roundel was omitted and did not have the white outer



Although of rather poor quality, these three near identical photos of A9-3 and -5 show the 'square'

type nose number common to these two Seagulls and the inboard and outboard positions of the upper wing roundels of A9-5.



A9-6 following its demise while embarked on HMAS Australia in August 1934. The nose number has been changed to a 'square' type compared with the rounded version after refurbishment (see page 54, December issue of ModelArt). A9-6 was converted to components and the remains burnt along with A9-2 at RAAF Base Richmond in November, 1934.

Wreckage of A9-6 showing what is believed to be a camera port. An archival reference mentions a proposal to install a camera in a Seagull.



A9-8 retained the 'square' type nose number until written off as a result of a gale when embarked on HMAS Canberra in 1935. The engine was transferred to A9-5 and the hull donated to North Sydney Technical School.

ring added to the roundels under the wings. At some time after its refurbishment, A9-5 had a wing change as evidenced in the photographs showing both inboard and outboard positions of the upper wing roundels. Lack of dating of the Seagull photographs, a problem encountered throughout the investigation, precludes knowing which was the earlier scheme. Wing changes appear to have been reasonably common with the Seagulls.

By 1930, the airworthiness of the Seagulls was causing the RAAF some concern and in order to extend their life, the wings of A9-1 were fitted to the hull of A9-2. The hull of A9-1 and wings from A9-2 were considered for scrapping, but eventually both aircraft were refurbished by Codock. Few photographs have been located of the Seagulls after their refurbishment and most are of poor quality.

## The Silver Wings Kit

**Kit** – Limited run resin kit with copper wire.

**Parts** – Some 195 pieces make up this kit including 171 grey resin, 14 resin struts with metal cores, 2 clear resin windscreens, 6 copper pins, 2 small styrene sheets and vinyl painting masks for the main aircraft markings and the two colour schemes plus a small supplementary sheet of decals.

**Mouldings** – Clean castings with all parts free from casting blocks. Only some small areas of flash were noted on smaller parts. The fabric effect on the wings and tail is very delicately done and looks most effective. The original aircraft was built with a sealed and fabric covered hull so the fuselage is correctly devoid of any panel lines or planking.

**General Comment** – Silver Wings have produced a large and impressive 1:48 scale model of the Supermarine Seagull. While there are no known highly accurate planes of the Seagull, the kit follows the dimensions of the

RAF Museum rigging plan – perhaps the best available. Importantly it looks right in all major respects when compared to photographs. The kit is very cleanly moulded in grey resin which is hard but not brittle. There are no casting lugs on the 50 main parts and only minimal ones on the 100 plus smaller parts. Although this will give the builder a flying start in construction, it is going to be a major undertaking, even for an experienced modeller.

The instruction booklet is basic and consists mainly of exploded diagrams – a parts index would have been most welcome. Some of the diagrams are confusing – the float struts are shown wrongly attached to the float bottoms (and are of aerofoil section rather than the correct tubular form, there is a diagram of a ladder and engine support struts which are not present. There are six pieces of copper wire which may be the hull to lower centre section struts or maybe the wire referred to as exhausts. It doesn't help that one float strut and the undercarriage legs appear to be missing. Some of the location points such as the undercarriage struts are rendered rather vaguely. It will be essential to refer to photos to do the kit justice – fortunately there are many available.

This is the sort of kit almost never built 'out-of-the-box' and while it may seem carping to pick up small errors, it is useful in pointing the dedicated modeller in the right direction. There are very few corrections to note though. The most difficult one is to the fairing at the front of the observer's cockpit which is too square in plan view. None of the photographs in the reviewer's collection show this area clearly but it can be seen from the accompanying photo of A9-1 that the lower section of the observer's station is circular as is that of the gunner's position and appears to have an upwardly angled deflector plate. Both cock-



Particularly attractive, eye catching box art on Silver Wings' new 1:48 scale Seagull kit.



Some 195 parts go to make up this complex kit however construction will be helped by the excellent quality of the resin mouldings.



Close up of A9-1 showing the circular shape of the lower section of the front fairing, (also the high curved fairing), connecting top plate and angled deflector strip.



*This photograph further highlights some of the features mentioned in the text, the shallower fairing for the observer, the hull/lower section struts, inboard location of the wing roundel and undercarriage strutting. Also just visible is the broad chord tailplane struts.*

pits are joined by a parallel section which has a flat plate along the top edge. This plate is included in the kit. The front fairing should be rounded in both planes. To complicate the issue, this fairing shown in the photograph of A9-6 appears to be shallower than that of A90-1. The silver finish suggests that is a later replacement item.

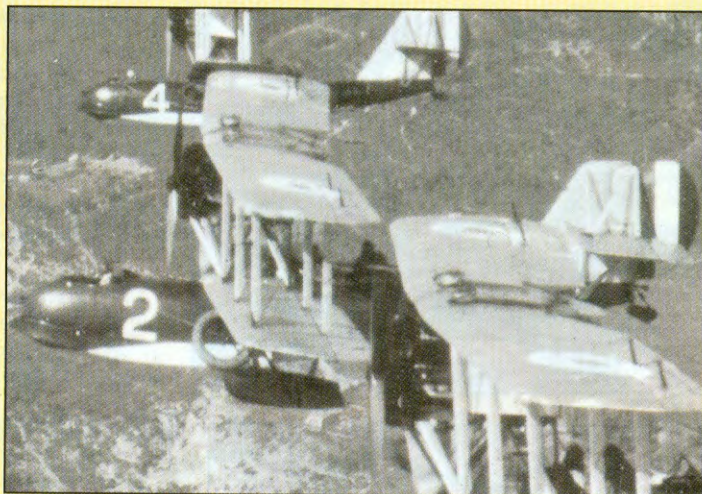
Another correction is to the colour diagram – disappointing as Silver Wings had access to the latest information on Supermarine flying boat colours. Although the placement diagrams of markings are mostly correct (although the lower roundels appear to be more inboard than they have shown), the colour call-outs are not and it

should be noted that the hull colour is grey or green painted fabric depending on the period and the planning surfaces are white. Judging from a few remnants of paint, the interior colour is most likely to have been white. If one wishes specifically build the example shown (A9-2) with the large 2 on the nose, the tailplane struts should be faired (they varied in service from tubular to faired – the kit ones are somewhere in-between) and the canvas covers on the wheels discarded to reveal the spokes – this latter item represents the sort of challenge offered to WWI modellers! We have concentrated on RAAF usage but current opinion is that these comments on colour would

be applicable to all early RAF Supermarine flying boats – the first with a varnished wooden hull would be the Southampton.

**Markings** – The markings are given in the form of masks – opinion is divided on whether these are superior to decals or not. Our opinion is that they do work but most people would expect decals. It would not be surprising to see an aftermarket decal sheet appear but it may not be a viable proposition for such a short-run kit.

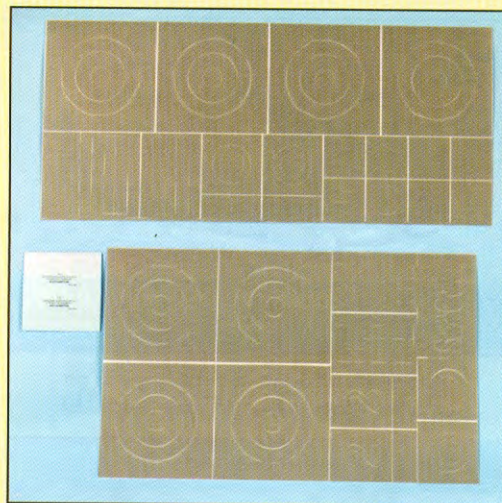
In summary, this is a magnificent kit, worthy of the cost and likely to give the experienced builder a great deal of interest and pleasure.



*A9-2 showing correct shape of nose number '2'.*





*Judging from a few remnants of paint shown on this hull section, the interior colour of the aircraft was most likely to be white.*



*The markings for this subject are provided in the form of masks – opinion is divided as to whether these are superior to decals or not.*

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