

Skelp 2004

Welcome

to the after show report for the wargames show, SKELP. Another busy wargaming year is almost complete and one's thoughts turn to buying Christmas presents for the kids, both big and small! At the Angus Wargames Club, we felt it would make a nice change to provide a post action summary of this year's show, for all who supported it. So here it is!

The show was held at the Town Hall in Kirriemuir, being a compact venue it provides a 'cosy' feel to proceedings, but can become somewhat cramped when busy. The main hall was home to the traders, painting competition and about two thirds of the club tables. Off the main hall you found the remaining club tables, the ever popular bring & buy stall, and the best value kitchen serving quality hot food all day.

It would appear that this year's show was quieter than some in the past, which appears to mirror the trend from other shows. With a break from tradition, we decided not to have a politically motivated guest of honour this year and instead opted to invite someone from within the wargaming community. The club was very pleased when Marilyn Bevan of Outpost Wargames Services, agreed to present the prizes at this years show.



The last samurai !

Marilyn and Jeff Bevan, have supported the show for many years and this seemed a good way to say thankyou for their support.

The tables on show this year were of a high standard, with handouts and display boards becoming the norm. There was a selection of periods on show this year, but there was a higher proportion of WW2 games, perhaps reflecting the current trend in the hobby as a whole.



Shots from around the show

We were pleased to welcome back a lot of the traders who have supported the show over the past 20 years and their continued support has helped make the show the success it is. There were unfortunately, a few faces missing this year, the reasons for this were varied, from selling up, illness and the lure of a much larger show. This provided an opportunity though, to invite some new traders to this year's show and very welcome they were too. Initial feedback during and at the end of the show would indicate that they all had a successful show, indicating that they will return next year and support our 21st Birthday Show, at the Reid Hall, Forfar.



**Iron Brigade game
"Br'er rabbit down, Fubar"**

See next page for details of next year's show.

Around the show

This years show was, as always, very well supported by the wargaming community. There was a good spread of demonstration and participation tables laid on by the various clubs. A broad range of periods were covered from Caesar's amphibious landing on the south coast (Dunfermline), through to a monumental reflight of Marston Moor in 6mm (Elgin), including a healthy selection of WW2 based games and a selection of fantasy epics including Greenocks Fantasy adventure.

There were a total of 8 demonstration and 7 participation games on display, the largest by far was the sand table display of the D-Day landings (Sword Beach) presented by the combined efforts of the Glasgow Phoenix and Greenock Wargames Clubs. An impressive looking table and they even managed to tidy it away without leaving a grain of sand behind. The boys from RAF Leuchars were taking it easy this year (well thats what they claimed) and provided a treat in 1:1200 - The Second Battle of Narvik. It produced lively interest throughout the day and I am sure will continue to do so around Christmas time,



This is what we like to see - happy traders !

when certain families sit down to enjoy the yearly game of Monopoly, only to find that some bright spark has pinched all the houses to use for this years table!

This brings us on to 'Panzer Ace', winner of the best participation game, from the League of Augsburg's Barry Hilton and Phil Olley. The Master speaks as they prepare to take command of their panzers Barry Hilton instructs a new intake of young gamers (Panzer Commanders) in what it takes to become



Panzer Ace - Best Participation Game

the new "Wittman" of the German Army before throwing them into the fight against the mighty Red Army on the Eastern front in The League of Augsburg's "Panzer Ace" played with their superb models and terrain, which had that must play look to it.

We were all keen to have a go at this game although I doubt if spaces were available as the game seemed to have a continuous stream of youngsters wanting to pit themselves against each other for the chance of winning the special prize put up by Phil and Barry of one of their painted German tanks for the best score of the day.

When I last passed the table Barry was still doing a wonderful job of controlling the teams of eager would be Aces and one told me that a young lady was leading the race for the prize. I'm sure Barry said they would bring their Eastern Front stuff down to the club next year for a game and we must remember to hold him to that.



"I don't mean to gloat, but I did tell you.."

SKELP 2005

On Saturday November the 5th 2005 in the REID HALL FORFAR .The Angus Wargames Club will be celebrating the 21st birthday of their annual Wargames show "SKELP"

The transformation of the show from its humble beginnings, as a local club event, aimed at attracting new members, into the successful show it is today can be put down to a number of factors.

The hard work and long hours put in to develop, improve and run the show over the years by past and present Club members, their families and friends.

The support of the Traders, many of whom travel hundreds of miles, from all over Scotland and in some cases, England, to support the show, which in the beginning could only promise them a good time but couldn't guarantee they would make any profit.

And of course the Scottish Wargaming community, the clubs and their members, many of whom we now consider friends; who, over the years have been generous in their support of the club and its show by turning up in large numbers and displaying many memorable games at SKELP, and without whose support there would be no show.

The membership of the Angus Wargames Club wanted to do something special to mark the occasion of it's 21st show, various suggestions were made, ranging from giving everyone a bottle (but, as we all know, wargamers never touch the stuff), to giving everyone who attended a specially commissioned figure, but that's been done before and the Treasurer's idea of some special Skelp dice, which he thought would be handy (being the cheapest option) was also knocked back.

In the end we decided that the best gesture of thanks we could make, was to make a donation to a worthwhile cause with a real connection to the hobby we all enjoy, and with your support the membership have chosen to donate all of the profits from Skelp 2005 to THE SCOTTISH POPPY APPEAL.



The view of the main hall from the stage

The John Hannay-Wilson Corner

His own personal views on judging at Skelp

I have been judging the painting competition and tables at Skelp for longer than I want to remember. Skelp is an amazing wargames show; that a small club in a remote corner of Scotland can generate so much interest from clubs and wargamers from all over Scotland and the northern part of England should be a source of great pride to all who have contributed to the organisation of this event over all the years it has been running.



The painting competition has always been of the highest standard and these notes are in no way a criticism of anybody who has entered their work over the years. My first comment is that small scales do not win painting competitions; anything smaller than 25mm just doesn't cut it. Why is this. Well, basically, although wargaming has been moving down-size for years for good economic reasons, for painting competitions there has to be a canvas upon which to work, and less than 25mm doesn't work. In other words, the bigger the better. Also if figures are entered as a wargaming unit or army, they should be based so that they look like a wargaming unit or army. So, basing counts - to many units or armies are nicely painted but badly based. If units are being entered into a wargaming unit or army, a simple "flocked" base won't do; it has to complement the painting.

For individual figures, it must be remembered that the category is "individual" figure. Painted figures straight from kits or purchased as figures are immediately seen by the judges for exactly that. Conversions, or tableaux are so much more attractive and catch the judges' eye. I have seen the same two figures of Sitting Bull almost exactly painted the same, but one was on its own and the other on the field of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, with the detritus of war strewn amply at his horse's feet (in this case half the 7th Cavalry). Which looked the best? Well, the one in context of course! The context evokes the mood of desperation and

heroism, which lends itself to the pose of the figure. Which leads nicely on to one truism; basing counts (again). Sloppy basing detracts from the best of painting. Another truism is that fantasy does not have to equate to garish. Too many fantasy figures are painted as though Rowneys were going out of business and the artist feels he has to use the full palate to make the point that it is a fantasy figure. Sometimes a certain amount of realism accentuates the fantasy.

Demonstration Tables are my favourite subject. My own club in London used to set up a demonstration table; make it look good for 11:00, then depart to the pub for three hours. Sorry, that is not what it is about. To my mind a demonstration table is about showing our hobby to the public and encouraging them to either play or develop the hobby further. So my advice to anybody setting up a good demonstration game is as follows:-



- (1) Use large, and well-painted figures - sorry anything less than 25mm won't do (1/72 for 20th Century). The League of Augsburg and Leuchars Wargame Group are experts at having large well painted figures that are immediately recognisable.
- (2) The table must be 3D - not just the table but placards, signs, anything to give height.
- (3) Good handouts to the public, to explain the scenario, rules being used, and the historic context.
- (4) Members of the club are there specifically to explain what is going on - so be proactive and above all be enthusiastic.
- (5) Play the game - setting out nice figures on a table is nice, but isn't the name of the hobby wargaming? There has to be action, otherwise the table can be entered into the painting competition.
- (6) Make sure the game is not played on one corner of the table, too many demonstration games have been spoiled by this.
- (7) If re-enacting an actual battle don't try and get it all on one table by using 15mm/6mm figures. For wargamers this is splendid for a club night but as a

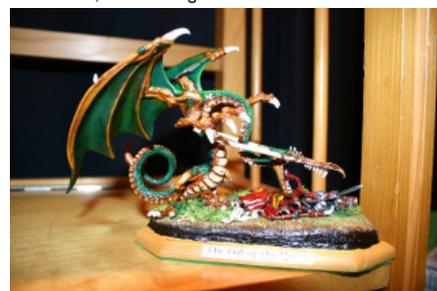
spectacle it leaves the public a bit cold.

(8) Good scenery counts; sometimes simple like the Games Workshop futuristic table at this year's Skelp is very effective and attractive. In the next room this year we had a nice demonstration game of the street fighting in Warsaw towards the end of WWII, with a very clever way of depicting the sewers, in which much of the fighting took place. Unfortunately the buildings and vehicles were obviously western European, which detracted from the overall effect. I am not unique in having been to Warsaw, Cracow, Prague, Budapest, Moscow and Bratislava, so remember that nowadays these are all on the tourist map, so try to get as authentic as possible.

(9) Unusual - Out of the ordinary catches the eye. The usual Scottish default of "let's do Bannockburn" is fine but somewhat predictable. This year at Skelp was a nice battle from the American Civil War with large size ironclads. A nice touch here was the use of 6mm ACW figures showing an ongoing land battle as part of the scenery.

I always judge participation games in a different way - how loud is the noise round a participation table?

The louder the better. Good participation games are those that any member of the public (especially those of school age) can take part in, and understand what to do in two minutes flat. Usually the quirkier the subject the better; I have seen, tiger hunts, Dad's Army (2004 at Skelp), and probably the best was an Asterix game with commercial toys at the Sheffield Triples some years ago. This latter was the talk of the show, with the queues to take part and the enthusiasm and noise of those taking part. The talk of the weekend was when somebody threw double six, and managed to kill Asterix.



If I have upset anybody, I am sorry, it is not intended.

I appreciate all the efforts of the figure painters and wargamers who have produced the countless figures and tables I have judged over the years - I stand in awe of the work and time spent on producing the exhibits. Please take my comments as what they are, what I see, as a judge at a wargames show. May the dice be with you!

List of Prizewinners

Wargames Unit

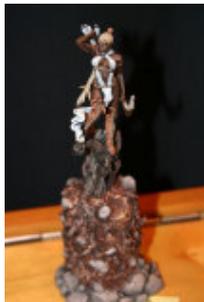
1. Dave Adams, Aberdeen
2. Kevin Calder, Aberdeen

Wargames Army

1. Phil Olley, League of Augsburg
2. John Hill, East Kilbride

Fantasy/Sci-Fi

1. Marjory Robertson, Invergowrie
2. Lesley, McColl, Newmilns



Single Figure

1. Lesley McColl, Newmilns
2. Marjory Robertson, Invergowrie

Modelling

1. Lesley McColl, Newmilns
2. Lesley McColl, Newmilns

Junior Modelling

1. Linden Forster, Invergowrie
2. Sandy Lamond, Wormit



Armoured Fighting Vehicle

1. Dave Adams, Aberdeen
2. Dave Adams, Aberdeen

Demonstration Wargame

1. Falkirk Wargames Club – American Civil War naval game
2. RAF Leuchars - Second Battle of Narvik
3. S.E. Scotland Wargames Club - Warsaw Uprising

Public Participation Wargame

1. League of Augsburg – Panzer Ace
2. Buchan Wargames Group – “Who do you think you are kidding, Mr Hitler?”
3. Dundee Games Workshop – Warhammer 40K

THE PAINTING COMPETITION

The standard of the entries this year was excellent, and seems to get better every year.

The most popular entries were in the Wargames Unit, Fantasy/Sci-Fi and Single Figure categories. There was a real ding-dong battle between the ladies (Lesley McColl and Marjory Robertson) who dominated the Fantasy/Sci-Fi, Single Figure and Modelling Competitions. They exchanged placings in several categories. It was good to see a lot of juniors entering, though there were none in the Junior Wargames Unit category (prizes up for grabs there - next year?). One or two people expressed disappointment that there was no Terrain competition this year, so we will have to look at resurrecting it for next year.

There were a total of 59 entries for the competition as a whole, the numbers of entries in each category were as follows:

Army - 5	Junior Unit - 0
Fantasy/Sci-Fi - 12	Single AFV - 3
Modelling - 7	Single Figure - 11
Junior Modelling - 3	Wargames Unit - 11



The prize winners - well done!

FAREWELL NOTE

As the traders make their weary way home(right), we would like to thank everyone who supported Skelp this year. We had hoped

to include photographs of all the tables, but unfortunately we ran out of space. We will make sure that every table gets a mention next year and a photo (if you have a photo of your table this year why not e-mail it to us so that we can post it on our web site). Have a good holiday over the festive period and all the best for the coming wargaming year!



We would like thank the following organisations and individuals for their support of this years show and we look forward to their continued support in the coming years.

Aberdeen Wargames Club
 Buchan Wargames Group
 Kim Cessford (photographer)
 Dunfermline Wargames Club
 Elgin Wargames Group
 Falkirk District Wargames Club
 Games Workshop
 Graham Robertson Books
 Gourock Wargames Association
 Greenock and District Wargames Club
 Iron Brigade
 Judges: Robert Ferguson
 John Hannay-Wilson
 Andy Horsfall
 League of Augsburg
 Derek Noble (kindly provided most of the photos)
 Osprey Military Publishing
 Pendraken
 Phoenix Wargames Club
 RAF Wargames Association (Leuchars)
 Scotia Micro Models
 Scheltrum Miniatures
 SESWC
 Under the Bed Enterprises
 Urban Mammoth Ltd
 Wargames Figures Company