



No. 2

2025

VE Day, 8th May 1945

By The Editor

There will be many celebrations throughout this country, including our village, to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) day on 8th May. I am sure many members will have had family that went out and celebrated on that day. Perhaps there are some members that remember it in their early childhood? What an extraordinary day it must have been. There are many pictures of the celebrations on the internet. Those pictures give the impression of joy and relief that the war was over in Europe. Of course, for many who had lost loved ones during the war it would have been a difficult time to celebrate.

The pictures show people laughing and dancing in the street, probably some with people they had never met before. More than 1 million people took to the streets in London. Sir Winston Churchill appeared with King George VI on Buckingham Palace balcony. Later Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret wandered incognito on the crowds. Would they be able to do that now?

World War 2 was not yet over though with the war still going on in the Pacific. The war did not end there until August 15 1945 after the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Britains did do a VE day celebration set (41166) of a Sherman tank with figures. I have not seen any model figures available to paint specifically for VE day.

My parents, like many, served in the forces. My mother was in the ATS and my father in the regular army. He fought in North Africa and went in on D-Day. (I have done a vignette of him on Juno beach.) The photo below, perhaps around the time of VE day, shows them happy and smiling. Maybe I will try and do a vignette of them? (Mind you I have a very large grey army to sort out!).



Above: Britians set 41166, celebrating VE day.



Nostalgia Catalogue

By The Editor

Recently we had a very successful Toy Soldier auction for the Society, where a significant number of toy soldiers generously donated by Bryan Maggs, who had sadly died were sold. The proceeds going to the Society. At that auction some Nostalgia figures were sold and John Franklin thought that the Nostalgia Catalogue may be of interest to the Toy Soldier collectors among us. So over the next few issues of the extra I will include a couple of pages from the catalogue.



NOSTALGIA The "NEW OLD" Toy Soldiers

Nostalgia Models are made in the style of old toy soldiers. They are not copies of old toy soldiers. They are painted in gloss paint and have moveable arms. They are standard toy soldier size (54 mm scale). They represent different regiments of the old British Commonwealth and Empire, between 1850 and 1910. It is hoped eventually to produce at least one unit from each country, including the Indian Princely States.

The work is divided into three. The research is done by Shamus O. D. Wade. The actual models are created by Jan Evelyn Scroby, the eminent military sculptress. The production side is presided over by Frank Scroby. A number of splendid Welsh Ladies in Pontycymer do the painting. The figures are solid cast in Fry's Tandem K.A., a tin rich alloy that will never get lead disease. They are painted first in metal primer, then in non-toxic enamel.

But, when such splendid connoisseur figures are produced today, why produce "old toy soldier style" figures anyway? Some unkind soul, long ago, when discussing the relative merits of connoisseur versus toy figures said the most important thing about a soldier is that he is a member of a group. A person in military uniform, standing alone on a wooden base, is not a soldier — he is someone with halitosis at a fancy dress ball. The "new old" figure, painted in gloss, with moveable arms, can be produced cheaply enough to be bought as a set of eight figures (seven and an officer or N.C.O.), ready painted. The cost of connoisseur figures, even unpainted, is a lot more. The painting of Nostalgia figures (see illustrations) is higher than that of actual toy soldiers.

Another virtue of the "new old" figures is that moulds are cheap enough to make it worthwhile producing a short run (up to 1979, Nostalgia usually produced 650 of each unit). This enables a much greater variety of figures to be produced. Between March 1974 and November 1978, 218 completely different Nostalgia figures (not just repaints, or head or arm swaps), representing 107 different units from 68 countries, were produced. With the cheapness of modern mould making techniques, there is absolutely no excuse for producing the same figure differently painted as "different Indian cavalry regiments."

Perhaps the nicest thing that happened with Nostalgia figures was when our Coke's Rifles figure (see illustration) was praised by a retired Colonel of the regiment.

Research is sometimes a long haul. A pillar of strength is Bill Carman, ex-deputy director of the National Army Museum. But the first prize for efficiency in answering a query (on the colour of a painting in the officers' mess) goes to the Adjutant of the 61st Cavalry of the present-day Indian Army; he sent a painter's colour guide with the colours marked.

Research sometimes gets a bit disheartening. For years, Shamus O. D. Wade had been unsuccessfully trying to find uniform details of the Gibraltarian Carreteros del Rey, the largest Empire contingent (for size of population) at Suakin. Recently he discovered that a gentleman who actually made their uniforms as an apprentice was still alive.

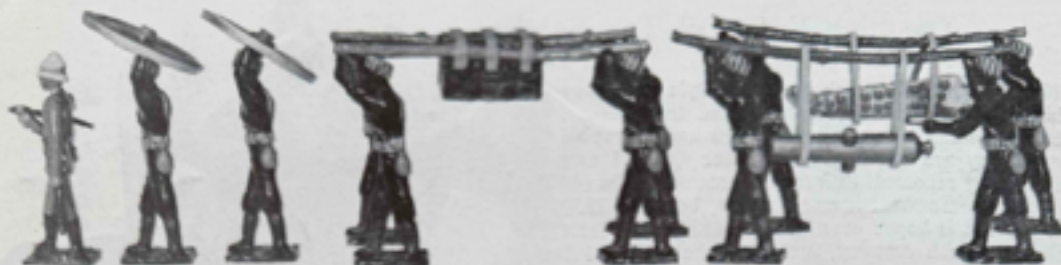
Of course, research is not just uniform details. Just as important is the type of men, who they were, what they did, physique, complexion etc. Most model soldiers seem to be made from the outside in, i.e. endless research is done to get the uniform exactly right, then a standard figure of a man is fitted into it. With Nostalgia, it is the other way round. First the man is discovered, then the uniform is added.



Front to Back: Bombay Sappers and miners c. 1897, Natal Native Horse, 1879, Camel Gunner, 3rd Nizam's Cavalry, 1848.



St. Helena Volunteer Sharpshooters, c. 1905.



Rait's Artillery, Ashanti War, 1874.

Although many Nostalgia figures have worn ornate and brightly coloured uniforms, the one that sold out quicker than any other was dressed in plain khaki. This was the figure of a Mazbhi Sikh of the 32nd Punjab Pioneers, c.1900. Because Jan Scroby knew the history of the Mazbhis, she was able to produce a superb figure with that unique "prickly" look, the result of hundreds of years of being looked down on, combined with fighting ability.

For technical reasons, only a limited number of each Nostalgia unit is produced; then the moulds are destroyed. This has led to rather an odd trade in "old" Nostalgia figures. The Drum and Bugle Band of the Wei-Hai-Wei 1st Chinese Regiment was originally sold, in August 1975, for £24.44. In October 1977 one changed hands for £200.00.

IMPORTANT

Nostalgia Models are produced in limited editions. Two new regiments of foot (or one of horse) are produced each month. The illustrations in this leaflet show some of the models produced between August 1975 and December 1977. They are illustrated to show the standard and variety of Nostalgia Models. None of them are normally on sale today.

**SEND OFF THIS COUPON TODAY FOR
FREE MONTHLY LISTS OF
NOSTALGIA MODELS.**

To: Shamus O. D. Wade, 37 Davis Road, Acton,
London W3, England. Telephone 01-749 1045.
(8.30 a.m. - 7.30 p.m.)

Please send me your free monthly lists of Nostalgia
Models and old toy soldiers.

Name.....

Address.....

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With every free monthly list of
Nostalgia Models, you also get a free
list of Britain's and other old toy
soldiers.

GARY HIGGINS (Died January 2025)

Derek Oakley

The Society will be distressed to hear of the death of this much respected colleague and friend of many years in the Northants Branch. Gary died in hospital on the 22nd January this year after more than a decade of progressively debilitating ill-health. He was first admitted in 2013 and then repeatedly released and re-admitted over the following years, undergoing increasingly drastic surgery which left him a double amputee. As he himself put it:

“The harder you try to escape, the more they keep dragging you back!”

In spite of this, and of the advanced diabetes which led to failing eyesight and virtually no feeling in his fingers, Gary’s reaction was predictably typical of him. He wrote to his wide circle of friends in the social media,

“Damn this! Its not going to beat me!”

So he re-learned how to draw, and although by now he could no longer paint or sculpt, he continued to design, and re-released (for “Planet”) the series of figures for which he was noted. His interests were wide. As the son of Les Higgins, whose work was to form the basis of “Phoenix”, Gary inherited and extended his father’s skills. Les will be remembered particularly for his 30mm wargames range depicting types of the English Civil War, but Gary went beyond this. He worked for preference on the 120mm size, and his meticulous research and precise modelling let him produce the fourteen high-relief figures of his “Dickensian” range: a range of models depicting the phases of musketry-drill in the ECW period: his fully-round vignettes of the 7 years war period (the soldier leaning forward to chuck an little girl under the chin springs to mind) and, latterly, a number of grotesques inspired by the vogue for Fantasy and Science Fiction. He even designed a six-foot inflatable Father Christmas to adorn the shop front of one of our larger high street supermarkets. He was much admired for his skills, talent and expertise but he was even more highly valued for his courage, generosity and friendship.

We have lost a good comrade.

The North Surrey Military Modelling Group Show, 1st February 2025

By The Editor

For me, this is the first show of the season and as a member of this group I always enjoy the show. It is not a big show but is always friendly with a good mix of trade stands and model clubs in the hall at Banstead. The competition had a good number of models in it, and there were certainly some high class models on display. I will include a few photos of the best models here (as this is an electronic document I need to minimise the overall file size). A full complement of photos from the show is available on the BMSS website, <https://www.bmssonline.com/bmss-online-blog>. Best in show went to Richard Boyle with his wonderful ship model. The detail, painting and weathering were exquisite. (Unfortunately it doesn't photograph well as it is under a perspex cover). Thank you, Ian Duthie, for taking and providing the photos.



Left: Highlander by Edward Sage.

Above: Diorama by Ian Duthie, presumably in Berlin. (Ian does like T34's!)

Sword and Lance, Darlington 12th April 2025

By The Editor

My alarm went pretty early on 12th April and I struggled to get up, but eventually got myself sorted and headed off to Darlington. I caught the 8am train from Kings Cross and settled down and relaxed for a couple of hours. For me travelling by train is a pleasure, if they are on time! Now awake and having arrived in Darlington (on time) I walked to the rugby stadium where this show is held. It was good to see modelling friends there. The show is the usual mixture of traders, club stand and competition. The quality of the models in the competition was excellent and is one of the reasons I go to this show. Certainly in the figure classes there were some exquisitely painted models. I will include a few photos of the best models here (as this is an electronic document I need to minimise the overall file size). A full complement of photos from the show is available on the BMSS website, <https://www.bmssonline.com/bmss-online-blog>. My favourite figure was a Japanese lady painted by Terry Neesham.



Top Left: Lady Samurai warrior by Terry Neesham.

The other two models the modellers are unknown, but both beautifully done.

Books

By The Editor

Figure Painting Techniques by Kirill Kanaev

By The Editor

If I recommended just one book for the figure painter, it would be this one. Yes it is expensive at £69.99 but in my opinion the outlay is well worth it. You could spend that amount of money on a number of books that would not explain the hobby as well as this book does. This book covers the topic in excellent detail and is beautifully illustrated throughout and if nothing else you can just admire the figures and busts painted by the author, who is one of the most respected painters in the hobby.

The book covers everything related to painting a figure from the basics of material and tools through preparing the figure and painting the figure. In addition it covers the concepts of colours and lighting. The majority of the book covers painting techniques both with acrylics and oils. It considers such things as glazing, dry brushing, stipling and so on. And then it covers painting in great detail from painting skin, in particular faces, including the eyes and hair, and hands. Then it considers types of clothing materials, leather and other animal skins. There is then an excellent section on painting metals including non metallic metal techniques, which the author is a recognised expert at. And finally there are sections on painting wood, other elective surfaces and special effects.

The book is full of illustrations on the techniques used and I particularly found the sections on selecting colours and mixing colours very useful. Many other books just reference the make of colour without describing why the colour was used and how a different tone was created.

This is my 'go to' book when I am looking for guidance. It is highly recommended.



Left: Eric Sanger advised me of this exhibition which may be of interest to the members

If members of the society have any suggestions for items for The Bulletin, or any *constructive* criticism please contact me at: bmss.editor@bmssonline.com

Support model soldier shows! Support model soldier traders!

BMSS Diary 2025

May 10	Spring Model and Toy Soldier Show , 10am-4pm. Haverstock School, Camden, London NW3 2BQ
May 16	Zoom Meeting- Military Pageant , 7pm-9pm. All members will be automatically sent a link via email to access the meeting.
June 14	Figureworld North , 10am-5pm, The Galtres Centre, Easingwold, North Yorks, YO61 3AD.
June 15	MAFVA Nationals , 10am-4pm, The Burgess Hall, Westwood Road, St. Ives, PE27 6WU
June 20	Zoom Meeting, Open . 7pm-9pm. All members will automatically be sent a link via email to access the meeting.
June 27/28/29	Tankfest , 8.30am-6.00pm. The Tank Museum, Bovington, Dorset, BH20 6JG
July 4/5/6	World Model Expo , 9am-6pm, Palais des Congres de Versailles and the Versaille town hall. France

"Bulletin" Schedule 2025

Issue	Copy Date	Publication
Buletin Extra No.2	7th April	Early May
Bulletin No.2	6th May	16th June
Bulletin Extra No.3	23rd June	End of July
Bulletin No.3	21st July	2nd September
Bulletin Extra No.4	15th September	Mid October
Bulletin No.4	6th October	17th November

BMSS Logo clothing



How to Order: We have set up an arrangement with JANCRAFT for clothing with an embroidered BMSS logo badge, a similar design to the existing letterhead and pin badge shown on the left.

Individual members can contact JANCRAFT for clothing orders – preferably by email so that our contact, Julian, can reply with a cost and payment details. You can also contact him by phone. Members should give the item code* and delivery address with your email contact where possible and a mobile/telephone number.

*All the details of the types of clothing, sizes and colours are shown on JANCRAFT's on-line catalogue. Find it at www.jancraft.com This also includes the code number for each item in the catalogue. Then you need to specify the colour of your choice and the size.

JANCRAFT address is: [3 High Park Avenue, Wollaston, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 3NJ](http://www.jancraft.com)

Email address: mail@jancraft.com **Telephone:** 01384 396226.