



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 200 –December 2010

EDITORIAL

Gentlemen,

Well, here we are: another Christmas and another 'festive' *AGB*...Well another *AGB*, anyway. Actually, the fact that this issue isn't quite as late as I feared is a cause for a small personal celebration in the Wimpenny household! If you peer at the top of the page you will note that this is the two-hundredth *All Guns Blazing* and my eighteenth as Editor. Dear me, how the months have flown by.

Like Christmases, birthdays seem to come along far quicker than they used to do, and for mine a few weeks ago I received from Mrs. W. a copy of *Warship 2010*. This one-time quarterly magazine has for a good few years now been published as beautiful hardback annual, covering 'steel navy' subjects with high quality articles and black-and-white illustrations. My primary reason for putting this particular edition on my 'wish list' was a fabulous piece by Stephen McLaughlin entitled 'Equal Speed Charlie London', which as you may have guessed examines Jellicoe's controversial deployment of the British battle squadrons at Jutland. This is a veritable goldmine for the naval wargamer, as all the alternatives of equal speed deployment (starboard wing and centre, etc) are examined, along with *un*-equal speed deployments; these complex evolutions, I have to admit, being a new one on me! All are eruditely explained and complimented by clear maps and diagrams showing hypothetical engagement ranges with the High Seas Fleet. And as if this wasn't enough on its own, there are also articles on the French pre-dreadnought *Suffren*, HMS *Hood's* cancelled sisters and—wait for it!—the development French fire control systems from 1815 to 1900! Wow! In short, I cannot recommend *Warship 2010* highly enough.

Although being a professional musician can have its drawbacks (odd working patterns making it awkward to play naval wargames not the least of them!), it does occasionally have its perks. Aside from all the pretty girls in the cast of *Chicago* (don't tell the Memsahib!), the travelling aspect can be very rewarding too. While working in Belfast a few years ago I was able to organize a trip around the Jutland veteran HMS *Caroline*, and Sunderland always has the added delight of the 1817 Leda class frigate HMS *Trincomaleea* just down the road in Hartlepool. Now, however, I've just started to work right next door the hallowed halls of the Admiralty itself! As I explained in last month's Editorial when I warned about a heavy workload threatening *AGB* deadlines, I'm back in London's West End at the old Whitehall Theatre, now renamed the 'Trafalgar Studios'. The name is good enough on its own, of course, but the theatre is virtually next door to the famous dolphin-framed main gateway of the Admiralty, while the stage door is almost underneath Admiralty Arch and close by 'Cooke's Entrance' on the Mall. It almost makes me glad to go to work! The show I'm on is actually a play about Judy Garland and I have **loads** of time to read in between musical numbers (Tough life, I know). Thus far, I've 'seen off' Fred T. Jane's 1912 *The History of the British Battlefleet* (excellent, by the way) and A. T. Mahan's volume of the American War of Independence; and being close by the heady delights of The Charing Cross Road, I won't go short of books to keep me going either!

Talking of books, while I've been mooching around I have noticed that D. K. Brown's superb *Warrior to Dreadnought* and *Grand Fleet* have both been published in paperback by *Seaforth*, priced at £16.99. These fabulous volumes chronicle the design and development of British Ships over a period of some sixty fascinating years, and if you don't already have them, it might be worth dropping the odd hint to 'Mrs. Santa', if you know what I mean.

I don't know how many of you visit the 'Naval Wargames' discussion group on *Yahoo*, but at the end of November, a member highlighted a page on *You Tube* that has computer-style animations of the Pacific carrier battles of Coral Sea and Santa Cruz. I haven't had a chance to watch them all yet, but it is thrilling stuff. If you fancy a few minutes diversion, check out:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QvNQS7HLYE>

It has been proposed to me on a couple of occasions that a 'Letters' page would be a good idea for *AGB* and I am more than willing to include this on a regular basis; for 'questions and answers', as it were, as well as queries over rule-sets, etc. However, while there are no 'letters' this month, there is a new 'Signal Pad' section for small items of interest, which this month are all Rob Morgan's work. So if you spot any interesting 'tit-bit', no matter how small, please email it to me at the address below. Rob has also very kindly supplied another instalment of his quiz, which I'm sure will keep your brains ticking over during these long and freezing winter days. (As I write, I am staring out of a train window at fields deep in snow; must be all the global warming we're afflicted with!)

Well, gentlemen, may I wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Yours with a festive 'Up Spirits'

Richard Wimpenny

wimpenny@talktalk.net

BLACKBEARD SOLITAIRE

By Jeff Crane

Pirate player: Jeff Crane

The thing I always most liked about 'Blackbeard' was the game's unique movement structure which prevents a player knowing whose turn it is next. I have played games where I have had more turns than my opponents and still lost. Recently after re-reading through the rules I realised I could play it solitaire and this epistle is an account of one of my 'least successful' games.

Set up:

6 Governors are drawn and placed in 6 different ports:

Governor Politics Port

Barry Pro-Pirate Cartagena

Collingwood Pro-Pirate Santa Domingo

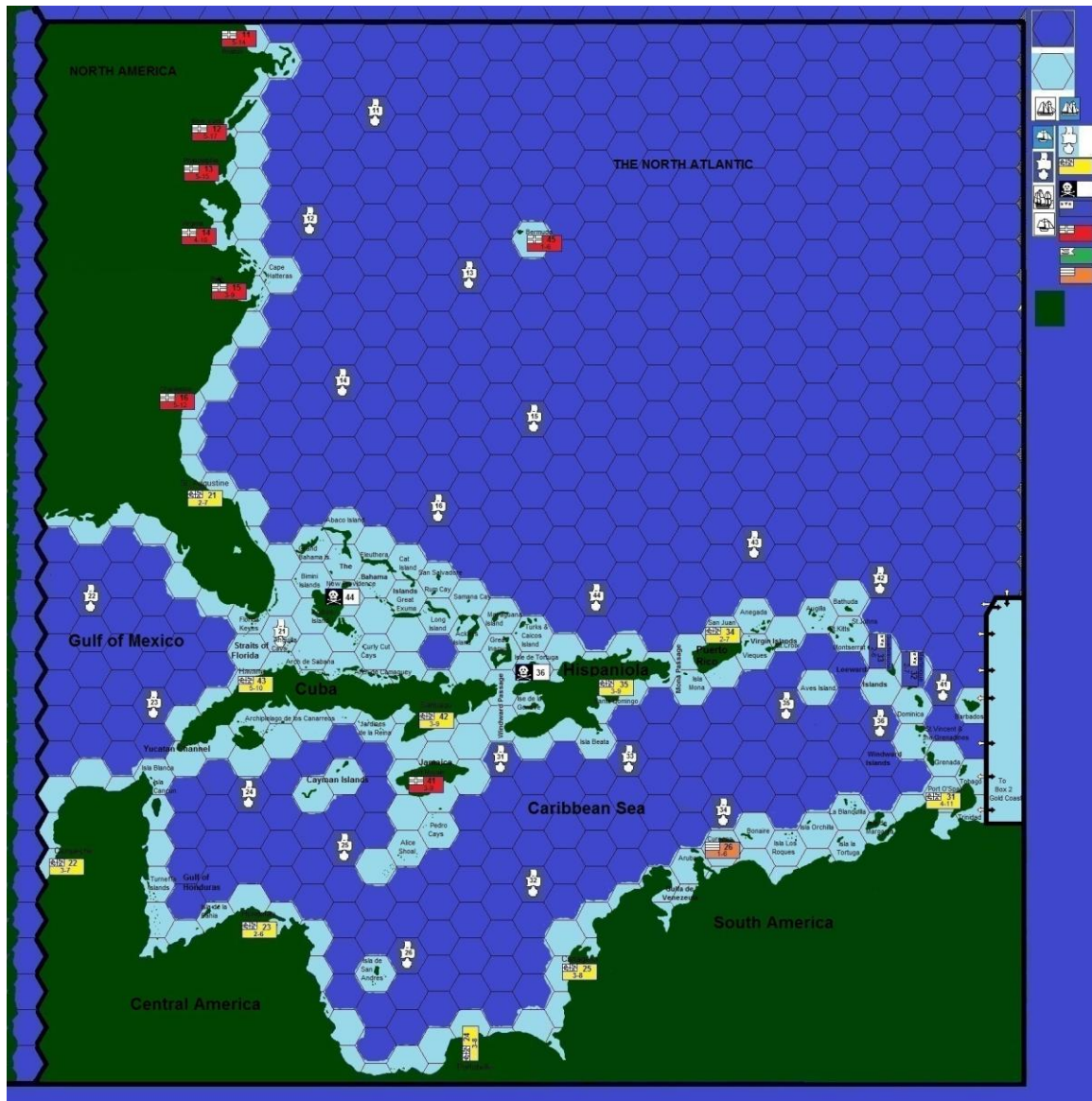
Richardson Pro-Pirate Goa

Bellomont Anti-Pirate Cape Lopez

Markham Pro-Pirate Cape Coast

Carr Pro-Pirate Whydal

Six Merchants are drawn and placed in Shipping lanes #11, #15, #21, #46, #52 and #66



Play:

Turn 1: Blood – Activate: Blood's sloop is placed in hex P24 with a Crew Unrest of 7, in the Caribbean. I took a Sloop rather than a Schooner because of the extra Combat rating, intending as I was to Raid Ports where the rewards tend to be greater than attacking Merchants. Rolling a '1' added to my Speed rating of 3, produced a 4 hex voyage to L24 where we searched without result.

Turn 2: Blood: Rolling another '1' was just enough for a 4 hex voyage to Honduras, where we dropped anchor and attacked the port. With an Ability of 5, a Combat rating of 6 and a (Dr.6) of 2, I scored 13. Honduras (Defence 6) and a luckily low (Dr.12) $1,4 - 5 = 11$. We take the Port, a bloodless victory by taking damage equal to one less than the Ports lowest Dice roll ($(1 - 1 = 0)$)

The Ports Value of 2 grants Blood 800 doubloons ($4 + 4 \times 100 D$) a Notoriety of 6 and an Attack history against the Spanish.

Turn 3: Random Event: Draw New Merchant: A new Merchant is placed in Sh.Lane 52

Turn 4: Lowther (Player 2) – Activate: Captain Lowther's Sloop starts in Sh.Lane 45 off the Gold Coast. As there is a Merchant at Sh.Lane 46 2 hexes away Lowther has no need to roll and makes the 2 hex voyage and Searches, but no further sail is sighted.

Turn 5: Blood: Dr.2 5 hex voyage to M23, a Coastal hex. Search 2 Merchantmen are sighted.

Turn 6: Random Event – Storm: Its not nice being in a storm in a Coastal hex (Dr12 Speed damage) Rolled 6 leaving the Sloops Speed rating at -2

Turn 7: Bonnet (Player 3) – Activate: Bonnet's Sloop starts in Sh.Lane 21. in the Florida Channel. As there is already a Merchant here Bonnet investigates, a British 3 master def. 7. Bonnet's Ability 2 + Spd. 3 + Cmb 6 = 11 – 7 = 4. Bonnet rolls a 5, takes 1 point of Cmb. Damage but no personal injury.

Turn 8: Bonnet: Attacks the British merchantman again needing a 3, curses a 5, takes 2 points of damage but again no personal injury.

Turn 9: New Merchant: A merchantman is placed at Sh.Lane 15.

Turn 10: Random Event – Crew Unrest: After 2 failed attempts to take the British ship the crew attempt a mutiny. Bonnet fails to quell the unrest and is marooned, while his ship sails away.

Turn 11: Lowther: Lowther attacks a Neutral schooner, Ability 4 + 3 Spd + 6 Cmb. = 13 – Def 4 = 9. He rolls 8 and takes the prize. Booty is 25 which goes into one hold and his Notoriety rises to 3.

Turn 12: Lowther: Lowther rolls a 2 and makes a 5 hex voyage to I6 where he searches and finds a Warship! The Pirate-hunter attempts an Intercept but Lowther's luck holds and he escapes.

Turn 13: Warship intercepts most Notorious Pirate: All warships are returned to the cup and a new warship intercepts Blood. In my damaged state there is no way I can get away and have to fight. Luck is on my side and the die rolls are equalised. Luckily I roll higher and so do not continue the fight.

Turn 14: Blood: I roll a 5 which with my -2 Speed mod. Gives me a 3 hex voyage, just enough to anchor in Port Royale. Perhaps I will be able to refit, but with that British warship just over the horizon....

Turn 15: Draw 2 Merchants: Place 2 Merchants in Sea Lane 17

Turn 16: Draw New Merchant: place new Merchant in S.Lane 45

Turn 17: Activate Thomas Tew (Player 3): Tew's Schooner is placed in S.Lane 41 and makes a 6 hex voyage to Y23 where a search turns up no sightings.

Turn 18: Warship attacks most Notorious pirate: All warships are returned to the cup and then *another* British warship enters Port Royale and ousts Blood. Unable to evade the warship, Blood is sunk in the one-sided fight, thus ending an inglorious career.

What I would like to do is attempt to run a game of Blackbeard by e-mail, should there be any interest although I'm not totally sure how to go about it and would welcome any ideas.

I imagine I would scan the board into the computer along with the Ship charts and Rules and send them to anyone who wishes to play.

**BRITISH DREADNOUGHT *versus* GERMAN DREADNOUGHT
JUTLAND 1916**

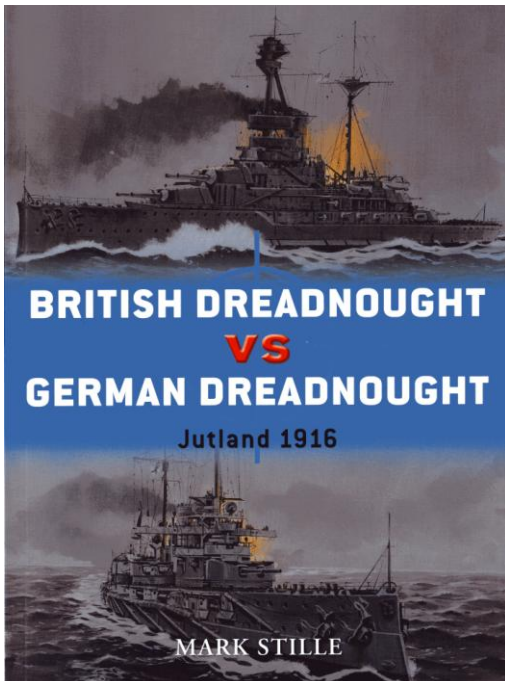
by
Mark Stille

(Osprey Duel Series 31)

Reviewed by Mike Dowd

After tantalising and fleeting glimpses through the mist and smoke of the flickering pages of the company website, one of *Osprey's* most trailed publications finally sees the light of day. At times this has seemed a bit like waiting for the High Seas Fleet themselves to eventually emerge – when *will* they come out? The expectation is high, the anticipation of great events is rife – clear the decks! –Fleet Action Imminent! ...or will it will it be a missed opportunity, and a damp squib?

If the recent record of this 'Duel' series of *Osprey* publications is anything to go by,- and I am thinking in particular of Robert Forczyk's excellent Russian Battleship *versus* Japanese Battleship Yellow Sea 1904-05,



then one can safely assume we are in for a worthwhile treat; If however, they continue to indulge authors who shall we say, if not outwardly biased towards their subject matter, are at least guilty of a little too much admiration and 'spin' to their narrative—as recently demonstrated in a certain two volume set of the *New Vanguard* series whose chosen subject matter is closely interwoven with our topic here, then it could be very much a Curates Egg of a book. [See *David Manley's* review of said volume below. RW]

Thankfully, author Mark Stille (Commander, US Navy Retd) has no such pretensions, there are no 'un-opposed advances across the North Sea', nor tactical 'marches back to port' here; although he has not entirely 'learnt to kill his darlings' as the great Chair of English at Cambridge Arthur Quiller Couch once stated was the true first step to great clarity and objectivity in writing; for early on within the text and before he really warms to his topic, we are reminded of the apparent primacy of the US Navy in first thinking of the all big gun battleship, and of first conceiving of centre line arrangement of turrets;-well.... *naturally*. However, Cdr Stille keeps enough distance here to give an impartial overview, and that is generally what this book is—a good general synopsis of the ships, their crews, their technical development and their deployment and performance

at Jutland. Just what you want from an *Osprey* publication really. Therefore, there is probably little new here for the seasoned enthusiast or scholar – which I am assuming counts the vast majority of *AGB* readership, but that does not in any way detract from the overall contents of the volume.

Whilst as previously mentioned, the author keeps a sufficient professional disconnect from the main protagonists to enable him to remain objective, one wonders at times if this is not a little too distant, as there are several small errors peppered throughout the book; such as twice stating *HMS Agincourt* had Fourteen 14-inch guns, and captioning the British dreadnought illustrated in the 'German gun sight view' as being *HMS Malaya* despite their being a *Q* turret clearly visible on the vessel depicted. (Well done our eagle eyed-Editor for that one) Given that there is a flyleaf acknowledgement to a Keith Allen the same person who sometimes features articles in the online 'gwpda' (Great War Period Document Archive) for his assistance in checking facts and details, it would seem perhaps the commissioning editors at *Osprey* may, like their printing presses have been outsourced a little too much to keep a sufficient grip on such matters.

This is also true of the main illustrations; one of the distinguishing features of the *Osprey* series—especially the much anticipated (ahem...) 'centrefold', in this instance showing the 6th Division of the 1st Battle Squadron steaming full on towards the viewer in line ahead, guns trained to starboard engaging the German fleet at approx 18:30 hours. However, despite a caption to the contrary (in which the repeated error

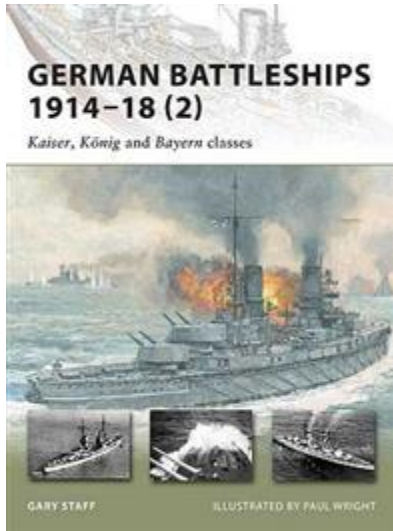
of mentioning *Agincourt's* 14-inch guns) the lead vessel of this division, HMS *Marlborough* has been cut off the illustration in the art edit, and only the final trails of her smoke stack plumes are testament to her having sailed off the page right past the viewer. Meanwhile the 15 inch guns of HMS *Revenge* though swung out at a difficult angle for an artist to represent clearly against the upper works of the rest of the vessel, where she is almost 'firing over her shoulder' are—to my eye anyway—a little too fore shortened, even for a 42 cal gun, making this an unusual and slightly awkward composition to choose to commission. Otherwise, it has to be said the artwork by Illustrator Howard Gerrard is up to his usual excellent standard.

The 'digital' artwork which seems a must these days with *Osprey* is quite useful in the representation of respective German and British Dreadnought turret evolution, and there are some good photographs too, particularly the dockyard images of the damage to German ships following the battle, and the preceding image of HMS *Audacious* in the final stages of abandoning ship and about to succumb following her striking a mine in 1914 – it is interesting to note how she settled so evenly in the water- does anyone know if she ever rolled over before she finally went down?

The maps are simple and clear, and show the salient points in relation to the text, but given *Osprey's* penchant for 'aerial' 3D illustrative perspectives these days, perhaps the two digital ship profiles (*Iron Duke & König*) which albeit serve to illustrate the tonal differences in grey paint finish which did have a bearing in the early stages of battle, do little to further knowledge better than a well chosen (and correctly captioned) photograph. Could these have been substituted for some alternative spend of the computer aided graphics budget directed to the mapping area? Otherwise the main body of text has a very useful chapter on Technical Development which includes quick reference 'boxes' encapsulating the various classes of dreadnought and the positive and negative aspects during their evolution on both sides. The chapter headed 'Statistics and Analysis' is also a useful read especially regarding the composition of respective shells, explosive and propellant powders, and the effect these had on events, as is the chapter on 'Dreadnought Crews'— the information regarding the German side I found particularly illuminating.

Overall, this is a good little book for the relative novice naval historian or wargamer, or someone wishing to begin to learn more of the period who may be daunted by the plethora of super detailed heavyweight academic books on the subject. From this perspective some stronger graphic material could have been deployed to 'pull in' perhaps younger readers to the subject (I personally remember the effect of borrowing a superb book on British Naval history from my local children's library in 1973, it was full of dramatic black and white pen and ink drawings, and the chapter on Jutland showing Hipper transferring his flag from the crippled smoking *Lutzow* fired my imagination so much! I wonder after decades of political correctness they still have such things in children's libraries these days—books I mean!).

To conclude, having bought the title through an online supplier (Amazon) for under £9 inc p+p I don't feel I have lost out, but if I had purchased from my local *Waterstone's* or *Ian Allen Books* for the full cover price of £12.99, I might feel a little short changed, but this is far more down to the publishers and the decisions of their series editors than any real fault of the author. Either way, it has squeezed its way on to the book shelf (next to many of the volumes cited as reference in the bibliography) where I am sure it will be used.



Osprey New Vanguard: German Battleships 1914-18: No. 2:
Kaiser, König and Bayern Classes
By Gary Staff
Reviewed by David Manley

It is always good to see naval subjects covered in the New Vanguard series. NV167 covers the German battleships of the *Kaiser*, *König* and *Bayern* classes. Unfortunately I was rather less than impressed with the content. The book is standard Osprey fare – a decent overview of the design, construction and operational histories of the ships concerned. The colour plates are lovely and the text is supported by a good selection of photographs, although the section will come as no surprise to seasoned WW1 readers. Whilst the technical text is good, the book is

let down by the author's bias, with many standard myths regarding "unsinkable" battleships trotted out as gospel. The bibliography indicates a restriction to secondary sources, and there is no mention made of the extensive survey and analysis of the *Baden* class carried out post war that revealed a number of areas where aspects of the design, lauded in the popular press as evidently superior to Allied designs, were shown to be of little benefit or actually to the detriment of the ships survivability. The author then concludes that the Grand Fleet "surrendered most of the North Sea to Germany," a statement that flies in the face of reality.

In summary, had the author stuck to technical and operational facts, researched the technical aspects of the designs in more detail and not overlaid the text with his own dubious assertions this would have been a far better book. As it is, one probably best to avoid.

(If I may add to David's comments, I read volume one of this series and his 'warning', if I may use such a term, could apply to that one also. I realize that the book is about German ships, but the constant reference to the Battle of Jutland as, "the Skagerrak battle," leaves you in no doubt as to Mr. Staff's inclinations!
RW)

THE NAVY LEAGUE QUIZ PART FOUR

My thanks once again to Rob Morgan for providing another round of his AGB teaser, but before Part Four, here are last months questions, with the answers in italics:

1. Which was the first British Warship to have 5.2-inch guns?
HM Submarine XI.
2. If you got question 1 correct in part two you may get this. What was the name of the warship that fired the **last** round off the Belgian coast in WW1? What was the gun's calibre?
The monitor HMS 'Lord Clive'. 18-inch.
3. Name the first two warships in the Royal Navy with a sloping protective deck?
The protected cruisers 'Blake' and 'Blenheim'.
4. Which naval 'activity' was outlawed by a treaty signed in Paris in 1856?
Privateering.
5. What was the name of the first British warship to have a ram bow? And what was her nickname?
The ironclad frigate HMS 'Resistance', known as 'Old Rammo'.

And now, on with the next round!

Rob writes: "I've continued my wanderings through the old 'Navy League' quiz questions, thought some of them are so very obvious to the wargamer and can't be included. For example, 'Why did British fleet carriers survive Japanese Kamikaze attacks so easily?' Other questions in the magazine portray a naval world long gone and forgotten. Here is the next set of questions, clearly intended for lookouts and navigation officers!"

1. Which RN aircraft carrier was laid down as an Italian liner?
2. Which was the first cruiser to burn oil fuel?
3. To which 'Royal' navy did *Shamsher* belong?
4. What and where are the manacles?
5. Which RN warships were known as the 'Wobbly Eight'?

As always, I look forward to receiving any answers you may come up with.

SIGNAL PAD!

[My thanks to Rob Morgan for all these 'Signals'. RW]

News from Russ Jackson at *Kremlin Miniatures* is that he has sold the Heimskringla range of 1/300th scale Viking Longships as of November 1st. They will now be made and marketed by Andy Kirk of Heroics & Ros along with the remarkably good range of Viking age war-at-sea rules which Russ wrote some years back. Interesting that the purchase of the Kremlin range was made after Heroics & Ross let slip that they were intending to commission a range of ships in that early medieval period. Perhaps we'll see one or two useful additions to the existing four models in the near future! Sadly, this now means that Kremlin's no longer a model ship manufacturer.

The 'Society of Nautical Research' is providing a number of talks at the Royal Naval Club in Old Portsmouth. Email peter Ashley at peter.ashley4@btinternet.com for further details.

Saturday 8th Jan. 2011 at 1400hrs.

The Battle of the Grand Port, Marina Carter.

Saturday 12th Feb. also at 1400.

The Japanese Navy, Alessio Patalano (ambitious subject for just one afternoon!)

The British Commission for Maritime History King's Seminars held at King's College in London WC2 has these in the programme.....www.maritimehistory.org.uk for further information.

Thursday 9th December.1715hrs.

The Naval Arms Race and the Great Naval Armageddon 1750-1815, Dr. Michael Duffy.

Thursday 13th January 1715.

British Sea Power in the Baltic 1715-1815, Dr James Davey.

Finally there are a few talks at the University of London Senate House in WC1, all beginning at 1715hrs, and for further information contact research@nmm.ac.uk

14th December.

Fighting on the periphery: The Crimean war in the Arctic 1854-6, Andrew Lambert.

14th January 2011.

Guerrillas at Sea: 1690-1756, Derek Elliot.

8th February 2011.

Histories of Victory and Defeat in Japanese Naval Films, Jon Rayner.

8th March 2011.

Piracy in the Atlantic 1688-1856, Guy Chet.

22nd March 2011.

The Navy and Cromwell's Conquest of Ireland 1649-53, Elaine Murphy.

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.

NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2009

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 - 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)
-
-

NWS North Hants [Every 3rd Sunday]

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

e-mail: gf.crane@ntlworld.com

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.
