

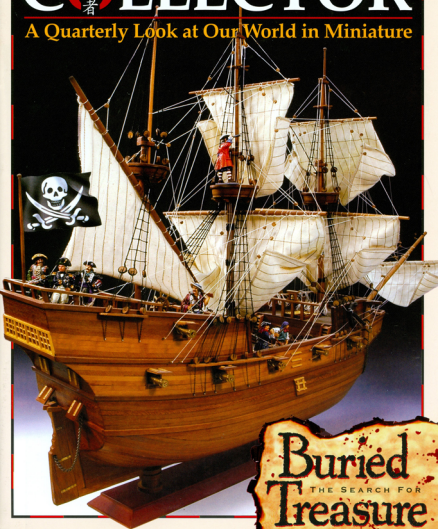
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# C<sub>蒐集者</sub>OLLECTOR

A Quarterly Look at Our World in Miniature



Buried  
THE SEARCH FOR  
Treasure

# A View From The Trenches...

WHILE I WAS WORKING on the special 25th Anniversary edition of "COLLECTOR" and looking back on our history I thought about all those projects and ideas that many K&C collectors never knew existed, or if they did, never knew the "whole story".

That got me thinking... why not do a feature for "COLLECTOR" on just a few of K&C's lesser known productions.

As I delved deeper into the vaults and archives I discovered a whole bunch of ideas and concepts... some that were produced... others that were still-born that I thought "COLLECTOR" readers would also be interested in.

At the same time I came across samples of work K&C had designed and produced on behalf of outside clients in Europe, Asia and elsewhere that I thought might amuse and delight our collectors.

Before long, what was going to be just a regular feature among several in "COLLECTOR" took on a life of its own.

Now, it has justified an entire edition of "COLLECTOR" all too itself!

And here it is... a few of the items some of you may have seen or heard about... others have been ghostly rumours. Most, however

are being seen for the first time outside of K&C headquarters and Museum. So, here they are, I hope you like them as much as we enjoyed making them...

ABOVE: A "Blue" Legionnaire.



2-4  
HEAVY METAL  
IN HAND-CARVED WOOD

5-7  
TANKS-A-LOT

8  
PAST TENTS

9  
VARIATION IN BLUE  
10-11

THESE LOOK  
KIND OF FAMILIAR...  
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT  
THE LONG LOST  
PYRATES

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ABOVE LEFT: Andy's original sketches for a Napoleonic Hussar for the Del Prado Collection.

ABOVE: 1:60 scale Quad Gun Tractor, Limber and 25B Field Gun.

*Andy C. Perkins*  
Andy C. Neilson  
Co-founder & Creative Director  
King & Country



Just one of many Fleeter Storch prototypes that K&C is still working on!!!

**THE FIRST OF THE MANY:** The very first hand-carved, hand-painted wooden model of the M4 Sherman... made in China. This now resides in the King & Country showroom/museum in K&C's Hong Kong headquarters.



# Heavy Metal In Hand-Carved Wood!

**N**OWADAYS with the wealth of 1:32 and 1:30 scale models of fighting vehicles available it's sometimes easy to forget that it was not always like this...

When King & Country first began to explore the toy soldier "virgin territory" of World War Two it soon became clear that suitable military vehicles of all kinds, shapes and sizes were in short supply. True, *William Britains*, the industry giant of the time, had manufactured a few diecast jeeps, half-tracks, motorcycles and artillery pieces but these had been around for many years. Elsewhere there were one or two small, independent "cottage industries" turning out some rare pieces on an often irregular schedule basis.

At the time, K&C and its creative director, Andy C. Neilson, could see an obvious gap in the market... and a

major opportunity to fill it.

"In the early 1990's", Andy recalls, "K&C was just starting to produce WW2 soldiers... a few Germans here and a couple of American Paratroopers there. I knew what I wanted as a collector myself. I needed trucks and tanks to go with our soldiers. The problem was, as usual... where to find them?"

## MADE IN CHINA

During this time many toy soldier collectors, if they wanted a vehicle or tank to go with their WW2 display, would either build a plastic 1:35 scale kit or perhaps utilize one of Britains' offerings.

"For me", Andy says, "the plastic kits were too small... too fragile and took too long to build. Britains were actually pretty good and certainly tough enough, being diecast, but in my opinion had no character to them!"

Andy wanted the kind of vehicle models most often seen in movies and documentaries... *Shermans... Tigers... Panthers...* where were they hiding, he wondered?

Fortunately for him and King & Country, help and assistance came from an unlikely source... his Chinese girlfriend, Bettina. "Bettina was always a fantastic source of information and contacts about all kinds of things. If she did not have whatever you were looking for she always knew someone else who did!"

One day in Andy's office, Bettina over-heard him talking to his brother Gordon about the difficulty of finding a suitable manufacturer to make some models.

"Diecast was out of the question because of the high cost of special molds and the huge number of models you would have to order and sell", Andy says.

"Why not use wood", Bettina suggested, "You're already selling hand-carved airplanes made in the Philippines".

It was so obvious, Andy thought, why didn't he think of that! The girlfriend then said that a friend of her sister's was a part-owner of a wood-carving shop in China. She would make some enquiries.

Philippine-made early Sherman based on K&C's original first polystyrene M4. This model dates back to 1966/7.

The two tank crew form part of DD088, released earlier this year.



Several days later Bettina phoned Andy to say that the friend was willing to try and make a sample. Quickly, Andy asked Gordon to build and paint a 1:35 scale plastic kit of a Sherman tank. Gordon completed the job in two days and soon the model was heading up to China with a simple instruction...

enlarge the dimension of the hand-carved wooden prototype to approximately 1:32 scale... substantially bigger than the plastic original.

#### SOME WEEKS LATER...

Andy heard nothing from China for five long weeks and then Bettina called to say her sister had received one small wooden tank.

"When I opened the box it came in",

*in lots of straw with the turret and machine guns packed separately. I was absolutely delighted... it was much better than I anticipated."*

The shop however did explain that this first model was very time consuming to carve but if K&C were willing to simplify the process (and the design) then they could do a



**ABOVE:** Some old K&C British Tank crew figures with a more recent addition



*Another made-in-the-Philippines model, an all-wood British M4 Sherman in the markings of the Guard Armoured Division. Launched to coincide with our first ARNHEM '44 series of British Paratroopers... 1996.*





**THE MIGHTY TIGER:** Just one of several different wooden Tigers specially hand-made in the Philippines for K&C. Alongside our original German Tank crew set, WS016.

small production run... Andy leapt at the opportunity.

"I ordered 50 models each of 3 different tanks... the Panther... the Tiger and, of course, the Sherman."

It took almost 4 months to get that first order and although reasonably happy virtually every model had to be repainted and "touched-up" by Andy and Gordon in Hong Kong to meet their own exact specifications.

### THE WOODEN WONDERS

Over the next 18 months those



original 150 models were sold all around the world with many ending up in the U.S. in American collections.

Strangely enough neither K&C nor Andy has any of those first three batches. "We sold every last one... K&C needed the money", Andy laughs. "I did though keep that very first Sherman sample and it has 'pride-of-place' in the K&C Showroom in

Hong Kong today."

After the first China production run King & Country were to venture forth to Vietnam and the Philippines in search of the

perfect hand-carved, hand-painted fighting vehicle.

That however is another story for another day...

### INVESTING IN THE PAST

On the very rare occasions when any of these 150 hand-carved, made in China, tanks comes onto the secondary market a feeding frenzy seems to infect collectors from all over the world.

Originally priced at just US\$150 each, prized examples have been known to sell for almost 10 times that on eBay and elsewhere.

One of our hand-carved Sturmgeschütz self-propelled guns, again made for K&C in the Philippines. The crew figures are mostly RAF ground crew repainted to resemble German tank crew.

Just a few of the 35 models King & Country designed and produced for a Japanese company specializing in 1:60 scale fighting vehicles.

Here you can see an M24 Chaffee... five different M4 Shermans and several M3 Stuarts.

Providing the town square backdrop are a few small souvenir buildings K&C's creative director Andy C. Neilson bought in Paris.

Originally Andy tried to persuade the Japanese to also produce 1:60 scale figures and buildings to complement the vehicles.

Alas to no avail...



# "Tanks-A-Lot!"

*Imagine a whole new range of fighting vehicles...  
in approximately 1:60 scale!*



company in Japan to market different ranges of "collectibles" that might appeal to a Japanese audience. "Did we" they wanted to know, "have any suggestions?" After much deliberation we offered them a range of different military vehicles showing their history throughout the 20th Century. K&C's own 1:30 scale was, of course, too big for the average Japanese home... They needed something smaller...

We proposed reducing the scale to 1:60... Small enough for the average dwelling but still big enough to include lots of detail.

### THE WORK BEGINS

The Japanese were very keen to begin work straightaway so, we requested a list of what they wanted us to do...

"Sorry," came the reply, "we don't know we'll leave that to King & Country!"

"How many different pieces do you want?" we asked.

"About 100 or 120", they answered.

OK we thought that's a pretty good number and off our design team went to compile a list of different tanks, trucks, armoured cars and other assorted

**O**NE OF THE GREAT things about this little business of making toy soldiers... military miniatures and... fighting vehicles is you get lots of opportunities to make all the things you wanted as a kid but either a) They were not available or b) You (or your parents) could not afford them!

As this issue of "COLLECTOR" shows, K&C over the years has been fortunate to work with many great companies and individuals. Not only that but most of the time these "outside

forces" have sought out our advice and knowledge of "what might sell" and/or "appeal to collectors" old and new.

Almost 5 years ago, one of our clients was setting up a joint-venture

major conflicts of the 20th Century but also a representative selection of each warring nation's output.

Fortunately for the team K&C has a huge library of reference books and magazines covering a wide spread of mechanical warfare throughout the ages... especially the 20th Century.

Of course, having produced so many 1:30 scale fighting vehicles for ourselves we already had several huge



Among the armoured vehicles K&C designed and produced were the more modern British Warrior APC's and this U.S. Abrams Tank.



Sample packaging for the series.

files of the most popular and common kinds of military vehicles. That made our task a wee bit easier.

After a week or so we compiled a long list of almost 300 items that could be reproduced reasonably accurately in 1:60 scale. Next to about half of those on the list we put an asterisk indicating that these were our "primary selection" for producing. Off to Japan went the list, with photos, for our client to make the final choice.

A few days later their preferred options came back... I'm delighted to say they went along with us on the vast majority—they did however want a few more Japanese vehicles in there... Well, I suppose it was only fair—they are Japanese!

## **BUSINESS... JAPANESE STYLE!**

So far... so good we thought and set to work. Within a few weeks we had the

first three "master-models" ready and sent them up to Tokyo for approval. Normally a client will only take a few days, even just one day, to say fine OK go ahead or... can you alter this just a little...

Our Japanese client and their own "task expert" in Tokyo took five weeks to check out our "masters" and then sent us back a three page letter on each model with comments, alterations and "suggestions" for changes.

What this did, of course, was delay the whole design and manufacturing process and destroy the delivery schedule from factory to customer.

One of the major problems was that they (the Japanese) could not understand that a 1:60 scale model cannot incorporate all the immense detail you see on an actual vehicle or tank. Even at 1:30 or even 1:16 there must always be a compromise because your end product is considerably smaller than the real thing!!

To make matters worse they kept changing the schedule of manufacturing on the different vehicles. For instance, the factory has been told to produce 50,000 Shermans which might take them two weeks to manufacture... Suddenly, halfway through production, a call would come from Japan... "Halt the Shermans... We need 50,000 Tigers... in a week's time!"

As you might imagine this drove us and the factories (we used three different ones) absolutely crazy.

And this was not a rare occurrence... it happened all the time.

What had begun as a "dream project" was rapidly turning into a "real nightmare".

## **KAMIKAZE TACTICS**

For a whole year K&C somehow managed to keep designing and producing these great little 1:60 scale models but boy was it hard work.

Meanwhile in Japan the joint-venture company was self-destructing in a spectacular way, because of their own self-imposed delays, obstructions, alterations and constant changing of schedules they missed their own delivery timetables to their distributors all over Japan. Eventually their overseas joint-venture partner decided to "pull the plug" and extricate himself from the mess and exit "stage left".

Sadly, the whole project ground to a halt...

For K&C it was far from a total failure... In that year we produced 35 beautiful master models that I think are among the best (and most detailed) we've ever done.

Of that 35, just 15 actually were fully manufactured, packaged and sent off to Japan for distribution. Here in Hong Kong, we proudly show them off in our Head Office "Museum" and they still get many admiring comments from visitors.

And we did get paid for all the work we completed which certainly helps! But... it's not just about the money... this could have been and should have been a really exciting project to work on and develop further.

Might we return to it ourselves sometimes in the future...? Who knows? You be the judge...



A pair of British medium Field Guns with their Limbers and Gun Tractors... these are very similar to a DINKY Model manufactured in the UK in the 1950's, one of Andy's all time favourites.

# Past Tents



**H**ERE'S A CLOSER look at some polystone medieval tents that K&C

produced a long time ago...

Then we were (and still are) the exclusive agents in the Far East for the superb St. Petersburg Collection made by Aenart and Thor Johnson. Our biggest Russian-made sellers were their "Knights of

the Middle Ages".

Along with these beautiful knights were a couple of fabulous-looking tents... However they were very hard-to-get and very expensive!

So, K&C designed and made our own-using English, Scottish, French and German heraldry and national colours. We originally planned on releasing all four but for some reason, now lost in the mists of time, we only actually released three! The English, Scottish and French...

Now for the first time you can see all four originals...



*A few of K&C's 'Blue Legionnaires' guarding the Gateway from K&C's now retired Roman Fort.*

**S**INCE KING & COUNTRY began producing the soldiers of Ancient Rome we've always chosen to portray them with red tunics and red and yellow patterned shields.

A few years back we thought we would experiment... when we checked our reference books we discovered that the other popular and most commonly

used tunic colour was... blue.

So, we painted up a whole batch... invited some of our leading Hong Kong-based collectors around to our head office

and showed them both versions—the red tunics and the blue tunics.

Nine out of ten selected the "red" variation as their favourite.

Funnily enough I still like the "blue" one... I wonder if we made the right decision...?

**Almost** FROM THE DAY King & Country opened its doors the company has, on occasion, designed and produced work for outside contractors...

The list of these clients is fairly long and very diverse... They include a bank... two airlines... a hotel... a security company... the Hong Kong Post Office... the Royal Hong Kong Police... several major publishing companies in Europe and Asia... a Theatrical Production House and an expatriate couple living in Italy! That, however, is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg...

Most collectors, new and old are already fairly familiar with K&C's own product lines (both past and present). How many, we wondered, knew about some of the other work we've produced over the years?

## VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

One of the major advantages of producing contract work for other clients and customers is it allows us to work on subjects that are "off-the-beaten-track" and more than a bit unusual.

That being said it can sometimes influence K&C to develop a range into a historic era or subject we've never thought to do before...

Some outside clients and companies also have us develop "counter samples" of figures for them to assess with their creative development teams or, one step further, produce a relatively small production run for a "test-launch" in one particular area of a country or region.

Here are just a tiny fraction of a few of the many private projects K&C has been involved in...



# These Look Kind of Familiar...

1. A ceremonial drummer of the Paris Fire Brigade, circa 1856, for Del Prado of Spain.

2. Three different painting styles of Napoleonic Old Guard Drummers for a proposed Military Musicians series for Hachette of France... project also canceled after creative development team rejected the idea.



3. Created for the Opening Gala in Hong Kong of the musical "Les Misérables". 300 sets were produced... 100 sets were presented to cast and crew... The remainder put on sale to the audience of the first night performance... Sold out!

4. Special "Pillow Gift" of a miniature (54mm) bell boy for the Peninsula Hotel Group of Hong Kong.

5. 24th Foot, Zulu War soldier for test launch in Britain for Hachette UK.

6. Benjamin Franklin of "The Great Americans" series for Spirit of '76 in the U.S.

7. French Foreign Legionnaire at Bir Hakeim in 1942. Part of a Foreign Legion series for Hachette of France.

8. French Foreign Legion Skiers WW2, also for Hachette of France.

9. Spanish Foreign Legion... Spanish Civil War. A test figure for Hachette of Spain.

10. Singapore Auxiliary Firemen 1941, one of over 120 Fireman of the World for Del Prado of Spain.

11. Two different paint versions of French Hussars for a Napoleonic Foot Figure series of Del Prado of Spain.

12. Two more Foreign Legion figures 1950's... for Hachette of France.

13. Two very early Foreign Legionnaires for Hachette of France.

14. Regimental Flagbearer of the Old pre revolutionary Royal Army of France. Six different figures and flags

were prepared for testing by Hachette of France... very colourful... very different... but too expensive. Project cancelled.

15. The Palio of Siena. Every year a colourful re-enactment of this historic horse race takes place in the beautiful old northern Italian town of Siena. More than 10 years ago two Hong Kong



residents (and big K&C collectors) were moving to a villa they had just bought outside Siena. They decided to commission K&C to produce a Palio series of ceremonial figures connected with the Horse Race. The first four were to be the "Standard Bearers"... this we did and made 500 for Italy and another 200 to sell in HK.

Sadly, the couple later divorced and the project went no further. K&C HK sold out all of theirs but I'm convinced somewhere in Siena there might be another 500 sets hiding in a cellar or locked away in a dusty attic!!!

Oh well such is life...

## ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION

Fortunately for King & Country and collectors around the world the vast majority of external projects and figures we've worked on have actually gone into full production.

Relatively few have ever been canceled outright or rejected by our clients.

So, if you would like to see more of these "outside" projects produced by King & Country let us know... there's a lot more where these came from!

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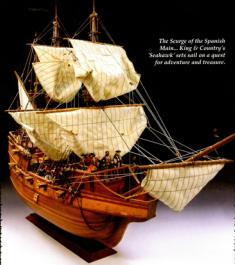
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**B**ACK AROUND THE TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY, this Century that is, I was attending one particular "Old Toy Soldier Show" in Chicago when I bumped into a good friend... Ron Barzso.

Ron, to those unfamiliar with the name, is the founding father and creative genius behind "BARZSO'S PLAYSETS"... a company that designs and produces totally unique and very unusual plastic and resin playsets. After a little friendly banter Ron invited me to visit his "show-room" in the Hyatt Hotel (where the



*The Scargo of the Spanish Main... King & Country's 'Seahawk' sets sail on a quest for adventure and treasure.*

to go forward together. Now, the "real work" for K&C would begin...

#### BACK IN HK

Just over 10 days later I arrived back in Hong Kong with my Barzso Pirate Playset and began the design process. In this case I also sought out any and all reference material I could find about Pirates... how they looked... dressed... armed themselves and what kind of ships they sailed.

This last detail was vitally important to me... putting K&C's Pirates on a ship was the whole point of the exercise. Pirates without a ship is like a fish out of water... totally unnatural! From

# PIRATES

**Andy C. Neilson tells a whale of a tale of King & Country's long-lost pirates and a mysterious Pyrate ship... Now read on...**

show is held annually) to see his latest "creation". When I questioned him further about what exactly he had made he simply said, "I'm not telling you... I want to show you in person!"

A couple of hours later, when I had some free time I went up to Ron's room to see the "mystery".

Over the years Ron's work has always delighted and surprised me and many others with his ideas and this time was no exception...

My eyes widened as I took in the display before me... an entire Pirate encampment complete with at least 20 or more pirates... stockades... long boats... cannons... and literally dozens of great accessories.

To say I was awe struck would be a slight understatement! Spread out before me on a table top was Robert Louis Stevenson's classic "Treasure Island" in all its glory... The attention to detail and skillful artistry was self-evident.

"You've got a winner here Ron", I enthused. "It looks fantastic... I think it will do well for you", I continued. I spent another hour at least in Ron's room examining each individual piece in detail... it really was a superb artistic achievement... and a lot of hard work."

#### PLASTIC INTO METAL

As I was studying Ron's work he quietly said... "They look good in plastic and resin... they might look even better in metal and... painted!"

"That's an idea", I responded, "but I don't want to just copy you... I'd rather use your originals as inspiration and develop a K&C line in our own style... our own size... and give you full credit (and money) for your inspirational hard work and guidance".

It didn't take long for both of us to reach a friendly and fair financial agreement where K&C would develop its own particular series of pirates based on the original creations of Ron. Both of us were happy and saw an opportunity

discussions with Ron I knew he was working on some kind of EPU model (Expanded Polyurethane). This material is a lightweight, sturdy composite that many companies use for molding buildings and other large structures that in Polystone (a mix of marble dust and resin) would be too heavy. I also knew that another toy soldier manufacturer was already working on a similar EPU ship project.

No, I thought, K&C will try do something different... why not produce a real wooden sailing ship model that any collector would be proud to put in his living room... library... or even a museum!

A tall order perhaps but, I hoped not an impossible one.

#### SHIP AHOY!

Several months later the design and master carving of our Pirate figure was coming along nicely. Almost 20 were in the works with ideas for at least a dozen more... But no Pirate Ship! I considered the Philippines (where K&C

*One of King & Country's Pirates on the lookout for some likely prey...*



36 inches from stem to bow sprit and 28 inches from support base to the top of the mainmast.

To scale this up to anything like 130 or even 132 scale would mean a total length of virtually 4 1/2 feet and a height of 3 1/2 feet. Too big... too costly and... too difficult! There had to be a better way...

All the time I was pondering this problem I was playing with the model... I would place some of our Pirate castings on the poop deck... in the rigging... at the forecastle... all over the ship in fact... But I could see they looked too big.

Then it dawned on me... raise the ship's sides where figures could be placed... enlarge items like ship's wheels and cannons to 1:30 scale... Reduce the numbers of smaller 1:48 scale guns to accommodate fewer but larger 1:30 scale cannons. We could even eliminate one entire raised area of poop deck at the stern to enlarge the remaining deck for 1:30 scale figures. By doing all of this (and more) we could retain the basic size of the original 1:48 "Golden Hind" but alter and change enough important visual details and accessories to accommodate our 1:30 scale crew of pirates.

With ship's plans of "The Golden Hind", which Mike Neville of

K&C UK obtained for me, I redrew the ship to K&C's own requirements and sent them off to China.

Two months later another "Golden Hind" arrived in the Hong Kong headquarters. By now we had decided to rename this new version "The Seahawk" in honour of the great old Errol Flynn pirate movie of the same name.

And that is what graces the cover of this issue of "COLLECTOR" and some inside pages. Now, you maybe thinking "Why did we never see this model...? Where are the K&C pirates...? What happened next...?"

## BECALMED ON THE CHINA SEAS

Well, sad to say, K&C got side tracked into several major international projects that literally captured all of our spare human resources for several

had worked before)... too expensive and alas often unreliable. I made enquiries in Vietnam... a definite maybe but... too far away from Hong Kong. Finally, maybe I should have looked here first, I turned to China and... BINGO! I found a potential manufacturer... a small model boat factory in the East of the country, near the coast. I contacted the company and asked them to send me photos of their work. A few days later I received a package of photos of their most recent ship models... Although a pretty mixed collection... Roman Gallies... Chinese Junks... Mississippi River Boats... and even Columbus' "Nina", "Pinta" and "Santa Maria"... alas no Pirate Ships!

But, almost hidden in the photos, was what looked like Sir Francis Drake's famous ship, "The Golden Hind". Now, this 16th. Century fighting ship was at least a hundred years too early for the Pirates we were working on but it had an almost "Hollywood-look" to it, perfect for our Pirate ship. I wanted to find out more...

So, we faxed and phoned through an order to the factory in China to buy a "Golden Hind" for us to inspect and scrutinize.

About 10 days later a large wooden crate arrived in Hong Kong... The "Golden Hind" had arrived. We eagerly (and carefully) opened the box to reveal the model. It was terrific... fully rigged... sails set... and totally ship-shape with one small problem... wrong scale! The model was approximately 1:48... we required 1:30 or at a stretch 1:32 to match our figures' size. This, however, was a minor disappointment... the quality and skill of the craftsmanship was exactly what we wanted. Scale differences we could work on later...

## BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

Once the model arrived in Hong Kong I spent days and days just looking at it. Its actual dimensions were almost

*"Clear the decks for action!"*



*A colourful Pirate...*



years... Around this same time we were also designing and producing literally millions of toy soldiers for several very large publishing companies in Europe, Japan and elsewhere. Simultaneously we were continuing to build and strengthen our own many and diverse K&C ranges and series.

Simply put we did not have the time, energy or extra effort available to launch either K&C Pirates or... our very own Pirate Ship. Will we ever return to this idea at a later date? Possibly... I still love the whole concept and its potential for fun and games.

What do you think...? What's your opinion...? Let all of us at K&C know...

Until then, "The Seahawk" and its crew of Pirate phantoms will continue to sail relentlessly around our Hong Kong headquarters looking for likely prey... and praying to be produced!



**KING & COUNTRY**  
AUTHENTIC HAND-MADE HISTORY



*The original model of the  
"Golden Hind" — before  
KRC's major modifications.*

