



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 227 – SEPTEMBER 2013

EDITORIAL

It has been a few weeks since I checked out the NWS Yahoo Group. There were lots of messages to catch up on, with the NWS contribution to Salute 2014 already under discussion - are we putting on a demonstration or participation game? Points for and against raised. If you are not already a member of the Group, then why not? Join in and have your say on existing topics or even start a new one!

Some club members may have personal memories of Don Featherstone who died recently. Don born in 1918 was interested in wargaming since the 1950s after reading H. G. Wells' "Little Wars". He wrote about 40 books on many aspects of the wargaming hobby. One of his books you may have is "Naval War Games" from 1965, updated in 2009.

"Battlefleet", will be produced soon and the high standard of previous editions will be maintained. Look out for a convoy game from Robert Langlois.

Galleys and the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty both feature in this month's AGB.

It is a year since I took on the production of All Guns Blazing. Many thanks to those who have contributed articles for AGB. It was a fear that I would have to spend time producing content to pad it out but that has not been the case. This month's edition contains contributions from members as usual. Please keep it up. AGB is certainly more interesting for it. In fact this month's AGB is so packed, that I've had to hold over the final "Sink the Bismarck" instalment. See below for the return of the Quiz and other subjects which I hope you find of interest.

Somewhere in the World, the sun is over the yardarm.

Norman Bell
normanpivc@gmail.com

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

September 2013

Chairman: Stuart Barnes-Watson

Stuart Barnes-Watson Chairman
Simon Stokes Membership Secretary & Treasurer
Norman Bell Editor 'All Guns Blazing'
Jeff Chorney Editor 'Battlefleet'

A very busy month on the bridge with the Brits enjoying their first true summer in 7 years! Needless to say, UK naval wargaming has rather slumbered. Deservedly so! However, the wargamers of Hull came up with a brilliant 'Sink the Bismarck' in 1/1200, using 1/144 scale Swordfish. Looked and played terrific. An even bigger inspiration was looking at the club's Falklands Campaign 1/1250 ships. Most of the merchants were hand made out of balsa wood, plasti-card and brass rods.....fabulous.

With Skytrex in administration and Navwar up for sale, 1/1200 and 1/2400 will soon be the only scale available.

I'm putting on the 1855 Baltic Campaign in 1/2400 at Lee Bay Village Hall on Friday 4th October to Sunday 6th October. An oft forgotten campaign, yet one of the most brilliant in RN history. The birth of the RN Hydrographic Dept, arguably the best in the world. On paper the Anglo-British fleet is clearly superior, but the Russians have the advantage of local knowledge of the coast, and prior knowledge of Allied advance. Plus mines! We will be using Dave Manley's rules, easily the best for this period. Better still, Dave will be umpiring and so averting any rule misunderstandings. This is littoral warfare, with ocean going fleets. RN players are invited (the Ruskies are already full).

Plan

Arrive Friday night: Setting up action, Russian Orders of Battle, mines etc. Open mike night in Grampus Inn, get merry!

Saturday: After a cooked breakfast to calm the hangovers, the attack on Sveaborg gets underway. Retire in the evening to the Grampus, and/or explore Lee Bay, a fabled smuggler's beach.

Sunday: Cooked breakfast, attack on Kronstadt.

Cost: £25 players, £10 per night in hall. B&B are available nearby. Contact me for info.

If you are putting on a big show, or have thought about it, let us know. I, for one, would be delighted to attend.

September is here! Wargames season restarts! Engage your imagination and let the Bridge know.

Stuart

Your continued support is vital in this, and as such I urge you to renew your membership asap.

I will be at the Taunton Toy Fair on Sunday 15th September with a large range of 1/1250 waterline ship models to suit all pockets.

Email: stuart_barnes_watson@hotmail.com or call 01271 866637

Royal Navy seizes multi-million-pound cocaine haul

The crew of a Royal Navy warship has seized a massive 680-kilogram stash of cocaine with an estimated street value of £100 million.



A high-speed pursuit boat intercepts the 30-foot drug-carrying vessel
[Picture: Leading Airman (Photographer) Jay Allen, Crown copyright]

HMS LANCASTER made the bust after sailors boarded a speedboat near Puerto Rico. The boat was spotted by a US Customs and Border Protection Agency aircraft in the Caribbean Sea. The Portsmouth-based frigate sped to the area and launched her Lynx helicopter and high-speed pursuit boat to intercept the 30-foot vessel with 3 suspected smugglers on board. As LANCASTER approached, the men attempted to dispose of the evidence by throwing the drugs overboard, but these were quickly recovered by divers.

A total of 22 bales of pure cocaine were seized along with the 3 men on board whom, ultimately, were fully compliant with the Royal Navy and US Coast Guard team. The suspected smugglers and cocaine were then handed over to the authorities in Puerto Rico. As is standard practice, the empty drugs boat was subsequently sunk by Royal Navy gunfire to prevent its use in future smuggling operations.

HMS LANCASTER is on patrol with a US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment which provides intelligence in catching drug-runners as part of a multinational effort to combat drug-smuggling in the Caribbean. The Portsmouth-based Type 23 frigate will continue to combat the illicit smuggling of drugs until the end of the year.



The drugs boat burns after being hit by Royal Navy gunfire
[Picture: Leading Airman (Photographer) Jay Allen, Crown copyright]

Over the past year the US Coast Guard has seized 20,500 kilograms of cocaine and 8,500 pounds of marijuana during 22 law enforcement interceptions.

Counter-narcotic operations with the USA and other partner nations is one of a range of tasks HMS LANCASTER is conducting across the Caribbean in support of British interests. Others include providing reassurance and security for British Overseas Territories and the provision of humanitarian aid and disaster relief during the core hurricane season.

The Royal Navy contributes to counter-narcotics operations across the globe whether it is cannabis and cocaine in the Caribbean or intercepting insurgent heroin traffic using its Sea King air surveillance helicopters in Afghanistan.

A veteran of the Second World War Arctic Convoys has been presented with the Arctic Star medal over sixty years after undertaking the dangerous mission. Ninety-two-year-old Tom Burke was aged just 24 when he served with merchant tanker San Venancio on its hazardous journey to deliver supplies to the Soviet Union.



Leaving the Clyde on March 11, 1945, Tom and his shipmates ran the deadly gauntlet of German U-Boats, warships and aircraft to reach their destination at the Kola inlet, near Murmansk, ten days later on March 21.

Speaking from his Helensburgh nursing home, Tom, who is originally from Cardonald, Glasgow described how the convoy had come under attack from German U-Boats. Tom said:

"The tanker I was on was carrying commercial alcohol for chemical works on the White Sea. We were all aware that to U-Boats we were a valuable target so it was particularly frightening to be on the San Venancio. We had almost reached our destination when the convoy came under attack and all hell broke loose. A U-Boat came close alongside our ship, using us as cover from the Royal Navy ships in our escort. It was so close that we were actually bumping into it. Eventually a British Naval Destroyer dropped a depth charge almost on top of it. The explosion blew every piece of ice off the deck of our ship."

Described by Sir Winston Churchill as *"the worst journey in the world"*, conditions on the Arctic Convoys were some of the bleakest faced by any Allied sailors. Besides the ever-present threat of enemy attack, the crews braved extreme cold, gales and pack ice. From September 1941 when the first convoy left, to May 1945 when the missions ended, 87 merchant ships and 18 Royal Navy warships were sunk, making the loss rate higher than any other allied convoy route during WWII.

Joining the Merchant Navy while in his teens, Tom's life at sea reads like an ocean-going adventure.

As well as his service with the Arctic Convoys, Tom also participated in the Atlantic Convoys and was involved in laying portable, temporary harbours – known as Mulberry Harbours – during the Allied invasion of Normandy. Serving on everything from fuel tankers ported at Dubai, to Banana boats bound for Jamaica, he eventually rose to become a Master Mariner and Ships' Pilot, spending the latter days of his career on board Caledonian MacBrayne ferries. During one trip to Jamaica the merchant seaman even had a brush with Hollywood, meeting actor Errol Flynn who asked him to captain his yacht. Aware of the actor's hell-raising reputation Tom turned him down, afraid of what his family back home would say if he took the job. They parted company, with the actor bidding the Cardonald sailor farewell with a *"so long Burkey"* and a wave goodbye.

The Arctic Star medal is embossed with King George VI's cipher – the letters G, R and I – and carries the words *"The Arctic Star"*. The medal ribbon features colours representing the three Armed Services as well as red for the Merchant Navy and a central white stripe, emphasised by black edging, marking the Arctic.

Destroyers for Battleships

We're all probably aware that in 1940 the United States gave the Royal Navy 50, 'four-stacker' destroyers, in return for bases. But what if they'd have asked for battleships instead?

Seems far-fetched? But apparently, during the First World War that was one option considered in 1917, and that, along with a couple of other possibilities, could make for some intriguing wargaming.

My holiday reading has been the two-volume "The United States Navy in the Pacific", by William Braistead, published by the Naval Institute Press (www.usni.org) and currently being sold off as a part of their 'Clear the Decks' drive. Between them the two volumes cover US naval policy and plans, not just in the Pacific, but in the Atlantic also. Until the US had a 'two-ocean' navy, their battle fleet was responsible for the security of both the east and west coasts. (American battleships were traditionally stationed on the Atlantic coast, and armoured cruisers on the Pacific coast. The opening of the Panama Canal allowed them to consider moving the battle fleet east or west in times of crisis.)

Volume 1, 1897 – 1909, covers the growth of US naval power, along with their concerns about foreign intervention in US interests. For example, one intriguing point is the preoccupation with German incursions into the Caribbean, up to, and during the First World War. The US response, "War Plan Black" covered this eventuality, but Braistead also mentions US concerns about the growth of an alliance between the Chinese, Russians and Germans. So, one wargaming possibility that struck me, and which I shall try out sometime, is a squadron of the Kaiser's pre-dreadnoughts joining the Russian fleet as it sails to do battle with the Japanese at Tsushima.

But it was something in Volume 2 that really caught my imagination. In 1916, the US were concerned that the Japanese were considering a move against the US in conjunction with a German attack on the Caribbean. A New York lawyer, returned from a trip to England where he had been selling arms, informed the State Department that Lloyd George, the British PM, had asked him on three occasions how the US would react if Britain gave the five *Queen Elizabeth* class battleships to Japan. Japan's naval expansion had been handicapped by a lack of money, but now, with money pouring into her coffers from arms sales, she had the financial ability to expand her fleet. The addition of the five super-dreadnoughts would give her a clear naval superiority over the US Navy. It was even suggested that, in view of Britain's gigantic naval programme, London might quite possibly give Japan other battleships and battlecruisers as well.

And in 1917, at the height of the submarine crisis, Arthur Balfour, British Foreign secretary, visited Washington to discuss the naval situation with the Americans. The US navy's General Board warned Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels not to allow the demands of the anti-submarine war to obscure the threat of a joint attack by both Germany and Japan. They recommended that US shipyards could be used to turn out large numbers of destroyers, sloops and other anti-submarine craft, which would have meant that the projected US battleships could not also be built. In return, though, the British should consider exchanging these ships for battleships and consider sending her battle fleet to Canadian waters if forced by the U-boat campaign to surrender.

These present fascinating possibilities for the wargamers. What would a fleet of fast Japanese ships, say, the *Kongo* class battlecruisers and the *Queen Elizabeths* under the Rising Sun, do to a slower, American fleet? Or what about the *QEs* under the Stars and Stripes, fighting the Japanese? Would they be used to turn the head of the Japanese line, or drive in the Japanese scouting forces? Would they tackle the Germans in the Caribbean? Or even a post-war British Fleet in a 1920s War Plan Red? The possibilities are, as I said, intriguing.

Andy Field

As usual, Sea Quiz 24 is from the 1950s. Anyone who remembers the questions and answers from first time round is disqualified.

1. How was Campania lost?
2. When and where was the signal 'Well done, Condor' made?
3. Which RN warship survived the 1889 Samoa hurricane?
4. How did Battleaxe differ from Crossbow? (This is the early 1950's, remember).
5. Name five early British Battleships which carried their turrets in echelon.

Good Luck!
Rob Morgan.

Grenades on board. Does anyone know anything to answer Rob on this subject?

My colleague Charles Trollope of the Ordnance Society, as a result of some discussion in the Society Newsletter, has provided me with an extract from a Military Engineering training manual published in 1870 at the School of Military Engineering, Chatham. Section 63 of this substantial work is entitled 'Hand Grenading'.

Now....the standard hand grenade weighed 3 pounds, and is described as issued for 'land service'. However, a heavier 6 pound grenade is also listed and described as for 'sea service'; remarkably a range is given for each to be thrown, about 34 yards for the 3 pdr and 26 yards for the sea service grenade, by a 'strong man'! Does anyone know any more about the sea service 6 pdr grenade? Why I wondered was it twice as heavy as the 'land' service weapon?

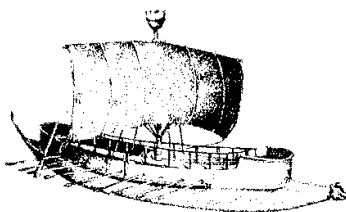
Rob Morgan.

“Ancient Warships”

I was writing up my review of the new Osprey “*Warships of the Ancient World*” title by Adrian Wood, and recalled an article in an old ‘Airfix Magazine’. I found it in the attic, and it dates to November 1972. Written by Ron Wood (someone may know him?) it dealt with ‘*Rameses*’ an Egyptian warship of the cXIIth BC, from the time of the naval wars with the Sea Peoples. Ron Wood built a handsome, and very complicated by scratch-building standards then or now, model in the scale 1inch=15 feet, about 14cm or 5 ½” long overall. The few vessels I have of the type are old Falcon Miniatures 1/600th, though I have to say this isn’t a conflict I’ve ever gamed.

The interesting point is that the opening remarks describe this as the ‘first article in this new series’. I’d forgotten that, and as I was at University then, my purchases of wargames magazines were rare events. I only have about a dozen issues of ‘Airfix Magazine’ from 1972 onwards, it went to a bigger format about then, you’ll recall. Now, if Ron Wood’s ‘*Rameses*’ was the first article, what in the world of ‘Ancient Warships’ followed it? Does anyone remember the series? I’m hoping there might have been a Pheonician warship, or maybe an Assyrian Sea-Horse river war-boat. One thing’s certain, we’ll never see an article suggesting home-moulding of scale ship hulls with plywood and an electric cooker again!

Rob Morgan.



Ron Wood

ancient warships

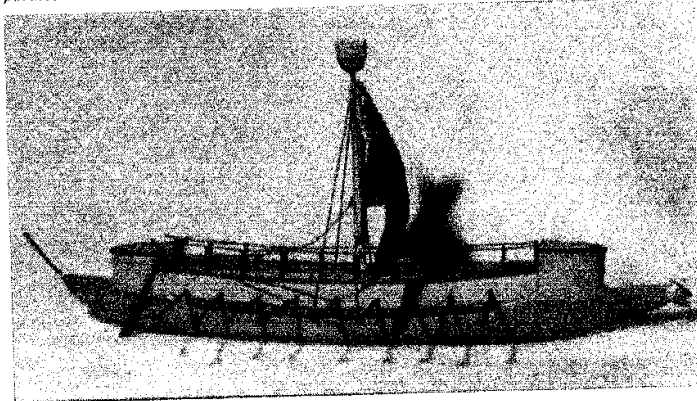
Rameses: first article in this new series

THE SHIP in this, and those in the following articles, were designed with the wargamer in mind. There is a lack of suitable kits, so anybody wishing to fight in miniature the battle of Actium, or relive the encounters between Rome and Carthage, or Egypt and the Philistines, must make his own ships.

In designing these models, I have also kept three things in mind: scale, economy, and simplicity. Whilst the ships had to be small enough to enable a fleet to manoeuvre on a living room floor, I wanted to get a good bit of detail on, so the models can be showpieces if desired. They had to be cheap, so that a fleet could be built up on a small budget, and they had to be easy to build in large numbers—this is why the hulls are moulded, and standard size strips used where possible.

The first model is of an Egyptian warship of the fleet built by the Egyptian king, Rameses III in the twelfth century BC. The Egyptians were not a sea-going people. They used boats on the Nile extensively—sailing upstream before the north wind, and drifting downstream with the current. But they lacked large timbers for building seaworthy vessels, and, having no keel, their ships were rather weak. This was compensated for by having a huge hawser stretched from one end of the ship to the other, inside—the tension held the ends of the vessel

Useful side view of the Rameses showing the amount of detail that can be incorporated in this scale.



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up, and stopped it breaking its back. So the Egyptians sailed the open sea only when they had to, either to trade for necessary items like timbers, or to go to war.

Rameses III built a fleet of warships to defend Egypt against a confederation of tribes from Syria. The Philistines (who, you remember from the Bible, were also giving the Israelites a spot of trouble) had defeated Egypt's other enemies, the Hittites, and assembled their own fleet to invade Egypt at the Nile delta. Rameses' ships, supported by infantry on the land, defeated them soundly in the first recorded naval battle. On the walls of his temple at Medinet-Habu, the two fleets are shown hotly engaged, with the Philistines getting the worst of the action. It is on these reliefs that this model is based. Nine rowers per side are shown, and working out a suitable distance between them, and adding on the bow and stern, the ship was probably about 75 feet long. It has a 'crow's nest' on its single mast, bow and stern castles, for the marines, connected by a catwalk above the rowers' benches. Steering is by two oars on the stern, and the figurehead (possibly used for ramming) is a lion's head, with a human head in its jaws. High bulwarks protect the rowers.

The rigging is simple—mast stays, hal-yards on the spar ends, and six ropes brailed to sail to raise or lower it, and lashed to the mast to hold in position.

Construction begins with the hull. Carve a wooden hull to the shape shown shaded on the diagram. Balsa is easy to

carve, but a piece of deal, or other softwood, will be more durable, and will take the heat better. Then, from a piece of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch plywood, cut a hole the same shape as the hull plan, but a fraction wider all round. Make sure that the wooden hull will slip through this hole. A dowel handle should then be fitted to the top of the hull-former (Fig 1).

For the actual moulding process, a pair of stout old leather gloves are a must, and an electric cooker is better than gas. Place a sheet of 20 thou plastic card on the back of the plywood, and carefully

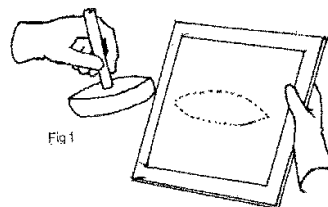


Fig 1

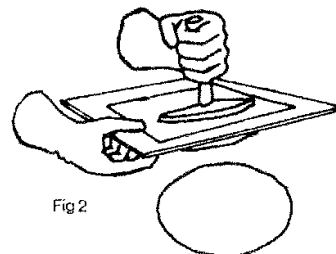


Fig 2

heat the part that is exposed through the hole. When it begins to go floppy, gently push the hull-former through (Fig 2). Remove it from the heat, but hold the former in place until the plastic cools, otherwise it will shrink and wrinkle. The hull can now be cut from the sheet and trimmed. As many hulls as you like can be made in this way. It *does* take practice, and I had a lot of sad-looking ill-shapen failures myself before I got it right, but persevere as the technique is useful for many other things as well as this.

Next, cut the deck from 40 thou card. Drill the holes for the mast and handrail stanchions (Fig 3). Cement the hull and deck together (to make the whole thing more stable, I filled the hull with a mixture of sand and pva glue, and let this dry first).

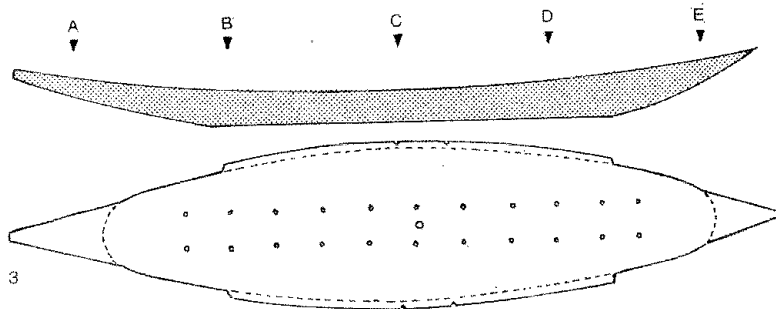
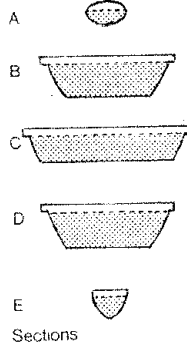
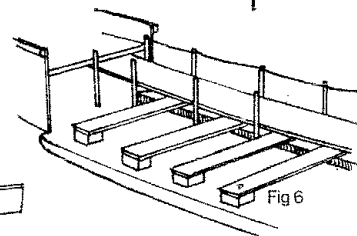
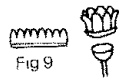
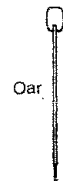
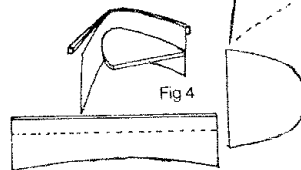
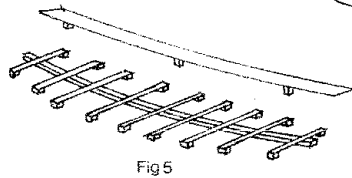
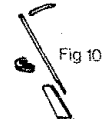
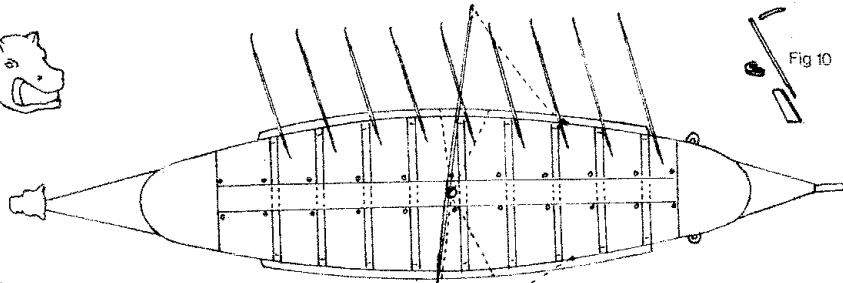
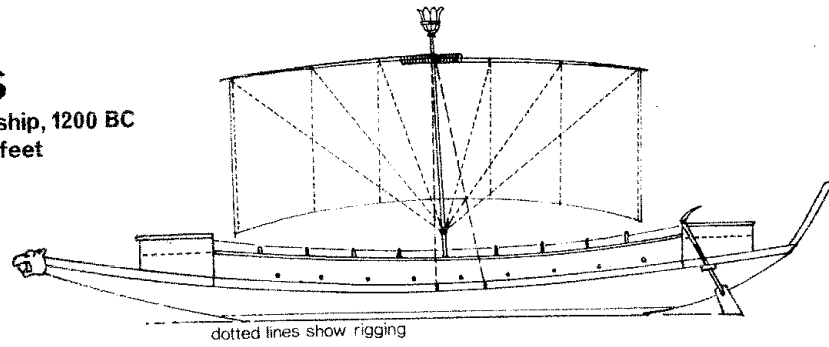
The castles are cut from 10 thou card, with decks of 20 thou, and an upper edge of the narrowest 20 thou microstrip. Cement the castles to the deck, and then file the bows of the ship to the round section shown (Fig 4).

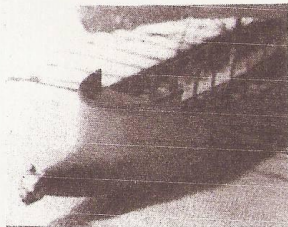
The rowers' benches are $\frac{1}{16}$ inch microstrip, 20 thou thick. Cement them to a thin piece of 40 thou card, and cut tiny blocks of the same to go under the ends. When cementing this assembly to the deck, don't forget the mast-hole, and cut this out as necessary (Fig 5).

AIRFIX magazine

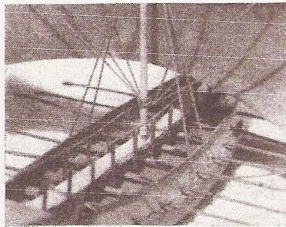
RAMESES

An Egyptian warship, 1200 BC
Scale: 1 inch = 15 feet

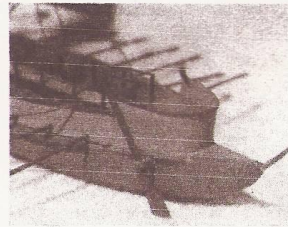




Close-up view of the Rameses' bow 'castle' and figurehead.



This photo clearly shows the rigging attachment points and central walkway.



The ship's stern showing one steering oar and the second 'castle'.

The catwalk is a card strip, which disappears under the castle decks at both ends, and is supported above the rowers' benches by posts of plastic rod. The hand rail uprights are thin plastic rod, cemented into the holes in the deck. When dry, cut them all to the same length, and place the rail itself. This was probably rope, so loop thread around each upright, holding it with a spot of liquid cement on each (Fig 6).

The bulwarks are made like the castle walls. Remember when marking the ports for the oars that each oar must be above and behind each rower's bench. When the oar holes are made, cement the bulwarks in place (Fig 7). I'm assuming, by the way, that you paint-as-you-go like me, but at any rate, the inside should be painted before fixing the bulwarks.

The figurehead is carved from an end of sprue (the ears were separate chips stuck on) and cemented to the bows, which can be cut off square to receive it. The ship's 'tail' is a strip of 40 thou card, slightly curved, and cemented at the stern (Fig 8).

The mast is plastic rod, stepped into

the hole made for it, and the yard is two pieces of thinner rod. On the original, two tapering lengths were bound together at their thick ends—so taper two pieces of rod, cement them together and glue them to the mast. The 'crows nest' is an end of sprue carved to a cup shape, with a ring of card added. Cut the 'petals' in after this has set, and bend them slightly outwards—it's supposed to look like a lotus flower (Fig 9).

Oars and steering-oars are thin rod with card blades—trim the ends of the oars flat on one side to take the blades (best cut from microstrip and shaped after cementing to the shafts). Push the oars through the hole, and cement them. The steering-oars are held in loops on the stern castle, and have tiller handles at their upper ends (Fig 10).

The standing rigging—two stays each side—is attached at the mast head, then cemented into the notches on the outside of the deck. The sail-hoisting lines are bound at the base of the mast, and cemented to the yard at suitable intervals. Make the sail from thin paper, and cement the six lines down its front surface. Halyards from the yard ends and from the sail's lower corners are fastened off in suitable positions inboard.

I painted the ship shades of yellow, green and brown. The sail would have

been of linen, and dirty light brown.

Several ships can be made at once, if you want to build a fleet, and the overall cost shouldn't be too much.

READERS building this and subsequent models in our *Ancient Warships* series may be interested in three books available through Patrick Stephens Ltd, 9 Ely Place, London EC1N 6SQ, which have a direct relevance and are highly recommended.

They are *Greek and Roman Naval Warfare*, *Naval Warfare under Oars*, and *War at Sea*.

Greek and Roman Naval Warfare is a United States Naval Institute Press book covering strategy, tactics and ship design from Salamis (480 BC) to Actium (31 BC). This book, which costs £4.30, is a facsimile reprint of the original book by William Ledyard Rodgers, Vice-Admiral, US Navy (retired), first published in 1937.

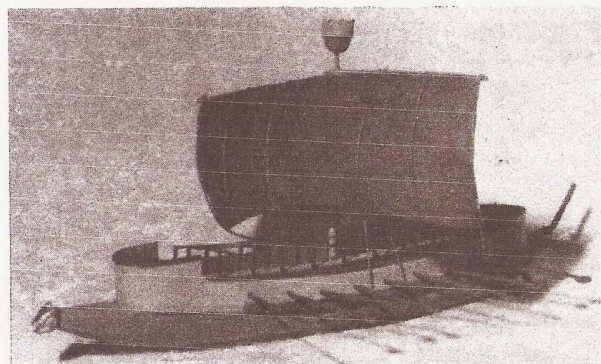
It covers the campaigns of the Greek and Roman navies in chronological order, while the developing patterns of ship design and tactics are clearly shown with the aid of numerous diagrams and illustrations. Wargamers will be particularly interested in this book since, despite the obvious progress in ship and armament design since these early days, the principles of strategy have changed surprisingly little, and even today an understanding of the techniques discussed in this book would tip the balance in favour of the better informed of two otherwise equal opponents.

Naval Warfare under Oars (£4.10) is a companion volume to *Greek and Roman Naval Warfare* by the same author, concentrating on the Christian era and ending with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

War at Sea (£2.50) is a Conway Maritime Press reprint of the book originally published in 1918. Written by Admiral Sir Reginald Custance, GCB, KCMG, CVO, DCL, it describes some of the principles underlying the conduct of war at sea. The struggles of the ancient Greeks have been used to illustrate the theory of war, because the theatre of these wars was narrow and the conditions of life comparatively simple. Thus the anatomy of each battle can be clearly followed and understood.

AIRFIX magazine

Another general view of the Rameses: background 'sea' and 'mist' is a piece of patterned carpet!



The 18" Gun and the 'N3' Battleships.

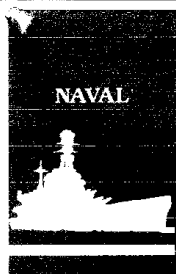
In February 1922, the Washington Treaty ended British plans to build four 'N3' class Battleships and a class of 'G3' Battlecruisers; ships which would have been the most powerful capital ships ever possessed by the Royal Navy. The 'N3's' which were, it's sometimes suggested, to be named after the four main patron saints, George, David, Patrick and Andrew, and were to be 25knot ships, with a displacement of around 50,000 tons. Big ships indeed!

The main armament intended for the 'N3's' was to be carried in triple turrets, 9-18in 45 calibre pieces, the most powerful weapon ever mounted in a British warship. I've found little information on these guns, they were, one source* states, intended to despatch a 2,837lb projectile at a muzzle velocity of 2,700 ft per second. I can find nothing about the range the guns were capable of, nor any information on work carried out on the 18" gun. The Battleship design was accepted in December 1920, and final 'touches' agreed by November 1921. The gun suite was unchanged, so was any further work carried out on the 18" 45 calibre? It would have been an astonishing piece of ordnance, though of course the 'successors' to the 'N3' Class, HMS's Nelson and Rodney, carried only 9-16" guns, but were otherwise fairly similar to the cancelled giant warships.

Now, sadly, I don't know of any company manufacturing an 'N3' Battleship, or the Battlecruisers either for that matter. A pity, might be just the thing to deal with Yamato!

*There was a detailed article by M.W. Williams in "Army & Navy Modelworld" in September 1986, which focussed on the design of the ship, rather than the guns. In the article, M.W. Williams mentions a series of articles on the post WWI British 'G3' Battlecruiser design, which appeared on the long defunct journal in December 1985 and January 1986, and a third article, written by himself sometime in 1986. Since the 'N3' article includes a magnificent drawing and plan, the 'G3' piece may have been as detailed. I've not been able to find any of these unfortunately. Someone may know of them.

Rob Morgan.



HMS St. George

The N3 battleship design of the early twenties

Earlier this year I produced a short feature, describing the principal specifications of the proposed British post WWI Battle Cruiser design, the G3, HMS *Invincible*. This appeared in 'Army and Navy' in direct response to a series of articles outlining the eventful history of this capital ship type, in the ranks of the Royal Navy, which appeared in the December 85 and January 86 issues.

Now I would like to follow up this coverage on the cancelled Battle Cruisers of the G3 design, by describing the general qualities and particulars of its proposed Battleship companion in this grandiose post war programme, the N3 design, the *St. George*'s.

Through this new feature I hope that I successfully convey the impressive nature of these projected capital ships of the early twenties. They were after all two of the mightiest capital ship designs ever proposed for the Royal Navy, and despite the fact that they were never built, I believe that a brief look at the general specifications they possessed, will prove to be of considerable interest to all naval enthusiasts.

Of these two designs, only the G3's had been advanced to a stage where orders were actually placed, at yards around the country. The Battle Cruisers did after all have priority in construction in the Admiralty plans, while the companion Battleships would follow within a year to this stage. Despite the results of the Washington Treaty cancelling all progress on these ships, there is a significant amount of published material on exactly what properties each had.

A very accurate impression of these designs can therefore be gauged from these various sources, to build up a set of particulars from, and perhaps most importantly of all for modellers, a faithful impression of just how these ships would have looked upon completion in the mid twenties. So based upon this available factual information, I will now describe the salient points behind the design of the N3's.

This proposed Battleship design had been subject to a number of evolutionary stages in its development. It had been involved in a series of initial sketch designs in June 1920, before the final Admiralty Staff requirements had been settled. But at even this very early stage, the main particulars for this class of four ships were beginning to take a definite shape. Paramount amongst these features was the intention to equip these ships with 18" guns, displace around 50,000 tons, and achieve up to 25 knots.

The early L2 and L3 proposals of October 1920, were followed by the M3 and M2 ones of November that year. All had the above features mentioned, with only the distribution of armament and allocation of armour, differing with each design. From these layouts the M3 design proved to be the most promising one to develop, and it was duly selected as the companion for the G3 Battle Cruisers in December 1920. Although it was decided on the 4th of

February the following year, that there was no desirable modification to be carried out to this design, there was soon to be raised a number of significant alterations to this layout, that was to eventually result in the creation of a much modified design.

In April it was mentioned that an increase in the torpedo protection arrangements was required, to this end a longer hull would be produced to reduce the width of the magazines and machinery spaces. Over the months ahead this major improvement to the original M3 configuration was perfected, until it eventually evolved into what was to become known as the N3 design, due to the significant changes that had been worked into the structure. So in November 1921, Britain had arrived at the particulars it deemed necessary for her next generation of Battleships.

By M.W. Williams

Dimension-wise, it is quite apparent that this new undertaking was going to produce ships, markedly larger than the last British Battleships, the *Queen Elizabeth*'s and 'R' classes. The N3's were to be 820' overall, have a 106' beam, and possess a maximum draught of 33'. While the size of the earlier units were in the range of just over 620' long, 90' wide and 30' deep. Needless to say such an increase in basic dimensions was again reflected in displacement figures, the N3 has had an expected legend displacement of 48,500 tons for the QE's and R's.

Into this new design's hull structure was to be arranged a distribution of heavy armour, on the 'all or nothing' principle. The sloped internal main belt was 15" thick abreast the magazines, thinning slightly to 13.5" abreast the machinery spaces. 14" bulkheads fore and aft sealed the ends of the citadel, which was topped off by an armoured deck with a very impressive uniform 8" thickness. Extending beyond this heavily-protected citadel was further armour for the forward underwater torpedo compartments, and steering gear aft, on a similarly grand scale.

Underwater, her hull was defended by an extensive and deep anti-torpedo/mine system of protection, formed around the principle of employing alternative layers of void and liquid filled compartments in a 'sandwich' arrangement abreast the vital citadel, which was supported and complemented by a 2" torpedo bulkhead inboard.

For the main armaments defence, the barbettes had a uniform thickness of 15" thick plate down to the armoured deck. The main gunhouses themselves were to be allocated 18" of armour to their faces, around 14" at the sides and rear, with 8" crowns. Into these structures was to be placed the N3's main gun outfit, comprising of nine 18" 45 calibre pieces, in a uni-

que (for the Royal Navy) arrangement of three triple gunhouses. This concentration of the main armament well forward, allowed for a shorter citadel and therefore heavier scale of protection.

These 18" guns could dispatch a 2,837 lb projectile at muzzle velocity of 2,700 feet per second, and have been described as the most powerful gun ever to have been proposed for a British capital ship. The protected directors placed in commanding positions forward, controlled these pieces which also had rangefinders built into each gunhouse for local control if required.

Supporting this main armament was a collection of smaller mountings. Sixteen 6" pieces in eight twin fully-enclosed units, formed the main part, while the anti-aircraft defence was left to a very respectable outfit for that period, of six 4.7" high angle single pieces, and four of the planned ten barrel 2 pounder pom-pom mountings. Two submerged 24.5" torpedo tubes, and the expected complement of two aircraft, completed the planned armament of the N3's.

To move this massive structure to its maximum designed speed of nearly 23.5 knots, would require the two shaft installation producing 56,000 shp. Here the engine rooms for the turbines were positioned forward of the boilers, a feature that can be readily seen in the location of the single tall funnel well aft.

Because development of these plans into actual ships was at first suspended and then cancelled due to the conditions of the Washington Treaty, no names were ever officially allocated to the four proposed members of this class. But to finally add some 'identity' and 'individuality' to these Battleships, I would like to close this look at the salient points expected of their physical structure, by mentioning the names with which they could have become known as, if they had been built. Their possible nomenclature might have reflected a mood of national unity and indeed pride, by employing the names of the patron saints of the members of the United Kingdom, that is, *St. George*, *St. Andrew*, *St. Patrick* and *St. David*. Conjecture, but a set of names which certainly provides these proposed ships with some individual identity.

Despite the fact that they along with the G3's (*Invincible*'s) were cancelled in February 1922, not all the hard work involved in their design was to be wasted. One of the concessions Britain obtained from the limitations and restrictions of the recent Treaty, was her allowance to build two 16" gunned, 35,000 ton Battleships, to counter those 16" armed units retained by the American and Japanese Fleets. Directly evolved from principally the G3 design, Britain also usefully employed lessons from the N3's, to eventually produce the memorable *Nelson* and *Rodney* in the late twenties. So it could be said that at least a part of the impressive N3 programme, did go on to be realised in the creation of these two ships.

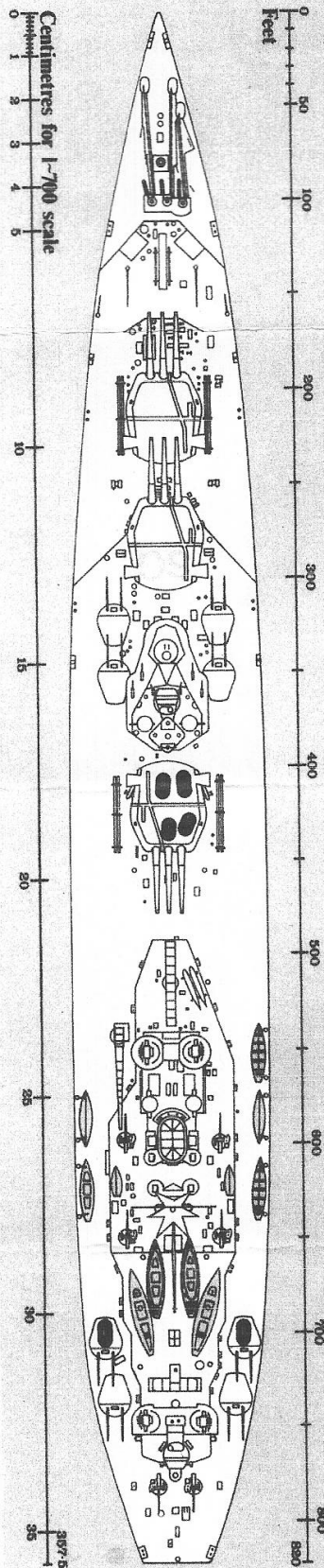
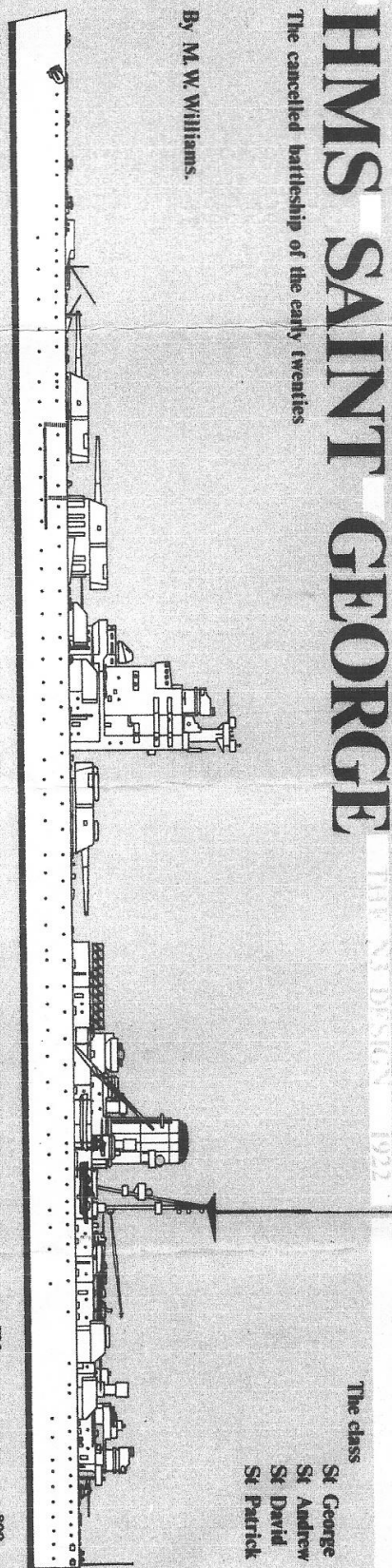
HMS SAINT GEORGE

The cancelled battleship of the early twenties

By M. W. Williams.

The class

St George
St Andrew
St David
St Patrick



A Royal Flagship.

King Athelstan ruled first Wessex, and the quite remarkably a great deal of the mainland of Britain from 925-939AD, and can be called the first powerful, and 'all-conquering' British monarch. According to Michael Wood in his book 'In Search of the Dark Ages', Athelstan was so highly regarded that several other Kings sent their sons to be educated at his Court. One of these was Hakon of Norway, son of King Harald Finehair, who arrived around 930AD accompanied by a truly Viking gift.

King Harald sent Athelstan a longship, quite a splendid and very large longship, with 'gilded shields' along the oar banks. And with a purple sail. Truly royal, almost imperial! Athelstan's fleet did sterling service in the invasion and conquest of Scotland (a rare feat for any English King!!!) in 934AD, and his ships raided as far north as Caithness. My small fleet of Navwar 1/1200th 'Saxon Ships', pack AGS22 in the 'ancient galleys' range rarely finds a place on the table top these days, but the addition of such a vividly decorated flagship as King Harald Finehair's gift might make all the difference in a sea-fight.

As it was so large then maybe the 1/600th Triton longship (AG14) might serve as Athelstan's flagship, but the sail's lowered and the model would have to be 're-masted' with a decent billowing sail to be effective, I think.

Rob Morgan.

August 2013

On Rams....

Most ACW naval wargamers will know the excellent 'Warships and Naval Battles' book by Tony Gibbons. I believe it's still in print. The book is regarded by many as a classic and is a very valuable resource. On page 36-37 is a most attractive side drawing of USS Roanoake in full colour. She wasn't a particularly useful warship, and spent most of her career as guard ship at Hampton Roads. I suspect most of us only have a model 'Roanoake' in our fleets because she was the only three turret US Monitor! Look at the drawing. At right the bow seems to be carrying a pronounced ram. Is this correct? I've not encountered comment or even brief mention of USS Roanoake as capable of ramming an enemy? Now turn to page 40-41 of the Gibbons' work. there's the very unfortunate USS Keokuk, the one off gun- house warship lost in her first real action. This drawing also, clearly shows a ram bow! She was capable of 9 knots, whereas Roanoake could move much more slowly. So was Keokuk intended as a ram? Had she not failed the first test, might there have been a class of Keokuk rams? Of course there were Monitor Rams built, by the Dutch in the 1870's to protect their close waterways, and they would have been effective vessels; these were the six ships of the Adder class and two larger monitors with ram bows, Draak and her sister.

Has anyone any ideas?

Rob Morgan.

HMS WESTMINSTER tests sub-hunting skills

A Royal Navy warship deployed in the Mediterranean has been testing her skills in an anti-submarine warfare exercise with the Italian Navy.



HMS WESTMINSTER (left) and Italian ship Francesco Mimbelli

[Picture: Leading Airman (Photographer) Dan Rosenbaum, Crown copyright]

HMS WESTMINSTER is working as part of the Navy's Response Force Task Group (RFTG) which is on an annual deployment to the Mediterranean and the Gulf to test the flexibility and capability of the force. Part of their tasking includes working alongside NATO allies – and in WESTMINSTER's case this came in the form of the Italian destroyer FRANCESCO MIMBELLI and submarine SALVATORE PELOSI.

Taking turns to practise hunting for each other, the sailors from both ships and the submarine were put through their paces in an action-packed few days. As well as testing sensors and weapons skills, the exercise also tested the reactions of those on board. There was also the chance for some of the sailors to experience life on board a partner nation's vessel.

Aside from the anti-submarine exercise, HMS WESTMINSTER has been busy undertaking a wide range of tasks including flying, gunnery and boarding as part of her Cougar deployment and also in preparation for operations further afield. HMS WESTMINSTER is due to leave the Cougar force before the end of their deployment and take up station in the Gulf as one of the Royal Navy's long-standing commitments to the region.

The ships of Cougar 13 will operate in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Gulf and around the Horn of Africa. This annual deployment involves exercising with partner nations and will show the UK Armed Forces' capacity to project an effective maritime component anywhere in the world as part of the RFTG, which is being commanded by Commodore Paddy McAlpine from the fleet flagship HMS BULWARK. The RFTG is the United Kingdom's high readiness maritime force, made up of ships, submarines, aircraft and a landing force of Royal Marines, at 5 days' notice to act in response to any contingency tasking including humanitarian disaster relief and international military intervention. As well as HMS WESTMINSTER there are 3 other Royal Navy ships – HMS BULWARK, HMS ILLUSTRIOUS and HMS MONTROSE – taking part and all are being supported by 5 Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels.

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The following letters from UK Defence Secretary Philip Hammond and from US Central Command were published in The Times on 4th September.

Sir,

Your story yesterday 'US leaves 'unreliable' British out in the cold' suggests that British military personnel embedded in the US headquarters in Tampa had been excluded from US meetings because the US feels they cannot be trusted with intelligence material. That suggestion is offensive and wholly inaccurate.

The fact is that following Parliament's decision last week not to support British military involvement, the Ministry of Defence decided that, consistent with Parliament's decision, British personnel should be withdrawn from the process of planning for a US response. Our Service personnel embedded at US Central

Command remain engaged in other routine military operations as part of our deep and enduring political and military relationship with the United States.

*Philip Hammond MP
Secretary of State for Defence*

Sir,

You incorrectly characterise the relationship between US Central Command and our British military partners. Our British colleagues are valued members of our team here at US Central Command and any characterisation that UK military personnel are being 'ejected' from meetings is inaccurate.

*Chris Belcher
LTC, US Army
Chief of Media, US Central Command
Communication Integration Directorate*

SIGNAL PAD!



Colours

The Grandstand, Newbury Racecourse, Newbury RG14 7NZ

Those of you who are not members/readers of NWS YAHOO Group will not have seen the following from Drew Jarman.

You are cordially invited to attend ESSEX WARRIORS OPEN DAY on Sunday 29th September 2013 from 10am to 4pm at Writtle Village Hall, 18 The Green, Writtle, Essex, CM1 3DU (opposite the duck pond). Entrance is FREE. Display and Participation games, Bring & Buy, Refreshments, and Traders. Traders attending include Wayland Games, Red Knight and Games Gazette Essex Warriors meet in Writtle Village Hall, which is on The Green, on the right as you come in to Writtle from Chelmsford, and opposite the pond. There is free public parking off to the left of the pond (signed).

Saturday 5th October from 8 a.m. NAVCON, Community Centre, 8853 S Howell Avenue, Oak Creek, Wisconsin. If you live near Milwaukee/Lake Michigan, perhaps you can visit and write a report for AGB. See the website <http://www.nav-con.com> for some impressive photographs of previous years.

13th October. South East London Wargames Show. Crystal Palace National Sports Centre. www.selwg.org

27th October. Fiasco, Leeds.

2nd November. Crisis. Antwerp

16th/17th November. Warfare at Reading, Berkshire.

The Shows above are only some of the total out there. If you know of a wargames event let me know and I'll gladly include the details in AGB. If you go to one of these or any other show, how about sending in a few words of a review for All Guns Blazing? We have members in many countries, so you may have information of a show that is not readily available to me.

JOINING THE NAVAL WARGAMES SOCIETY

If you have been lent this newsletter and would like to join the Naval Wargames Society, please follow this link to join our Society:

www.navalwargamessociety.org.

Membership secretary: simonjohnstokes@aol.com

NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2013

NWS Northern Fleet – Falkirk East Central Scotland

Kenny Thomson, 12 Craigs Way, Rumford Grange, Rumford, Stirlingshire, FK2 0EU

Tel: 01324 714248

e-mail: kenny.thomson@hotmail.com - Website: <http://falkirkwargamesclub.org.uk/>

Falkirk Wargames Club meets each Monday night at 7pm with a variety of games running each evening. Naval games are popular with 2 or 3 run each month. Campaign games sometimes feature in our monthly weekend sessions. Games tend to be organised week to week making a 3-month forecast here a waste of time. Please get in touch if you'd like to come along.

- Popular periods – Modern (Shipwreck), WW1 and 2 (GQ), WW2 Coastal (Action Stations), and Pre-dreadnought (P Dunn's rules)
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NWS North Hants [Every 3rd Sunday]

Jeff Crane 31 Park Gardens, Black Dam, Basingstoke, Hants, 01256 427906

e-mail: gf.crane@ntlworld.com

Devon and the West Country

Naval Wargames afternoon/evening/all day on a regular basis.

Contact Stuart Barnes Watson to arrange the details.

stuart_barnes_watson@hotmail.com

3 Clovelly Apartments, Oxford Park, Ilfracombe, DEVON, EX34 9JS

Tel: 01271 866637
