



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 183 – July 2009

EDITORIAL

Gentlemen, before I begin my tenure at the helm of this august newsletter, I would like to extend my thanks to David Manley. As I'm sure you will all agree his time on 'Fleet' Street has been most enjoyable for us all. On a personal note, I have to thank David for helping me through some still unresolved email problems (which is why he has had to send this issue out to you all) and in providing tips and templates, etc. Well, now that David's decommissioning pennant has been well and truly hoisted, I'd better 'read myself in'...

Unlike David and our previous editor, Jeff Crane, I have no connection with 'the service' or even the sea; and living in Warwickshire I think I am about as far as it possible to get from the 'briny' in our seafaring isle! However, I did work on some cruise ships in the mid-to-late eighties (as a saxophone player, not a sailor) and have enjoyed bouts of mackerel fishing when on holiday. Nevertheless, lubber though I am, I have passion for naval history and, by extension, naval wargaming. I have been wargaming in one way or another for as long as I can remember, and although like most men I found the raw power and majesty of battleships interesting, I was always a military gamer. However, eleven years ago I was working in London and visited HMS *Belfast*. I was spellbound and walked down the gangway a changed man. Soon after I joined this esteemed company and I haven't looked back.

As a man in his mid-forties with two young-ish girls and sometimes nocturnal work patterns, I never seem to find as much time for gaming these days as I would like. However when I do, my favourite periods are late eighteenth age of sail, pre-dreadnought, WWI and, during the last year or so, WWII carrier actions. The fact that I use (in the main) a combination of *Seekrieg V* and Rod Langton's *Signal Close Action* will acquaint you, no doubt, with the fact that your new editor tends to favour the simulation as opposed to the purely 'game' aspect of our hobby. Nevertheless, we are a broad church in the NWS, and what *AGB* needs are details of the games *you* are playing; what good books you are reading; or even what you are fed up with and moaning about! Now I'm sure you've had enough of my ramblings already, but in the absence of any other material this month (hint, hint), I'm afraid you're stuck with a light-hearted piece of mine on a rather interesting alehouse I stumbled across (not *out* of, I hastened to add!) last summer.

Yours Splicing the Mainbrace

Richard Wimpenny

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SHOVELLING SHIPS

Being an account of a nautical hostelry: one sure to whet the appetites of all honest tars!

As some of our esteemed membership is aware, I am a professional musician. As such, I spend a fair amount of my working in life London's West End—and while working, I enjoy a few pints! To be sure, this flies in the face of modern sanctimonious work ethics, but to those who would prescribe me coca cola or, God forbid, herbal tea, all I can say is that not all 'progress' is enlightened or, indeed, good for the soul. I need my grog. Now, while I'm happy to enjoy a wet just about anywhere, if it can take place in an alehouse with a nautical inclination, so much the better. And so it was...

One Saturday a few months ago during the teatime break between matinee and evening performance, one of the other sax players asked if any of us had heard of a pub behind Charing Cross station called the 'Ship and Shovel' (note spelling). As it happened I hadn't, but the name roused my interest immediately. My suspicions were rewarded when one of the trumpet players said, "I've been there, but 'Shovel' is spelt a bit funny, isn't

it?" Then, I had it. "Is it," I enquired, "S-H-O-V-E double L?" He nodded and said he thought it was. "A-ha," I piped, "that'll be Sir Cloudesley Shovell—the famous admiral!" My triumphant announcement yielded naught but a number of 'questioning' eyebrows, one or two blank stares and a full broadside of pitying 'oh-no-he's-off-again' looks. (I'm sure we've *all* used to those, eh chaps?) Nevertheless, as soon as the tide had gone out in all our glasses, m' shipmates and I were off!

Like Vice-Admiral Sir George Tryon and the loss of HMS *Victoria* in 1893, Sir Cloudesley Shovell is one of those men who despite careers of note and achievement, are, in the main, remembered for one tragic episode; an event so huge that all before is forgotten. After joining the Navy in 1650 as a cabin boy, Shovell won fame burning four men-of-war under the walls of Tripoli in 1676; went on in 1688 to make the shrewd move of convoying 'Dutch William' to his new realm; and at the Battle of Barfleur in 1692 served his new king by breaking the French line-of-battle. But despite these acts of derring-do, and many more besides, it is for the wrecking of his fleet off the Isle of Scilly in 1707 that he is now remembered (Although not by the members of the 'Chicago' band!) This disaster, which cost of the lives of Shovell and 1,400 of his men, was the result of inaccurate dead reckoning, and it led to the formation of the 'Board of Longitude' and, ultimately, to John Harrison's famous clocks. However, that, as they say, is another story.

Just as I was getting over the surprise of there actually *being* a pub dedicated to Sir Cloudesley Shovell, I was presented on arrival with another singular facet of the House: the premises are divided in two, on opposite sides of the alleyway! Each has its own bar, etc, and if were it not for the fact that they have the same red paint work and excellent hanging signs showing the Admiral himself (resplendent in white periwig!), they could easily be mistaken for two separate establishments. The interiors of both sides of the pub are packed with naval paintings and prints; and though these are by no means all from Sir Cloudesley's era, there is plenty to keep those such as ourselves interested while swigging from a superb pint of Hall and Woodehouse's ale: *Badger Best*, *Tanglefoot*, etc. So, if you find yourself 'in Town' with a moment of leisure and a dry palate, it could be just the place to slice the mainbrace while your good lady carries on shopping.

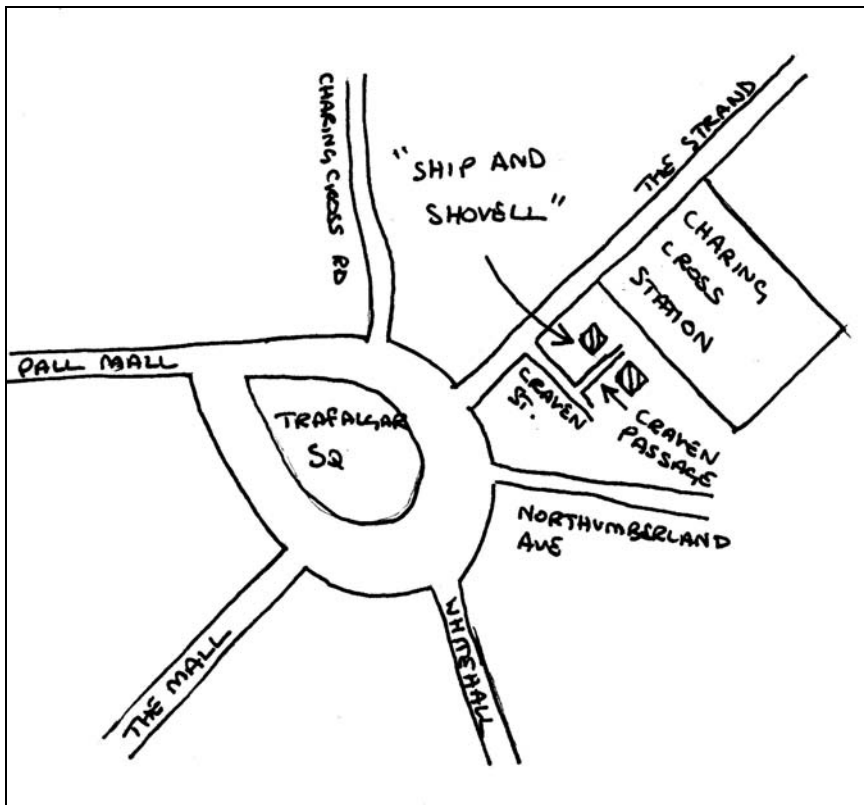


The two halves of said hostelry, featuring fine portraits of our hero!

For those of you who, like the good Admiral, maybe relying on dead reckoning, the 'Ship and Shovell' can be found at:

1-3 Craven Passage,
Charing Cross,
WC2N 5PH.
Tel: 020 7839 1311

However, should you prefer to rely on a chart, see below:



Over the past months this pub has become one of my regular 'haunts', and as I sometimes actually alight the underground at Charing Cross...well it would be disrespectful to old Sir Cloudesley not to pipe 'up spirits'. Hope to see you there. Cheers!

Richard Wimpenny

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)
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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

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.
