



# All Guns Blazing!

## Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

### No. 158 – June 2007

#### Editorial

Hi Everyone,

The latest Belfast event including the AGM went off well at the beginning of the month. Since then Simon Stokes and I have been busy with “real world” stuff hence the delay in getting this issue of the newsletter out to you. There will be an “official” report from Simon on the AGM and the game in the next issue, but for now here are the salient points:

The committee is now as follows:

Chairman – Jeff Crane

Treasurer – Simon Stokes

Membership Secretary and Secretary – Peter Colbeck

Chris White continues as Battlefleet editor whilst I'm continuing with editing AGB.

The membership fee will have to increase slightly in the next membership year to cover increased postage, printing and paper costs. However, we will be introducing a new “E-membership” scheme; E-members will receive their copies of Battlefleet via email in PDF format. E-membership will be at a substantially reduced rate compared with traditional membership and is likely to be more attractive to overseas members.

Those are the key points – more details in the next issue.

Yours aye,

DM

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## **FIRE CONTROL OR DIRECTOR CONTROL...A SUPPLEMENT**

**By Richard Wimpenny**

In April's *All Guns Blazing* I wrote a short piece outlining some of the more common misconceptions that arise when considering fire control and director control in the dreadnought era. I say 'short' but it actually grew and grew as I scribbled away to something far longer than I at first intended, and this coupled with dashing in extreme haste for an April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, meant I was a little *too* brief on one important aspect. I wanted to make the point that the development of fire control systems was very much an on-going thing and that when HMS *Dreadnought* herself came along she was part of that development. All this is true, but *Dreadnought's* whole *raison d'être* was to improve the control of long-range gunnery, and by the time she was built she was fitted with all the latest models of fire control equipment; including the new 9ft Barr and Stroud rangefinder (double the base length of its predecessor) and a 'Transmitting Station' that correlated all the data before passing it on to the gun turrets. However, useful as all this was, perhaps the most radical element of *Dreadnought's* fire control 'suite' was the number of her main guns; and fearsome though these ten 12-inch guns (eight on a broadside) must have appeared to contemporaries, it wasn't the weight of fire that was *Dreadnought's* greatest asset—it was *the speed and regularity of salvos*. When Admiral Sir John Fisher was C-in-C of the Mediterranean Fleet at the turn of the twentieth century, he conducted gunnery trials at the then unheard of range of 6,000 yard. He demonstrated that at these 'extreme' distances, the only effective way to apply aiming corrections was by spotting the fall of shot, and that at least four rounds need to be fired together to provide 'overs' and 'shorts'. Furthermore, against a moving target these salvos needed to be fired frequently so that data could be updated and accurate fire control solutions reached. Thus at least eight guns were needed, with one four-gun salvo firing while the other four guns reloaded. Compared to the mixed armament of the pre-dreadnoughts, the advances in fire control made possible by the all-big-gun concept was decisive, even when they had very similar fire control instruments.

Richard Wimpenny

(Sources as in last April's piece.)

## **NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2007**

### **NWS Northern Fleet – Falkirk East Central Scotland**

Kenny Thomson, 1 Excise Lane, Kincardine, Fife, FK10 4LW, Tel: 01259 731091  
e-mail: [kenny.thomson@homecall.co.uk](mailto:kenny.thomson@homecall.co.uk) - Website: [WWW.falkirkwargamesclub.co.uk](http://WWW.falkirkwargamesclub.co.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)

### **NWS North Hants [Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday]**

Jeff Crane 31 Park Gardens, Black Dam, Basingstoke, Hants, 01256 427906  
e-mail: [gf.crane@ntlworld.com](mailto:gf.crane@ntlworld.com)

Next game will be a WW2 coastal action to be held at Jeff's house on 24th June.  
Contact Jeff for more details.

### **NWS Wessex [Bi-Monthly Meetings]**

The Wessex Group has gone into (hopefully) temporary abeyance for the moment. If anyone living in the Bath / Bristol / Gloucester area (or further afield) would like to take on managing the group please contact myself or any of the other NWS officials.

### **Other Events**

*None listed at this time*