

SMS 2011



Words & Pictures
by Paul Davies

***Wargames Illustrated* is always keen to support new initiatives in our hobby. And one such initiative was the inaugural SMS Show hosted by the Lincombe Barn Wargames Society and held on 14th August 2011 at Lincombe Barn, Downend near Bristol.**

Michael Stockin of Angel Barracks, described the show as:

"A wargames show for 10mm and under only! Mostly games with a few traders. Think of it more as a gaming session and the chance to buy, rather than a conventional show."

The aim of the show was to redress what some wargamers consider to be the undue emphasis placed on larger figure and model scales at wargames shows and in magazines, to the detriment of the smaller scales. In defence of *Wargames Illustrated*, and by inference the rest of the wargames press, I don't believe this to be entirely fair.

The reality is that photographing individual, or small units, of smaller scale figures under exhibition or show conditions is far more difficult than



photographing larger ones. And the smaller they are, the harder it becomes. Lighting is far more important and of course the degree of magnification of the figure to create an image large enough to view easily on the page of a magazine means that any small blemish in the casting of the figure or the painting of it is also magnified, and can become very obvious! That said *Wargames Illustrated* does, when a suitable subject presents itself, feature smaller scale figures. The magazine's guiding principle is, and will always be, to feature the very best images we can achieve irrespective of scale... after all, the clue is in the magazine's name... *Wargames Illustrated!*

Anyway, on to the show... Unsurprisingly with a new show with a clearly defined and possibly minority target audience, the show was quite small and the number of visitors relatively low, but what was lacking in numbers was more than compensated for by the enthusiasm of

gamers and visitors. For example, one chap who presented two games had a 540 mile round trip! How's that for enthusiasm and commitment?

Unfortunately, as is often the case at shows, and for whatever reason, there was a 'No-show' game, which must have been particularly galling for Michael as he had to turn away other wargamers interested in putting on games at this new event! So a plea to any club or individual putting on a game who subsequently discovers that they are unable to do so... if at all possible, try to let the show organisers know in plenty of time so that the table can be offered to someone else. I imagine that there's nothing worse, or more annoying for a show organiser than to see an empty table that could easily have been filled twice over.

Anyway, moving on, and in no particular order apart from alphabetical, let's take a look at the games that were on display at SMS.

MIKE SALWEY'S 6MM PAINTING AND CONVERSIONS

Every so often whilst covering wargames events for *Wargames Illustrated*, I see examples of particularly good, if not outstanding, painting skills. Such was the case when I attended the SMS 2011 in August.

Sitting quietly at his table surrounded by paints and exquisitely painted figures was Mike Salwey. And judging by the number of people clustered around, it was clear that there was something special to see. On the basis of the cliché... 'One picture is worth a thousand words' judge for yourself the quality of Mike's work.





CAESAR IN ALEXANDRIA 48/47BC

Scale: 2mm

Presented by: Caoimhín Boru
and Simon MacDowall

Figures: Irregular Miniatures

Ships: Navwar

Terrain: Scratchbuilt

Buildings: Causeway walls
and towers - Langton
Miniatures. Pharos scratchbuilt
by Tony Hughes of Tiny Tin
Troops, and other buildings
scratchbuilt or converted

Rules: "Civitates Bellantes".
Special game rules designed
for Caesar in Alexandria.

Described as "a fast urban battle with Alexandrian inter-rivalry, firebrand wielding looters, and a naval component" all set around Caesar's attack against Alexandria, this game was a perfect example of the benefits of choosing the smaller size figures. Given that the game needed to feature plenty of 'sea' for the sea battle, as well as enough land mass for the land campaign, any other scale would have made it impossible to feature as much of the battle area, or at the very least, the players would have needed extremely long arms to reach the centre of the table!

As well as an impressive collection, Mike also demonstrated just how easily 6mm figures could be painted, and painted quickly. In this case, a unit of Romans in 40 minutes! (Left)

I already know just how good 6mm figures can look, because I've seen some excellent 6mm painted figures at shows I've covered for this magazine and which have subsequently appeared on these pages, but a glance at these photographs of Mike's work should dispel forever any suggestion that you can't get good results painting 6mm figures!

And it's not only in painting figures that Mike excels, he also customises and converts them too. Take a look at the arrow wounded casualty... (Right)



**MOSCOW-MINSK HIGHWAY, ORSHA,
BELORUSSIA 23 JUNE 1944**

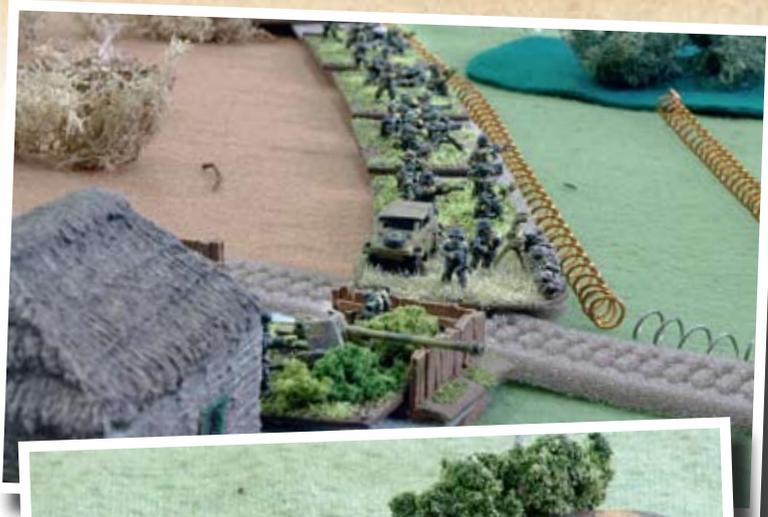
Scale: 10/12mm

Presented by: Dave Pike

Figures: Mostly Pendraken

Vehicles: Wargames South, World Tank Museum,
Pithead, Pendraken and Minifigs

I particularly liked the tankriders from Wargames South. If you look closely you'll see that one of them is actually smoking a cigarette... probably one of those Bolshevik firecrackers!



LATE WAR WW2

Scale: 6mm

Presented by: Penarth and
District Wargamers

Figures and vehicles: GHQ and
Irregular Miniatures

Rules: *Spearhead*

Good to see Arty Conliffe's *Spearhead* rules in use. They were the first WW2 rules that I tried more years ago than I care to remember. Thought they were good then, and they're still good.



... and his war elephants. (right) Mike decided that the cast on spears looked a bit overscale, so he cut them away, carved a recess into their right hands and then inserted a much improved spear from wire!

Mike is fully occupied with his 'day job', and does not, unfortunately for we less talented mortals, undertake commissions at the moment, but if you want to discuss his techniques with him, he can be reached via the Baccus forum where his on-line name is 'Cranium27'.



WILSONS CREEK ▼

Scale: 6mm

Presented by: Dark Knights and Bloody Dawns

Figures: Baccus

Terrain: Kallistra Hexon.

Buildings: Total Battle Miniatures.

Rules: Based on *Battlecry* by Richard Borg, but adapted for large scale battles.

Whilst the figures and buildings were well painted, I liked the special dice that had been created by taking blank dice and then creating individual decals using an inkjet printer. A good idea, which I think I might just 'steal' for myself... after all, "a good idea doesn't mind who has it".

OVERVIEW:

So that's it for the games, but it would be seriously remiss of me not to mention the outstanding brushwork of Mike Salwey, which is worthy of its own article... in fact we will be showcasing Mike's amazing painting and conversions in an article in the very near future.

Suffice it to say that, as the 'taster' photograph demonstrates, in the hands of a skilled painter, 6mm figures can be just as impressive as their larger 'brethren', not just in gameplay but visually too!

So, what did I think of SMS 2011? And would I personally go again? Well, as I said at the beginning, it was the first one and I'm sure Michael has a lot to think about, but for a first show it was a good start. It could do with better support, both from gamers and visitors, but obviously it IS a new event on the wargames show calendar, so it will take time for public and trade to make a decision about it.

That said the games were very good. The players enthusiastic... and I stayed until everyone started packing up, so that must say something! So "Yes", I would definitely go again and I wish Michael every success with SMS 2012. I don't know what his plans are for his next event, but I suggest that anyone interested, be they gamers, traders or visitors, should definitely keep in contact with Michael at:

www.angelbarracks.co.uk



Right: These legionaries of the 4th legion are pretty impressive... and how, I hear you ask, do I know that they are from that particular legion? Simple. Because its written on their shields!



Left: Of course one of the benefits of 6mm is that it is relatively cost-effective. For example if an army employs tactics that are difficult to reproduce simply by rearranging normally based figures, then its financially viable to create a special base, such as this cantabrian circle.