

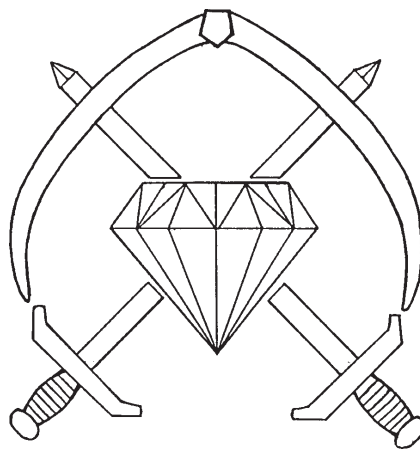


"Multum in Parvo"

*The British Model Soldier Society,
1935 - 1995*

by

Paul H. Vickers



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Foreword

By Roy S. Dilley, President of the British Model Soldier Society

When, in 1935, a small group of enthusiasts founded the British Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers, few of them could have foreseen the extent to which their hobby would develop over the following sixty years. At first viewed with what amounted to little more than amused condescension, particularly by the Press, the Society, steadily adding to its numbers, had by the outbreak of war in 1939 established a solid reputation for not only high standards of modelling but also for perseverance in a constant search for accuracy in the portrayal of personnel, uniforms and equipment. The Society's publication, the "Bulletin", provided a regular link for the membership, with relevant news and information otherwise hard to obtain.

Despite difficulties imposed by absence of members on military service, shortages of basic materials and, not least, by enemy action on the Home Front with all the strains thus incurred, the Society survived unbroken, ready to welcome returning collectors and modellers to a "going concern".

In the immediate post-war period, rapid expansion of membership activities enjoyed great success, a process which was to continue subsequently. Ever growing improvements in work standards went hand in hand with wider availability of quality figures, paints, tools

and other accessories. Reliable research data became more plentiful as a supply industry, complete with books and magazines, came gradually into being to support the hobby. Meanwhile, a name revision to British Model Soldier Society had taken place.

Other groups have been formed throughout the world; but it can truthfully be claimed that former or current BMSS members have, directly or by influence, had a hand in most if not all major developments in military modelling. Another very pleasing result of the Society's activities is the vast number of lasting friendships that have been made.

How all this came about is set forth in Paul Vickers' lively account. We are indebted to him for marking the BMSS Diamond Jubilee with this story of the leading organisation in a remarkable art-form, with all its spin-off interests.

When Her Majesty the Queen visited the BMSS Stand at the 1980 Ideal Home Exhibition, after careful inspection of the items on display, she gave her verdict in one word - "Fascinating". As usual, our Sovereign got it exactly right!

May 1995

A note on sources

The most important primary sources for this history have been the records of the BMSS itself. The Minute Books from the first meeting in 1935 to present were an invaluable source, as were copies of the Society's publications, principally the "Bulletin" magazine. The archives of the National Collection contain comprehensive records of that institution, and the BMSS Society Archives provided much useful material.

Outside the Society, articles in various magazines and papers have been used, many of the early items taken from the superb scrapbooks of the late John Peck.

The scrapbooks of John Ruddle also provided a number of valuable items. The novel quoted in Chapter Three is "Death in seven volumes" by Douglas G. Browne, published by Macdonald, 1958.

Last, but by no means least, are the personal recollections of many of our senior members who have been always ready to talk of the great pioneering days of the Society. Unfortunately space restrictions prevent the telling of every anecdote, but hopefully all important developments have been covered.

Acknowledgements

Many people have given invaluable assistance in the compilation of this history. The author is most grateful to William Carman, founder member of the BMSS, for his help with information on the early days and with the manuscript; to Roy Dilley, President of the BMSS, for the foreword and for commenting on the manuscript; John Ruddle, Curator of the National Collection, for the use of items from his collection and for his comments on the manuscript; Morry Miles, BMSS Archivist, for providing items from the archives; Mrs J. Peck, for kindly loaning her husband's scrapbook; David Pearce, Hon Secretary, for

providing much material in his keeping; Derek Crook, for work in preparation of the photographs; and to Peter Ledger, of the BMSS Support Services, without whose unstinting support and assistance this history would never have been published.

Many thanks also to all the many BMSS members who have made the author's last 20 years in the Society so interesting, informative and enjoyable.

All opinions expressed in this account are solely those of the author.

Introduction

In 1975, aged 20, I joined the British Model Soldier Society. I had just moved from Sheffield to Bournemouth, to take up my first professional post after leaving college. Knowing no-one in that area, I wrote to the Secretary of the BMSS enquiring if there were any other model soldier enthusiasts nearby. He sent me details of the nearest branch which met in Southampton, only 30 minutes away by train.

Visiting one of the regular meetings of this group I was warmly greeted by John Sandars and John Cox, and introduced to many others who made me most welcome. Very much an inexperienced modeller, I quickly learned much in the way of techniques of conversion, animation, the use of different paints, and presentation of models. Becoming a regular attendee at the South Hampshire Branch meetings led me to join them in travelling to other events, such as regional shows and the BMSS Annual Competitions, then held in Chelsea Town Hall. Here was a revelation indeed, figures on display in such quantities and of such quality that I had never seen before. Inspired to do better in my own modelling, I continued to practice, indulging in numerous conversions, some of which came off and some which did not. Nevertheless, I began entering competitions myself, local, regional and national. Occasionally there would be some small success, which gave wonderful encouragement. Travelling to various BMSS meetings I met other famous names, like Roy Dille, John Ruddle, and Bryan and Don Fosten, who I had hitherto only known from their published work. Once again I was privileged to be able to benefit from the experience of these men, all of whom freely gave invaluable advice to any young modeller who asked for help.

As time went on my employment took me to Salisbury, where once again the BMSS quickly put me in contact with another small group of fellow members and model soldier enthusiasts. Far from losing my friends from South Hants the move to Salisbury merely widened the circle, for we could still meet up regularly with South Hants at meetings and shows. In 1980 I was glad to be able to make a small contribution to the Society which had given me so much, by taking on the post of Area Representative for Wiltshire.

In 1982 I was offered the chance to participate even more closely in the running of the Society, by going onto the National Committee as Publicity Officer. This

opened up yet more avenues of interest, and among the officers and committee gained new friendships. Years of regular attendance at various BMSS events had brought an even wider range of acquaintances. Men and women who lived all over the country would now exchange greetings as long standing friends, even though we only ever met at BMSS shows. Hence when another professional change of job brought me to Aldershot, I was in no way a stranger in a new town, for most of the Aldershot Branch were already comrades from many Society events. And becoming Editor of the BMSS Bulletin in 1984 completed the picture, for now I was corresponding with all types of members from many locations, both in this country and overseas.

Through just one person's experience of the BMSS can be seen how this organisation can benefit not only one's hobby but bring a wider fellowship. I am honoured that so many of the leading names in model soldiers are now among my friends, a comradeship which I value enormously. And my experience is by no means unique, as is shown by the number of dedicated, loyal members of the BMSS, many of whom have enjoyed lifelong membership of the Society.

Being in the BMSS it becomes clear what a debt we owe to the pioneers who, 60 years ago, had the vision to create a model soldier society at a time when it was deeply unfashionable to enjoy this hobby. In these modern times, when there are great quantities of models, books and magazines readily available, we sometimes forget that it was not always like this. For much of the Society's history it was alone, and had to find its own solutions to the problems of finding raw material and even basic information. It was because the Society found answers to these difficulties that the hobby developed in the way it did. It is no exaggeration to say that the model soldier as we know it today is a direct result of the activities of the British Model Soldier Society. In this Diamond Jubilee year for the BMSS it is appropriate that we should look back at the early days, and recognise the achievements of those great innovators.

In this narrative there has been no attempt to hide the problems which have been faced by the Society at various periods in its history, but the aim has been throughout to produce a celebration of the first 60

years of the BMSS and its achievements. Similarly, the account is often weighted towards the early years. No apologies are made for this, for it is the origins of the Society activities and organisations which are of greatest interest and the pioneers who deserve our acclaim.

What follows is, I am confident, only the first chapter in the history of the British Model Soldier Society. With the support of the members, and the dedicated work of the officers, Committee, Area Representatives, and all who give such service to the Society, there is no reason why the second 60 years should not be as fruitful as the first.

Chapter One

The Founding of the Society

“Nature’s handmaid, art, makes mighty things from small beginnings grow” - John Dryden

Adolf Hitler, secure in his position after two years as Chancellor of Nazi Germany, repudiated the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles and began the expansion of Germany with the retaking of the Saar. Stanley Baldwin formed a new administration, setting up a National Government with Ramsay Macdonald as Lord President of the Council and Samuel Hoare as Foreign Secretary. Malcolm Campbell achieved a new land speed record, driving his ‘Bluebird’ car at 276.8 mph across Daytona Beach, while Robert Watson-Watt built the first practical radar. The music world welcomed the first performance of George Gershwin’s ‘Porgy and Bess’ and Rachmaninov’s ‘Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini’. All round the world audiences flocked to see Greta Garbo as ‘Anna Karenina’ and thrilled to the exploits of Gary Cooper in ‘The Lives of a Bengal Lancer’. The year was 1935.

Of considerably more interest to many young boys was the appearance of some new toy soldiers from the famous William Britain’s company. New in the shops was a British military band in service dress, and the more colourful band of the Royal Marines in review order. Painted in bright gloss paint, these delightful figures in their distinctive boxes were the objects of many a lad’s hopes for birthdays or Christmas, while for many the single figures available for pocket money prices were a more realisable prospect.

But it was not only small boys who were excited at seeing new offerings from Messrs Britains. There were a few dedicated adult collectors and painters of model soldiers, who eagerly fell upon new products of quality. It was in 1935 that a group of these gentlemen assembled at the Rendezvous Restaurant, Dean Street, Soho, to found an organisation which would change forever the perception of the model soldier. To see who these gentlemen were, and how they came together, it is necessary to look back a little at what the model soldier collecting world was like in those days.

Without any form of society or organisation to which they could belong and meet other enthusiasts, individual collectors in the days before 1935 pursued their hobby in isolation. In most cases they thought that they were probably unique, and did not talk about their interest for fear of being thought somewhat peculiar and subjected to ridicule. Unable to share his interest, the collector worked alone with his models and paints, no doubt happy in his own work but, unable to compare his models with any others and equally unable to discuss methods and techniques, the standard of modelling did not progress.

The only indications an enthusiast may have that there were others of like mind would be if a newspaper or magazine showed an interest in a collector. For example, in 1927 the “Model Engineer” included an article on the model army of Mr A Leicester Hewitt, a resident of Hunstanton in Norfolk, who had a collection of some 20,000 figures displayed in two large rooms. In September 1932 the Evening News published an article on Mr E K Milliken, a teacher and “once of the Indian Army”, who used model figures arranged in tableaux from history as an aid in his lessons.

On the continent the situation for collectors was slightly different. Manufacturers such as Mignot had a long established tradition in France, while in Germany the main area for collecting remained the traditional flat figure. This style of model, cast flat with engraved detail on front and back, usually to a standard 30mm scale, was made by a number of manufacturers who produced a huge variety of subjects of high quality and interest for the serious collector. Probably the earliest society for model soldiers was the Deutsche Gesellschaft der Freunde und Sammler Kulturhistorischer Zinnfiguren (German Society of Friends and Painters of Historical Tin Figures, known as KLIO for short), founded in 1924. A French society, the ‘Societe de Collectionneurs de Soldats d’Etain’, was established in 1931.

One of the greatest collectors of tin figures was Otto Gottstein of Leipzig, who had made a considerable fortune out of his profession as a wholesale fur merchant. This allowed him to indulge his passion for his hobby, amassing large numbers of flat figures and commissioning his own designs, mostly from the renowned engraver Ludwig Frank. A founder member of the German tin figure society, in 1930 Gottstein made a major impact at the first international exhibition of historical tin figures organised by KLIO at Leipzig. Among the numerous large dioramas he displayed was a festive procession through the Ishtar Gate in Babylon, and Cortes being received by the Aztec king at Tenochtitlan. In 1933 the rise of the Nazis caused Gottstein to leave Germany (he was Jewish) and he moved to London.

Another newspaper article about Mr Milliken's "ambitious experiment" in using toy soldiers in the teaching of history, this time in the "Observer", brought Otto Gottstein into contact with Mr Milliken. At the time Mr Milliken was headmaster of Lancing House School, Lowestoft. Through his collecting he had an insight into sources of material and, importantly, names of some other like-minded gentlemen. Another newspaper article had brought notice of another collector, Walter Lockwood, a tailor with Messrs Joel Edwards of Bruton Street, London, and through him contact with another enthusiast, Frederick Allen.

In this way, with more names added through this unofficial, almost underground, network, a list of 22 names of collectors was compiled. On 13th May 1935 a letter drafted and printed by Gottstein was circulated by Mr Milliken to these collectors to see whether there was any support for the formation of a British society along the lines of those already established on the continent. Out of the 22 letters sent out there were 15 replies, all enthusiastic about the idea. A second letter was circulated on 6th June suggesting that if "six or nine gentlemen" were willing to assemble on Saturday 6th July at a restaurant Mr Milliken would arrange the meeting.

In fact there were 18 gentlemen present at that first meeting in the Jacobean Room of the Rendezvous Restaurant. Fourteen collectors came, and invited guests were Mr L D Britain, Director and Secretary of Britains Ltd, Captain I Parker of the Royal United Services Institution, Mr W M Whiteman, editor of Bazaar Exchange and Mart magazine, and Mr Charles ffoulkes of the Imperial War Museum. After enjoying dinner, at a cost of 5s 6d (27.5p) per person, they began the business meeting, asking Mr Milliken to act as Chairman. Opening the proceedings, Mr

Milliken gave a report on the purpose and objects of the proposed new society. He suggested that a society of collectors should be established corresponding to those in France and Germany for the study, research and mutual help in the hobby. This was readily agreed, but the name of the association caused rather more discussion. Mr Milliken had suggested the "British Society of Lead Soldier Collectors", in contrast to the continental "tin" figure collectors. Mr William Carman suggested the use of the term "Miniature Figures" to cover both materials and widen the scope to include all types of figure. Finally, it was agreed that the society would be the "British Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers".

In electing officers to run the fledgling association, Mr Milliken was voted president, as seemed appropriate for the man who appeared to have done the most work in bringing the society into being. Vice-presidents were Mr A Leicester Hewitt and Otto Gottstein, who was the real power behind the scenes. The position of Secretary was filled by Walter Lockwood, whose business address in central London was an ideal location, close to Hamleys of Regent Street and, importantly, meant that he had access to a telephone, something of a rarity at the time. Committee members were Mr P Dana Clendenin, who had been a Pipe Major in the Gordon Highlanders, Mr Frederick J Allen, who had helped arrange the meeting place, and Mr William Y Carman, who described himself as "a self-employed military research-artist". In addition to these officers, the other founder members of the society were Robert Lockwood, Allan Clayton, F W Carman, H A Owen, L Richards, H R Umfreville, and P B Cornwall.

The final business was to set a subscription, which was fixed at 10 shillings (50p) per year. Receipts were sent out on July 11th, number 1 going to F W Carman and number 2 to his son, William Y Carman, who is still a member today. As the evening concluded the Society had been well and truly launched.

From this founding meeting the Society immediately began to grow and become active in furthering the hobby and interests of the members. A formal set of rules was drawn up to put the Society on a clear and established basis, and important in these was the declared object of the British Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers (BSCMS). "The Society", it declared, "is founded to further the collection of model soldiers of all kinds and periods, to interchange ideas and information, arrange lectures and exhibitions, engage in historical research, co-operate with manufacturers, and for exchange, gifts or sales between members."

Membership swiftly grew. Lord Greenway, who had a large collection of models of the Indian Army, agreed to become the Society Patron, and Monsieur Paul Armont, the Honorary President and founder of the Societe de Collectionneurs de Soldats d'Etain became the first overseas member.

A decision was soon taken to publish a regular magazine for members, for the better communication of news, ideas, and interchange of information. The first issue of the Society's "Bulletin" was sent out in October 1935. Included in this issue were small items of news, the rules of the Society, and a full list of members which showed that there were now 39 members, of whom four were French, four German, and one Swiss.

Growth in membership continued apace. The second Bulletin listed no less than 18 new members, including three more from Germany, one from France, and one Austrian. By issue 3, February 1936, the Society was proud to proclaim its membership as 63, including its first member in Australia. It also noted the formation of a Belgian Society, "Les Collectionneurs de Figurines", in November 1935 and sought links with them. With some satisfaction the editor commented "Thus with our own Society flourishing at home and spreading its membership to the colonies, the societies in France and Germany strongly established, and the new society launched in Belgium, the interest in model soldiers is becoming world wide." However, other events indicated this may have been a little over-optimistic. Attempts had been made to affiliate with the "Miniature Hobbies Association" of the United States, but an announcement was made to the January 1936 meeting that "The American Society, through lack of support, having collapsed, and nothing having been done in the matter, the question of affiliation was cancelled."

The fifth meeting of the Society took place in March 1936 at the Masons Arms in Maddox Street, London, attended by 30 members. It was reported that "the rendezvous proved so suited to our requirements that it has been unanimously agreed to make it our Headquarters." Meetings were now to be held regularly in the evening of the third Friday of each month. It is interesting to note that after sixty years and various changes of venue, the Society still meets in London on the third Friday of the month - clearly a wise choice! Freddy Green, who joined the Society in April 1936, later remembered the meetings at the Masons Arms as "very friendly and, to most of us amateurs, very instructive. It was a cheerful venue, with beer at sixpence a pint, freshly cut sandwiches for sixpence, and lobster salad for half-a-crown! There

were always mugs and glasses on the long tables we sat around. The only professionals were L W Britain, Mr and Mrs R Courtenay, and a young couple called Ray who used to paint figures to order. There were tentative ventures into casting, and H P Bayston brought re-cast Britains using plaster moulds, although most of us could buy Britains castings very cheaply from Hamleys in Regent Street who were most helpful."

One of the characteristics of the serious modeller has always been the desire to make his models more personal by using commercial figures only as a base for his creative talents. This may be to create a variety of uniform not available from the manufacturer, to add greater or more accurate detail, or merely for the pleasure of producing a model which is truly unique. In the early days there were none of the modern materials for these pioneers to use, but this did not prevent considerable experimentation. One of the great benefits of the formation of the Society was the possibility of interchanging ideas and techniques for the better conversion of basic figures. Freddy Green again: "The techniques of how to use sealing wax and plastone were learned, and paper, string, wire and wood were fixed to the tin soldiers with glue (Secotine). The results were not bad, albeit rather frail." William Carman remembers that "Britains figures were converted by means of changing heads, adding drums cut from dowelling, and addition of barbola and other material available in those early days. None of the modern aids had been manufactured or even thought of."

A major project upon which the Society embarked was the production of a set of figures depicting the British Army at Waterloo, intended for exhibition in the Royal United Services Institution, Whitehall. The catalyst for this was a letter to the "Times" newspaper from a Colonel Adrian Porter, lamenting the fact that the RUSI had a set of models of Napoleon's forces, which had been presented by Sir Robert Mond, but there was no representation of the British.

The BSCMS immediately rose to the challenge. The "call to arms" appeared in the Bulletin for February 1936, under the heading "A duty and a pleasure". In ringing tones, the Editor declared:

"As long as the model of the French Army as it fought at Waterloo stands without its British counterpart at Whitehall there can be no rest in the British Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers. The Society owes it to Wellington and his gallant army to create without delay a reproduction worthy of standing side by side with

that of their gallant foemen. It is a duty which provides material for many hours of fascinating work.”

Members who were willing to help were asked to contact the Secretary, and the Editor hoped that all members would participate:

“Naturally an undertaking of this nature will call for the whole resources of the Society ... One member has skill in adapting existing models, another can create and mould new figures, others excel at painting ... whereas another member who has never attempted these branches of our hobby may be an expert on detail and versed in research work. It is the work of the Committee to assemble the varying talents of the Society and apply them to the creation of a model that will not be the work of any one man but of the Society as a whole. Here is a distinct call for team work. So hurry everybody and join the team.”

To assist in the work the Bulletin began carrying articles pertaining to the army of Waterloo. Ironically the first of these, “The Colours (British) at Waterloo”, was reprinted from the March 1936 Bulletin of the French society! However, by the next issue not only were “home grown” articles appearing but there were corrections given to the French article by W Y Carman, one of the great military historians the Society is fortunate to have in its ranks. Help was also forthcoming from Britains Ltd, who offered to cast models on which the Society members could work.

At the end of its first year the Society could reflect on a most successful twelve months. The Editor looked back with satisfaction, declaring that “We are now firmly established and known throughout the world ... We have already proved to the Public and the Press that our little figures are models and not toys and by mutual encouragement, criticism, and information we shall go on to better things.” It was reported that there were now 76 members, “58 British and Colonial, and 18 members from America, Austria, France, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland.” This was substantial growth indeed in such a short period. A permanent display cabinet was purchased for “Headquarters” (the Masons Arms), at the substantial cost of £8..3s..6d, for which an additional subscription of 2s..6d was requested from each member. The cabinet was used for display of both members’ models and samples of new models from manufacturers.

An Annual Dinner had first been proposed in 1935, but had been postponed owing to the death of King George V. Alternative arrangements were put in hand and the new proposal was for the first dinner to be held in October 1936. It was further proposed that an exhibition of members’ models would be held on the same day, with exhibits examined by independent judges and prizes awarded to the best models.

The dinner was held on Friday 9th October 1936, attended by 61 members and guests. Presiding over the evening was Lord Greenway, with Lady Greenway presenting the prizes to the winners of the exhibition. The dinner was a formal event, with morning dress being worn and speeches made by Lord Greenway and the Society President, Mr Milliken. A special guest was Monsieur C F Keller, President of the French society. In his speech Mr Milliken stressed the close cooperation between the two organisations. As for entertainment, the Bulletin reported that “While the judges were inspecting the exhibits, a very excellent programme of music was provided by the well known tenor, Mr Percy Manchester, and rousing baritone ballads were rendered by Mr Evan Jones”.

Although in existence only two years, the Society had established a pattern of activities which would be followed until the present day, not only by the British Model Soldier Society but by all similar organisations. Meetings were held regularly and in an established venue, a regular magazine was issued to members to bring news of events and exchange information, competitions had been established with prizes for the best models, and exhibitions brought the hobby to public attention as well as aiding worthy causes. All these activities will be familiar to Society members today.

Also progressing well was the Waterloo Models project for the RUSI. Britains made available to the Society models of British infantry privates and highlanders, made from designs submitted by Mr Clendenin. The figures, which had detachable arms and packs, were delivered as unpainted castings which the BSCMS members were asked to paint, in sets of 10 men and a sergeant. The medium to be used for painting caused much debate, in particular the various merits of flat or gloss paint. To resolve this, members interested in participating were each given a single figure to paint in whatever style they favoured, with the object of gathering all these at a Society meeting to decide which style best suited the project. 29 figures were given out, with members asked to make careful notes of the paints and preparations used. When the sample figures were returned only one had been finished in flat paint. Thus the sub-committee

overseeing the work resolved “that enamel should be used, members who prefer oils to use gold size as medium or varnish the finished figure, for uniformity of presentation.” To ensure uniformity the sub-committee even recommended the type of paint to be used (Scolux Enamel) and the various shades of colours for the uniforms. Volunteers were sought to undertake the conversion of Britains figures to represent Wellington and his staff, artillery, cavalry, Rifles, and wagon train.

By the middle of 1937 around 120 figures had been completed, and all appeared to be progressing well. A target of some 600 figures was set, plans were in hand for Britains to produce cavalry figures for the project, and articles were continuing to appear in the Bulletin on various aspects of uniforms of the period. In June the RUSI asked for samples of the models being produced to be submitted to their Uniform Committee for approval, which the Secretary duly arranged.

The Uniform Committee sat at 3.30 pm on Friday 15th October and came to their decision - the models were not acceptable. Mr Clendenin, who was himself a member of the Committee, reported that “while appreciating the efforts of the Society to supply this model, the Uniform Committee were unable to pass them as perfect or up to their standard.” The Committee would send a detailed letter of their criticisms in due course. They stated that “the painting is not objected to, only the details of uniform etc are not correct”.

Here was a blow, and one from which the project never really recovered. Modellers today may well wonder how it was possible to have incorrect uniform details for a period as popular and well documented as Waterloo. However, such is very much a view from the later part of the century when, largely thanks to the growth of the model soldier hobby, there is an enormous range of uniform books in every bookshop and library. In the pre-war era such luxury was unknown and any scrap of information, such as the articles starting to appear in the BSCMS Bulletin, was eagerly seized by modellers desperate for detailed and accurate uniform descriptions. No doubt the enthusiasts who painted the Waterloo models were doing their very best with what was available, but unfortunately this was just not good enough for the experts of the time.

As it was the RUSI who had rejected the models it was agreed that the Society should write and ask them to supply details of the uniforms which they wanted depicted. Rather unhelpfully the RUSI would not do

this, although they said they would help individual members. This was of no great benefit when the Waterloo model was a project for the Society as a whole. Mr Clendenin undertook to produce a book of designs of the uniforms required, which he completed in 1938. In April of that year it was “passed and confirmed by the experts at the RUSI” and made available in the Library’s Institution for any BSCMS member to consult. Unfortunately, the impetus for the Waterloo model project had been lost, and it was not until May 1939 that work recommenced, thanks mainly once again to the efforts of Mr Clendenin in encouraging members to resume the challenge. However it was now too late, for the outbreak of the Second World War would intervene shortly to stop the work on the project which sadly would never be completed.

During the early years membership of the Society grew slowly but steadily. At the meeting held on 21st May 1937, Otto Gottstein introduced two new members from Germany, Generaldirektor Bonness of Potsdam and Sixtus Maier of Fuerth, a famous engraver of the German flat figure type of models. On the same occasion a notable landmark was reached when Mrs Ida Lockwood, wife of the Secretary, became the Society’s 100th member. Unfortunately, as time passed problems began to arise for some of the overseas members. At the meeting of 20th May 1938 letters were read from Major Albrecht Baer and Dr Hans Mueller, both from Germany, who regretted that they would have to resign as they could not obtain permits to send their 10 shilling subscriptions. The Society asked them to continue as honorary members, but the episode was a grim foreboding of the storms shortly to engulf Europe.

The scope of the Society was also a cause of some debate. At the end of 1937 W Y Carman formally proposed that “the name of the Society be changed or added to, to include collectors of historical figures.” It was agreed to publish the proposal in the Bulletin to give members a chance to air their views, and to decide the issue at the next Annual General Meeting. The idea had both strong supporters and opposers, with arguments which will be familiar to members who have seen similar suggestions come and go throughout the Society’s lifetime. Supporting the broadening of the Society’s title, Denny Stokes wrote at length in the Bulletin discussing the arguments. Setting out his position, he declared “if an addition to the name which would broaden the Society’s activities is decided upon so as to allow the introduction of non-military figures ... can it be argued that such a change would damage the excellent health suffered at present

by the BSCMS? Is there not a very good chance that a rational alteration would increase the interest of our hobby?" However, he also acknowledged that care would be needed: "To call the Society 'The Society of Collectors of Model Figures' certainly might induce a bright individual to introduce miniature livestock or mermaids but to call it 'The Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers and Historical Figures', while allowing the Horse of Troy to enter the Masons Arms, would prevent unreasonable beasts and insects mounting the stairs under the impression they would get a pleasant evening at the top, and it would at the same time very probably draw fuller attention to us from the press." Expanding on this last point, Mr Stokes stated that "It cannot surely be said that an alteration of name would confuse the Press or reduce the notices it gives us, for we are aware that up to date one section of the press has done no more than ignore us while the other section with vile misrepresentations only recognised us sadly."

At the 1938 AGM the matter was apparently discussed at some length, with arguments for and against being put both in the hall and in letters from members read to the meeting by the Secretary. Eventually the issue was put to a vote, and was narrowly defeated by a slender majority of only four votes. However, although the Society's name remained unchanged the inclusion of historical figures was by no means shunned, for only a month later a proposal was passed "that collectors of historical figures are welcomed in the Society". Further, a new competition, the Kadur Trophy, was established for "non-military figures".

Rather less controversial was the commencement of a long running war game competition. The impetus for this activity came from W R Gordon and J R Sachs, who devised detailed rules which were published in instalments in the Bulletin. Mr Gordon had a special room set aside in his house for war gaming, and offered its use for the Society's wargaming competition. Reporting this offer, the Bulletin noted that in his room "The scenery is excellent, every possible obstacle and effect, he has all kinds of armies, guns, transport, planes and everything the heart of a War Game player can dream about." A number of people took up this opportunity and soon a series of games were underway, members competing against each other in a series of rounds until the overall champion should emerge. Unfortunately this was yet another activity which was brought to a halt by a war which was no game.

The BSCMS received excellent publicity in the popular "Picture Post" magazine. Its issue of 11th March 1939 contained two pages of photographs of

members and their models at a meeting in the Masons Arms. The text accompanying the illustrations emphasised the work that members put into their figures:

"Collecting model soldiers is by no means the childish pursuit it sounds. It calls for patience, care and hard work. At the Society's headquarters, the "Masons Arms" in Maddox Street, London, there is a glass case containing a score or so of the figures "collected" by members. Exhibit A is the Coronation Coach. The coach, horses, and men took nearly a year to finish. In the same case is General Gordon, riding a camel, "collected" by a London tailor. The camel cost him eightpence, and when he bought it an Arab was riding it. Now, after about a month's hard work with sealing wax, paint, glue and string, it represents Victorian history. Even the General's eyes and moustache are recognisable.

Anyone can join the Society who can afford ten shillings and the time; enthusiasm and an ability to paint are the only necessary qualifications. One of the most enthusiastic members is a London navy, and his work is every bit as important as that of the various furriers, bankers, Territorials, tradesmen and regular officers who swell the membership list. The Secretary is a Mayfair tailor, a chimney sweep competes each year for the annual trophy, and a railway official has won it two years in succession. Nearly every member specialises in a different field, and the biggest collection need not necessarily be the best. One member and his wife have concentrated upon two famous battles - Poitiers and Crecy. It has taken them seven years so far to collect about 100 men - but each man is a work of art, correct to the last detail, and his history has been traced from records of the time."

As the thirties drew to an end the BSCMS had every reason to be satisfied with the progress it had made in a few short years. From those few men meeting in the Rendezvous Restaurant it had grown steadily to a substantial membership, both in the United Kingdom and overseas. It had already, in its meetings, lectures, publications, displays and competitions, set the pattern of activity not just for this Society but for many societies which were to follow it. New levels of modelling skill and artistry were being reached by members, and the promulgation of uniform information through the Bulletin and commitment to historical research set higher standards of accuracy than had ever been seen before. In the summer extra meetings were held which were primarily social events,

there being no business conducted but simply giving members a chance to meet together, display their figures and talk about their hobby.

Perhaps the lighter tone of these meetings was, consciously or unconsciously, because people knew that these happy days could not last. In the Minute Book there is a short space after the record of the August meeting, and at the bottom of the page a simple one line entry:

“War declared Sept 3rd 1939. Further meetings postponed.”

Chapter 2

The Society at War

“There never was a good war or a bad peace” - Benjamin Franklin

Although the outbreak of war caused all meetings to be postponed, the Society did not cease to function. A Bulletin was published in October 1939, although the Editorial reflects the great uncertainty felt at the time. Addressed “To our members”, it read:

“This is the first Bulletin that the Society has been able to issue since the outbreak of war, but we will carry on to the best of our ability under the altered circumstances.

Owing to many of our members being on Active Service or engaged in the different Home Services, the black-out and the difficulty of transport, we have been obliged to cancel our monthly meetings for the present, and also the Annual Dinner and Exhibition on November 4th.

We hope to issue a quarterly Bulletin and to hold an Annual General Meeting in January ...

One of the main objects of our Society has been to reproduce in models the elaborate and colourful uniforms of past ages and historical scenes. Most of our members have for years preferred to collect and make models of periods up to the Great War. Even that war gave us a variety of uniforms, but the majority were very sombre. Mechanisation put the final finish to pageantry.

From a collector’s point of view the present war promises to be more sombre and gloomy than ever before. Officers and men in our Army are to be dressed exactly alike, hidden fortifications, camouflaged guns, mechanised units of every description. The introduction and fear of poison gas has transformed the human face into a gargoyle, and shape and figure has been rightly sacrificed for comfort and efficiency.

We ask our members to take note of any new uniform they come across, and either take notes or make models for future reference and record. We also propose, if we obtain permission from the Authorities, to publish particulars of new uniforms, etc., in our future Bulletins.”

The Editorial did end on a more optimistic note:

“We are pleased to inform members that Messrs. Britains are continuing to supply the markets with their excellent models and that they hope to introduce some new models in the New Year.

The black-out will give some of us an opportunity to revise and replenish our collections.”

As intended, the Annual General Meeting was indeed held on Saturday 20th January 1940, in the Grafton Hotel, Tottenham Court Road, with 24 members present. It was reported that “14 members are serving in HM Forces, from Colonels to Sergeants, also in the Home Service, ARP [Air Raid Precautions], AFS [Auxiliary Fire Service], CNR [Civil Nursing Reserve].”

As for Society activities, it was proposed to continue to try and issue Bulletins and monthly meetings would begin again in April at the Masons Arms and continue until September. The War Game competition had reached the semi-finals before being interrupted, but “we still hope to finish the competition after the war”. As the Annual Exhibition had been cancelled, the competition for the Britains Trophy was held at the AGM, with Mr L D Britain himself judging and presenting the prize.

With regard to the fellow societies overseas, it was reported that “The French and Belgian Societies are carrying on, but we have not heard from the American society.”

The April meeting was held as planned, with a good attendance. As before the war, new models were shown, and a Spoon Competition held as normal. It was also agreed to ask Lord Blythswood to become a patron of the Society.

But the war was entering a grim phase, with the Nazi blitzkrieg sweeping across Holland and Belgium. The British Expeditionary Force joined the Belgian and French forces on the Dyle River on May 13th, but were soon forced into retreat before the German tanks. Against this background, only 11 members of the

BSCMS gathered for the May meeting, on the 17th. Mr Peck gave a "lantern display" of model soldiers, and it was recorded that "everyone present thoroughly enjoyed the exhibition and hope it will be repeated in happier times."

The hoped for "happier times" were still some way off. The end of May and beginning of June saw the British evacuation from Dunkirk and the fall of France, which surrendered on June 17th. Four days later, June 21st, the Society attempted to hold its regular meeting. There was news of members in the forces: "Major Gordon and Lt Peter Young had escaped from Dunkerque and were safely home again ... Mr Clendenin had received a commission in the Seaforth Highlanders and had been posted to Wick in Scotland." Not surprisingly, there was little modelling activity, "There was such a small attendance (only 8 members were present) that there was no business except news of our members who were serving." The good news was that Lord Blythwood had consented to become a patron of the Society. Prior to 1940 Lord Blythwood had been Philip Archibald Douglas Campbell, but had succeeded to the title on the death of his father on 7th February. He was a noted model soldier enthusiast and had a most extensive collection. Coming from a family with a long military tradition, Lord Blythwood had been commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Scots Guards in 1939.

Dunkirk was over and the Battle of Britain was about to begin. Yet the Society's determination to continue in the face of all difficulties continued. Bulletin number 3 was issued, and its editorial reflected the situation:

"Owing to war contingencies we have been forced to cut our Bulletin by half this quarter. We are determined to issue a quarterly Bulletin to assure our members who are unable to attend our meetings that the Society will continue as long as possible. We appeal to those members who have not sent their subscriptions for this year to do so at once to enable us to carry on."

In July Lord Blythwood informed the Society that he would shortly be leaving for active service and as a result had amended his will leaving his collection to the BSCMS so that "in the event of his decease we should place them in some museum, by finding one that had a spare room to be called the Blythwood Room and he would endow the collection with enough money to pay for its upkeep and preservation."

By now the Society was struggling to continue. The report of the August meeting reads in its entirety: "Although so few were present, owing to an air raid

alarm about 6 pm, it gave us the opportunity of welcoming Mr Creed as a new member, and admiring Mr Atkins' models." The "few" members numbered only five, but worse was to come in September when only Otto Gottstein and Walter Lockwood came to the Masons Arms. Their inevitable decision was to postpone all further meetings for the year. The Battle of Britain was reaching its climax, as German bombers poured destruction on London and other major cities, and the "Few" in the RAF heroically defended the country against the Luftwaffe, inflicting the first major defeat on Hitler's forces.

Despite the appalling difficulties of 1940 the Society continued, through the determination of its dedicated officers and members, and was able to convene an Annual General Meeting in January 1941. Otto Gottstein proposed a well deserved vote of thanks to the Secretary, Walter Lockwood, for all he had done to keep the Society together during the previous year. As may be expected, he was re-elected for a further year, and Captain Clendenin was confirmed as President.

Sadly a large part of the business of the meeting had to be given over to a discussion of how to deal with the Blythwood bequest, for Lord Blythwood had indeed lost his life. In a particularly tragic waste he had been killed on 14th September 1940 in an accident while still with his regiment's Training Battalion in the UK. He died without an heir, but he had, as he had promised only some six months earlier, left instructions in his will for his model soldier collection to be left to the BSCMS. The AGM resolved that, although it "may be some time before [the bequest] is the property of the Society it was necessary to appoint trustees to receive, invest and administer the fund. Three trustees were appointed: Capt J C Sachs, Mr H P Bayston and the Secretary and Treasurer, Mr W Lockwood."

As the year went on it was clear that 1941 was going to be another difficult year, both for the country at war and for the Society. The Battle of the Atlantic reached new levels of intensity as the German attacks on the shipping convoys attempted to cut off Britain's vital supply routes, while in the Western Desert the arrival of Rommel returned the initiative to the Axis forces. Reflecting the grim situation, the BSCMS also found itself under strain. In April Colonel Rolston informed the Society "of the complete destruction of his collection, except one set in the bank's vaults." A meeting held in May was attended by only six members, so was used just as a social evening.

At the June meeting Peter Young, now a Captain, gave a talk “on his experiences in the War from the time he left to join the BEF in France, the retreat to Dunkirk, escape, landings on Guernsey and in Norway.” At this same meeting Otto Gottstein reported that he “had heard from M Armont from Paris that the French Society is still in existence and models are still being made in Paris.” Considering that Paris was suffering German occupation the continuance of their society for so long was an astonishing feat.

Attempts to continue regular meetings continued through the summer, but by September it was decided to stop monthly meetings and try to arrange “an Annual Meeting, dinner or tea in January 1942”. It was also decided that “members of HM Forces, not officers, to have subscriptions waived for the duration of the War.”

An Annual General Meeting was convened for 1942, held in February. In his report the Secretary looked back on the previous year during which “difficulties have increased, air-raids, shortage of paper, members joining up, black outs, etc, but notwithstanding the Society has not only survived but by the loyal support of our members in Great Britain and America is holding its own, meeting whenever possible, issuing our Bulletin quarterly which enables us to keep in touch with each other.” There was more news of members in the Forces: “Capt Peter Young is with the Commandos and was in the Vaagso Raid. BSM R Lockwood is on his way east with his battery. Capt Perrera has returned from Iceland and is now in this country.”

For the formal business, P D Clendenin, now a Major, was confirmed as President for a further year, and Walter Lockwood re-elected Secretary. In an attempt to continue normal Society functions there was a competition held for the Britains Trophy, which had 12 entries, won by John Peck with a model of a dismounted drummer of the 1st Dragoon Guards.

From April another attempt was made to resume monthly meetings. Among the small group present was Peter Young, now Major Peter Young MC. Meetings were held each month from April to September, with generally modest attendances, and once again with the onset of the autumn it was decided to suspend meetings until the AGM the following year. But the Society was far from finished. In the Bulletin for October 1942 the editor wrote “With this issue the Society enters its eighth year of existence and fourth year of war. We have proven our usefulness by giving exhibitions for Charity or War Savings efforts, by supplying models for Army instructional purposes,

and our members are as loyal, enthusiastic, and ready to help the Society forward as they were in the peaceful days which seem so far away.” The publication of this issue coincided with the beginning of the Battle of Alamein, which was to be the first great Allied victory of the war, bringing with it an upsurge in morale and intimations of the vulnerability of the previously invincible German forces. Further defeats for the Nazis at Stalingrad at the end of 1942 checked their advance and gave further grounds for belief in ultimate victory.

The next Society meeting was the 1943 AGM, which conducted routine business (including the unanimous re-election of the officers) and allowed the annual competition for the Britains Trophy to take place. The difficulties caused by the war were never far away, and a warning note was sounded by Mr Lockwood in the Secretary’s report: “Please take care of your collections, manufacture has almost ceased and ours should be historical and valuable in the future.”

In the war there was a major shift as the Allies moved onto the offensive. Alamein was followed up by complete victory in North Africa and the invasion of Italy. In the East, the Russians inflicted another defeat on the Germans at the Battle of Kursk, while at sea the balance was also shifting against the U-Boats and the vital supply convoys continued to cross the Atlantic. For the Society this year followed a very similar pattern to the previous one, with meetings held only from June to September, and a shortened Bulletin being the main contact with the membership. A sad blow came in July with the death of H P Bayston, the Society Vice President. Many members spoke of his work for the Society, and there was a generous gesture by his widow who donated his papers and many of his models to the BSCMS.

As was now usual, the AGM for 1944 was held in February. Again as was now usual the Secretary began with a report of news of members serving with the Armed Forces, beginning with the sad news of the death of Sergeant J F Page, killed in action near Tremoli in Italy on 5th October 1943. Staff Sergeant Jackson had been shot down in Germany during an American bomber raid and was now a prisoner of war. Better news for Lieutenant Colonel Peter Young, who had been awarded a second bar to his Military Cross. Captain S F Stewart Francis was attached to General Alexander’s Headquarters in Italy, and General Sir Oliver Leese, the new Commander of the Eighth Army, had become the Society’s fiftieth member.

The difficulties noted the previous year over the supply of figures had become ever greater. The Secretary (still Walter Lockwood, unanimously re-elected) reported that "The law forbidding the sale of all metal toys has caused the lead soldier to disappear from the shops. It is now up to members with big collections to help those with smaller ones by exchanging or selling some of their superfluous figures." However, there was undoubtedly a new mood of hope and optimism appearing. Mr Lockwood said: "We feel sure that the signs of this well attended meeting show that you [the members present] intend to continue your support for the Society and we hope all our other members at home and abroad will do the same, and that when final victory comes we shall be one of the few societies to have seen it through and come into our own again."

Once again the BSCMS attempted to hold regular meetings during the summer months, and members continued to be active in using their hobby to support events in support of the Services. At the May meeting there was much talk of various members work for the "Salute the Soldier" campaign. "The Secretary said he had put up several shows for the Salute the Soldier weeks in Edgware, St Albans, Watford and Harrow. Mr Peck had offered to Charlton but did not show. Mr North had had a show at Bletchley. Rev W Powell intended to show at Henley on Thames."

D-Day finally came on the 6th June, the huge Allied invasion of Europe showing that final victory was now but a matter of time. But this did not mean an end to hostile acts by the Germans, for England was now subjected to the V-1 and V-2 campaigns. The report of the July BSCMS meeting records that "No business had to be done and owing to the circumstances of fly bombs etc the meeting was very short." And for August: "Undoubtedly the cause of poor attendance was the 'flybomb'."

In September it was again decided to suspend meetings until the next AGM, as had happened throughout the war. But the minutes of the meeting show plainly the new mood in the country. Mr Lockwood wrote that "The fifth year of war is over and at last the light at the end of the dark tunnel is glimmering ahead. So far as we know we are the only pre-war Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers who have survived and we are all looking forward to the end of the War when we shall go all out to make it *the Society* of its kind." Here was confirmation that the European societies, who had heroically struggled to continue in the face of appalling difficulties, had sadly succumbed to the inevitable and had ceased to function. However, the

British Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers had kept going and now were thinking positively about the future.

By the time of the 1945 AGM the Allied armies were pushing towards the Po River in Italy and had crossed the Meuse in North Europe and were advancing towards the Rhein. Again reflecting the wider situation, the attendance at the BSCMS meeting was improving again. The Secretary's report for the year is instructive in its summary of the state of the Society at this time: "Our Society will be ten years old in July this year, and during six of these years we have been at war. We have done everything in our power to keep the Society alive, and by strict economy are in a firmer position this year than we have been since the war began. We have been able to issue Bulletins and hold meetings. Our officers and members have been called up, others have passed on before us, but the gaps have been filled. We have to thank America for a number of new members these last two years. Our Society seems better known there than in its own country." In fact, over the year there had been 15 new members, 10 British and 5 American. The total membership had now reached 81, of which 17 were American. In reports of members in the forces there was good news. Colonel Peter Young, DSO, MC, was now Deputy Commander of a Brigade, and L D Britain was now a Wing Commander with the RAF in the East, having a staff job in India.

J E Peck, acting as Vice Chairman, proposed that Walter Lockwood should become an Honorary Life Member of the Society as appreciation of his work as Secretary since the inception of the BSCMS, and on behalf of the membership made a presentation to him of a set of figures of the 12 Scottish Regiments mounted on an alabaster plaque. Here was a well deserved honour indeed, for surely no-one had done more than Mr Lockwood in holding the Society together during its most difficult period.

Monthly meetings resumed in April, with noticeably better attendance than had been the case for the past few years. The May meeting was held on Friday 18th, ten days after the unconditional surrender had been signed by the Germans, although, of course, the fight against Japan in the Far East continued. That the end of war was bringing about attempts to return to normality was shown by a letter received from the resuscitated French society, whose secretary wrote asking if he could become a member of the BSCMS. It was decided that secretaries of affiliated overseas societies would become members automatically if the BSCMS secretary was accepted by their organisations on the same terms.

In June "Col P Young DSO gave a racy account of his recent travels on the continent in search of models and model makers. Many of the latter - he mentioned Ochel and Maehr - have been eliminated." (Ochel was later to resume production as Germany recovered from the war.) This June meeting shows how quickly normal Society activities were resumed. As well as Colonel Young's "racy" talk there was a short address by Rev Mackie on the war game. As for figures, "Models in great variety and in large numbers were on exhibition. Capt Sachs showed some unusual models from his collection, some dating back to the nineteenth century, and others whose origins was lost in the mists of philosophical doubt. He also said that his War Game had been largely played by ARP Wardens in Bushey during the war years. Several of Mr Greenwood's intriguing little figures were on view as were some beautifully detailed wooden figures by Sergt North. A lot of time was devoted to buying and selling. Many models changed hands. We hope this phase will be developed at each meeting."

A month later Peter Young, now Brigadier, proposed an exhibition of members' models be held at the September meeting, for which he offered to provide two prizes, one for single figures and one for groups or dioramas. This was agreed and the exhibition did indeed happen in September as planned, at the usual venue of the Masons Arms. A splendid entry of 36 single figures and 14 groups was received, the winner

of the former being J H Sloane with a Colour Bearer of the Gordon Highlanders, and of the latter J E Peck with a Pipe Band of the Black Watch.

As the official surrender of Japan had occurred on September 2nd, this meeting can truly be said to be the beginning of the post-war era of the Society. At the same meeting it was announced that letters had been received from the Belgian Society of Collectionneures de Figurines and from the Danish Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers. Together with the letter from the French society mentioned earlier, these clearly indicate how great was the desire all over Europe to put the war behind them and get back to normal business as quickly as possible. That there were still problems, and would be for a considerable time to come, can be seen from another report at the same meeting, which said that the "Only news from Germany is that all firms making continental soldiers of any kind have been wiped out."

Marking the end of the war years, the Secretary, giving his report at the AGM in January 1946, declared in ringing tones that "The six years struggle is now over, and the Society, raising its head above the fog of war, girds up its loins and marches proudly forwards, to what brilliant future which, given the hearty co-operation of every individual member, is assured."

Chapter 3

The Growth of Military Modelling

*“Not even the successful man can begin to describe the impalpable elations and apprehensions of growth” -
Norman Mailer*

As the Society emerged from the difficult years of the Second World War the members looked ahead with optimism, although in the 1940's few could have foreseen the remarkable growth of interest in military modelling, or the heights of artistic expression to which the model soldier would aspire in the second half of the twentieth century. Revolutionary developments in materials and techniques would come into the hobby during the 1950s and 60s which would lay the foundations for the modern era of exquisitely sculpted, detailed and realistically painted figures.

Embarking on the first full year of peace, the Society was struck by tragedy when, on the 4th January 1946, Walter Lockwood died. The Bulletin reported that “He had suffered poor health for the last two years, and although ill, insisted on being present at the November Meeting, but the ensuing excitement and physical strain proved too great, and a subsequent collapse confined him to his bed.” Walter Lockwood had been a founder of the BSCMS and its first Secretary, a position he continued to hold until his death. He steered the Society through the war years, and it was surely due to his enthusiasm and dedication that it survived intact, the only one of the pre-war societies to have an unbroken record into the post war period. During the war Walter Lockwood served as an Air Warden in Westminster by day and in Harrow by night, and it was his zeal in carrying out his duties that adversely affected his health. His contribution is best summed up in the words of the Bulletin obituary, which said “He was our most enthusiastic collector and propagator of our mutual hobby, and in him the Society loses a lovable character and a faithful friend.”

The Secretary's post was filled by Allan Clayton, while the Bulletin once again came under the capable direction of William Carman. Mr Clendenin remained as President.

The first business of the BSCMS was to pick up from where it had been in 1939, and soon it would seem as if the war had not intervened at all. The War Game competition, which had been held up for six years, (“so rudely interrupted by the late Paperhanger and

Brush Artist in 1939”, said the Bulletin) resumed from where it had been left off. The monthly meetings were reinstated and with them the monthly Spoon Competition. A full programme of events was drawn up, with a “sale and exchange mart” to be held in February, which would be followed at subsequent meetings by lectures on “Sources of information for uniforms” (P D Clendenin), “Plaster casting” (W Y Carman), “Making and faking” (A G Clayton), “Scenic effects” (D C Stokes), and “The Royalist army” (P Young). In addition at one meeting there would be a demonstration war game by Capt Sachs, and in November J E Peck was scheduled to give a “lantern lecture”.

The Annual Dinner also returned, the first post-war event being held on Saturday 23rd February 1946 at the New Inn Restaurant, Westminster Bridge Road. With the Annual Dinner the competitions returned to their full size, with classes for groups and dioramas, single figures, novices, and, of course, the Britains Trophy.

A further innovation was the Society's Information Panel. In order to draw upon the great depth of knowledge and expertise which was contained in the Society's membership, a questionnaire was sent out asking members to give details of any special subjects on which they would be willing to give advice to other members. From this the Information Panel details were compiled and published in the Bulletins for May and June. The results were a varied collection of subjects. Some were general, such as “Continental Armies” (W Y Carman), or “Modern equipment” (C A Reavley). There were a number of members who offered specific periods, such as “1400-1599” (P D Connett), “Elizabethan” (Mrs Ida Lockwood), or “1908-1946” (Sgt A T Dickinson), while others preferred armies of different countries, such as Lt P Willing who offered the “French Army 1740-1946”, or H P Jones whose interest was simply “German Army”. Others had very specific subject areas to contribute, such as “Poitiers” (H L Pottier Smith) or “Prussian Army 1866” (Maj A W H Lees). The full list covered some four pages

of the Bulletin, showing what an extensive range of interests were now encompassed by the BSCMS and the amount of research and scholarship which was being undertaken by its members.

The bad news for 1946 was that the Society found itself facing some financial difficulties. As a result it was decided to increase the subscriptions after a postal ballot of members had overwhelmingly preferred this to the other option, which was to curtail the Bulletin. The annual subscription went up to £1.

But the central activity remained, of course, the making of model soldiers. In this the Society rightly could claim great success in the promotion of ever higher standards of modelling and painting, moving the miniature figure forward as an aesthetic object to be appreciated in its own right. Evidence of how the Society was seeking to extend the artistry of military modelling is in the pages of any Bulletin, where not only were there articles on details of uniforms but also numerous articles on modelling techniques. To take one example, D C Stokes contributed a two part article on diorama building, throughout which the message was the need for every aspect of the work to be carefully thought out so as to achieve the best possible overall effect. "First, without a plan concealed in, may it be called, the artistry of making, the attempt will prove tiresome and the result be clumsy. There must be a planned design set down immediately the subject has been chosen." Only the best was good enough for Mr Stokes: "With a concrete plan on paper the question of housing the scene then follows. Nothing slipshod is adequate for the specially assembled figures to represent the human element. A shoddy box is no complement to the scene itself. Any old box will not do, even if given a lick of stain and varnish."

In the diorama itself, Stokes advocated using lessons from the painting techniques of artists to give an impression of distance in the scene.

"Success here is brought nearer by an ability to draw and paint in an understanding of the trickeries of the receding scale. But as much depends on a firm plan of colour graduation. This graduation must be made to reduce colour intensity on the ground from front to rear, and on the back and side screen from top to bottom, so that the lesser loads of colour tone meet where the modelled terrain fuses with the back screen ... The violence or smoothness with which this easing of colour tones is carried out depends on the character of the subject dealt with and how the influences of place and time of year participate proportionately.

While dealing with this essential colour graduation let it be carried further to cover the control of colour weight loaded on figures themselves. In a very large diorama carrying many scores of figures in close formation it is very necessary, if full effectiveness is to be attained, to graduate the colour tones of uniforms, the plan conforming to the one set down for the terrain."

What Stokes is describing here is the use of aerial or atmospheric perspective, a technique common to picture painters but which is often not thought of as applying to three dimensional models. It is clear that even if they did not have the benefits of all the modern materials, the members of the BSCMS in these years had no shortage of ambition or desire to produce the best possible models from what they had available.

Indeed, a recurring theme at this time is the strenuous objection to the use of the term "toy soldier". Writing in the Bulletin, A G Clayton said: "From the many contacts I have had with the uninitiated one forceful point is apparent: no longer is the hobby looked upon as the latent influence of the nursery whereby one plays at Toy Soldiers. I think that we can safely say that the high standard of the work so painstakingly undertaken by the collector is now recognised as the means by which the fighting man is reproduced in miniature, or model form." Unfortunately this view of a change in public perceptions was to be shown to be considerably over-optimistic by events which were shortly to follow.

In the autumn of 1946 the Society was approached by the "Illustrated" magazine who were interested in publishing an article on the BSCMS. The Society cooperated fully, with a photographer from the magazine taking pictures at the October meeting and the Secretary inviting the reporter to dinner so that he could give him all the help and information wanted. Unfortunately these first photographs were not at all successful, being described in the Bulletin as "very flattering to the individual collector, but totally disregarded the model soldiers also present which, dwarfed by their owners, appeared only as vague blurs". As a result a special meeting was called at which the members displayed, for the benefit of the "Illustrated" photographer, "the finest examples of miniature soldiery throughout the ages that have ever been assembled at one time". This having been done, hopes were high for a good article on the hobby and some fine publicity for the Society. Unfortunately there was to be disappointment, and some anger, at the resulting article which yet again was said to peddle the "grown men playing with toy soldiers" angle. At the 1947 AGM the resulting correspondence between

the Society and the publication was read, and the feeling of the membership can be gauged by the passing of a motion proposed by Otto Gottstein that "Any Press articles to be written and published with the assistance of the Society should first be submitted to the Society for approval. If the Press people who want these articles do not consent the Society should refrain from sponsoring such articles."

Reading the "Illustrated" article today it is hard to see why it occasioned such strong reaction. Certainly it refers to "playing with toy soldiers", but does give details of the care and precision which went into the figures:

"An eye that gleams with boyish enthusiasm, a hand that takes a toy soldier as if it were a piece of rare old china, are the hallmarks of a member of the British Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers ... The British Society has 136 members. If you were to attend one of its monthly meetings in the dining room of a Soho tavern, you might find yourself next to a Harley Street specialist; Charles Creed, the dress designer; Maurice Elvey, the film producer; or General Sir G F MacMunn. The Society has Civil Servants, clergymen, furriers and authors as members. Once it had a dustman. A BBC policeman looks in at meetings when off duty.

Most model soldier fans are handymen. They make their own soldiers from standard models. With file and fretsaw they can remove arms, shakos and trousers and substitute quite different limbs and uniforms. If you know how, you can transform a figure into a Cromwellian pikeman or a Roman legionary. A first-class figure by one of the specialist model makers might cost anything up to £5.

Model soldiers must be accurate to the last painted button before they are taken to the Society's meeting where, after official business, members "swop" surplus models with the exuberance of schoolboys. A keen collector keeps his models in cases but is always eager to show them to his friends."

Accompanying the article were a series of photographs of members and their models, including two large illustrations in colour. Today the Society would be delighted to receive such publicity. The chagrin which greeted the references to "toy soldiers", however, says much about the struggle of the early pioneers to have the hobby taken seriously.

Nothing daunted, the Society continued its attempts to gain good publicity through the media, this time on film. The BSCMS was approached by two film companies, one for a film on hobbies and the other for a film to be called "All the King's Men" being made by Pathe, who planned to use models to depict military history through the ages. "We hope that this time we shall be able to avoid any reference to the subject of 'Toy Soldiers'" commented the Bulletin. The first film seemed to be a great success, having had a preview at which the participating members "had the pleasure of seeing themselves in glorious Technicolour. The models have come out splendidly and the result is very gratifying." At the same time there came a request from yet another film company, Paramount, who wanted to feature the Society in a film to be called "Unusual Occupations".

Regrettably the Society's initial satisfaction was to be short lived, for they were shocked when they saw the films actually projected onto the big screen. Models which were only 3 inches high were now blown up to many feet and every flaw was both apparent and amplified. At the next Society meeting the President said "that in view of the doubtful result, due to the magnification of models projected onto public cinema screens, it had been decided not to undertake any further film work ... until a definite result could be seen.

No great successes with either print or film, so what about radio? In early 1947 Otto Gottstein and Peter Young appeared on the BBC radio "Hobby Horse" programme, interviewed by C Denier Warren. A condensed transcript was published in the February Bulletin, and began with the following exchange after Warren had introduced Gottstein as a "three star collector of model soldiers":

Gottstein: Thank you, and I am glad you said "Model Soldiers" and not "TOY" as mentioned in the 'Radio Times'.

Warren: Ah, I knew I should have to refute that statement very early in our talk or irate members of the British Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers, to say nothing of our opposite numbers in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark and the United States, will be writing, phoning, and cabling protests..."

The discussion then ranged over the history of model soldiers, the current manufacturers and their figures, and the displays in the RUSI, before Warren turned to another potentially controversial point:

Warren: I have heard it said that to do away with war one should not only get rid of human armies but the “toy soldier” which apparently nurtures the latent “Dictator” in our children.

Gottstein: That is nonsense; at any rate from the angle that we serious collectors approach the subject. It is really a study of the history of costume and uniform and, when applied to dioramas, the re-construction of historical events. You might just as well advocate the abolition of the study of history.

The interview ended on a positive note, with the presenter reading out a letter from Lieutenant General Sir Oliver Leese, who said that “During the war members of the Society of Model Soldiers have given valuable financial help to Services charities, and I am very glad that it is going strongly and wish it every success in the future.” Overall, the radio had proved a useful platform for good publicity for the Society.

But there was still another medium to be explored which was still very much in its infancy - the new fangled service that was television. The Society was contacted by BBC Television to participate in its “Picture Page” programme. The result was described in the Bulletin by Allan Clayton:

“Tony Quinn, armed with a selection of models, was rushed at a few hours notice to the television studios at the Alexandra Palace and gave an interesting talk, illustrated with models, on the pursuits of the Society. Unfortunately for me, I did not see the afternoon transmission and intended to see the evening performance, but just after my friend had switched on his television set, clouds of smoke emanated from the interior, together with a smell of burning rubber, and then the screen went blank. As my wife had seen the afternoon performance and reported favourably on the talk, no blame is attached to Tony Quinn for this accident. Frankly Television is not yet sufficiently well developed to permit close-up views of our models, as apparently the camera cannot get close enough, this being due to technical reasons.

The Society’s other media connection in 1947 was a personal one, when a young actor who had just started appearing in films joined the BSCMS ranks. He was to go on to be a true star of the cinema, for this young man was Peter Cushing. The Bulletin commented on the “novel” group of miniatures which he brought along to the meeting. The unusual aspect of these figures was the method of construction. “This group of five figures, each one inch high, of which a Roman

Legionary and the mounted figure of Dick Turpin will serve as illustration, were faithfully reproduced in minute detail. Cushing informed us that they originally start as paper “Cut Outs” and are then built up with glue until the desired proportions are obtained, additional accoutrement and detail is added, and then the model is painted. Definitely a new line in Model Soldier manufacture.”

The meeting of December 1946 added a new activity to the Society’s calendar, again one which was so successful that it has remained ever since. This was the Society Auction. Initially this was an experiment to see if there was any interest. J E Peck acted as auctioneer, selling figures, books, prints, and “odd bits and pieces of figures”. The experiment proved a resounding success, with bidding described as “very active” (the Bulletin recorded that “actually it was dangerous to move a muscle”). The members selling received more money than they expected, obviously the buyers were pleased, and the Society benefited by taking a fee of one penny in the shilling as commission.

The other major sale at this time was the collection of the late Lord Blythwood, bequeathed to the Society after his death in the war. Attempts to find a permanent home to display the collection came to nought, so the trustees decided to offer the collection for sale to Society members. The collection was split into 349 lots, for which members were asked to send in bids. To ensure fairness for all members, these had to be posted to the Secretary and at a special meeting a draw took place to decide who should be the successful bidder. In many ways it is sad to see such a collection broken up, but it is understandable that it was just impossible to house it intact, and the way the sale was handled ensured that it did bring benefit to the membership as a whole.

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The beginning of 1948 brought a momentous change to the Society, for it was at the Annual General Meeting held on January 16th that the name was changed to that familiar to modellers today - the British Model Soldier Society. The reasons for this were simple. The old name was felt to be too long and cumbersome, and it was noticeable that the organisation was generally known as just “the model soldier society”. The change recognised this and gave the Society a shorter and simpler name, without changing its scope or purpose.

Along with the name change came an overhaul of the Rules of the Society, governing such matters as officers, meetings, voting, etc. Importantly, a revised Object was published, which now read:

The Society is founded to further the collection of model soldiers and ancillary figures of all kinds and periods, to interchange ideas and information, arrange lectures, exhibitions, engage in historical research, to co-operate with manufacturers, and for exchange of gifts or sales between members.

Coincidental with these changes a new President was elected. P D Clendenin had been President since 1938, and would no doubt have continued to be elected to the position except that he had to step down owing to pressure of work. He was replaced by Captain J C Sachs, who had made many contributions to the Society's activities over the years and this was a fitting recognition of his work.

These changes are important in the history of the BMSS, not so much in themselves but more for what they represent. In many ways this was a symbolic closing of the first chapter of the Society's existence and the beginning of a new period in which the BMSS would move into the post-war era. Just around the corner would be new materials for figures and modelling, new techniques, and a remarkable growth of interest in modelling. In the Society the competitions were expanding, the first regional meetings were beginning, the Bulletin was beginning regularly to carry pictures and photographs, and in many other ways the BMSS was setting out on the road which would lead to the modern Society of today.

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Although matters were improving, the late 1940s were still a time of some difficulties for modellers. Modern adhesives were still some way away, as shown by a Bulletin article of July 1948 which advised "eschew the glues of the seccotine family. The reason is that after a period whatever has been made to adhere will eventually come away from the figure. The "Dope" type adhesives are more satisfactory. Be careful when you use this type of adhesive though, as it will dissolve oil paint and can make a mess of your paintwork."

The availability of the basic raw materials for the hobby, commercial model soldiers, was also rather erratic. In February 1949 the Secretary reported that "Model soldiers are beginning to appear in greater quantities in the shops at last. Browsing through Woolworths the other afternoon, I found the following figures. A charging Highlander in full dress, by Hill & Co. Stripped of its paint and repainted it would be a good figure. Also a kneeling sailor, with rifle, again by Hill & Co., several infantrymen in action positions ... Another find was a kneeling Highlander in full dress, firing. Again repainting and filing would make

this into an excellent model. As yet the model is unidentifiable, having simply the word copyright on the back."

There was even more optimism in September, along with the first hints of things to come, when it was reported that "Two very good little plastic figures are now to be found in most of the local toy shops. They represent a commando and a paratrooper in battle order. Although the ones already seen look rather out of keeping with standard figures, due to the plastic being in various colours, these figures when painted are very realistic." The picture was not, however, all good. The November Bulletin noted that "the toy shops are sadly lacking in stocks of models, either displaying masses of Hunts and Farm figures, or else figures that are far too costly for the humble collector". But the Secretary had again been to his favourite shop: "there is still a goodly selection appearing in the well-known Woolworths emporiums. Many of the figures, although crudely painted and representing in some cases no known regiments are, even so, good models for conversion or just repainting. The plastic circus horses are quite useful, as they can be manipulated. The rubber-tyred howitzer limber is also to be found. For those who paint in enamels, the small 1/3d Chinese Lacquer is once more on sale in the necessary colours."

Even as late as 1951 supply was a major problem. A G Clayton again: "Wandering into Hamleys the other afternoon one had a pleasant surprise. Displayed on the counter were boxes of Britains' famous dismounted Hussars and their new line, Dismounted and Mounted Life Guard Sentries. For one moment it was thought that the days of gloom were ended, but according to information received it is doubtful when such a further delivery will be received. Such is the lot of the collector at home."

Meanwhile the BMSS continued to grow steadily. It passed the 200 mark in January 1950, when membership was reported to stand at 207. Unfortunately not all members were as enthusiastic and active as the leadership would like. The Secretary complained in the Bulletin that "In the early days of the Society members always brought models to the meeting, nowadays the attitude is rather one of "I want to be entertained", and it is left to a small band of members to provide the entertainment, as far as models are concerned. Whatever the standard, be it poor or good, there is always room for improvement and it is only by comparison that this is attained." What a familiar ring these words will have to anyone who has been to any Society meetings over the years, right up to the present day! In any organisation there will always be those who participate and those who just

watch, and it is surely the job of the Society to encourage the participators and attempt to persuade the watchers that, if only they would take a more active role in Society activities, they could gain so much more benefit and satisfaction from their membership.

The Society recognised the contributions made by its leading personalities and supporters. After his stint as President, Captain Sachs was made the first Life Vice President of the BMSS in recognition of his services. Announcing his award, the Bulletin noted that “actually he is the oldest active member of the Society, and many times has fulfilled the temporary roles of secretary and Treasurer when called upon to do so.” The second Life Vice President award was made in October 1950 to Otto Gottstein, “In view of the great interest that Mr Gottstein has always taken in the hobby of figure collecting, and in recognition of the services that he has rendered to our Society and its pursuits”. A worthy award to the man who was generally recognised to have been one of the prime moving forces behind the Society from its inception and right through its early years.

Sadly Otto Gottstein was only able to enjoy his Life Vice Presidency for a short period, for he died in New York on Wednesday 5th September 1951. In tribute the Bulletin left its front page blank except for the announcement of his death, followed inside by an appreciation of the man and his contribution to the hobby. “It is safe to say that seldom in one man is found such a combination of practical commonsense and aesthetic appreciation coupled with full-blooded humanity and straight dealing, whether engaged in pastime or business, as was found in Otto Gottstein”, read the appreciation. “The world of the model soldier enthusiast has lost its greatest collector, and we have lost our greatest friend.”

Financial problems dogged the Society, usually the twin problems of ever increasing costs of printing and distributing the Bulletin, and the tardiness of some members in paying their subscriptions despite repeated reminders. A further, and unexpected, blow came in February 1952 in the shape of the Inland Revenue, who decreed that the BMSS could not be deemed a “learned society” and hence was liable to pay income tax. Correspondence and protest followed but inevitably there was no avoiding the tax man.

The ongoing failure of some members to pay their subscriptions became a source of ever increasing anger to the Committee, whose efforts to balance the books was being undermined by these selfish few. Appeals in the Bulletin to pay arrears appeared in issue after issue, in ever stronger terms. In his comments at the

1953 AGM the exasperation of the Secretary with the non-paying members was obvious: “The Secretary stated that if members cannot afford to spend four pence three farthings per week, which is all that is necessary to pay the subscription, the Society is better off without them as passengers.”

Despite these problems the Treasurer and Committee managed to keep the Society solvent, thanks to the tremendous loyalty and enthusiasm of the majority of the members for the BMSS and its work. Indeed, the membership continued its steady upward movement, passing the 300 mark in 1954.

Along with the growth of membership came continuing improvements in the art of modelling. The conversion of figures became ever more common and imaginative, helped by the introduction of plastic wood as a filler. The first article on the benefits of plastic wood appeared in 1951, and it was but a short time until it became the accepted medium for filling, adding uniform items such as lapels and turnbacks, and for details such as hair and moustaches.

In 1952 an article advocated a new idea for the better display of figures - mounting them on wooden bases. Although commonplace today, this practice was rare in those days and the advantages of bases, not only aesthetic but practical, in helping the handling of models without damaging the paintwork, had to be spelt out in the Bulletin. However, the idea quickly caught on, for only a year later Allan Clayton wrote that “There is ... a tendency today to get away from the loose figure, either on its own or with duplicates. Instead single figures are mounted on small wooden plinths with a descriptive plate and little groups of figures are mounted on a common base containing scenic additions”.

At the same time the members were being encouraged to ever greater feats of detail and naturalism in their painting. The Bulletin for September 1952 contained an article on “Painting of faces”, written under the pseudonym of “A Merchant of Venice”, which would not be out of place in any modelling magazine or handbook today. Among its hints were getting the correct tint of flesh, avoiding both the “high blood pressure” and “jaundiced” look, the application of shadow and highlights, how to get a natural shape to the mouth, the treatment of the eyes and hair. It behoves the modern modeller to look back at the legacy of the pioneers from the early days of model soldiering, for it is thanks to their experimentation and practice that the hobby has reached the heights of skill which are almost taken for granted now.

Amongst the leading modellers of this period was Mr A Nesbitt, whose great interest was in hussar figures. The January 1953 Bulletin described in detail his latest work, a group of German Hussar Troopers in 1900 Review Order, depicted "indulging in a somewhat alcoholic carousal". Some were dancing, some drinking, some playing musical instruments, and there was a monocled officer. The Editor noted with astonishment that the beer steins, each about a quarter of an inch high, not only had hinged tops but on each could be seen the regimental cipher and the words "Deutschland uber alles". All figures were converted from the Britains dismounted 11th Hussars. A few days before Christmas Mr Nesbitt had taken this model to Sandringham and had delivered it to Her Majesty the Queen, who gave it as a Christmas present to HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.

The Editor continued to report on the improvements on the supply of figures in the shops. In Hamleys of Regent Street there was more space being given to toy soldiers, and Mr Clayton had "not seen so many Britains boxes for a very long time". Timpo were now producing more figures, and other toy figures of less certain origin were appearing in Woolworths depicting Vikings, Romans and figures from "Treasure Island". Plastic figures from Herald were becoming familiar, described as "excellent" and with "good detail". Other plastics from the American firms of Revell and Marx were also having an impact. "The great point about all these figures is that they all come unpainted and are very cheap," reported A W Saunders, "yet the workmanship is excellent".

Also starting to appear around this time were models from some of the fine sculptors who have become part of model soldier history, for such was the quality of their work that they moved the model soldier to new levels of artistry. Charles Stadden issued his first catalogue in 1955, selling direct to collectors so as to prevent excessive prices being charged by some retail shops. The Bulletin enthused that Stadden was "one of the few manufacturers who really animate their figures ... Mr Stadden specialises in faces, and it is amazing the amount of expression that he is able to portray in paint, especially in his action models."

The other major newcomer in this year was the "Rose" figure range by Russell Gammage. Among the first figures were two soldiers from the American War of Independence, beginning "a series of models in various positions, showing the different uniforms worn by American, French, English and German troops fighting on the American continent." In contrast, a Roman centurion of the 1st century AD was released at the same time, again beginning a series of figures

from this era which were to prove most popular with modellers. It is a tribute to the quality of Gammage's work that the Rose Models range are still with us today and are amongst the most highly regarded of all the products of the modern model soldier era.

The growth of available models continued apace. By the end of 1956 Revell had been joined by Aurora in the plastic kits market, the latter offering kits of Stalin, Patton and Panther tanks among their range. The Bulletin recorded in December 1956 the appearance of the first home produced plastic kits: "one firm under the name of Airfix make a really fine series of kits available almost always in Woolworths" (did the Editor shop anywhere else?). The range at this time consisted of a few aircraft and small scale ships, but in retrospect no modeller can doubt the importance of the Airfix firm or the impact their cheap and readily available plastic models were to have on the whole modelling hobby.

Yet more plastic soldiers were reviewed in 1957 when the Crescent Toy Company issued some medieval knights and foot soldiers, based on the Agincourt period, and costing 6 pence each. The reviewer drew attention to the quality of the poses, and the detail in the chain mail, weapons and faces.

As well as models new types of paint were becoming available. Don Fosten, in the Bulletin for February 1958, drew members' attention to two firms who were marketing "new plastic enamel paints". The first of these were the "Joy" paints, which were gloss but could "be made matt by the application of a Flattening Agent which is produced by the same firm ... The result is a smooth matt surface without trace of brushmark or grittiness." Joy paints were a familiar sight in the model shops for many years but have now disappeared. The same cannot be said for the other firm mentioned in this article, the Humber Oil Company, now better known by their acronym of "Humbrol". In 1958 they were said to "have a wide range of colours, some in glossy finish and some in their new Matt finish. These colours dry flat without the aid of a Flattening Agent." There can be few modern modellers who have not used Humbrol paints to a greater or lesser extent, and it is instructive to reflect on the impact the easy availability of different types of paint has had on the hobby.

Needless to say, all this commercial activity helped the BMSS to thrive. An interesting survey was carried out over a long period by Messrs Huber and Grant called "What we Collect". Some extracts from their findings give a good picture of the state of the hobby in the 1950s:

“the collectors of the “solid” figure - ie the figure “in the round” - vastly outnumber the “flats only” collectors. Against this, however, there is a fair number who collect both “flats” and “solids” ... The second point is that, in the technical aspect, converters are more numerous than the moulder/casters, although a surprising number do both. The pure moulder/caster is a pretty rare bird ... a goodly number of members mentioned that they played or were interested in the War Game.

Probably the most interesting feature was the determination of the different periods favoured by collectors, and there was no doubt that the period known loosely as “pre-1914 Full Dress” was the most popular. In other words the historical horizons of the great majority are bounded by the years 1914 and, say, about 1880. The “mass display” is particularly strong in this period ... While a respectable number of collectors were interested in the Napoleonic period only a mere handful, less than a dozen, were a hundred per cent Napoleonic, all the others having at least one other period in which they dabbled ... Like the Napoleonists are the “Ancients”, most of them having one or more other interests. A number of them, too, are “flat” enthusiasts. Nearly a score of collectors ... claim that their interest lies in “All periods” ... The medieval period is very neglected ... the Crimean likewise. Half a dozen or so concentrate on a single regiment or unit ... The American Civil War is fast becoming popular ... and of course there is the refreshing individualist who models in cork, or makes plywood figures or some such idiosyncrasy. Jolly good, they give life to the hobby.”

So in 1956 the BMSS proudly proclaimed that it “came of age” - it was 21 years old. In a special issue of the Bulletin Allan Clayton traced the history of the Society from its origins to its present membership of 386. “The Society has come a long way since 1935,” he wrote, “and is now recognised as a learned Society and has lent much valuable assistance to Regimental Museums in the supply and loan of models. In Coronation Year the Royal United Services Institution offered us a permanent exhibition which we were delighted to accept ... Twenty-one years ago saw the beginning of our ambitions, and today we are a healthy and progressive Society, and it is with much pride that this commemorative issue of the Bulletin is circulated for the pleasure of all our members.”

A break with the Society’s origins occurred in January 1958, when the London meeting left the Mason’s Arms and was held for the first time in the “Tudor Room”

of Caxton Hall. The move was not occasioned by any lack of satisfaction with the traditional meeting place, but was simply that with ever more members coming to the meetings it was too small and a larger venue was required to accommodate everyone in comfort. The difficulties with a growing attendance had resulted in the practice of holding a formal “business meeting” at the monthly meetings ending in 1955, business now being conducted by the Committee meeting regularly. This improved the enjoyment of the monthly meetings for members, but the lack of space in the Mason’s Arms eventually became a serious problem. In Caxton Hall was seating for 60 people with ample clear floor space to walk around and see the models displayed on tables around the walls. At the first meeting it was noted with pleasure that “there were more models on view than of late, and it is hoped that this new spaciousness will continue to encourage model display.”

In 1958 there was published something of a “requiem” for the old Mason’s Arms meetings in the unlikely form of a mystery novel. The book’s author, Douglas G Browne, was a member of the BMSS and used the world of model soldiers as background for his novel “Death in Seven Volumes”. At one point a character asks the hero, Mr Tuke, about model soldiers: “Isn’t there a society or something?” “There is”, replies the hero, “It meets on the third Friday of the month. In other words, there’s a meeting tomorrow. I shall be going. Would you care to come? I’ll introduce to the elite.” This led to a scene of a Society meeting (in the book at the fictitious “Partridge and Talbot”) which was agreed by BMSS members at the time to be a very accurate description of the gatherings at the Mason’s Arms:

“Members of the Model Soldiers Society were circulating round tables used earlier for lunch and now arranged in the form of a ‘T’. On the long arm of this, brightly coloured little figures were being set out. A glass-fronted cabinet was full of more miniature soldiery. One or two women were present. Though the windows were open to [the street] and the bright still evening, the smoke-laden air was already very close.

... Mrs Tuke and the inspector examined the figures on the tables, an array in which variety added interest to virtuosity. General Rapp, on horseback, in a superb uniform, man and horse four inches high, raised his telescope beside the pipe-major and pipers of the Black Watch, blue streamers flying from their pipes. A Greek Hoplite, behind his round shield, was casting his spear. The Imperial Eagle glittered on the staff

borne by a standard-bearer of the 3e Regiment Suisse of 1809. The Captal de Buch, in full armour, his tiny surcoat a blaze of heraldry, sat his barded horse by two other mounted figures scarcely less gorgeous - an officer of the Prince Regent's 10th Hussars and a sowar of Bengal Light Cavalry. Lancers trotted, drummers marched, their drumsticks poised, gunners loaded a fourteenth-century bombard, and a battle was developing between Egyptian and Hittite warriors, flat and slightly moulded and no larger than a halfpenny.

"They are for dioramas," Mrs Tuke explained. "This is a good display, I think."

Later that same year there was a wholesale revision of the Society rules, those which had been in place earlier now being found inadequate for a much larger organisation. The object of the Society was declared to be

"to foster and promote the hobby of the collection of model soldiers of all kinds and all periods together with ancillary figures and equipment in the military model scene."

In general the new rules did not bring any major change to the way the Society was run or its activities, but they set out in more formal detail much of the practices that had grown up and become accepted over the preceding years.

A further change to the Society's management was proposed in 1959, that the President should only serve for one year, the post being filled in rotation from members who had served on the Committee. The outgoing President would serve a further one year on the Committee. The reasons for this move were explained by the Chairman of the Committee to the December meeting. The move would help "to improve the outlook of the Society, to properly maintain its prestige among kindred societies and allow the policy and business to be followed through year by year without the risk of annual disruption ... It will ensure that the Society has the benefit of the continuity of service by those members who undertake to serve on the Committee ... It will also allow at least one new member to be elected on the Committee each year thus bringing fresh ideas into the working of the Society for the benefit of all members." The proposal was agreed, and came into effect from 1960. In a further development that year a Recruitment Sub-Committee was formed "to consider ways and means of increasing membership."

With the end of the fifties came continuing signs of the seemingly inexorable growth of the hobby. Norman Newton Ltd opened their shop in Shepherd's Market, Mayfair, described in the Bulletin as "a collector's treasure house, as it caters for every facet of the hobby and for all collectors interested in matters military." Hinton Hunt Figures, designed by Marcus Hinton, joined the list of firms producing what the publicity described as "military and historical models for the connoisseur". The more traditional firms continued to bring out new releases, such as the appearance in the middle of 1959 of the "Swoppet" knights in Britains "Herald" range, figures which were to become classics of their kind. The following year Airfix began their series of 20mm plastic figures with the first two sets of a Guards Band and Guards Colour Party, "all at the astonishingly low price of two shillings a packet, Surely these are the cheapest yet," enthused the Bulletin reviewer. Airfix were to create more opportunities for the military modeller with the release of their first armoured fighting vehicle models in 1961, the first kits being the German Panther Tank and the Allied Sherman. "Rather small pieces and inclined to be rather fiddling in assembly, but when finished a well designed and moulded little model", said Robert Tichband of the Sherman, "Airfix seem to be getting better all the time."

New materials also continued to impact on the hobby. In 1961 there was news of a new casting rubber being manufactured in the United States, known as RTV, for Room Temperature Vulcanising. "It is not a true rubber but a silicone plastic", explained Colin Hurd in the Bulletin for March/April 1961. The material came as a thick liquid to which was added a hardener, the mixture being poured over the master and left for a few hours to set. "It reproduces the details of the models exactly and while the mould must be parted in a manner similar to that used with a normal two-piece plaster mould there is no need to worry about undercuts etc." The drawbacks were a comparatively short shelf life (approximately three months) and the high price, but Mr Hurd thought these outweighed by its advantages: "Believe me, though, when you cast a musket complete with open trigger guard and detailed lock mechanism you feel that this stuff is worth what it costs." So, clearly, did many other modellers, for over the years RTV rubber became a standard material for home casting.

The Society's Caxton Hall meetings continued to attract growing numbers, and some members who were also traders found the meetings a lucrative source of business. After considerable debate in the Committee, to which the trade members concerned

were invited, it was agreed that traders at the Society meetings would make a donation of ten shillings each per meeting in return for the BMSS making available a table for their use. Thus began another feature of Society meetings which has continued to be popular with both members and trade ever since.

The plastic figure's influence on the model soldier hobby continued to accelerate as the Sixties progressed. In 1962 the now well-established Britains "Eyes Right" figures were joined by the first of their American Civil War range, models of Union Cavalry. "The ones I have seen are quite neat, and for plastic figures rather good looking", said Robert Tichband in his review. In the same year the Herald range began their "Soldiers in Action" series, the first releases being modern British infantry, a mortar team and a stretcher party with casualty. "Now these were no ordinary models, they really looked as though they were in action," said Mr Tichband. "Of course, being plastic swoppets there is a certain amount of bulkiness about the figures but the overall effect is good."

Two years later a firm arrived on the model soldier scene whose impact was probably greater than any since the start of Britains. This was the French firm of Historex, whose range of 54mm figures supplied as kits made out of hard plastic would transform the view of plastic as a modelling medium and usher in the period when conversion and detailing of plastic figures would take military modelling to new heights of achievement. However, this could not be foreseen in 1964 when Mr Tichband reviewed the company's first releases. "Historex figures come as plastic kits, made in polystyrene plastic and made up of numerous small and delicate parts necessitating careful assembly," he explained. "The first cavalry kits made up a series of Hussars which were first rate ... The foot figure kits are of the same high quality as the mounted figures but please let me warn you, they are very delicately cast indeed and consist of very minute parts. Any over use of polystyrene cement or medium will result in the dissolution of the part being used and will spoil the figure."

With plastics now being common the BMSS members had to find new ways of converting them. "It would appear that the converter of commercial models who in the past has wielded a soldering iron and needle file to great purpose, will now have to consider new techniques if he is to keep abreast of the times," wrote J W Davis in the Bulletin for June 1964. He went on to suggest that plastic figures could be re-animated using a hair dryer:

"Turn to warm position and hold the part, for example the horse's neck in the jet and apply gentle pressure until the desired curve is achieved. Then, still maintaining the pressure, get the wife to switch to cold jet and this will set the plastic in the desired position. I found that the soldering iron could be used to weld various sections into place and indeed I amputated one leg on the horse previously mentioned and repositioned it by applying the iron to the joint and feeding molten plastic in as a filler."

An opportunity the BMSS could not afford to miss was the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo in 1965, and the Society seized it with both hands. It was decided to mark the event with a two day convention on the 18th and 19th June, for which the Rembrandt Hotel in South Kensington was booked. To organise the convention a sub-committee was set up, chaired by Robert Tichband and consisting of such luminaries as W Y Carman, B Fosten, H Faulkner, L Richards and R Griggs. The programme consisted of talks and lectures on the campaign, weapons, uniforms and medical services; an exhibition of relics of the battle, including the Shapiro head-dress collection, and models; manufacturers' stands; a special competition for Waterloo models; a Waterloo wargame; and a splendid banquet on the Saturday evening with music provided by a Guards Band. Here was the BMSS fulfilling a number of objects in one event: bringing the Society to public notice, contributing to the furtherance of military research and history, and, of course, putting on an event that members would find interesting and enjoyable. The Waterloo Convention met all expectations and was another great success for the BMSS.

Still more new manufacturers started production. In 1965 "Willie" figures, by BMSS member Edward Suren, issued their first models. These 30mm figures were again destined to become classics of their genre. Robert Tichband, in the Bulletin, was certainly impressed. "The method of making the master figures is painstaking and unusual, resulting in a final product that is really worthwhile," he wrote. "In the main the figures have been designed in positions and poses that fit in with the character of the times they are representing ... In the case of the eighteenth century soldiers the cock and tilt of the tricorne hat is authentic, and in the seventeenth century figures the exaggerated standing position and stance is faithfully reproduced. Horses are designed to fit in with this historical accuracy and have that delicate, prancing appearance that is shown in the paintings of the period."

The following year Hinchliffe Models, by the brothers Frank and Bob Hinchliffe, BMSS members from the Midlands, released their first kits of artillery pieces. "They are superb. All the individual parts are beautifully made and perfectly fitted together - I can't fault them" said Laurence Archer reviewing the models. The next year, 1968, a BMSS member in Southampton, Neville Dickinson, started the firm of Miniature Figurines with four metal 54mm figures, three French Napoleonic soldiers and a German Landsknecht. Mr Archer's view of these was that "the animation is lively and the detail quite well done. In fact, for first figures, they are very good." Miniature Figurines also began making small scale metal wargame figures, which quickly became the major interest of this firm and in which field they became one of the most important manufacturers.

Meanwhile, the influence of Historex was greatly helped when Lynn Sangster, already well known as the BMSS South Eastern Area Representative, became the English agent for these figures, setting up the firm of Historex Agents in Dover. With the superb service for which this firm is still renowned, it was now simple for British modellers to acquire these "state of the art" kits and their use grew apace. It is no coincidence that articles now started to appear in the Bulletin on making and converting Historex figures as their potential for complex animation, conversion and detailing was seized upon by Society members. This was greatly assisted by the start of the Historex Agents "spare part" service in 1968, "especially useful to members of the Society who wish to adapt existing figures or create dioramas" said their advert in the Bulletin, sentiments echoed by many modellers over the years.

There were less welcome developments with Britains figures. A shocked member, D Roake, wrote to the Bulletin in December 1966 recounting his experience:

"I recently paid a visit to my local Britains dealer for war of Independence models. Pausing to speak to his young lady assistant, who was arranging a new consignment of Britains Combat Infantry, I remarked on the change in texture of the plastic which had been used in the moulding. Turning an officer over in my hands, I saw on the base (to my immense surprise) "Made in Hong Kong for Britains Ltd".

I feel certain that as far as Britains are concerned this move cannot be a pure case of "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em", as my dealer has already received complaints of the sudden drop in quality from some of his customers.

There must have been some small measure of consternation in the board room when the decision was made as I can well imagine the ghost of William Britain the Founder screaming for mercy."

The next year, 1967, Britains stopped making lead figures altogether as they were no longer commercially viable. This event, probably more than any other, symbolises the end of the old era of model soldiers and the triumph of plastic as the medium for mass produced toy soldiers. It is probably also true to say that no other event caused so much sadness amongst the long standing collectors who loved the look and feel of the traditional lead figure. It says much for this type of figure that not only are the lead figures of Britains and their contemporaries now more prized than ever, but also that the modern era has seen the remarkable growth of a number of firms making new lead "toy" soldiers for collectors in exactly this traditional style.

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Wargaming had been an activity enjoyed by members of the BMSS since its founding, with rules being published in the Bulletin and various competitions organised over the years. As with all other aspects of military modelling, wargaming grew dramatically in the 1960s, with ever more adherents and greater availability of cheap figure which could be used, such as the Airfix plastics. Among the leading figures in wargaming were many who were long standing BMSS members, such as Peter Young, Charles Grant, and Donald Featherstone, and the books published by these gentlemen on wargaming and model soldiers had been a major influence in drawing people into the hobby.

A Wargamers' Convention was organised in Southampton by Donald Featherstone in April 1961. Attended by 20 wargamers, among them Peter Young and Charles Grant, this was a two day event, the first day being given over to discussions on such matters as rules, use of maps, wargames terrain and figures, and the second day was taken up by a knock-out wargames tournament. "Everyone seemed to have a great time and I don't suppose that there has ever been so much talk of wargames by so many people at the same time!" reported Mr Featherstone in the Bulletin. Such was the success that it was proposed to make the convention an annual event.

Further meetings of wargamers followed, the leading role in the organisation of these usually being taken by Don Featherstone, who also produced his own independent magazine, the "Wargamers Newsletter".

To cater for wargamers in the BMSS, in June 1965 the Society established its Wargame Section. This held monthly meetings in London, interestingly at the Masons Arms in Maddox Street, a venue familiar to BMSS members in the past. At the same time, the Committee were concerned to find ways to encourage wargamers to attend the regular BMSS meetings, suggestions discussed including extending the time of the Caxton Hall meetings and the possibility of opening a bar to refresh members during the evening.

Unfortunately these measures failed in their intention, and the Wargames Section became increasingly autonomous. Concerned at this trend, in 1966 the Committee appointed John Tunstill as “War Game Liaison Officer” to try and ensure that wargamers interests continued to be fully represented in the Society. With the growth of wargaming other, local, wargames clubs began to appear around the country, and wargames meetings were held with competitions in some of which the BMSS Wargames Section were successful in winning trophies.

It was after one such event, won by the BMSS in 1967, that problems began to appear. In an attempt to standardise wargames rules and practice the BMSS Wargames Section proposed to their fellow gamers that a common set of rules such be established and accepted by all. Unfortunately, this was interpreted by some as an attempt at a BMSS “takeover”, and even more regrettably was reported as such by Don Featherstone in a critical editorial in his “Wargamers Newsletter” for November 1967. This caused much consternation in the Society, and the Committee promptly asked for a correction to be published, but by now it was too late to repair the rift which was opening up between the BMSS and the wargamers. In December the Committee felt that the situation could not continue and a proposal to disband the Wargames section was carried by a narrow vote of five for, three against and one abstention. The section did not disappear altogether, becoming the London Wargame Section as a separate group with its own officers and organisation. In announcing this decision to the membership in the Bulletin the Committee stated that they “wish the wargamers every success in their autonomy, and look forward to a continuing bond of friendship and goodwill.”

This was the first time that a group had split away from the BMSS, although such problems would recur in the future. Although the BMSS was much criticised by the wargamers at the time for this split, it is difficult to see what more the Society could have done. The BMSS had done nothing to discourage wargaming, on the contrary it had been an important factor in the

growth of this aspect of the hobby. When wargaming began to be seen as a separate strand of the hobby it set up a special section for these enthusiasts, and created an officer specifically to look after their interests. Yet still the gamers wished to go their own way, and so they left the BMSS. Such a division is regrettable, but in retrospect it was probably inevitable.

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Sadly, the Society suffered the loss of some of its most respected members during the Sixties. John Peck, Treasurer since 1947 died suddenly on Christmas Eve 1963, Robert Tichband died in April 1966, having just completed a term as BMSS President, and E R Reynolds, another past President and valued friend of the Society, passed away in 1967. Truly the later 1960s saw the passing of many links with the foundation of the Society.

Yet there was still some continuity as senior members maintained their support for the BMSS over many years. None was ever more dedicated than William Y Carman, a founder member, past editor, past president, regular Bulletin contributor and long serving Committee member. So it was most fitting that, on his retirement from the National Committee in 1966, Mr Carman was honoured for his service to the Society with the award of a Life Vice Presidency.

Better to recognise the outstanding contribution of some people to the work of the BMSS, H C Faulkner, seconded by R Marrion, proposed to the Committee Meeting of September 1967 the creation of Fellows of the Society. The reasons for the establishment of the Fellowship were given as follows: “During the 30 years of the Society’s existence certain members have rendered exceptional services to the Society and its membership. Without their efforts it is doubtful whether the Society would be the thriving lively Society that it is today. To recognise the achievements of these members and to provide for such recognition in the future it has been decided to establish the Fellowship of the BMSS.” The qualifications for admission to Fellowship were stringent and required that any nominee had to have demonstrated “exceptional services” over many years. This move was again a great success, rewarding those deserving of honour and providing a practical means for the BMSS membership to show their appreciation. Over the years since its founding the Fellowship of the BMSS has been regarded as the highest honour which can be bestowed and its recipients are acclaimed throughout the Society.

The Founder Fellows, elected in 1968, were the past Presidents of the Society, W Y Carman, D S V Fosten, B K Fosten, F A Green, and W R Turpin.

As the end of the decade approached, the BMSS was in a stronger position than at any time in the past. Membership had grown ever faster, and the Sixties ended with the Society celebrating reaching 1,000 members in 1969. With hindsight the loss of the wargamers to their own separate organisation, with their own magazines, local clubs, and meetings, can be seen as a portent of what was to follow in the subsequent decades. However, in 1969 this was by no means the situation as seen from the ranks of the BMSS. The hobby of model soldiers had grown beyond recognition from that of the thirties and forties, in terms of standards of modelling, painting

techniques, the use of new materials, and the number of high quality figures available from an ever increasing number of manufacturers. In all of these areas the BMSS had been instrumental. Its competitions and displays had inspired members to ever greater feats of artistry, the Bulletin had provided articles on modelling and painting and much needed uniform details, the meetings both in London and around the country had provided forums for the exchange of ideas and information, and even the commercial manufacturers were largely founded by BMSS members. The Bulletin remained the only model soldier magazine available and the Society had no rivals. The British Model Soldier Society could look back with pride on its achievements, and look forward with confidence to the future.

Chapter 4

Displays and Competitions

“What mighty contests rise from trivial things” - Alexander Pope

The staging of exhibitions to display the art of the model soldier has always been a major activity of the Society. The BSCMS was less than a year old when it organised its first exhibition, at the Queen Victoria Memorial Soldiers Home, Woolwich. Opened on 9th December 1935, this ran for six days to raise funds for the Home. Then in January 1936 Frederick Allen mounted a “one-man” exhibition of figures from his collection at Finsbury Park, entitled “The Might of Empire”. Immediately the Society benefitted from having such public displays of the hobby. In reporting the Woolwich and Finsbury Park exhibitions the Bulletin noted that “In both cases the public gave enthusiastic support and the Society in general derived great benefit from the publicity accruing in the national press. Many letters of enquiry for particulars of the Society were received as a result of these exhibitions, a number of which have already drawn new recruits to our ranks.”

Important as these public displays were, from a very early stage in the Society’s history the event which would arouse the greatest interest from members was the Society’s own Annual Exhibition. At this members could not only display their work but also compete for prizes awarded to models judged to display the best workmanship and painting. The Annual Competitions developed rapidly and laid the foundations for the many competitive events which make up the modelling calendar today.

The first competition of the British Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers coincided with the Society’s first annual dinner, held on 9th October 1936. Planning for this had begun much earlier, for in May of that year a proposal had been put to the Society meeting that there be an exhibition with independent judges and prizes. It was proposed to divide the exhibition into three sections: Dioramas, for large displays of figures up to a size of 2 feet wide, 3 feet deep and 1 foot 6 inches high; Groups of figures, up to 12 men with accessories; and Single figures, subdivided into “full size” (54mm scale) and flat figures (30mm scale).

By the time of the publication of the rules in the July issue of the Bulletin some refinements had been made. It was made a rule that only Society members could compete, and that “the models must be soldiers”, which was curiously defined as being the Army, Navy or Air Forces. The definition of the Groups class now included the statement that “size and shapes of figures optional”, and a fourth class was added, for “Single figures, purchased but unaltered by competitor, or manufactured figures.”

The Bulletin gave the criteria by which the judges would be asked to allocate points. These were:

1. Accuracy of detail.
2. Amount of detail.
3. Realism in general.
4. Finish.
5. Dramatic effect.

It is remarkable how these criteria placed the emphasis very much on the detail and realism which a modeller achieved, showing how, even in these very early days, the Society was actively engaged in advancing modelling as an art. Looking back from the 1990’s, many of today’s modellers often think of the old days of lead soldiers as being very much the heyday of the collectors who preferred the mass “toy” effect over the “realistic” model. The evidence of the competitions, along with the numerous articles in the early Bulletins on painting techniques, shows this not to have been the case. The enthusiasts wanted to produce the best models they could. If today their efforts appear not to reach the exacting modern standards it is more the result of paucity of materials and accumulated knowledge of techniques than any lack of dedication to quality modelling. Indeed, it is thanks to these pioneers and their search for ever better modelling that we can enjoy the fruits of their efforts today.

The judges for the first competitions were from outside the Society, but were all well qualified to undertake the task. Captain Altham, Secretary of the Royal United Services Institution and Mr L R Bradley, Secretary of the Imperial War Museum, were able to

bring a wealth of military knowledge to assessing the quality and accuracy of the detail, while the third member of the panel, John Hassal, was an artist and so able to pronounce on the finer points of the painting and presentation. Fittingly, the winner of the first class was Otto Gottstein, for a diorama of "The death of General Wolfe". The other classes were won by H P Bayston ("The 12 Scottish Regiments", in the Groups class), P D Clendenin ("7th Light Dragoons 1815", in the Single Figures class), and Denny Stokes ("French Staff Officers 1815", in the Unaltered Figures class).

During the dinner following the first competitions the firm of Britains presented to the Society a fine trophy in the form of a silver figure of a Guards Officer, to add to the prizes for which members could compete. The Committee considered rules for a suitable competition, and it was agreed that the trophy would be for a "scena", size not to exceed 3ft 6in wide, 2 ft deep and 4 ft high, using figures which had to be of Britains manufacture but could be "altered or added to". Thus was established what is assuredly the longest continuously running competition in model soldiers, for the same Britains Trophy is still an important part of the BMSS Annual Competitions in 1995. The rules are almost identical, except that in the present competition "single figures or groups" are allowed, but the figures must still be "of Britains Ltd original design converted and/or painted in any style". Once again the remarkable fact is not the differences between the pre-war Society and the modern day, but rather the significant similarities.

For the 1937 Annual Exhibitions there were again four classes, these being:

1. The Britains Trophy
2. Dioramas and scenas not eligible for No. 1
3. Single figures, full models
4. Single figures, flat models

Significant changes here are that the idea of a class for "unaltered figures" has been dropped, placing the emphasis squarely on judging the modelling and painting skills of the entrants, rather than just the acquisition of desirable items. The rules did still allow figures which were not the entrant's own work, but the elimination of these as a class in their right shows where the stress was being placed. With the introduction of the Britains Trophy, class 2 has been devised for non-Britains figures, the rules for this being that the award was for "Any diorama or scena of any figures or scenes of a military, naval or air force character, not included or eligible in Section 1". The two sub-sections of the 1936 single figures class have

now been divided into two full classes. Class 3 was defined as: "The figures must be full models of any make or material, of historical, naval, military or air force character. Each member can exhibit four figures." For the flat figures, "The figures must be flat models, continental type, subjects as Section 3. Each member may exhibit six figures. Where two figures are used to show front and back they will be counted as one." The last clause is interesting, showing how flat figures were displayed by some modellers and showing the Society's sensitivity in recognising the different needs of flat and round figure collectors.

A pattern is now clear, which will be followed in all future competitions. This is to divide the entries into classes designed to bring like type of models together, allowing them to be judged against others of a broadly similar nature, while at the same time endeavouring to allow as broad an entry as possible within these limitations. Over the years the number of classes was to grow many fold, but these principles, like the judging criteria discussed earlier, would remain significantly the same.

In November 1937 F J Allen proposed the introduction of a photographic competition, with a prize of one guinea (£1.05). Mr W Y Carman, writing in the Bulletin in 1985, remembered this as a most significant innovation: "This may not seem very important by today's standards but in those days it was almost impossible for enthusiastic amateurs to produce satisfactory detailed results. Box and folding cameras had no special lenses and extemporary extension lenses were pressed into use by means of spectacles bought at Woolworth's. Even the detail of flat figures was elusive and the black and white paper negatives of the popular Jeromes's were not able to reproduce the subtleties of tone and even less of detail."

The last addition to the Annual Competitions in the thirties was the Kadur Trophy, given by an anonymous donor in 1938 and bringing the number of classes up to six. The trophy, a silver salver, was for non-military figures, and was a response to the moves to broaden the Society's scope at this time.

It was not only at the Annual Exhibition that the spirit of competition was evident, for at the AGM of January 1937 it was announced that there would be a competition held at each monthly meeting. This would be the "Spoon Competition", resulting from a donation of six silver spoons, with the letters BSCMS set into the handles, from a member who wished to remain anonymous. Once again reflecting the stress which was placed on encouraging members to ever greater standards of modelling, the rules drawn up for the

Spoon Competition were that entries must be single converted figures, and that the work must be that of the exhibitor. "Conversion" was defined to include "the repainting entirely of a figure which need not otherwise be altered." There had to be at least five figures exhibited at a meeting to make the competition active, and judging was by popular vote of all members present.

The first Spoon Competition, in February 1937, was described in the minutes as being "not so well represented as was hoped for". This says something about the hopes of the organisers, for there were 12 figures entered, not at all a poor total for a Society which was still relatively small and new, and indeed was a total entry which is not uncommon in many competition classes today! Of the 12 entries there were six foot figures, five mounted figures, and one flat. The latter was a Gottstein war elephant, of the round figures there was one RAF figure, two of the Waterloo period, and all the rest were pre-World War One full dress British and Indian Army. The winner was Walter Lockwood with a model of the late King George V as King Emperor, in India.

The second Spoon Competition saw a rise to 15 entries, and the general continuing level of support for it resulted in the Spoon becoming a regular part of the BSCMS meetings. When the supply of Spoons ran out there was a donation of pen knives, so it became for a while the monthly "Knife Competition". But whatever the prize, the significant point was the participation by the members in the event, with its desired effect of stimulating further improvements in modelling techniques.

Because of the outbreak of war the 1939 Annual Exhibition was cancelled, with the result that the competition for the Britains Trophy was held at the AGM of January 1940. The rules were changed "for the present" to allow single figures to be used, although all still had, of course, to be of Britains manufacture. Given the difficult circumstances, a remarkable entry of 18 figures were exhibited, judged by Mr L D Britain himself, who was reported to "have had such great difficulty in deciding, he told us he would have liked to give the trophy to everyone." Eventually it went to Sergeant R Lockwood for a Finn Infantryman on skis.

Throughout the war years there was no question of holding the Annual Exhibition, but the spirit was kept alive by the holding of a competition for the Britains Trophy at each Annual General Meeting. There can be no doubt that this determination to keep going whatever the circumstances, which has been described in Chapter Two, not only saw the Society ready to

build on its traditions when peace returned but also means that there is no doubt that the BMSS can justifiably claim that it has the longest running continuously contested competition in the field of model soldiers.

With the approach of the end of the war, in February 1945 the Britains Trophy was joined by the Gottstein Cup in the competitions held at that year's AGM, awarded for single "full size" (ie 54mm) figures. The latter, presented by founder member Otto Gottstein, has likewise been a constant feature of the BMSS Annual Competitions ever since.

The first post-war event was the Annual Dinner and Competitions for 1946, held on 23rd February at the New Inn Restaurant, Westminster Bridge Road, London. 60 members and guests attended and the event was reportedly much enjoyed by all. The competitions totalled 36 entries in four classes, not a huge number compared with the many hundreds seen in modern competitions, but it must be remembered just how difficult conditions were in the immediate post-war period. Nevertheless, the Bulletin reported that "the standard of the exhibits, especially in the Groups and Diorama section, was very high and presented some problems to the three judges."

Gradually the competitions grew, with more members competing and additional prizes donated. The first of these was the "Lockwood Cup", presented in memory of the late Secretary, Walter Lockwood. It was kindly donated by Mrs Lockwood Senior, and was for a new novices class "in view of the interest and encouragement shown by our late Secretary to the beginner and newcomer to the hobby". Next came the "Blythswood Memorial Trophy" in 1947, for groups of flat figures, in memory of the late Lord Blythswood. In 1948 was added the "Secretary's Mug" for "figures that have been subjected to conversion". To encourage depictions of the more modern soldier, in 1949 Lieutenant Carl Reavely presented the "Reavely Moderns Cup" (first competed for at the 1950 Competitions), for groups of figures of one or more of the contending nations of World War Two, in battle order. The following year the ever growing list of competitions was joined by the "Nesbitt Hussar Trophy", for hussar regiments of any nation or period, donated by Alexander Nesbitt, one of the Society's American members.

The reports of the early BMSS Competitions show just what a training ground the Society has been for modellers who are famous names today. Included in the report in the Bulletin on the 1947 Annuals is the observation that "the most popular presentation was

that of the Blythswood Memorial Trophy. Alistair Bantock, a junior member, was the winner of this trophy, and as yet a schoolboy. At the time of the presentation he was standing amongst a group of members, a fact that accentuated his youth; when his name was called one had to be there to appreciate the rapid flow of emotions over his young face, they cannot be described." Two years later amongst the results of the 1949 Competitions was one Roy Dilley, appearing as a runner-up in the Lockwood Cup for novices! The list of winners for this event is almost a roll-call of the leading figures in modelling at the time, including such worthy names as Granville Bantock, F W Carman, C Grant, Kathleen Ball, J B R Nicholson, and Peter Young.

The reports of the Annual Competitions in the Bulletin return always to the quality of the work on display, usually with particular reference to the originality of the ideas, the amount of work put in to the conversion of the figures, and the quality of the detailing and painting. Some examples from 1951 give the flavour of the time. The Britains trophy was won by K Green of California with "The Battle of Mullhausen", depicting a brawl in a village and including various military and civilian figures. "All figures with the exception of the mule and the barmaid were converted from a box of standard Britains figures, 'The Middlesex Regiment' in review order, marching slope arms", said the report, "and the barmaid from the Nursing Sister issued with the Army Medical Service." An accompanying photograph showed that none of the figures betrayed any hint of their original as marching British figures, each one being a new pose and new uniform. The Bulletin reporter was impressed by the detail: "One very outstanding feature ... is the treatment of hands. Mr Green is one of the very few collectors who actually models fingers and thumbs, and if you possess a strong magnifying glass this fact can be seen when inspecting the figures." Nor was this the only example. The Nesbitt Hussar Trophy was won by J B R Nicholson with "Sir Stapleton Cotton", for which "much conversion had been necessary to transform the prancing Life Guards Officer (ex Britains) into this artistic and very detailed model", and there was considerable originality in "Captain Oates, a very gallant gentleman" by W R Turpin in the Secretary's Mug competition. "This entry was an exact reproduction of the well-known painting ... The model was an excellent example of simplicity and imagination. The Pilot Officer with skiing trousers, gauntlets and fur collar (Britains) had been very neatly converted and the figure given the stumbling position, as of that in the painting."

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Although interest in competitions was undoubtedly growing, the Society continued its non-competitive display activities. A major display was put on at Hamleys of Regent Street in 1947, sponsored by the Charter Club, an organisation whose purpose was "to found an international centre of art and sport, for in such activities ... people of all races find common interest and a common language." This Charter Club exhibition was entitled "Battle for Freedom" and consisted of a series of dioramas illustrating "the English speaking peoples' struggle to Freedom." There were no less than 18 large dioramas, plus many smaller items, depicting figures from ancient times to the Second World war, and commemorated such major historical events as Magna carta, the Armada, Saratoga, Waterloo, the Somme, the Battle of Britain, D-Day, and the Irrawaddy Crossing. Such was the success of the exhibition that it was sent "on tour", travelling throughout 1948 to Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow. Here were some excellent opportunities for the Society to show what could be achieved with model soldiers, and to make its presence known all round the country.

The Society's next major exhibition resulted from a request from the Royal United Services Institution for BMSS assistance with a display to coincide with the Festival of Britain in 1951. A large display case was made available in the newly refurbished RUSI building, into which the BMSS put a variety of figures representative of many types and periods. Interestingly, the Society decided that for this display all the figures should be in matt paint, instead of the traditional gloss, and that "instead of exhibiting serried ranks of figures the accent has been upon little groups representing periods." The figures were mounted on a pyramid-shaped structure, mostly the "standard" (ie Britains size) figures, but also including a number of small scale Greenwood and Stadden figures and the continental flat figures. On the upper levels of the pyramid were figures representing Kings and Queens from Alfred to the present, along one side models of military types from ancient Britain to 1790, and on the opposite side figures from 1800 to the twentieth century. The two ends were taken up with smaller scale figures and flats.

Once again this display was a great success, attracting the interest of both press and public. Equally impressed were the RUSI, whose Secretary wrote to the Society to express "warm thanks for the magnificent display of Model Soldiers lent by your Society. I can safely say, without exaggeration, that this exhibit was outstanding in its attraction to both

expert and layman, and a constant pleasure to all of us here. There is little doubt that it has enhanced the growing reputation of your Society.”

Indeed, such was the satisfaction with the display that the RUSI asked the BMSS to have a permanent exhibition in cases in the crypt, fittingly between the two rows of dioramas presented by the late Otto Gottstein. The Society had great pleasure in accepting this offer, seeing another fine opportunity to bring the hobby to the attention of the wider public. “It was gratifying to find that the serious aims of the Society had at last been recognised,” wrote the Secretary in the minutes. The exhibition was set up in May 1952, again in an elongated pyramid shape. Using the configuration of the display to best advantage the organisers grouped figures together by themes. One long side was devoted to the Middle Ages, with knights, archers, foot soldiers and standard bearers all contributing to a colourful spectacle of chivalry. The other long side was called “Soldiers of the Queen”, and depicted the uniform history of the British Army from the time of Charles II to the present day, including models of HM Queen Elizabeth II at the Trooping the Colour ceremony and the Duke of Edinburgh in Naval uniform. One short side displayed civilian figures, mostly medieval, of a variety of trades and professions, while the other short side was given over to small scale (1/72) scale figures of the Indian Mutiny.

If the RUSI exhibition was designed to bring publicity to the BMSS it succeeded admirably. In May 1953 it gave rise to what the Bulletin described as “probably the finest public mention that the Society has ever enjoyed.” The Editor told the story thus:

“On Saturday evening, May 30th, the BBC television camera visited the RUSI and Col P S M Wilkinson was interviewed by Richard Dimpleby. Having passed through the banquet hall ... and also the crypt, Richard Dimpleby caught sight of our exhibition case. We will forgive him his outburst, “What a lovely lot of TOY soldiers!” as Col Wilkinson very quietly but very firmly explained that we were a very learned and meticulous society, when it came to figure reproduction, and that they were not toys.”

The programme went on to show many of the exhibits, often in good close up. Certainly this must have brought many members of the public to appreciate something of the art of the modeller.

In passing, it should be noted that not every display attempted by the BMSS was a complete success. One of the saddest entries in the Society Minutes is for September 1953. After noting the business there is a simple one line entry which reads:

“Soldiers of the Queen display. Flop.”

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The Annual Competitions continued to thrive. An innovation for the 1952 event was a change in the method of selecting winners. No longer was there a team of judges but instead the results were decided by popular vote, each member present being given a ballot paper on which they recorded their choice of winner from each of the competition classes. The change seemed to be successful, for the subsequent report noted that “apart from the fact that this system is popular, it is also surprisingly accurate in deciding the winning figure.” The popular vote system continued for many years, and as late as 1960 the Bulletin report commented that “An interesting feature of this judging [system] is that the winning model is, without argument, the best entry in its respective competition, and this system is far better than when we used to have a small panel of ‘experts’ who invariably pleased a few, and caused many to grumble.”

The number of classes in the Annuals grew as more donors presented prizes. Mr F S Huber donated the “Waterloo Cup” for the 1953 competitions, for figures of the Napoleonic period. At the same time a welcome innovation was “Woods’ Bowl”, presented by Major H A Woods, which was reserved for junior members of the Society (defined then as anyone under 18 years of age). The rules today appear somewhat restrictive, the requirements being for an entry of 10 or more Britains figures, converted or repainted, representing full dress of the period 1900-1914, but the significant feature is the explicit encouragement to the younger modeller. Ever since, the BMSS has had competition classes for juniors, rightly seeing the need to promote modelling amongst young people as essential to the continued growth of the hobby.

That the Annuals were wholly succeeding in their object of promoting ever higher standards of modelling, as well as providing an enjoyable day for members, is evident from the enthusiastic reports published after each event. One particularly fulsome tribute came from Mr A Nesbitt following the 1954 Competitions:

“The standard of work has risen this year as usual, although when comparing this display with that of last year, it becomes very difficult to imagine how this can be possible. Unless degrees of quality can be reached, which 500 years of craftsmanship in Europe have not attained, future generations of model makers will have to be ‘ruddy marvellous’ if the best of our present Society do not rank as the ‘Old Masters’ of the subject for many years to come. I can only repeat what I said last year, that now the uniform of the model figure seems to have become of secondary importance, so assured appears its constant perfection. It is the actual man inside the clothes which is becoming a mastery of the sculptor’s art and whose character and personality are made equally manifest in his gestures as in his facial expressions, which now leaves me more astonished than knowing the shape of his buttons to which service, regiment, country and period he belongs. The knowledge of anatomy (whether distinctive or instinctive) displayed in certain figures I saw easily puts to shame the work of some sculptors of a bygone age who succeeded in living quite well off their work.

To have reached at such a standard after only 19 years must certainly speak well for the enthusiasm and sincerity of the Society. We ought to be proud indeed that we are responsible for a new phase of craftsmanship whose finished works are so well executed as those of the goldsmiths in the City, and especially at having managed it in an age when most people are either too ‘20th century’ or regrettably too ‘broke’ seriously to take notice.”

Still more trophies came to the BMSS. The Californian “Miniaturas Militares” society marked its close links with the BMSS by the presentation of the “American Cup” in 1955, for figures of any unit in service in North America. In 1958 Lt Col J B R Nicholson donated the “Nicholson Trophy”, for unaltered commercial figures, catering to the collector who preferred to purchase figures for his collection rather than make his own. Unfortunately there was an unforeseen delay before the first Nicholson competition could be held, for the 1958 Annuals had to be postponed to September because of a bus strike!

To encourage wider participation, in 1959 a table was set aside for members to simply display models, as opposed to having them judged in the Competitions. Colonel Broome, proposing this, hoped it would “help to overcome the reticence or shyness of members as regards displaying their figures.” A further and more radical experiment was to hold the Competitions

separate from the Annual Dinner. The 1959 Annuals were the first to be held on a Saturday afternoon, in the Tudor Room of Caxton Hall. Afterwards, Allan Clayton reported on the day:

“As a social affair, as some members complained, the afternoon did not have the warm and intimate atmosphere of the Annual Dinner, but it must be remembered that this was an experiment and there is always room for improvement in all things. We did not attempt to embrace catering in any form, our main object was to induce members to compete, as it was felt that the Annual Dinner was an expense that prohibited many would-be participants.

As an experiment the afternoon was a great success. 53 members participated and this was double last year’s attendance at the Annual Dinner, and last year’s total included guests. Also members had much more time to enjoy the exhibits, in fact the event lasted six and a half hours, before our models were packed away.”

The Annuals had grown somewhat haphazardly, new competitions being added according to the conditions of the prize donors. In November 1960 the Committee undertook a wide ranging review of the competition rules, making changes as necessary to clarify some of the requirements or to amend others to bring them more into line with the current state of the hobby. Such reviews would become a regular feature over the years, as the BMSS constantly tried to keep its competitions in line with the needs of the majority of the Society members. However, as new prizes were donated they still tended to reflect the prejudices of the donors. In 1961 Pilot Officer Winter and his wife donated a trophy for the Annuals, the rules for which were that “only unmounted models between 50mm and 60mm are eligible. They must be painted by the exhibitor who must be an amateur. The figure must not have been subject to any conversion, in a major form. Figures of the Napoleonic era are not eligible.”

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The RUSI Museum continued to provide the BMSS with an excellent “shop window” for the Society. For the summer of 1961 the exhibition was entitled “Men of Waterloo”, consisting entirely of figures of that campaign. Reporting on the plans the Bulletin noted that “the figures to be shown will be of the highest standard, and many of them will have been specially produced by members for the exhibition ... every effort has been made, not only by the Society but also by the RUSI, to make this one of the best displays of

model soldiers of recent years.” The organisation of the display was undertaken by Mr R Tichband, whose efforts were rewarded when the exhibition proved a great success. After only a month of its opening he reported to the Committee that the takings of the RUSI Museum were already greater than for the same period the previous year, the increase being caused by the BMSS display. By the end of the exhibition in September Mr Tichband reported that 18,752 members of the public had paid admission to see the display, and that the Museum authorities were very pleased with the increase in the value of their takings during the period. From the Society’s point of view, not only did the display bring valuable publicity but it had lead directly to the recruiting of 26 new members, a significant achievement.

It was fitting that this display should have been such a success, for it was the last BMSS exhibition at RUSI owing to the closure of the Museum in 1962. Recognising the value of having a permanent display at such a prestigious venue, the Committee attempted to find an alternative location but unfortunately had no success. Without the RUSI exhibition the BMSS lost one of its best venues for bringing the hobby and the Society to the attention of the general public.

Despite this setback the BMSS continued to take advantage of all opportunities for displays. In 1963 the Society staged what it described as its “second full scale exhibition”, this time in the Museum of the University of Manchester. Originating from an invitation by the Curator to put on a display of model soldiers, the idea grew until, in July 1963, a whole gallery was taken over by the Society and filled with figures of all types and periods under the title “The Livery of War”. Eleven large display cases were used, containing models from 45 members of the BMSS covering the whole development of model soldiers from the earliest productions to the contemporary metal and plastic commercial figures. The exhibition was a phenomenal success. The Bulletin reported that:

“The first two days of the exhibition broke the record for the number of visitors to the museum in any previous display. It says something for the publicity and the preceding spadework of the display itself that there were no hitches and everything worked out as planned.

The quality of this exhibition has to be seen to be believed, and some of the antique figures are literally priceless (figuratively speaking). The success of the exhibition and the interest that it has aroused raises the question of further such displays ... The result of the 1961 Waterloo

Exhibition was an unprecedented expansion of interest in model soldiers which gained the Society some seventy new members apart from some fifty who joined for a while. The Manchester exhibition, perhaps not having such a huge effect on our membership, is also arousing much interest.

The Committee wishes to place on record its sincere appreciation to all who have worked on the Manchester Exhibition and to all those members who have made and loaned models for display.”

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Through the Sixties the Annuals continued to grow, both in popularity and in the number of competition classes. In 1964 Mr H C Faulkner donated the Medieval Trophy, for “period 1050 to 1485 in England and Europe”. The same year the Committee unanimously decided to purchase a trophy in memory of John Peck, the Society Treasurer for the previous 16 years until his sudden death. Named simply “The John Peck Trophy” it would be presented for entries of complete bands, his special interest. The Annuals of 1967 saw the first competition for the “Willie” Figures Trophy, donated by Edward Suren for the best entry using his range of 30mm figures, and the introduction of a class specifically for “Professional Members”. A memorial to the late Robert Tichband was the “Tichband Artillery Award”, the trophy being presented to the Society in 1968 by Norman Newton Ltd.

By 1969 the Annuals had reached a total of 20 classes, still being judged by popular vote of members. Some other innovations had been introduced to control the competitions, notably the introduction of colour coding on entry cards to help members when judging entries. The colours indicated whether the exhibit was a commercially bought figure or had been converted, and whether the entrant was an amateur or professional. In an attempt to control some excesses in display a rule was introduced that the height of bases must not exceed one inch, the object being to prevent any figure gaining undue eye-catching prominence purely by reason of an oversize plinth.

The day was reported at length in the Bulletin by Robert Marrion in terms of unqualified enthusiasm. This was an event, he said, “where even the most inexperienced tyro excelled himself in this feast of craftsmanship”. Prominent amongst the competition winners was Peter Wilcox, taking the Gottstein, Groups, Annual Spoon and Medieval trophies. “It is difficult to find words to suitably describe this

member's original figures of ancients", said Mr Marrion, "but I will say for me that they are superb, and one would consider it a privilege to see his work." Other well known winners included George Hanger in the Blythswood Trophy for his model of Isandlwana ("This fine diorama of flat figures jumped right off the table at you"); Alan Caton in the Professional and Journeyman Trophy for a trooper of the Chasseurs a Cheval de la Garde ("What a character! Right eye covered by a patch, wrinkled and weather beaten skin, iron grey hair and moustache - this was a hoary old veteran of many of L'Empereur's campaigns."); and Bill Hearn in the Winters Trophy for a converted Historex figure of the Royal Flying Corps ("This was the zenith of how such a figure should be treated - subtlety of colour and delicacy of brushwork were the keynotes here.").

Such was the response to the Annual Competitions that for the 1970 event no less than three rooms in Caxton Hall had to be hired. A more unusual innovation was the presentation of a trophy by Brian Hornick, the "Bulletin" editor, to be Known simply as the Editor's Trophy. Writing in the magazine, Mr Hornick gave its theme to be "comedy in war", which could be "any single figure or groups of figures which will make us laugh, giggle or just gurgle." An Australian member, Mr W Brennan, donated the "Anzac Trophy", for the best British Empire figure of the period 1845 to 1939.

As the Society moved into the 1970's the number of competition classes continued to grow. The 1971 Annuals saw the first award of the Historex Trophy, donated by Lynn Sangster for the best Historex figure in the competitions, and won by A Haseling for his converted figure of a Scots Grey in campaign dress, 1815. Following the death of Allan Clayton later that year his widow generously presented the "Allan Clayton Memorial Trophy", to be awarded for the best figure or group of figures by any member under 18 years of age, to be first competed for at the 1972 Annuals.

The 1972 Competitions were remarkable for having no less than nine new competitions. In addition to the Allan Clayton Trophy, there was the F J Allen Trophy, also donated by his widow as a memorial, for colours, standards or guidons; the Milani Campaign Cup, for groups on campaign in the 18th or 19th centuries (horses had to be included); the Harris Equestrian Trophy, donated by Major Henry Harris, for a single figure with horse (mounted or dismounted) depicting any regiment or corps of the British Army between 1642 and 1939; the Almark Trophy, for 54mm plastic Almark figures, either standard or converted; the

Greenwood and Ball Trophy, for figures made from the products of Greenwood and Ball Ltd, including Lasset, Olive, Garrison and Sanderson figures; the Irish Cup, donated by the Irish Model Soldier Society for the best model of an Irish soldier; the Ancients Trophy, for single figures depicting the period prior to 1050 AD; and, finally but by no means least, the Wendy Dilley Award, donated by the President's good lady, for single figures of female warriors or soldiers. The total of prizes to be awarded now reached thirty.

Another innovation in 1972 was the awarding of Certificates of Merit to first, second and third placed models in the competitions. Now the successful entrants had a permanent memento of the occasion after the actual cups had been returned the following year. Today certificates are such a standard part of all competitions, at national and local level, that it may surprise some members what a relatively recent addition these were.

One of the curious and unexplainable phenomena of the Annual Competitions over the years is the way the numbers of entries fluctuates. There seems to be no pattern to this and it is something over which the organisers have frequently agonised. Unfortunately there has been a tendency among some members to panic when number of entries falls, believing this signals a decline in the Society, although a longer term view shows that the number of models does simply rise and fall from time to time. To show this, after the unprecedented success of the 1969 event the 1970 Competitions had rather less entries. The same Bulletin reviewer who had so enthused in 1969 wrote of the 1970 Annuals: "What a disappointment! The amount of figures exhibited were down on the past two years by at least a third ... All were stunned to see the yawning gaps on the tables." Was this a downward trend? Certainly not, for in 1971 the same writer opined "Every one of the older members of the BMSS that attended this year's Annual Competitions ... must surely agree that this must have been the most successful meeting ever held by the Society." The next year there were fears that the increase in number of competition classes would mean the entries would be spread rather thin, but the Bulletin reported that "There was a very full turnout ... The membership rose to the occasion and all but two of the competitions were hotly contested."

Only six days after the 1972 Annuals, the Competitions Sub-Committee met to discuss various problems which had arisen as a result of the event. The opportunity was taken to have a complete overhaul of the competition rules, as the rapid growth of the Annuals had made them a very different type

of event from that held in the early days of the Society. The numbers of classes, entries and competitors also meant that a number of queries had arisen during the 1972 event, so a careful examination of the competitions was needed to prevent any misunderstandings in the future.

The results of the Sub-Committee's deliberations were approved by the full National Committee in August. The definitions of the competition classes were redrafted so that many of the long and complex requirements were simplified, making them both clearer and broader, to attract a wider entry. Regulations concerning bases were amended to reflect the fact that scenic groundwork was now the norm rather than the exception. And, probably most importantly, judging was no longer to be by popular vote. While this had worked well for many years when the Annuals were a relatively small show, it had now become impractical as well as potentially controversial. Hence it was decided that judging would now be done by judging panels, consisting of senior members of recognised experience of model soldiers.

The other change for the 1973 Annuals was a change of venue. Caxton Hall had proved far too small for the burgeoning competitions, with references being made in the Bulletin to "black hole conditions". The new venue was Chelsea Town Hall in the Kings Road, which, according to Robert Marrion in the Bulletin, "proved a great success. The surroundings comprised a large ballroom which housed all the competitions, plus a large, airy room just off the main hall which safely accommodated all our trade members and enabled everybody to circulate freely. As if this was not luxury enough, members had the benefit of a large and airy balcony overlooking the competitions and also the use of a refreshment room including a licensed bar which was open for the duration of the meeting." The use of judging panels had a few teething problems, but was reported as being "about 80 percent successful and, in principle, appears to be supported by the majority of members." Total entries exceeded 400 and "there was an exceedingly good turnout and everyone concerned is congratulated on their efforts."

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While the Annuals were forging ahead, a new event joined the BMSS calendar with the founding of the Interbranch Competitions.

Some branches had already held friendly competitions with neighbouring groups, such as an event held jointly by the Midlands and the Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire branches in 1969.

However, the proposal for the first truly national Inter-Branch competition was put to the National Committee in March 1972 by John Cox, South Hampshire Area Representative. The Committee had no hesitation in giving Mr Cox their full support for this initiative.

South Hampshire organised the Interbranch in cooperation with the Warwickshire Branch, who arranged the venue, the Avon Hall in Leamington Spa. The first Interbranch was held on 23rd September 1972. Surprisingly the event was not reported in the Bulletin, but it is reasonable to assume that it was a success as it was repeated in September the following year, again organised by John Cox of South Hampshire and Ron Banks of Warwickshire. There were 19 competition classes, including single figures, groups or dioramas, flats, artillery, and vehicles. A branch gained points for each class entered, and scored three points for a first place, two for a second and one for a third, a straightforward tally of the points deciding the winning branch. It is a tribute to the thought put into these arrangements that the structure has remained substantially unchanged ever since. Other aspects which have now become traditional are the date, which is always early September, and the holding of the show in the Midlands, even though the exact venue has changed frequently.

The 1973 Interbranch, held at the Royal Agricultural Showground in Stoneleigh, attracted 150 members from nine branches. The winner was Manchester with 61 points, runners-up were London with 45 points, and third were South Hampshire with 36. This spread of branches demonstrates once again how the BMSS was proving a genuinely national Society, giving members the opportunity to meet with, and see the work of, fellow modellers from all parts of Britain.

So quickly did the Interbranch become an established event that in 1974 some of the individual competitions from the Annuals were moved to the Interbranch, being held at the venue alongside the inter-branch competitions themselves. This had become essential as yet more new awards continued to be donated for the Annuals, including the Fosten Trophy for Guards Regiments, the Marrion Cup for German forces, the Philip Stearns Trophy for armoured fighting vehicles, the Clegg Award for small scale figures, and the Rene North Trophy for kettledrummers.

Both the Annuals and the Interbranch had become fixed points in the model soldier calendar, both were well supported by members and were regarded as the most prestigious competitions which could be won by a military modeller. All the major BMSS events

were not only reported in the Bulletin but were extensively covered by the commercial modelling press, notably "Military Modelling" magazine. In fact, such was the importance of the BMSS Annuals that Military Modelling regularly spread its report over two issues, with enthusiastic articles on the quality of the models on display backed up with extensive photographic coverage in both colour and monochrome.

In order to give encouragement to younger modellers, John Cox, who at that time was also serving as the Junior Members' Liaison Officer, donated a trophy for the 1975 Annual Competitions for the best model by a junior members. Similarly, at the 1976 AGM he proposed an additional class at the Interbranch for junior modellers. These have been an essential part of the BMSS competitions ever since, the Society believing that junior members should be encouraged as much as possible to develop their skills and participate fully in BMSS activities. The junior modeller of today is, after all, potentially one of the top modellers of the future.

In these years the story of the Annual Competitions seems to be that each managed to out-do the previous year. After the 1976 event Military Modelling magazine had its now usual two-part report, written by Bob Marrion. His article began:

"Members of the BMSS can be congratulated on this first class show held at the Old Chelsea Town Hall, Kings Road, London. The organisation, which had to cope with the added strain of security, was first class; the problems that beset the previous years at last appear to have been alleviated and the committee can take a well earned bow for this. The membership did the BMSS proud; the standard of workmanship on display was superb and the number of entries greater than ever. Indeed, this was another vintage year, in fact it would be no exaggeration to say that it was the best show ever."

Among the members winning prizes were many names which will be familiar to anyone interested in model soldiers in recent years, including Francois Verlinden, Sid Horton, Max Longhurst, Peter Wilcox, John Sandars, Jim Woodley, Norman Abbey, Tony Kettle, Mike Thomas, and many others. With such a line-up of talent at one event no wonder the reporters were struggling to find superlatives.

In fact, 1976 was something of an "annus mirabilis" for BMSS members in competitions. In addition to the outstanding success of the Society's own

competitions, that same year many members reached the finals of the Historex Competitions in Paris, and no less than 15 out of 18 awards in four classes went to BMSS members. Truly the BMSS was setting the standards for others to follow.

But there were still lessons to be learned and improvements made. Guidelines for judging competitions were drawn up, published in the Bulletin issue 1 of 1976 and also in Military Modelling for June the same year. The guidelines offered suggestions for judging technique, different methods of assessing figures, and details of points that judges should look for, such as originality and imagination, skill, finish, animation, balance and composition, historical accuracy, presentation, overall effect and realism. As a result of queries which had arisen during the 1976 Annuals, the Competitions Sub-Committee introduced precise definitions of some of the terms which were in common use but over which there had been some dispute among a few competitors. Hence there was now a clear definition of what was meant by "a figure", "a single figure", "a group", etc. These were subsequently extended to cover other potentially contentious terms, such as "military", "conversion", "scratchbuilt" and "diorama". This was the first time the terms had been defined within the context of model soldiers and were intended to prevent any misunderstandings by either competitors or judges. Such was the influence of the Society in the field of competitions that the August 1978 issue of Military Modelling published the full BMSS competition rules, including all the definitions and judging guidance, so that other competition organisers could use them as the basis for their own events.

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Although heavily involved in organising its own shows, the BMSS by no means neglected other events outside the Society, seizing any opportunity to put on a display of its activities and members' work.

Significant among these in the 1970's was the Model Engineer Exhibition. The BMSS involvement began in 1970, when the Society was invited by the organisers, Model and Allied Publications, to provide judges for six new competitions for model soldiers being introduced at the MEE in January 1971. It was readily agreed that the BMSS would accept this invitation, and also would publicise the new competitions to BMSS members. A display of figures was arranged by Roy Dilley courtesy of the International Plastic Modellers Society, who had a stand at the exhibition. In late 1971 the BMSS was approached by Model and Allied Publications with

the offer of a Society stand at the Exhibition scheduled for January 1972. As the MEE ran for nine days there was a potential problem in continuously manning the stand for such a period, but sufficient volunteers were found that the display was able to be staged. The MEE became another fixed point in the BMSS calendar.

Reporting the 1973 Model Engineer Exhibition in the Bulletin, Don Fosten wrote:

“Perhaps the most important point to make about this year’s exhibition is that it should be re-titled! Without any doubt the model soldier and military vehicle aspect has grown to such proportions that without them the exhibition would consist of only a few trade stands and a small group of ship and locomotive models which have been trundled out in previous years. The Society together with our neighbours and good friends the International Plastic Model Society put on a very good show indeed and on this Saturday we were literally besieged with visitors. Members will be pleased to hear that we even had our first visit from the Royal Family! HRH Princess Margaret brought Viscount Linley and Lady Sarah Armstrong Jones on an informal visit to the stand. The President and HRH’s detective stood “on guard” while the Royal children looked at the exhibits. The writer was engaged in noting the exhibits for this article at the time and being totally immersed in this task did not notice the Royal presence. In bustling round the stand I had to ask the elegant visitor to move so that I could take full note of the names of the groups, etc, and on one occasion I regret I did rather try to barge her out of the way. At the time I just couldn’t understand why the President and the other chap on the stand (the detective) were mouthing soundless words at me and fixing me with their wide open and beady eyes! Well, at least she had a really informal visit.”

The MEE at this time was a most fertile recruiting ground for the Society, the Secretary reporting in 1974 that each year it had led to the enrolment of around 60 new members. The record was reached in 1977, when over 100 subscriptions for membership were taken during the show. Organising the display took a great deal of effort, and many members had to give up their time to man it, but the results made the work worthwhile.

Another prestige event at which the BMSS could display its wares was the Aldershot Army Show, the Society first appearing there in 1974. Regrettably this

was only to last for a few years, the Army Show being one of the casualties of cutbacks in all aspects of defence spending.

A special display was mounted to mark the Queen’s Silver Jubilee in 1977. Organised by Brian Hornick, this was a six week exhibition at the Church Farm House Museum in Hendon. Naturally, the accent of the display was on the Coronation, pageantry and ceremonial. Spread throughout three rooms of the museum, the exhibits included a Coronation procession, massed bands, colour parties, and many examples of British troops in full dress. Most of the “mass” displays utilised toy figures both old and new, but the wider aspects of the hobby were represented by other cases containing colourful and high quality model figures, plus some flats and half-round models. The display proved highly popular with the general public and was much appreciated by the museum curator and staff.

The Royal connection was renewed when the Queen, Prince Philip and Princess Margaret visited the BMSS stand at the 1980 Ideal Home Exhibition. Through protracted negotiations with the organisers, Roy Dilley had secured a stand for the Society in the “Salute to British Skills” pavilion. Many branches participated in the model display and many members gave up their time both to man the stand and provide continuous modelling demonstrations throughout the show. Once again being at such a prestigious show the Society was able to bring its activities to the attention of many thousand members of the public, including the VIPs mentioned earlier. Once again writing in the Bulletin, Don Fosten noted that the Royal visitors “all expressed appreciation of the high standard of artistry regarding the models on display. In fact Her Majesty summed it up in one word: ‘Fascinating’.”

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Despite the heights which had already been reached, the Annual Competitions continued to grow both in numbers attending and in number of competitions. Four more classes were added to the 1978 Annuals, the Realmodel, Airfix and Dragoon Trophies and the John Edgecumbe Memorial Shield. And it became routine for each year’s competition report to note a new record for attendance. Thus an inevitable pattern repeated itself - the venue, which had been heralded as such a great improvement when the competitions moved there, was now causing problems by being simply too small. A typical view was expressed in a letter to the Bulletin in 1980:

“Chelsea Town Hall is no longer big enough for the event. Well before 3 o’clock it was very difficult to study or even see the models because of the number of bodies. More important the models themselves were in physical danger because of the volume of bodies pressing against the tables ... There is limited space to sit and rest weary feet, and inevitably the bar area is very crowded, very stuffy, and very grotty.”

In the same issue of the Bulletin in which these views were expressed was the announcement that a new venue had in fact been found, and the 1981 Annual Competitions moved to the Civic Suite of Wandsworth Town Hall. Listing the benefits of the new venue, the Bulletin noted that it offered much more space than had been available in the past, it had a large car park, it was within easy reach of British Rail and bus routes passed the door, and there were local facilities for eating and shopping nearby. After the event the Bulletin reviewer remarked that “in spite of everybody feeling their way around a new setting, nobody can say that this new venue was not a great success.” Also new to the 1981 Annuals was another competition, the John Sandars Memorial Shield, presented in honour of the great Society stalwart who had died at the end of 1979. This was unusual in requiring entrants to build a scene interpreting in their model a given theme word.

“This year’s Annuals, held at Wandsworth Town Hall, London, were a triumph for the Society” proclaimed the Bulletin in 1983, showing that there was no diminution in the competitions in the early part of that decade. “Although the number of entries was down on last year, the quality was supreme. One American member, from ‘The National Capitol Military Collectors’, said that he had been to every model soldier show in the States, but had never seen such a massed display of work of such high standards.”

Innovations for the 1984 Annuals included the establishment of the “President’s Medal”. There had never been a “Best of Show” award at the Annuals, because of the extreme difficulty of getting agreement of a large number of judges on the superiority of one model from such a wide range of subjects and categories. This remained the case, but the President’s Medal was now to be an award to the entry most liked by the President, or in his absence the senior Vice President. Also, in recognition of the excellence of the many models which did not achieve places, judges were now able to award ribbons of commendation for high quality entries. In this way merit would be properly recognised and novices would receive due

encouragement for their efforts. Two additional trophies were added, both donated by overseas societies in recognition of the friendship between these groups and the BMSS. The Military Miniatures Society of Illinois (MMSI) Trophy was for models entered by a first-place winner of any previous National competition, and the Trophee de l’Amis d’Historex et Figurines Historiques (AHFH), for artillery equipment with associated group of personnel.

The occasion of the Golden Jubilee Annuals caused the Chief Judge, Michael Creese, to reflect in the Bulletin on how the competitions had progressed over the years:

“If, by some miracle, our Founder Members could have seen this display they would surely have been astounded. The models on show ranged from Neolithic Man, with strong emphasis on the ancients and medievals, through to a robot, and included guns, tanks, planes, submarines and aircraft. The sheer artistry and the imagination of the vast majority of the entries would have been unthinkable only ten years ago, let alone fifty. There were members present from America, Belgium, Canada, France and Germany as well as the length and breadth of the British Isles. Perhaps the time has come to drop the ‘British’ from our title and to call ourselves, with just a touch of arrogance, **The Model Soldier Society.**”

The Interbranch at this time suffered from not having a regular venue and the same “up and down” attendance numbers which had from time to time afflicted the Annuals. A low point came in 1984 when only around 100 members from seven branches attended and the average entry per competition class was only six. “In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that the organisers felt somewhat disheartened and discouraged”, wrote Michael Creese in his report in the Bulletin. However, the organisers persevered and by the 1986 event had found a new venue at the Lutterworth Club, Lutterworth, Leicestershire. This provided a large, bright room for the competitions, had good refreshment facilities, and was easily reached, being just off the M1. Numbers were back on the increase, with 12 branches competing, and all agreed that this had been one of the best Interbranch events for a number of years. Such was the general level of satisfaction that the same venue was rebooked for the next year and has, in fact, become the settled home of the Interbranch for all the years since. This has led to the resurgence of the Interbranch, with numbers of entries in recent years equalling, or even exceeding, numbers at the Annuals.

Many members have appreciated the way the Interbranch has developed its own character, being a more relaxed day than the Annuals and often having a better range of models on view, since some of the more modest members will still bring an entry for the Interbranch competitions to get a point for their group. In fact, many of these more “modest” entries have often been as good as anything seen in competitions elsewhere. It is at this event that one can really get a feel for the depth of talent there is in the Society, distributed through its various areas and branches.

Unfortunately the Annual Competitions were not without their own problems. In 1987 numbers of models entered fell sharply over the previous year, one class had no entries at all, two had only one, and another only two. There were a number of non-military entries, which were contrary to BMSS rules, and there was considerable controversy in the Bulletin about some of the results. Clearly some action had to be taken, and the Competitions Sub-Committee set about a complete overhaul of the BMSS Competition Rules, the first major revision undertaken since 1978. Ideas were taken from the 1987 Area Representatives Conference and members’ views expressed at the 1988 Annual General Meeting or sent in by letter. To reflect the changing times, and try to prevent having classes in which members no longer wished to compete, the definitions for most of the Trophies were revised and broadened, allowing the actual number of classes to be reduced by one third and leaving those which remained more attractive to a wider entry. Roy Dille, as Chairman of the Competitions Sub-Committee, introduced the new rules in the Bulletin Extra number 7 of 1988:

“The object has been to rationalise, by means of amalgamation, re-definition, etc, competitions which have proliferated over the years, as well as to extend coverage and reduce duplication of modelling subjects. Additionally, it has been to facilitate judging and to streamline the awards presentation ceremony.

It is, of course, realised that some members may regret the non-inclusion of a specific competition, but the Committee trust that in such cases one or other of the competitions on the revised list will allow for the entry of a particular item.

In certain instances several competitions covering similar or related subjects have been combined under one title, eg the Harris Equestrian Trophy now includes previous Dragoon and Nesbitt Hussar elements ... Where possible, existing competition titles have been retained but trophies

that have been withdrawn, owing to amalgamation or deletion of competitions for which they were formerly awarded, are to be kept in store against possible future requirements, display, or other employment in the Society’s activities.”

Did this have the desired effect on the Annuals? The answer seems to have been yes and no, as the Chief Judge said in his report: “The number of entries was down this year, but of course so were the number of competitions. Several, such as the Reavely, the Micro-Scale and the Faulkner Medieval, were much better supported than in recent years.” It was generally felt that no more changes should be made for a few years, to allow the new rules to settle in and let members become used to the revised classes. The trend for falling numbers of entries was not continued, the numbers stabilising around the same level for a number of years. And, of course, the skill and artistry of the winning models has every year astounded both judges and members alike, showing that, whatever the quantity, there is no lessening of the quality of the competition.

* * * * *

Away from competitions, in the 1980’s the BMSS undertook a series of displays which showed the Society maintaining its position of eminence in the field of military modelling.

The initial catalyst was the Society’s Golden Jubilee in 1985. As part of the celebrations to mark the event it was decided to hold a non-competitive display of model soldiers, calling on the branches, members and National Collection to bring along models for a one day public celebration of 50 years of the BMSS. Not knowing what the likely attendance would be, the Society could not risk over-committing itself to expenditure which it may not be able to meet, and hence chose to hold the show in its London meeting venue of the Napier Hall, Vincent Square, London. The organisation was in the hands of the Support Services team, led by Mick Beale on whose shoulders the burden of the work fell.

In the event the Jubilee Show was an unparalleled success. Mick was ably supported by his team and volunteers from the membership. Branches brought displays and the trade gave superb support. And, most importantly, people turned up in great numbers to see the show. The hall was crowded all day, and more than one trader reported such brisk business that they sold all the stock they had brought. If there had been any fears that the BMSS was becoming tired after 50 years this show dispelled them. On the contrary, it

demonstrated just how vigorous the Society and its membership were and how the fifty years gave the BMSS a solid basis of achievement on which it could build.

Such was the success of the Jubilee Show that many asked if it could be repeated in some form. Owing to the volume of work involved in organising such a show that it was two years before another could be arranged. Initially referred to in Committee as “Son of Jubilee”, the official name selected was the “British Model Soldier Spectacular”, which not only accurately described the nature of the event but retained the initials “BMSS”. Now more confident of the likely level of support a larger and more central venue was chosen, the Victory Services Club at Marble Arch. The same team who had organised the Jubilee Show took on the running of the “Spectacular”, which once again exceeded all expectations. Michael Creese was again reporting for the Bulletin, and he began:

“Some time after the Second World War, my father took me to see an exhibition of model soldiers at Hamleys. It was my first introduction to the hobby and my first contact with the BMSS. I wonder what the young lads (and there were plenty of them I’m pleased to say) made of the exhibition this year at the Victory Services Club. There were certainly many more people than at the display I saw forty years ago. More significantly, there was on sale to any budding collector an almost bewildering array of figures, together with books, plates, postcards, paints, indeed everything else one might require right down to the case in which to display the finished model.”

Mr Creese went on to describe in detail the many branch stands, the National Collection display, and the many contributions from individual members. He concluded:

“I wonder how many of the visitors spotted a sign hanging over the balcony ‘BMSS: For over 50 years the foremost military modelling Society’. It seemed to me that the show was the perfect answer to anyone who doubts the vigour and enterprise of the BMSS. Mick Beale and his stalwart band of helpers did a splendid job in mounting this exhibition in the centre of London and showing just what the hobby, and our Society in particular, has to offer.”

Two years later the whole was repeated in the same venue but on an even larger scale, for this time two halls in the Victory Services Club had to be hired to hold all the displays, branch and trade stands who wanted to be a part of the event.

The next “Spectacular” was in February 1994, when the BMSS accepted an invitation from the Royal Engineers Museum, Chatham, to stage its display in the museum, in fact in an enormous covered-in courtyard area. Owing to the location, the organisation of the event was undertaken by the North Kent branch and their Area Representative, Colin Bowen. Once again all parts of the Society rallied around to support the venture, and there were stands from the National Collection, Support Services and 13 branches, plus 20 trade stands and displays from related societies such as the British Flat Figure Society and wargamers.

It was another a major success for the Society, and the Curator of the Royal Engineers was delighted with the numbers who came out to see the show, so much so that he immediately wanted to arrange a repeat for a future date.

Outside its own events, the BMSS has continued to support important shows of other organisations wherever possible. Throughout the 1980’s the Society had its regular stand at the Model Engineer Exhibition, and BMSS members enjoyed considerable success in the MEE competition classes. The organisers introduced an award, the International Military Modelling Club Trophy, awarded to the society whose members gained most points in the competitions. Thanks to those members who regularly not only entered the competitions but achieved so much success, the BMSS won the award year after year, showing that it could take on all comers.

Unfortunately, as time went on the character of the MEE changed and returned much more to the “engineering” concept. As a result the type of enthusiast who went also changed, the model soldier traders left, and it became progressively less fruitful as a recruiting ground for the BMSS. Even so, the Committee continued to try and support the show, it still being a major public exhibition. However, enthusiasm diminished as it became less and less of interest for military modellers. Finally, in trying to organise the stand for 1993, the Secretary was unable to find enough volunteers willing to give up enough time to man the Society stand for the full nine days. With regret, the Society had to inform the organisers that the Society would not be at the 1993 exhibition, bringing to a sad end what had been a long and, certainly in the early days, a fruitful collaboration.

A new commercial show began in 1986, when the firms of Historex Agents and Poste Militaire jointly sponsored the “Euro-Militaire” show at the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone. With the backing of these well known names, Euro-Militaire was an immediate success and

attracted more traders than any other show. The BMSS was invited to take a stand at the first show, which it was delighted to accept. Euro-Militaire quickly became established and attracted huge numbers of enthusiasts, so provided the BMSS with another fine "shop window" for the Society and its activities. This continued for a number of years until unfortunate problems arose over the allocation of space to societies and the BMSS lost its stand. However, appropriately for the Diamond Jubilee year, these difficulties have been resolved and the BMSS will once again return to Euro-Militaire for 1995.

Since the Golden Jubilee Show the BMSS has shown that it can mount model soldier exhibitions with great skill, both in terms of the quality of the displays and the behind the scenes organisation. Ten years on, and the BMSS celebrates another Jubilee, its Diamond, with its most ambitious show yet staged, this time at the New Connaught Rooms in Holborn. While there is such continuing enthusiasm within the BMSS ranks its future looks assured.

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The runaway success of the Spectaculars, and the numbers of models on display, demonstrated that there were many members of the Society who were very pleased to show their work but wanted to do so in a non-competitive environment. Noting this, at the end of 1989 the Hon Secretary, David Pearce, proposed to make an addition to the 1990 Annuals - a display of models which were not in competition. This, it was hoped, would encourage those members who did not like competitions to still participate and bring their models along, and also let previous competition winners be displayed once more for members to enjoy. Such a display would, it was hoped, both result in more models being on show at the Annuals and provide an additional point of interest for those attending.

The other innovation for 1990 was the ending of the distinction between amateur and professional members. This had originally been introduced as it was believed professional members would have an unfair advantage in competitions by having access to greater quantities of figures, but over the years the distinction had become an anachronism, particularly as there were many who did some trading but certainly not as their main source of income and so were being unfairly penalised. Also, such were the standards being reached by the majority of modellers, that there was no longer any fear of competition between those who made models for a hobby and those who did it as a living.

The display tables at the Annuals were an immediate success. Michael Creese in the Bulletin again:

"What a delight it was to see such an excellent show. Members were obviously pleased to have the opportunity to bring their models along to show, unfettered by competition rules. Extra space had to be provided such was the enthusiasm."

Ironically, the same year saw another fall in the number of entries in the competitions themselves. This led many members to wonder if a new trend was being established, with a move away from competition to a desire simply to enjoy showing one's work to fellow enthusiasts. However, more likely was this just being another example of the fluctuations which have been a common feature of the Annuals, for in 1993 the Chief Judge, now Mike Thomas, reported:

"There were more models on the tables than the previous year and the overall standard was extremely high - there were some outstanding models to be seen. It goes to show what I have always contended, that this Society of ours has a great deal of modelling talent within its ranks, as good as anywhere in the World."

Even in 1995 there is still innovation in the Annuals, in the shape of two new competitions open, for the first time, to non-members of the Society. This follows an experiment at the 1994 Spectacular in Chatham, when two such competitions were held to see if they would attract more interest from modellers outside the BMSS. At Chatham all were surprised by the number and quality of entries, so they have also been introduced to the Annuals. The main competitions remain, of course, for current BMSS members only, but it is hoped that the open classes will encourage non-members to come to the event. There they will see what the Society can offer and hopefully new recruits will be the result.

Since its beginnings, competitions and displays have been integral parts of the BMSS. Members have always wanted to show their models and see those of fellow modellers. Public displays have helped spread information on the hobby and the Society, and have encouraged many both to take up model soldiers and join the BMSS. Competitions have been central to many events. They are enjoyed by members, they provide a fine opportunity to see the best work, and to recognise the skill of fellow enthusiasts. The friendly rivalry of competition pushes up standards. Entrants always seek to do just that bit better, to put that little extra care into the detail or finish, to achieve the great accolade of being an award winner judged by their

peers in the hobby. The organisation of competitions, their rules and guidelines were developed by the BMSS through long experience, careful thought and hard work. They have subsequently formed the basis used by many other organisations and similar events. All involved in these occasions, as organisers, judges, and, most importantly, as participants, can look back with pride on the history of the BMSS competitions and displays, and look forward with confidence to scaling even greater heights in the future.

Chapter 5

Publications

“Publish and be damned!” - Duke of Wellington

As mentioned in Chapter One, the decision to produce a magazine was one of the earliest taken by the newly formed BSCMS. In 1935 it was noted that the French society issued a “Bulletin” and Walter Lockwood proposed to the Committee Meeting of the 5th October that the BSCMS should “produce a ‘Bulletin’ similar to the French society”. Otto Gottstein offered the use of his duplicator to print the journal, and the assistance of his secretary to type the first issue. At the subsequent October general meeting the proposal for a regular magazine was agreed, and Frederick J Allen was appointed as the Editor. The first edition of the Society’s magazine was published later that same month using the title of “The Bulletin”, a name which has remained ever since.

Writing the first editorial, Mr Allen set out his view that the Bulletin’s prime role was as something “which allows for the interchange of ideas and information.” He continued: “The subject embraced by the Society is so vast that no one man can possibly have at his disposal sufficient knowledge and information. One has one thing - one another. One knows this - the other knows that. Through the Society we shall now be able to place one another into touch with the innumerable sources of supply and information.” Members were invited to write in to the Bulletin with their queries, for “Somewhere among our ever increasing membership can be found an expert upon any particular subject, or one who has the very thing you seek.” To assist with this interchange, the major part of the first issue was given over to a list of members’ names and addresses, and the full rules of the Society were also published.

Subsequent issues brought news of Society events, details of new members, and some members queries and answers. By the third edition, February 1936, there came the first article on modelling techniques, “Workshop hints” by W Y Carman, and the fourth edition started to carry articles on uniform details. The commencement of the Waterloo Models project for the RUSI stimulated the publication of many articles on that era, alongside further modelling tips, articles on military history, and many articles on

military bands by Lt Col A C Rolston, an authority on bands who was to contribute many informative pieces on his chosen subject over a number of years.

Despite the efforts of a small number of regular contributors, producing the Bulletin has always been hard work for the editor. It was reported at the 1936 AGM that “Our Editor has a grievance and that is that he does not receive enough articles or queries from members.” This refrain was to be common throughout the Society’s history, through many years and many changes of editor.

With the sixth edition of the Bulletin, published in June 1936, a block heading for the cover was used for the first time. Drawn by William Carman, It had the Society’s name above a cannon and stand of colours, flanked on either side by figures representing British soldiers of different eras. In January 1937 Mr Carman took over the editorship of the journal, and in March produced the first illustrations within the magazine.

As mentioned earlier, the first Bulletins were printed and distributed by Otto Gottstein, using the facilities available to him at his office. However, in March 1937 that changes in his office staff meant that he could no longer do the printing, although he would continue to supply paper, stamps and the printing machine at his own expense. Mr Gottstein’s generosity in subsidising the Bulletin in its early days cannot be overstated. Without his sustaining the production of the journal until the Society became sufficiently established to cover the cost of the Bulletin it is doubtful whether there would have been a magazine at all. The other prime mover in the history of the early Bulletins, W Y Carman, took on the printing task and the production of the journal continued.

Possibly as a result of the problems experienced, at the January 1938 Annual General Meeting the President, Mr Clendenin, proposed “that our Bulletin be printed in future”. This was carried, with arrangements and finance left in the hands of the Secretary, Walter Lockwood. The first printed Bulletin appeared in February 1938, with Mr Carman’s

drawing as the block header above a front page which consisted simply of the details of the officers and committee, the main editorial body of the magazine commencing on page 2. This pattern continued through 1938, but in 1939 the details of the officers were reduced to just the Secretary and Editor and the front page used for editorial matter.

The new printed Bulletin was undoubtedly a major improvement on the original duplicated version, and did much to present a professional image of the Society. Ten issues per year were being produced, bringing the members news and information which was not available elsewhere. A fund was established for having blocks made for illustrations, adding further to the overall quality of the publications and value to the reader. However, the balancing factor was, of course, the additional cost. Printing and distributing the Bulletin now cost just under £40, while total receipts from subscriptions, covering all Society expenses, were only £46..15s. Fortunately the cost of the blocks had been covered by donations made for this purpose. Other printers were tried in an attempt to reduce costs, but once again a familiar pattern had been set which was to recur throughout the Society's lifetime, that of subscriptions just managing to cover the costs of the Bulletin, and other Society projects having to be funded largely from other fund raising sources.

With the outbreak of war, the Bulletin was reduced to four issues a year, and was reduced in size to eight, and then down to four, pages. As Mr Carman served with the Army during the war, Walter Lockwood took over as Editor in January 1940, combining this with his existing roles of Secretary and Treasurer! Throughout the war years production of the Bulletin was difficult, having to contend with paper shortages, wartime restrictions, and just the general difficulties faced in attempting to operate during such a period of national crisis. However, the importance of the Bulletin during these years was never greater, for the difficulties in holding meetings, and of members attending the few meetings which were possible, meant that now more than ever it was the magazine which kept members in touch with the Society and with each other. It is no exaggeration to say that the Bulletin was one of the prime reasons why the BSCMS managed to come through the Second World War not only intact but able to immediately press forward when peace came again.

Unfortunately the strain of the war years took its toll on Walter Lockwood, whose health broke down and by the end of 1945 had to give up the offices he held. William Y Carman, who had returned from his service

with the Army, was asked in December 1945 to resume the editorship, which he accepted. With his erudition and great depth of knowledge of military matters Mr Carman was an ideal choice as Editor, but after only 18 months he was forced to give up the post owing to the pressure of his professional work and consequent lack of time to devote to the Society magazine. There was no obvious candidate for the editorship so the Secretary, Allan Clayton, agreed to take on the Bulletin alongside his other duties "until such time as a replacement can be found". In fact this supposedly temporary arrangement turned out to be rather more permanent than anyone had suspected, for Mr Clayton was to continue the dual Secretary-cum-Editor role for 15 years.

The change in Editor provoked a lively debate on the role of the Bulletin and its editorial policy. During the meeting of June 1946 Mr Clendenin pointed out that "the majority of members relied on the 'Bulletin' as their major link with the Society as they were unable to attend meetings". He further proposed that, as the membership had voted for an increase in subscriptions rather than any curtailment in the Bulletin, "the contents and size should be increased, and ... the size of the Bulletin should be doubled." This proposal was carried unanimously. It was also agreed to encourage manufacturers to pay for advertisements in the magazine, as a means of generating some income to help the ever increasing production costs.

In debating the contents of the magazine, Otto Gottstein observed that "the Bulletin had not catered for all types of collections and all periods, and considered it to be a short sighted policy in so doing." While not disputing this, the Editor pointed out that he was reliant on having articles submitted by the membership. This is another constant in the Society history - everyone wants to see more and better articles in the magazine, but the Editor can only print what material the members send to him.

The end result of the debate was a declaration in Allan Clayton's first Bulletin as Editor of the magazine's policy, which "will be to endeavour to cater for the tastes of all collectors, by means of more articles of an informative nature, historical interest, and illustrations. With the ultimate aim of creating a publication that can be referred to, as an authority on the information presented for the consumption of the collector."

Some improvements were quickly made. The issue of August 1946 was the first to have a separate cover, on which were printed names of officers and relevant addresses, and manufacturers' advertisements.

Illustrations, which at this time were restricted to line drawings, were now printed on different paper to the rest of the magazine so that they could be coloured in by the individual member using watercolour paint.

Production of the Bulletin was not always easy or straightforward. The minutes for the meeting of February 1947 record that "The Editor regretted the non appearance of the Bulletin, and explained that our printer was unable to print same due to the ban on the use of electric current." When the issue did eventually appear the editorial detailed many woes of the time: "Arctic conditions prevail, the use of electricity is curtailed, the Daily Press endeavour to cheer our monotonous existence with the gloomy forebodings that emanate from the large edifice in Westminster, therefore the reader is requested to be indulgent and to pardon the present erratic publications of the Bulletin, due to reasons beyond our control."

Despite all the problems the Bulletin continued to try and reach ever higher standards, the next notable innovation being the first use of a photograph. This came in the issue for March 1947, and was of a group of Elizabethan figures depicting the Queen knighting Sir Francis Drake on the quayside. The figures were by Allan Clayton and J D Moody, and in an accompanying article Mr Clayton gave details of how they were made, which included some ingenious conversions. The kneeling Drake was made from three figures, the bottom half of a kneeling gunner (with legs reversed to conform to Court etiquette), the top half of a Mignot cuirassier, and the head of a footballer. It is interesting to note that the photograph was not printed along with the text, as is common now, but instead actual photographic prints were glued into each issue as a separate operation. This method was to be used for a number of years and, laborious though it may have been, the inclusion of photographs was invaluable to members who could not attend meetings and hence would otherwise have been unable to see other members' models.

Needless to say, all these improvements added to the Society's costs. In 1948 the Editor urged members to pay their subscriptions promptly as each Bulletin now cost 2 shillings a copy to produce, and the BMSS needed income to pay the expenses. Indeed, the 1948 balance sheet shows that the cost of the Bulletin, £149.9s.6d plus postage of £8.4s.1d, outstripped income from subscriptions, £145.3s.8d. It was only additional revenue, such as £13 raised from the sale of advertising and fees from exhibitions which allowed the Society to maintain a positive balance.

The most common problem for the Editor continued to be the lack of articles (and remains the cry of all editors since). Things appear to have reached crisis point in May 1950, for the Editorial reads:

"Members are requested to excuse the tardy appearance of the Bulletin this year. Due to circumstances beyond the control of our very worthy printer it now takes practically four weeks to produce each edition of the Bulletin.

"Although this is the May edition we are reporting events which have transpired this month [ie June], as in the April edition we reported events in May.

"Would members please submit articles so that your harassed editor may catch up on arrears, and also have material in hand. To illustrate the dearth of material the article on 'Screw Guns' by Mr Moody was received this morning and was gratefully included in this edition. Even so the editor had to leave the editorial desk and sit down at the other side, which is marked 'Secretary', and compose a space filler which he then offered to the editor."

In an attempt to encourage more articles, in 1951 a prize was inaugurated for the best article submitted to the Bulletin. Initially presented on a quarterly basis, this prize remains with us to the present day as the Editor's Book Prize, now awarded at the Annual Competitions.

Sometimes unforeseen incidents caused problems with Bulletin production. The editorial of March 1952 began: "We would apologise to members for the late appearance of this issue of The Bulletin, but unfortunately the Editor suffered an accident. He fell off a bus and it necessitated the immobilisation of his right arm."

Despite the odd setback, the Bulletin continued to develop. December 1953 brought the first appearance of printed photographs, rather than the "stuck-in" pictures of earlier. The first pictures were three full-page photographs of The President's Bodyguard of India, sent in from the sub-continent by Lt Col J B R Nicholson. From January 1954 the magazine also grew in size, each issue up from 12 to 16 pages.

The first appearance of colour was also thanks to Col Nicholson, who provided a coloured illustration of various Indian Army uniforms which appeared as an insert in the Bulletin of December 1955. Exactly one year later the members were treated to an even greater array of colour for the "21st Anniversary" issue, December 1956. For the first time there was colour

on the cover, in the form of a print by W Heath of the Royal Horse Guards at Windsor Castle, 1844. Inside were no less than four more colour photographs, of the Drumhorse of the King's Dragoon Guards, the Band of the 3rd Battalion The Nigeria Regiment, Colours of the 1st Battalion the Devonshire Regiment and 1st Battalion Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, and an officer of the 15th (Yorkshire East Riding) Regiment of 1833. Such an array of colour would not be seen again until the advent of the commercial military modelling magazines many years later.

The combining of the positions of Secretary and Editor in one person placed an enormous burden on Allan Clayton. As a result in January 1960 the Committee appointed two Sub-Editors to help ease the burden, their role being to compile material for the different sections of the magazine and then pass them on to the Editor for final incorporation into the journal. Volunteering to take on the Sub-Editor roles were the Fosten brothers, Bryan and Don. Unfortunately matters outside the control of the Society continued to dog the Bulletin, for the early issues of 1960 were late owing to a printing trades dispute. In order to catch up the first three months' issues were combined into one "omnibus" edition sent out in March.

This issue also saw the start of a series of loose illustrations in the Bulletin, known as the "BMSS Plates". These were instigated by Don Fosten, who proposed the use of loose leaf illustrations as a cheaper alternative to printing pictures within the body of the magazine. To facilitate the production of the plates the Society bulk purchased art paper, the plates themselves being drawn by Don Fosten. The series began with two plates of Privates of British Infantry of the Line of 1815, and continued to be published in subsequent issues at the rate of two plates per issue. Details of the uniform colours for each plate were published in the main Bulletin text.

Even with the assistance of the Sub-Editors, the ever increasing workload on Allan Clayton was too great for him to continue as Editor, and he relinquished the post at the AGM of 1961, his last issue being number 2 of that year. Elected as new Editor was Bryan Fosten.

Mr Fosten quickly found himself facing problems with the existing Bulletin format of 16 pages of text, two pages of advertisements, a title page and contents page. He reported to the Committee in August 1961 that

"The inclusion of figure reviews, book reviews, reports on branch meetings and the occasional report on new media and materials, which are in

my opinion essential items, means that approximately twelve pages in the booklet are available for the inclusion of articles by members. Half a page of this remainder is required for the colouring instructions for the plates and a further page must be set aside for sales, wants and emergency items from the Secretary. This ultimately leaves some ten and a half pages, which when broken up into the various interest headings of uniform, figurework, campaigns, etc leaves me at the most three or four pages for each subject ... I have sufficient articles in hand now to last for a year. Some however are much too lengthy to print in one issue and would not benefit from being serialised ... If the enthusiasm of members who subscribe to the Bulletin is not to be squashed and the quality of the journal is to increase it must, in my opinion, be enlarged. A minimum of twenty pages of text is necessary to achieve my immediate aims."

Such an enlargement of the Bulletin would, of course, bring other problems, including both the cost and the extra work which would be involved in producing a bigger magazine every month. Hence it was proposed that the Bulletin should be reduced in frequency to six issues a year, but each issue increased in size. Writing in the first issue of 1962 the Editor explained the idea to the membership: "It is possible this year that we may change the format of the Bulletin, depending on the AGM. If my proposals are carried then the Bulletin will be bi-monthly, it will contain 36 pages, and with a little luck we may be able to insert line blocks, using members own artwork, rather than be cramped as we are at present using D Fosten's peculiar method of production which precludes the use of other artwork." He also went on to state his appreciation of the work of the printers: "Mr Moss of the Hill Press, who print the Bulletin, should be lauded for his help and I should like it placed on record that, without his indulgence, we certainly would not have the Bulletin at all in its present state."

The Editor's proposal was put to the AGM of 1962, but "after discussion it was considered that this proposal was too important to be dealt with by only the members attending the Annual General Meeting and it was agreed that all members be circulated". A ballot of all members ensued, the result being announced in June. Of those replying, 274 voted in favour of the change and 11 were against. As a result of this overwhelming majority the changes were put in hand, the first of the larger, bi-monthly Bulletins being issue number 1 of 1963.

The new style Bulletin proved very popular among the members, providing an expanded coverage of modelling information, uniform details, and reviews of new kits. However, it cannot be said that Bryan Fosten did not occasionally have matters other than the Bulletin on his mind. A note in issue no. 4 (August) 1965 reads:

“If this Bulletin is not up to the usual standard don’t blame the Editor. It has been prepared by me in his absence - on honeymoon!

Don Fosten”

The end of the decade saw a change of Editor. Bryan Fosten announced in September 1968 his intention to resign his position with effect from the 1969 Annual General Meeting, allowing the Committee ample time to find a successor. The Committee voted a gift to the value of 25 guineas to Mr Fosten in recognition of his fine work as Editor. The new postholder was Brian Hornick, who took over from issue 2 (April) 1969. One of his immediate challenges was to produce a special issue to mark the Society’s milestone of 1,000 members, which came out in August of that year.

This was a splendid issue of 88 pages, which included four photographs, the first time such had appeared for a number of years, and included one full colour plate, a painting of Napoleonic Imperial Guard Horse Grenadiers. W Y Carman wrote a summary of the growth of the BMSS, and L D Britain contributed an article on “A brief history of Britains Limited”. There were thumbnail sketches of Committee members, reminiscences by Jane Clayton (daughter of Walter Lockwood, the first secretary, and wife of Allan Clayton, the current secretary), letters of support from the Society’s famous members in the entertainment world, Peter Cushing and Douglas Fairbanks Jr, and Derek Guyler contributed an article entitled “One man in his time plays many parts”. And all this in addition to the usual items!

It is also worth noting that this issue contained no less than 13 pages of advertisements from commercial manufacturers and related firms, including Tradition, Historex Agents, Willie, Bugle and Guidon, Hinton Hunt, Hamleys, Phillips, and many others. The Bulletin was, at this time, the only specialist model soldier journal published and so was an essential means of communication not just between enthusiasts but also between commercial firms and their customers.

The 1970’s saw the Bulletin facing a very different world than it had in earlier years, for it was no longer alone as a model soldier magazine. For some time

there had been magazines produced by model societies around the world, regularly reported in the Bulletin. There were thriving publications from societies in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Spain and the USA, as well as the specialist wargamers publications in Britain, such as “Wargamers Newsletter”. But these were primarily produced by enthusiasts and groups. The major change was to be the advent of the commercially published modelling magazine.

With the enormous growth in military modelling during the Sixties, and the ever growing numbers of manufacturers and associated firms supporting this burgeoning number of adherents, it was inevitable that a commercial publisher would eventually see a market opportunity for a model soldier magazine. There were already some more general magazines and these had had a beneficial influence on the BMSS, for example there are still many members who first came to model soldiers as a result of Roy Dilley’s seminal articles in “Airfix Magazine”. But it was in 1970 that the first purely military magazine was proposed. To be published by Model and Allied Publications, this was “Military Modelling” magazine.

The BMSS noted the advent of this newcomer with mixed feelings. Of course anything which would bring a wider public to the hobby was to be welcomed, but there was also understandable concern about the impact this magazine would have on the Society. The Bulletin had hitherto had no rivals and had become recognised as an authoritative publication on all aspects of model soldiers. Would those who joined the BMSS to receive the Bulletin now find that they did not need the Society to receive news and views but could instead pick up Military Modelling each month at their local shop? And having the resources of a commercial publisher, which the Society could never match, Military Modelling was a bright, glossy publication with plentiful photographs and, importantly, colour.

In considering their reaction to the arrival of Military Modelling the Committee debated a suggestion from Bryan Fosten that it may to the Society’s advantage to open negotiations with Model and Allied Publications with a view to “Military Modelling” becoming the official organ of the BMSS in preference to the Bulletin. There was considerable debate on this topic in Committee, some feeling that this was the way forward while others feared not only a loss of independence for the BMSS but also argued caution in becoming over-committed with a venture which had yet to prove itself. Such a major change to the workings of the Society would also require a ballot

of the whole membership. However, there was concern that, if discussions were to be opened, it was essential to act quickly as the Society would be at a disadvantage if it were decided to try and negotiate after Military Modelling had become established. Hence the Committee agreed in December 1970 to approach Model and Allied Publications to seek their views. By the Committee meeting of January 1971 the first issue of Military Modelling had been published and there had been no reply to the Society's approach. As a result a motion was carried that the proposal would not be pursued further. As an aside, it is interesting to note that the first issue of Military Modelling cost 15 pence, compared with the 1995 price of £1.90!

It is tempting to speculate on what might have been the result if Military Modelling had taken the place of the Bulletin as the BMSS magazine. With hindsight it can be seen that Military Modelling was a great success in the market place and retains to the present day the highest circulation of any model soldier magazine. There can also be no doubt that it provides a channel of communication between model soldier enthusiasts outside the BMSS. As such it can be seen as a major reason why alternative local model soldier clubs were able to spring up outside the BMSS framework and why non-BMSS shows were able to reach an audience and achieve some success. Hence it would appear that those who feared the impact of Military Modelling on the Society were justified in their concerns. So was this an opportunity missed? Probably not, for whether or not Military Modelling was acknowledged as the official BMSS magazine it would still have been on general sale to members and non-members alike, so would still have provided this channel of communication outside the Society. There is also no doubt that the Society would have lost some of its independence, for a commercial publication must take into account the demands of the market on its editorial content. Indeed, being linked to a business would have had profound repercussions on the Society and would almost certainly have changed the whole nature of the BMSS, forcing it to become much more of a commercial organisation.

In fact what has happened is that both the BMSS Bulletin and Military Modelling have existed alongside each other for 25 years, each having its own purpose and readership. The influence of Military Modelling can be seen in a positive light, for now that the Society no longer had a monopoly in its field it was forced to look far more critically at itself and its activities, to ensure that it continued to provide benefits for the membership which could not be met outside. Indeed,

the BMSS has always used the fact that Military Modelling reaches a wide readership of non-members to its advantage, using the commercial magazine to promote its activities and so bring more members to the Society. And, certainly in the early years of Military Modelling, the magazine relied heavily on BMSS events and writers for much of its content.

Almost immediately the Society was having a detailed and critical look at the Bulletin to see if changes needed to be made to allow it to maintain its position in this new environment. Bryan Fosten proposed a number of innovations, including a change to A4 size; dividing the Bulletin into sections for news, uniforms, modelling techniques, and reviews; and, importantly, dramatically increasing the photographic and illustrative content of all these features. He and the Editor even produced a couple of "mock-ups" of how the new-look magazine would appear. However, the problem with the proposed changes was, inevitably, the cost. At the Committee meeting of December 1971 the Editor, Brian Hornick, reported in detail on the costs of the restyling, including extra charges for higher quality paper, additional postage costs, more expensive envelopes, and all the other detail which would have to be taken into account. The result of this analysis was to show beyond doubt that the Society simply could not afford to produce a magazine to such a specification. Mr Hornick offered a compromise proposal, which was to alter the size very slightly to a standard A5 size, but to use a better paper, more illustrations, a more modern cover, and some improvements in internal layout. These proposals were overwhelmingly carried, with the result that the first of the new style issues was number 1 of 1972.

Unfortunately the financial problems were to return with even greater severity in 1974. Rapidly escalating printing costs meant that drastic measures had to be taken else the Society would have been unable to meet the bills for the Bulletin, so issues 5 and 6 of 1974 were much slimmer in size, down to 24 pages from a usual size of 40. A Bulletin sub-committee was set up to examine the problem and reported in September 1974. They proposed that the Bulletin should be reduced from bi-monthly to quarterly, so saving not only printing charges but also the ever growing postage costs, and that if necessary the shape of the magazine should be changed. It was also decided that an editorial team would be formed to assist the Editor, with three members responsible for coordinating articles in the field of modelling, uniforms, and Society news. Interestingly, at the Committee meeting discussing these proposals it was again suggested that the BMSS

approach Model and Allied Publications with a view to adopting Military Modelling as the Society's magazine. This was defeated by five votes to two.

As a result of these deliberations, Bulletin number 1 of 1975 was dramatically different. It was now in a large format, just under A4 size, printed on high quality paper, with a much greater emphasis on photographs and illustrations than ever before. This was the first of the "modern" Bulletins for, although there have been numerous detail changes over the years since, the basic format established in 1975 remains.

There was a change of Editor in 1976, when Brian Hornick resigned and was replaced by John Sandars. An indefatigable worker for the Society, he brought his own distinctive style to the Bulletin. Mr Sandars set out his editorial policy in issue 4 of 1978. Noting firstly the history of the Bulletin, when it had been the only journal of its kind, he went on to reflect that the situation had now changed with the coming of rival publications:

"Commercial magazines not only pay the sort of writer who used to contribute to the 'Bulletin' for his work, but can often produce it better than we ever could, with colour illustrations etc. They also produce illustrated reviews and adverts covering almost everything produced relevant to our hobby. At the same time escalating costs now limit us to four 20 page magazines a year, while the range of members' interests if anything continues to increase, and some still rely on the magazine as their only link with the hobby.

In view of all this we have tried to adapt, by avoiding areas where the commercial press can inevitably out-do us, and by reflecting the changes in the nature of the Society, of which the magazine is now deliberately a subsidiary and not the major feature. With the increase in pictures of models and members, and more Society news etc. which this role involves, it is more than ever important that the limited number of articles that we can print should be both good and varied in subject matter."

John Sandars' sudden and tragically early death in 1979 resulted in the last issue of that year being put together by Peter Wilcox as a caretaker editor. The post was filled on a permanent basis in 1980 by Morry Miles, who was to hold the position for the next four years. During this time he produced two notable "special editions", one devoted to New Zealand, all articles being contributed by Society members from that country, and an issue devoted to the Fiji Islands,

with a variety of articles on the unusual uniforms from that part of the world. There can be no dispute that this was information which was not easily available anywhere else.

In 1984 Mr Miles stepped down and was succeeded in turn by Paul Vickers as Editor with issue 3 of that year. However, Morry did not give up all work for the Bulletin as he remained on the Editorial Team as Copy Co-ordinator until he moved to the appointment of Society Archivist.

One of the first tasks confronting the new Editor was the planning and publication of a special issue to mark the Society's Golden Jubilee. This was issue 1 of 1985, and to mark this special occasion the magazine had a full colour cover, depicting the various commemorative figures produced for the Jubilee, and back cover consisting of a full page photograph of members of the Band of the Blues and Royals in full dress. Inside were contributions from the President and Secretary on the Jubilee, an article on the origins of the Society by founder member (and former editor) W Y Carman, and items on the history of the Bulletin and the National Collection. Throughout 1985 articles celebrating the 50th Anniversary continued to appear, covering both the early days as recalled by senior members and also the special Jubilee events organised by the Society.

The start of 1986 saw a significant increase in the publications issued by the BMSS, for the Bulletin was joined by two new titles, the "Bulletin Extra" and the "BMSS Handbook".

The origins of the Bulletin Extra lay in the concerns which had been expressed by both members and Committee that a quarterly Bulletin meant long periods when the members received no communication from the Society. This, coupled with the unavoidably lengthy production time for a properly typeset magazine, meant that the Bulletin was not a satisfactory medium for news or important notices of coming events. At the Committee meeting of August 1985 it had been asked if a fifth Bulletin would be possible, and the Editor was tasked to investigate this. At the October meeting the Publicity Officer, John Regan, suggested the possibility of sending out a Newsletter between Bulletins as a means of keeping the membership informed.

The Editor presented his report to the Committee in November, in which he produced detailed figures which showed that, for financial reasons, a fifth Bulletin would not be viable. However, he proposed to take up the suggestion of a newsletter and amplified

it to have such a publication come out not only between Bulletins but also with each quarterly issue, the reasoning being that this would free editorial space in the Bulletin and also, using the much shorter copy dates of a newsletter, more current news items could be included. This proposal was unanimously agreed.

The first Bulletin Extra came out with Bulletin number 1 of 1986. It was a simple A4 sized newsletter, four pages, with a mix of editorial content and adverts. The text was simple typescript and the whole was produced on lesser quality paper than the Bulletin proper, reflecting the principle of the Extra being quick and cheap to produce. In the Editorial of the Bulletin the Extra was introduced to the membership, its object being to give “members a more regular and constant flow about what is happening in the Society and in the military modelling world generally.” Because of the short production time of the Extra the Editor believed that “we can publish news and information faster than any other publication in our field.”

The Extra proved an immediate success with members, who approved of having this additional means of communication and also of not having to wait three months until the next Bulletin. Such was its success that from issue 6 of 1987 it doubled in size to eight pages an issue.

The BMSS Handbook also stemmed from an idea by John Regan in 1985, who proposed that the Society should issue a “pull-out” supplement to the Bulletin containing factual information which members could collect and build into a permanent work of reference. This was initially planned to come out in 1985, but problems with production meant that it also first appeared with Bulletin 1 of 1986, making this something of a landmark issue in the history of the magazine. The Handbook format was to produce with each Bulletin a supplement of two A4 sheets (one A3 folded), each containing some details of modelling reference (eg proportions of figures, scales, etc), uniforms or equipment, or Society information (eg Area Reps addresses, conditions of Fellowship, etc). Each sheet had a simple filing code, which enabled it to be slotted into the Handbook in the correct sequence. The rule for Handbook material was that it would only contain incontrovertible factual data - anything which was open to argument or interpretation was a Bulletin article. This was done to establish the Handbook as an authoritative reference tool on which members could rely. As an example of how this rule was applied, if an item of uniform or equipment was being illustrated and described the Handbook would state that this was a description of a specific item

from a named collection, rather than a general description of all patterns of that equipment, for which there could be many variations.

Much of the early material for the Handbook was contributed by John Regan himself, and it was his great skill with illustration coupled with painstaking research which established the reputation of the Handbook. Other members contributed items on pieces of uniforms and equipment, a bibliography of model soldiers, and similar items, as well as there being information on Area Reps and Branches, the BMSS Competition Rules, judges’ brief, etc. As with the Extra, the Handbook proved a great success, quickly gaining a reputation for quality and providing an additional benefit of Society membership which was much valued.

Although the additional publications were a success the Bulletin continued to be dogged by the recurring problem of inflation, and by 1987 it was again clear that some action needed to be taken to reduce costs again. At the same time the load on the Editor had significantly increased, having to produce not only the Bulletin but also eight Extras and four Handbooks each year. In an attempt to tackle both problems, Paul Vickers proposed to the Committee that the Society should invest in word processing and desk-top publishing equipment. This would not only ease the Editor’s tasks but also mean that “camera ready” pages could be produced for sending to the printer, so eliminating the typesetting costs which were currently incurred. At the same time there would be some reduction in the lead time for the Bulletin. As the initial investment would be substantial, the Editor prepared a detailed report of costings and alternatives for Committee members to study at length. Having considered the alternatives, the Committee agreed to the Editor’s proposals in August 1987 and so ushered in computerisation of Bulletin production.

The first publication produced with the new technology was Extra 7 of 1987, with Bulletin issue 1 of 1988 being the first magazine produced that way. Inevitably there was some reduction in print quality from the professionally typeset version, which was much regretted, but the Society had no option but to cut costs to meet its financial situation.

There was a further trimming of the publications in 1990, with the number of Extras being reduced from eight to four, cutting out those which came out with the Bulletins but leaving those coming out between magazines. This time the reduction was not caused by finance but simply through the problems the Editor was having in coping with the demands of so many

different issues. He proposed easing the problem by appointing another person as editor of the Extra, but no volunteers were forthcoming. So it was with regret that the decision was taken to reduce the number of issues, there being no other course open.

Computers were the reason for the next change of Editor, for Paul Vickers informed the Committee in June 1990 that he would have to give up the job after September as he was to begin studying for a Masters degree in information science. During the ensuing three months five names were put forward and approached to take on the editorship but all turned it down. In order to produce a final issue of 1990 Stuart Asquith acted as caretaker editor, with typing and other duties shared by other Committee members. Fortunately in September 1990 a volunteer came forward, and a special Committee meeting convened at the Euromilitaire show agreed to accept the offer. Thus Simon Westwood took on the Editor's post, commencing with issue 1 of 1991. A somewhat relieved outgoing editor announced the change in Extra 4 of 1990 under the headline "Future of Bulletin assured as new Editor is found."

In his first editorial Mr Westwood declared it his intention to follow the editorial policy which had been pursued in the past, and so the transition from one editor to another passed smoothly.

By 1992 the equipment which had been in use for magazine production was becoming worn out and had been overtaken by the rapid development in computing over those years. The Editor was concerned that the equipment was likely to break down if it continued to be used as heavily as it had been, which would leave the Society in a difficult position. He proposed that the BMSS needed to replace it with newer machines, at the same time taking advantage of technological

developments to produce a Bulletin of higher quality. Strongly supported in this venture by the previous Editor, the proposals were approved by the Committee in September 1992. The first issue produced on the new equipment was number 4 of 1992. The technological advances since the first use of computerisation meant that the Bulletin print quality now returned to the standard which had been enjoyed under the older traditional methods of typesetting, and once again the BMSS had a professional looking magazine which could stand comparison with any society.

Another change of Editors at the beginning of 1995 brought Paul Vickers back into the job, ironically once again just in time to produce a special issue, this time for the Diamond Jubilee.

Throughout its long history, the Bulletin has been a vital part of the British Model Soldier Society. Whatever the changes in Editors, formats, or production methods, of supreme importance has been the magazine's content, which has always followed the same pattern of Society news, modelling information and advice, uniform references, and reviews of what's new in the model soldier world. It remains the main channel of communication between Society members and, despite the variety of commercial magazines now on the market, there are still many BMSS members, including many overseas, whose main reason for joining the Society is to receive the Bulletin. Over the years many members, some well known and some less so, have contributed articles to share their knowledge and experience with their colleagues. While there remain members willing to contribute in this way there will be a thriving Bulletin, and with it a healthy Society.

Chapter 6

Areas and Branches

“I thought the best thing to do was to settle up these little local difficulties” - Harold Macmillan

The BMSS has always traditionally been based in London, a natural home as this is the nation's capital and was the site of the first meetings of the select band of modellers who founded the Society. However, it has equally always regarded itself as a truly national organisation representing model soldier enthusiasts in all parts of the British Isles. As membership grew all over the United Kingdom it was inevitable that members who could not go to the London meetings should begin to come together in groups in their own localities to exchange ideas, see each other's models, and enjoy the company of like-minded enthusiasts. Recognising the value of these local groups, and their potential for furthering the hobby, the BMSS welcomed and encouraged provincial meetings.

The first local meeting took place in Somerset on the 3rd February 1951. The location was the Vicarage in the village of Worle near Weston-Super-Mare, the home of the Reverend E Vallance Cook, an enthusiastic BMSS member and organiser of the meeting. There were five members resident in the Somerset area although one of them, Major Roche Kelly, was unable to be present as he was serving in Malaya at the time. Although few in number there was great enthusiasm for the opportunity to meet fellow members. Reverend Vallance Cook described the spirit of the meeting in the Bulletin: “Those who meet together frequently will need no description of the orgy of enthusiastic talking, comparing and exchanging which made three hours seem like one. It was a small and all too brief encounter, but at least it was a beginning and we parted with a real determination that our hobby should no longer be pursued in loneliness.” The members resolved that meetings in Somerset would be held quarterly, and this group can lay claim to being the precursor of the network of BMSS branches which was to spread throughout the country.

Following rapidly was the coming together of a group in Manchester in 1952, organised by A G Cromack. Initially there were just three members, with sometimes the addition of a couple from Liverpool. These grew to a group of half a dozen modellers, who organised their first display at the Northern Models Exhibition,

held in the Manchester Corn Exchange in June 1952. This, plus other smaller displays around Manchester, brought in more new members, demonstrating once again that there were many model soldier enthusiasts who would jump at the chance to join the Society when its existence was brought to their attention.

Mr Cromack was keen to establish an event to bring together modellers in the North of England and he engaged in lengthy correspondence with Allan Clayton, BMSS Secretary, on this topic. The result was a meeting arranged at the Douglas Hotel, Manchester, in November 1952, attended by nine members hailing from Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Derbyshire. Allan Clayton (himself a native Mancunian) attended as representative of the National Committee. Although few in number the members each brought many figures for display and mounted an impressive exhibition of their work. Included in the day's events was a Spoon Competition, making this the first BMSS competition to be held outside London. Beginning at 3.30 in the afternoon, the meeting did not break up until nearly 8 o'clock at night (with an interval for tea), demonstrating vividly the enthusiasm and enjoyment of the members. Significantly there were a number of visitors to the display, drawn by a notice in the local Manchester “Evening Chronicle” the day before, and of these three promptly joined the Society.

A year later the event was repeated, this time at the New Millgate Hotel, and membership of the Manchester group had risen to fourteen. Mr Cromack was unanimously elected as Chairman, an automatic choice given his role as the prime organiser. Such was the success of these events that it was resolved to hold such meetings on a regular basis every six months.

Joining these groups in Britain came the first of the Society's overseas branches when a group of model soldier enthusiasts in Southern California, calling themselves “Miniaturas Militares”, joined the BMSS en masse. Not only did this swell the BMSS numbers by an extra 20 members, but the Society was pleased to recognise Miniaturas Militares as an affiliated branch of the BMSS, formally doing so in March

1953. At the other side of America there was more activity, although on a smaller and less formal basis, when three members from New York and New Jersey got together (plus one guest), rather fittingly meeting at Fort Ticonderoga.

Even further afield, in 1955 a group of BMSS members met together in Christchurch, New Zealand. R Tomlin wrote a short report to the Bulletin which shows how delighted remote modellers were to be able to get in touch with other collectors: "What a thrill it is to meet a fellow enthusiast after two years, and to swap ideas, blanks, and show the latest creation to somebody who does appreciate it. Mark well, you London members! You really don't know how lucky you are!"

Meanwhile, in the UK the branch activity continued. Joining the Somerset and Manchester groups, both now meeting regularly, was a group in Sussex. Based in Brighton they also held regular local meetings, and followed the pattern of others in staging displays in the local area, the first being in the Brighton Corn Exchange in August 1954. By November the meetings were being held fortnightly at the home of one of the members, with around 19 attending.

The Somerset group appears to have had a great attraction for men of the cloth, for the Reverend Vallance Cook was soon joined by Reverend G Milroy and Reverend E Newell. Reverend Cook brought Biblical allusions to his reports in the Bulletin: "When the modellers of Taunton come to Weston-super-Mare they always bring two things. The first is rain. The second, a collection of achievements which invariably causes their clerical host to break the Tenth Commandment. He would also break the Seventh if he had the opportunity, but Messrs Tarr and Saunders keep a watchful eye on the products of their genius." Commenting on the number of vicars in the branch he noted "There are heavy times ahead for those who engage in the Sunday war game while their partners preach on peace!" Whatever the problems of the clergy this group remained most active, meeting regularly in various venues. Growing in size it became known as the Western Group, and it was as such that it arranged the first BMSS meeting in Bristol in October 1959, meeting at the home of Mr Lionel Farr. Here was an auspicious event, for in the coming years the city of Bristol was to be home to one of the Society's most enthusiastic branches.

The largest of the regional meetings continued to be that held in Manchester. In view of the success of these events, and the difficulty experienced by Northern members in travelling to London for the

Annual Competitions, the Committee decided that the Society would present a cup to be competed for at the Manchester meetings. In view of the work of Arthur Cromack in initiating the northern meetings, and his work over the years in organising the meetings, it was decided to name this the Cromack Trophy. The competition was for groups of not less than six figures and was first held at the Manchester meeting of October 1959. The first winner was in fact Arthur Cromack himself, with "a very good scena depicting Rorke's Drift complete in every detail ... a very popular award indeed" as the Secretary noted. In 1961 the Committee agreed to add two further competitions to the Northern Meeting, named after past presidents of the BMSS. So to the Cromack Trophy for dioramas were added the Clendenin Trophy for single figures and the Carman Trophy for groups.

In 1960 the position of the regional groups was formalised and the work of the organisers recognised by making them co-opted provincial members of the BMSS Committee. The list of these first co-opted members was: A Cromack (Manchester), G Jewson (Brighton), L Sangster (Dover), F A Green (Chelmsford), L C Farr (Bristol), and Rev E Vallance-Cook (Weston-super-Mare). Soon added to the list was J H Bevan Rees of Northampton, who wrote in the Bulletin in August 1960 to see if any Midlands members were interested in getting together, which resulted in the first Midlands meeting in November of the same year.

With the start of 1961 these provincial organisers were given the title of Area Representatives, and their groups given wider titles than specific towns, more accurately reflecting the role these gentlemen filled in their work for the Society. There were a few changes to the earlier list, the Area Representatives now being A Cromack (Northern), L Sangster (South Eastern), J H Bevan Rees (Midlands), G Marshall (Southern), F A Green (Eastern), and Rev E Vallance-Cook (Western).

More overseas members began to organise their own meetings, the latest addition being those in Ontario, Canada. Bruce Boyd of Port Credit, Ontario, wrote to the Bulletin in January 1961 to ask if members around the Toronto area would be interested in forming a local association of the BMSS. The letter had the desired effect, and quickly a group got together and began a series of bi-monthly meetings at Mr Boyd's home. By 1962 the group was sufficiently well established to request that they be recognised as a branch of the BMSS with an Area Representative. The Committee readily agreed, and appointed Mr Boyd as Ontario Area Rep, who thus became the first

official overseas representative of the BMSS. Later that year Mr Boyd wrote requesting that the position should pass to Charles Faulkner, who thus took over the post from 1963.

Back in the United Kingdom another welcome addition to the Area Representatives was the appointment of the first Rep for Scotland, in the person of Col P D Clendenin, a long serving member and past president of the BMSS. The confidence in Col Clendenin was well placed, for meetings were soon being held following the usual pattern. The first was at the Grand Hotel in Glasgow and was attended by 18 members. The Committee had sent one of the BMSS Spoons for them to hold a competition, won by Ian Mackenzie with a group of the Buffs. Delighted by this success the Committee once again acted to encourage further participation by donating a cup for subsequent competitions, to be known with great originality as "The Scottish Trophy". The Celtic coverage was further enhanced in 1963 with the appointment of J Norris Green of Dublin to be the Area Rep for the Irish Republic.

An era came to an end at the beginning of 1963 when Arthur Cromack retired from the post of Northern Area Rep. His work had had a profound effect on the Society, with his organisation of the Manchester meetings becoming a model for other regional events. In recognition of his achievements he was made a Life Vice President. Mr Cromack's replacement was Mr T H Middleton, who once again proved a fine choice as he continues to be the Northern Rep up to the present day.

The Manchester group was joined by a fellow branch across the Pennines with the creation of the North Eastern branch in 1965. The founding of this group followed what was by now a well established pattern: a letter in the Bulletin from a member asking for members in an area to get in contact (in this case from Carl Whitfield), some initial meetings held (in York), and then the formal recognition of the branch by the National Committee (with Mr Whitfield as Area Representative).

Next to follow was the Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire Branch, which held its inaugural meeting in March 1968 at the home of the Area Rep, Mr R H Buxton. This brought the total number of branches to 11 at the close of the 1960s, and the BMSS was now undoubtedly a truly national Society providing meetings for members all over the United Kingdom and even overseas.

The trend for ever more local branches to be formed continued apace in the 1970s. South Hampshire branch was formed in 1971 with John Cox as Area Rep. It is interesting to note that although many others have held the post since, Mr Cox has always been active in South Hants and he returned to the Rep's job in 1989, continuing to hold the post to the present day. Also in 1971 a branch was formed for Blackpool, and in 1972 Warwickshire, Plymouth, Nottingham and Devon joined the list.

It was in 1972 that the Interbranch Competition was first proposed, the idea of John Cox and the South Hampshire Branch. The Interbranch is discussed in more detail in the chapter on competitions, but its arrival at this time is significant in showing both the growing strength and confidence of the regional branches, as well as their capacity for innovative ideas.

The spread of branches continued. During 1973 new branches were formed in Wales and Norfolk and Suffolk, and in 1974 in Northamptonshire. The Bulletin published a full list of the current Area Representatives in issue 2 of 1974, which now included no less than 16 names. A further example of the contribution of the contribution made by the branches to the Society in this year was the support for the fledgling National Collection, the Secretary noting in March that items for the exhibition had come from Oxford, Lichfield, Bristol, Northants, London and Southants.

Still more regions gained their branches, with Huntingdon and Aldershot branches being started in 1975.

Inevitably there were occasional problems, to be expected with an organisation the size of the branch network. The most dramatic occurred in 1975 when the Warwickshire Representative was found to have been writing bad cheques and not paying bills incurred by his Area. The problem was discovered when the Society was informed by Warwick council that they could not hold the planned Interbranch Competitions in the Warwick Court House as the fee for the previous year had not been paid. To make matters worse, this had been reported in the local press including the name of the Society, so bringing the BMSS into disrepute. Immediately the Committee relieved the offender of his post and appointed a new Rep, and also an letter was sent to the local paper setting out the position of the Society in an attempt at damage limitation. Thankfully this was an isolated incident, but it did illustrate the need for caution in ensuring that those appointed to represent the Society were reputable and honest.

Another, and somewhat surprising, side-effect of the spread of local branches was to actually lose members from the BMSS. What was happening was that a local branch would be formed, and the resources of the Society used to put members in touch with other, provide publicity, give advice on organisation, etc, and a strong local group would be established. Regrettably in a few instances the group members then found that they only wanted to go along to local meetings and have no part of the national Society. Not only did individual members drop out but occasionally whole branches would leave the BMSS umbrella. This had happened, for example, when the Wessex Branch decided to become a separate organisation. The split was reported at some length in both the local and national press, under headlines such as “Mutiny in Wessex” and “Rebel generals split an army of toy soldiers”, hardly the sort of publicity the Society or the hobby wanted. (Later a new BMSS Branch was formed for Mid-Wessex, which was to be one of the Society's most loyal and enthusiastic groups.) One ex-Area Rep not only left the Society but attempted to set up an entire competing organisation, the “British Military Miniature Society” (BMMS). This never took off and fizzled out in a short time.

Much as the Society deplored such ungrateful and short-sighted actions, there was little that could be done to prevent them. The Secretary produced a paper on this problem, expressing the view that the BMSS was in danger of creating its own rivals and that greater control of branches was now necessary. He proposed that numbers of BMSS members within local groups should be monitored and any falling below a certain percentage would no longer be allowed the credit of being a BMSS branch, that regular reports should be submitted to the Hon Secretary on their activities, and, importantly, that the groups which did enthusiastically contribute to BMSS activities should be strongly encouraged to participate as much as possible. This was essential, for it would be only through the Society pursuing a positive approach to its keener members that the benefits of BMSS membership would be obvious to others.

Fortunately, the “enthusiastic” branches were a clear majority, as can be seen from the fact that most of those mentioned so far in this account are still part of the Society today. Although there have continued to be episodes of “break-away” groups it is on the dedicated branches that the health of the Society rests. Their contribution to the BMSS and the hobby has indeed been of great significance.

An example of the positive moves to greater involvement of the Area Representatives in the Society's affairs was the establishment of the annual Area Representatives conference. The first full meeting of all the Area Reps and Committee was held at the National Army Museum on 20th December 1975, followed by a dinner at the Ranelagh Restaurant. This was an opportunity for a full discussion of matters affecting the BMSS, with the Committee being able to inform the local representatives of developments centrally while the Area Reps could bring their members' views and ideas to a wider audience for discussion. This meeting was most successful, so the Area Representatives conference became another regular event in the BMSS calendar.

Although the Society had always held its main meetings in London, these were general meetings open to all members. There was a need for a London Branch, to act as the local focal point for members living in the capital and to enable them to participate in such events as the Interbranch Competitions. The main problem in creating such a group was finding a venue for meetings, which took months of searching. In September 1976 a room was hired at “The Albert” public house in Victoria Street and the Central London branch came into being.

Branches have continually been added the list, the formation of each following the regular pattern of having a small number of local members getting together, one person volunteering to act as the Area Representative and applying to the National Committee for the post, and the Committee giving its approval wherever possible. It would be pointless to document the formation of every branch in detail, so similar is the pattern, but examples of the groups formed are: Ealing (formed in 1980 with David Pearce as Area Rep, later to become BMSS Secretary); Wiltshire (1981); Worcestershire (1982); Hertfordshire (1984); Grampian (1986); Leicestershire (1987); North London (1989); Sunderland and Tyne and Wear (1989); and City and East London (1990).

Two of the Society's more unusual branches were formed in the late 1980's. In 1988 the Society created the Armed Forces Branch, to cater for the needs of those members who were in the Services and hence had difficulties caused by constant moving, postings around the World, and the other problems created by pursuing a hobby whilst in the Forces. The following year, 1989, Alex Vella was appointed the Area Representative for Malta. The Maltese modellers had their own general modelling society and had made

contact with the BMSS through members visiting the island, in particular John Gardner, a National Committee member who had family connections in Malta. Such was their enthusiasm for the hobby and the help they had been given that many of the Maltese modellers joined the BMSS. To further help and encourage them to fully participate in the Society, the Committee was delighted to appoint Mr Vella as the Malta Representative.

From its early days of having small meetings in London only, the Society grew through its local groups to reach all parts of the country, and even overseas.

Now wherever members lived they could meet other enthusiasts and exchange views, ideas and techniques. In turn the Areas and Branches gave greater strength to the BMSS by their activities, support for projects such as the National Collection, and innovations such as the Interbranch Competitions. Through the Area Representatives local groups had a communications channel to the national officers and committee, encouraging full participation in Society affairs at all levels. The Areas and Branches have made the BMSS a truly national Society.

Chapter 7

The National Collection

“Dear Mr Clayton”, wrote Australian member Mr W E Brennan to the Hon Secretary, “I wish to ensure that my collection will be kept intact and exhibited after my decease and would be prepared to make provision in my will leaving the entire collection to the British Model Soldier Society together with the amount of about one thousand dollars to cover costs etc, **provided** the Society is willing to accept the bequest, have the collection shipped to England and that it will be exhibited permanently for the benefit of members of the Society and the public if it is so desired.” The date was the 27th April 1970, and this letter was to set in train the sequence of events which led to the founding of the BMSS National Collection, a collection now seen every year by thousands of visitors and which is indisputably the finest of its kind in the country.

Mr Brennan was employed by the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney and in 1970 was working temporarily in their London office. During this time he had met with Society members and officials, and, as an honoured overseas visitor, had been asked to present the prizes at the Annual Competitions. It was during the Annuals that he had approached Allan Clayton with his proposal for leaving his collection to the BMSS on his death, and the letter was confirming his offer. Mr Brennan’s collection at the time was around 12,000 items, of which 10,000 were Britains figures, so this was undoubtedly a remarkable and valuable collection.

The proposal was raised with the Committee and within a month of the original letter the President was able to formally reply that “the Committee agreed unanimously that your extremely generous offer be accepted, in principle.” There were some practical problems to be overcome, not the least being that the BMSS had no permanent premises where such a collection could be housed or displayed. However, proposals to find a venue were already being put forward, and as Mr Brennan was still very much alive there was no immediate problem. The President was therefore happy to inform Mr Brennan that his terms were agreeable and “that with this assurance you will now find yourself able to put the necessary

arrangements in hand to carry out your intention.” He went on: “In conveying, both personally and on behalf of the Committee and members of the Society, our grateful thanks for your generous bequest, I express the sincere hope that it will be many years before the Society benefits from it.”

Among the Committee members there was now a determination to establish a BMSS Collection to receive not only the Brennan collection but also other bequests, donations and presentations. This would build into a collection covering many examples of modelling and toy soldier collecting, which could be permanently displayed for the enjoyment and benefit of both Society members and the public.

There had been a suggestion as far back as 1967 for the establishment of a “Society Collection of Models”, proposed by John Tunstill at the August Committee meeting. The proposal was agreed and the Committee also agreed to grant the princely sum of £5 per year towards such a collection. However the proposal seems to have gone no further and nothing more was heard of the idea. It was not until 1970 and the events surrounding the offer of the Brennan collection that work really began on forming a BMSS Collection. The formal decision was taken at the December Committee meeting. Roy Dilley proposed that the suggestion of a National Collection “be accepted in principle”, and this was agreed unanimously.

The first and essential prerequisite for a Society collection was somewhere to house and display it. At the time the National Army Museum was relocating to its present premises in Chelsea so it was thought possible that the BMSS may acquire some permanent display space there, but this did not come to fruition. Over the next two years various venues were approached, with Syon Park at one time appearing a likely location, but all proved equally to be dead ends. It was at the Bristol Branch’s second Annual Show that a member suggested that Dodington House, near Bath may be interested. Now heading the National Collection project was John Ruddle, at that time the Hon Secretary of the BMSS, who contacted Dodington and received an encouraging response.

Dodington were looking to increase the number of visitors to the house and were working on additional attractions, such as a centre for horse-drawn transport, and hence the opportunity to have the BMSS Collection on display fitted in well with their plans.

By October of 1973 the Society was able to announce to the membership, through the "Bulletin", plans for establishing the National Collection at Dodington. After detailing the advantages of Dodington's location and the many attractions it had to offer, the plans for the display were outlined. This would "be housed in its own Exhibition Hall, within the main house. It is the Committee's intention to display a fine cross-section of the collection of our members, all suitably labelled with credits to those concerned. The trade members will be asked to co-operate and provide large displays of their figures, all with suitable worded credits." As to the individual exhibits themselves, it was "hoped to show Britains 'en masse' bands, flat figures, dioramas, groups and single figures of all periods, sizes and styles, together with the work of other members whose interests lie more in the production of uniform paintings and drawings." As an encouragement to participate "members who donate figures will be given a free season ticket to the Estate, and all its facilities, and those members who do not display will be able to get in at a reduced rate on production of their membership card."

As is always the case with appeals, the response was variable. Some members were apparently reluctant to part with parts of their collections until the Collection was seen to be established and functioning. Fortunately, however, there were others who came forward with enthusiasm and offers of figures. One member offered his entire collection for two years and Committee members offered loans from their collections. Leading by example, John Ruddle contributed 1,500 figures from his own collection and it was reported in the "Bulletin" that "some offers of a similar nature have been received".

The lead role in putting the exhibition together was taken by the local Bristol Branch, under the leadership of Mike Blake, the Branch founder and BMSS Area representative. With their enthusiastic support an interesting and colourful display was constructed, taking as its theme 'The British Army through the ages'. The models were displayed in wall mounted display cabinets supplied by Dodington, along both sides of a vaulted gallery. Adding to the interest for visitors was a full scale World War One dug-out diorama constructed on site by the Bristol Branch, using numerous artefacts and mannequins dressed in authentic uniforms.

With everything in place the BMSS National Collection opened on 6th April 1974. In a colourful occasion, members of the Sealed Knot in full English Civil War costume provided a guard of honour as the ribbon to open the exhibition was cut by a Chelsea Pensioner. The National Collection was at last a fact, and another important part of the Society's activities had come to fruition.

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The National Collection exhibition proved an immediate success. Dodington House reported that during the season from April to October they had had 200,000 visitors, the vast majority of whom had also visited the BMSS display. They also reported that the model soldier exhibition was one of the most frequently mentioned attractions in letters they had received from visitors. In the National Collection the Society had not only established a landmark collection of models but had also found a "shop window" for the Society and the hobby which was reaching unprecedented numbers of the public.

For the 1975 opening the collection was expanded still further, with more donations from members. The responsibility for the collection was shared between the Society's Editor, John Sandars, and the Secretary, John Ruddle, with the latter increasingly taking on the major part of the organisation of the exhibition. Expanding the collection for its second year's opening required an immense amount of effort from him, with sterling assistance once again from the Bristol Branch, lead by Peter Sturgeon, and from the South Hants Branch.

The display itself now contained some 5,000 figures, including 35 dioramas or groups. Among the highlights were a diorama of the Charge of the Light Brigade by Alan Dimery, artillery models of many types from the collection of Duncan Buller-West, and numerous British and Indian Army figures, including a couple of composite groups showing County Regiments through the ages and several bands. A large number of rare Britains figures were on display, alongside the complete range of this famous firm's current products. A good variety of figures representing the ever popular Ancient and Napoleonic periods were included, as were the more unusual wooden cut-out figures by the late Rene North. Clearly the collection was becoming fully representative of the military modelling hobby and reflecting the range of activities within the BMSS.

For the next few years the Collection remained at Dodington and continued to grow slowly. By 1977 a complete case was given over to models by junior

members, celebrating the wealth of talent to be found among the younger modellers. Further notable donations of models from the Marrion, Wass and Henry Harris collections were received, and improvements to the displays, in particular the provision of better labelling and more information on the figures, continued.

Unfortunately, as time went on there was increasing dissatisfaction with the way the exhibition was being treated by the management of Dodington House who appeared not to appreciate the serious nature of the models, their worth or value. The Secretary wrote to express both the Society's gratitude at the assistance received in setting up the exhibition, but also to point out the grave disquiet felt over the layout of the area housing the models, security, and the antagonistic attitude of some of the staff. "After the second year, when a definite improvement was made, things seem to have lapsed", wrote Mr Ruddle. "What was once a display area is now virtually an entry foyer to a restaurant." The General Manager of Dodington replied that the BMSS display was extremely popular, and expressed his hope that the exhibition would remain and that improvements could be made to the layout. However, despite the manager's personal wish that the collection remain the general problems with Dodington caused the Committee to decide that the collection would have to be moved to a more suitable venue. In June 1977 John Ruddle wrote to Dodington to notify them formally of the Committee's decision that the National Collection would not be housed there in 1978.

It should be noted that the National Collection, in addition to the benefits already noted, was becoming a useful source of income for the BMSS. In return for the Society's efforts in mounting the exhibition Dodington made donations to BMSS funds, and from its opening until its move the Collection had brought in £1,850, ninety percent of which was used to keep membership subscriptions down to a low level. With some funds to hand it started to be possible for the Society to purchase figures for the Collection to fill gaps, such as a collection of Hinton Hunt Hussars purchased for the National Collection from the September 1977 BMSS auction.

The opportunity to move from Dodington was greatly helped by the opening of the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood. This museum, a branch of the Victoria and Albert, was concerned primarily with toys, seeing these as central to the development of a person's appreciation of the world. The museum's publicity hoped that "what a child sees in the old toys at Bethnal Green may help him, when he grows up, to appreciate

the works of art at the V and A." It also quoted Baudelaire in saying "the toy is the child's first initiation in art."

Such a philosophy was wholly in harmony with that of the BMSS, for whom the "toy soldiers" of childhood did indeed develop into an adult appreciation of these same artefacts as miniature sculpture, works of art in their own right, as well as the more direct artistic applications of skill such as painting and animation in the modern model figures. Thus when the Bethnal Green Museum generously offered the BMSS display space the Society had no hesitation in gratefully accepting the offer. Using figures from the National Collection, an exhibition was mounted, naturally concentrating on the old toy soldiers to remain in keeping with the museum's theme.

Although the setting up of the display at Bethnal Green was a great boon, space there was extremely limited and could not possibly hold all of the now substantial National Collection. So the hunt for venues resumed, with letters being sent to a huge range of possible venues, including Madame Tussauds, the Wallace Collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Tower of London, the Rotunda Museum, and many others. Unfortunately this effort brought only a dispiriting series of rejections.

Light at the end of the tunnel appeared when the BMSS was asked to put on a four day event at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, as part of their Living Craft Fayre. During this fair John Ruddle made some tentative initial approaches to Hatfield about moving the National Collection there. Encouraged by the response, negotiations began in earnest. These lasted for some time as many details had to be agreed and the misgivings of the Living Crafts organisers had to be overcome. However, eventually all was resolved, and in February 1978 a formal agreement was reached between the Society and the Gascoyne Cecil Estates for the housing of the National Collection in the Old Riding School at Hatfield House. The agreement established the dates and times the exhibition would be open, responsibilities for access, insurance, staffing, and the many other factors involved in a venture of this kind.

Still undertaking the organisation of the exhibitions, John Ruddle began the mammoth task of setting up the Collection in its new home, ably assisted as ever by John Sandars. The display had to be ready for opening to the public on 25th March 1978. Initially a display of historic costumes was in the same building and the opening ceremony for the combined display

was carried out by the Lord Chamberlain, with Lord Salisbury (owner of Hatfield), the President of the BMSS, and the Secretary in attendance.

Along one wall of the exhibition was a series of internally lit double sided cabinets containing models grouped by theme: toy soldiers, ancients, seventeenth and eighteenth century subjects, Napoleonic, British Empire, World War One, World War Two, flats, small scale figures, and juniors' models. Along the opposite wall and across one end were counter-type cabinets containing artillery and transport models, bands, groups and dioramas, including a display of 900 of John Ruddle's figures depicting a Delhi Durbar. Fixed to the walls were two boxed dioramas, one of which, the "Ceremony of the Keys", had been specially made for the National Collection by members of the BMSS National Committee.

Although smaller than the display at Dodington the exhibition still covered the full range of Society interests and showed the many subjects and types of model covered by the hobby. Another significant difference from the original exhibition was that now most of the exhibits were owned by the Society, rather than being on loan from collectors. In addition, the arrangement of the exhibition at Hatfield allowed more potential for expansion and improvements which were planned for implementation over the years.

The exhibition at Hatfield proved an immediate success, seen by 66,667 visitors in its first season alone. The National Collection had developed into a much more professionally organised and exhibited asset, with long-term planning and growth very much to the forefront of the Secretary's mind.

As has been noted, up to this time the National Collection was being run jointly by John Ruddle, the BMSS Secretary, and John Sandars, the Editor. A major blow came in 1979 with the sudden and untimely death of John Sandars at the age of 41. In the National Collection, as in so many other aspects of BMSS activities, he left a gap which was never really filled. The following year, John Ruddle found that the strain of running the National Collection alongside the work of Society Secretary was becoming too much, and this situation could no longer continue. He decided to resign as Hon Secretary, finally relinquishing the post at the AGM of February 1981 after 10 years in the job. However, this was good news for the National Collection, for he was now free to devote his energies to this project and was confirmed at the same AGM in the new post of National Collection Curator.

Writing in the "Bulletin", John summarised the growth of the Collection and went on to describe the current philosophy guiding it. "Its existence is multi-purpose", he wrote. "Firstly to preserve types of models of our early years, and of the hobby as a whole. These may now be crude and badly painted by present day standards, but they show the development of painting, conversions and the art of casting. Along with this we have tried to acquire figures from the Toy side of the hobby, and show the contemporary solid Toy figure now emerging. Juniors are given space to show that we encourage younger members within our ranks of the Society. We have tried to acquire the super models from our very advanced modellers, and these are coming ... This is an exhibition of all aspects of the hobby." Here was a clear and concise summation of the reasoning behind the National Collection, which had been its guiding principles from its foundation and continue to the present day.

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The prospects for the National Collection now looked rosy, with John Ruddle concentrating on his position as Curator and a good home at Hatfield. Looking forward to the 1982 season, the Curator wrote that he hoped "to develop the British full dress era from 1850 to 1914 which strangely enough hasn't been very well supported. The Indian Army seems to have done very well and it is hoped that this may have a case of its own soon. So also has the Zulu Campaign, but the parade dress of the British Army is sadly lacking. Two other areas I hope may bring more items are the 1914-18 War and the Boer War. The Ancients have been another good ground for donations and I hope to split this into two sections, one exclusively for Mediaevals ... We are still ploughing some of our funds back into the collection and were able to buy one lot of the Richards Collection at the Phillips auction."

Another innovation which had been introduced most successfully was a Trophy for the best model donated to the National Collection each year. Initially known as the Hatfield Trophy and later the Whitbread Trophy, after member Dave Whitbread presented a fine engraved glass goblet for the competition, this was judged by the Curator and presented to the winner at the Annual Competitions. The winning entry was displayed in a place of honour in the exhibition for the next year. As an encouragement to modellers to present models this was most effective, and was another factor in the continued growth of the collection.

Unfortunately, this apparent stability was to be short lived. Ironically, the catalyst for the problems was the proposal for the BMSS to take on the restoration of the Siborne Diorama of the Battle of Waterloo. This remarkable model was one of the first great dioramas, dating from the middle of the nineteenth century. It was constructed by Captain William Siborne, late of the 9th Foot, who was commissioned by the Commander-in-Chief of the army to make a model of the field of Waterloo. A painstaking historian, Siborne spent much time researching on the site of the battle itself, as well as contacting a great many of the veterans of the battle (this work later being published as "The Waterloo Letters"). The money Siborne had been promised for his work did not materialise so he had to finance the project himself, the total cost eventually being some £3,000. The diorama was completed in 1838, was 18 feet square, designed to a scale of nine feet to one mile, and consisted of a staggering 190,000 figures, each half an inch in height. The final result, with groundwork and the figures laid out to show the position at the height of the battle, was spectacular indeed. It was originally displayed in the Royal United Services Institute, but after its removal it had been languishing in an army store in an ever deteriorating condition.

Through a series of chance discussions in 1979 the Curator persuaded the authorities to bring the diorama to the National Army Museum, where it could be inspected. Following contacts between the National Army Museum and the Society, the BMSS agreed to take on the immense task of restoration of the model to its former glory and a working party was set up under the leadership of Don Fosten. The model was in 35 sections and a framework was constructed in the NAM on which two sections at a time could be mounted for working. From 1980 the BMSS teams worked steadily on the project, evolving a number of procedures and techniques to be followed through the restoration which ensured both uniformity of work and the maintenance of the validity of Captain Siborne's work, allowing as much as possible of his original to remain. By 1982 five sections had been completed.

The plan was for the completed diorama to go on show at Hatfield, who had initially expressed interest in taking it on for a twenty year period commencing in 1984. The general satisfaction with these arrangements was shattered in July 1982, when a meeting was called by the Chief Executive of the Gascoyne Cecil Estate, Mr D Cripps, with representatives of Hatfield, the National Army Museum and the BMSS. At this meeting Mr Cripps

announced with regret that it would no longer be possible for the Siborne Diorama to be displayed at Hatfield from 1984, partly as the result of falling attendances to the static exhibitions in the Riding School building and hence a change of policy at Hatfield regarding the types of exhibitions and displays for the future. Mr Cripps went on to say that, for the same reasons, it would not be possible to house the BMSS National Collection or display it after October 1983.

Here was a blow indeed. For the Siborne diorama, the NAM thought that space might be found in its planned extension, but the Curator was left with the major problem of having to find a new venue for the National Collection for 1984. The Curator of Hatfield House, Lt Colonel A Walker, had always been an enthusiastic supporter of the National Collection and he kindly offered to find storage space for it at Hatfield should it not be possible to find an alternative location in time, a generous gesture which was warmly welcomed by John Ruddle.

Losing no time in finding a new home, the Curator was soon in negotiation with the manager of Stratfield Saye, the country house of the Duke of Wellington. In November 1982 agreement was reached for a small exhibition to be mounted in the Stable Block at Stratfield Saye in 1983 while the main collection remained for its final season at Hatfield, with the full National Collection moving to Stratfield for the 1984 season. For 1983 the Curator agreed with Hatfield to remit part of the fee for the collection in return for the show cases becoming Society property, in preparation for the change of venue.

Models were still coming into the National Collection, and a bequest from the late John Hannington included four dioramas of the Waterloo period which would be most welcome and appropriate at Stratfield. For the 1983 temporary exhibition some makeshift cases had to be used, but with imaginative use of available models backed up with a number of prints an attractive exhibition was mounted.

Regrettably the situation at Stratfield was not all that would be wished. The accommodation was not very suitable, with walls which, although newly decorated, were exceedingly damp, and the Curator found the Stratfield management indifferent to the exhibition and unsympathetic to what he was trying to achieve. As a result he continued intense lobbying with Hatfield to allow the collection to remain there, but as 1983 went on it appeared these efforts were to be to no avail and so he pressed on with negotiations for more space at Stratfield.

On the very day that Stratfield agreed to allow the Collection extra space the Curator was contacted by Colonel Walker to say that Hatfield had relented and the BMSS could stay there after all. Instead of having no home for the National Collection the Curator now faced the curious dilemma of having two venues to which the Society was committed!

To honour the agreement to Stratfield Saye, and yet keep the Hatfield exhibition, it was decided to split the collection between the two houses. With the steady growth of the Collection this was now possible, and there were obvious benefits to the Society in increasing the numbers of visitors who would see the models and so be aware of the BMSS, plus of course the financial benefits of having two displays. The Hatfield display continued to present an overview of model soldiers, while the Stratfield exhibition logically placed its emphasis on the Napoleonic era and the army of Wellington.

A collection from a different era on display at Stratfield from 1984 was the small scale wargame models of the late John Sandars. John had been an expert of the Western Desert campaigns of World War Two and had built up an unrivalled collection of models depicting the armies and vehicles of that era, many of them scratchbuilt. This collection had been passed to the National Army Museum, but John Ruddle was horrified to find that they had been badly stored and neglected, and were rapidly deteriorating. Obviously such an important collection could not be left where it was not appreciated, so the Curator rescued them from the NAM and put them on proper display in a large showcase at Stratfield. The models were laid out depicting British, Italian and German brigades as they would have been in the Desert in 1942.

The earlier problems with the management of Stratfield continued to manifest themselves. As one example, during the 1984 closed season the Curator was aghast to visit and find the display cabinets surrounded by straw bales - the room had been used as a shelter during gun dog trials! The situation continued to decline, and it was decided in 1985 that the Society would have to pull out at the end of the season. This was readily agreed by Stratfield, who wanted to use the area for an audio-visual display on the Battle of Waterloo, and they agreed to store the models until they could be removed.

Although it had never been originally intended for the National Collection to be split over two venues (three counting the small display in the Bethnal Green Toy Museum), having established a second exhibition the

Committee were very reluctant to give up such an obvious benefit for the Society. So, yet again, the Curator had the unenviable task of writing around trying to find another venue. Yet more possible locations were circulated, such as the Royalty and Empire Exhibition in Windsor, Chatham Historic Dockyard, Bentley Motor Museum, and many others, without success.

All was not lost, however, and a location was eventually found at Stonor House, the home of Lord and Lady Camoys near Henley. Here a small room was made available, in which were showcases with interior lighting plus ceiling mounted spotlamps. The Curator was able to set up an exhibition there for the start of the 1986 season which, although much smaller than that at Hatfield, was well laid out and displayed. The presentation was well received by the Stonor House management and once again the reaction of visitors was most appreciative. This arrangement lasted for five years, during which time the Society and the Stonor House management had an excellent working relationship and the display brought much mutual benefit. But, almost inevitably, it was to come to an end when the house owners wanted the room for other purposes, and in 1990 the Curator was informed that the Stonor display would have to be moved again for the 1991 season.

Drawing on his now considerable experience of hunting for venues, John Ruddle decided that this time he would concentrate on the military connection, particularly the various historic forts which were being opened. This proved a most judicious decision, with the first two approached both showing interest. Fort Amherst on the Medway appeared keen, but the Curator felt that the proposals from Eastbourne were more attractive. They were offering the use of the Wish Tower, one of the Martello Towers built along the coast during the Napoleonic wars as defence against any invasion attempt from across the Channel. The sheer size of the accommodation offered was daunting, but the main concern was the obvious seepage of damp through the roof. Unattended for 180 years, foot long stalactites were hanging from the ceiling! However, the authorities gave assurances that the roofing and damp would be dealt with, and it was on this basis that the Curator agreed to move the Stonor display to Eastbourne.

After Christmas 1990 some of the bulkier dioramas began to be moved to Eastbourne and one of them, the "Death of Gordon" by the North Kent Branch, was used by Eastbourne in their publicity brochure for 1991. To the anger of the Curator the promised roof repairs had failed to materialise on time, and

during an initial visit in a downpour the rain continued to seep into the display area. Pressure was brought to bear on the authorities, and working parties of BMSS members, particularly a number of members of the Essex Branch lead by Mick Beale, set about making the Tower presentable. After overcoming numerous problems in fixing showcases to round walls in restricted spaces, the display was assembled and the Tower walls embellished with prints from the National Collection augmented with items from the Eastbourne Redoubt fortress. The opening ceremony was performed by the Mayor of Eastbourne on the 25th May 1991.

The size of the accommodation meant that the display could now include representative models covering the full range of the hobby, including some toy figures, models, and dioramas. However, in keeping with the history of the Martello Tower there was a significant emphasis on the Napoleonic Wars. Once again the display proved a great success, with much interest shown by visitors.

It will come as no surprise to learn that two years later the display was on the move yet again. Eastbourne Council had received a better offer for the Wish Tower from someone who was willing to pay them for the use of it, and hence the BMSS had to move out. This was somewhat galling, not only for the disruption caused but also because of the great efforts put in by Society members in making the Wish Tower habitable after its long period of neglect. However, all was not lost, for the Society was offered alternative accommodation in the Redoubt Fortress close by.

The Redoubt offered many advantages over the Wish Tower. The Society was offered one of the casements in the fortress, which, compared with the Martello tower, was larger and dryer. Also significant was its location within an existing military museum complex, for in the Redoubt were the museums of the Sussex Regiment and Royal Irish Hussars. The disadvantage was that again the Society's help was needed in renovating, even rebuilding, the interior of this part of the fortress. Once again the Curator was ably assisted by various Society members in the work, even including some bricklaying by the redoubtable Mick Beale. Order began slowly to emerge, but another setback was suffered when the museum authorities, in an attempt to be helpful, got a group of young people from the Youth Opportunities to move the models over before the BMSS working party arrived. As none of these people knew anything about models or how to move them, many of the pieces suffered appalling damage. Some heroic restoration work ensued, and

despite all the problems the exhibition was able to open for the 1993 season. There was no official opening this time, but the Mayor of Eastbourne came by once again to wish the exhibition well.

The exhibition in the Redoubt now covers the themes of Ancients, Crimea, the Indian Mutiny, Imperial Germany, the Second World War, post-war armies, the American soldier, and four cases are devoted to Waterloo and Napoleon's Grand Armee. An unusual display is devoted to the Royal Navy, using figures from the collection of the late Fred Sell. Other sections include items from the Bamford collection of Britains figures and there is a display of the new gloss toy-style figures.

Hopefully this is now a settled venue for this section of the National Collection. It is certainly a fine display reflecting great credit on all who have worked on it and provides an excellent introduction to the hobby and the Society for the many visitors to this popular site. However, experience shows that longevity of venue cannot be taken for granted, so who knows where the display may be in five years time?

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Meanwhile, what had been happening to the Hatfield House display during these years?

When the decision was taken to allow the Collection to remain, Hatfield found new accommodation for it in a separate building, for the Old Riding School was now wanted for an exhibition of motor cars. The model display was located in the Old Stable block, a much improved venue with larger and better display area. This did not last for long, for in 1986 it moved again into the kitchen area within Hatfield House itself.

In 1986 the National Collection had one of its most important bequests, when it received the collection of the late Roland Bamford. This immense collection of toy soldiers contained many rare items, including large numbers of mint condition Britains figures. Adding these to the National Collection gave the Society one of the best old toy soldier collections in the country. The bulk of the Bamford collection was put on display at Hatfield in this year. Also added to the display was a striking display of the Trooping the Colour Ceremony, made by the Curator, which had taken him two and a half years to complete.

Lt Colonel Walker retired as the Curator of Hatfield in 1987, much to the regret of the BMSS National Collection Curator. Colonel Walker had always been most cooperative and supportive of the National Collection, irrespective of what the Hatfield

management may have been doing, and it had always been reassuring to know that Colonel Walker and his wife were prepared to look after the models when BMSS members were not present.

1987 also saw the creation of a “travelling show” of exhibits from the National Collection which the Curator took to important Society displays. Clearly it would not be appropriate to move any of the models too frequently as the risk of damage in transit would be too great, but at the same time John Ruddle was anxious to support national Society events if at all possible. To this end he built a portable display unit which could be taken to shows to display selected items from the Collection. Initially used for the first of the BMSS “Spectaculars” (see Chapter Four), the travelling display has become a familiar and welcome feature of major Society events.

More major bequests came to the collection. The collection of the late Robert John Grazier was donated to the Society by his brother, and brought another 300 models to the National Collection. All finished to a very high standard by this skilled modeller and painter, the collection included both single figures and dioramas ranging in subject from Japanese samurai to the Second World War. Another important collection was that of Jack Higgs, whose widow donated his models to the Society following Jack’s untimely death. His models were of the Second World War, mainly vignettes and dioramas and often including finely modelled vehicles and figures in lively and imaginative scenes. Adding to these bequests were the continuing donations of figures by Society members and some purchases, all the while building to an unrivalled collection of the art of the model soldier.

The fourth change of location within Hatfield came in 1991, when the authorities decided to move the collection out of the kitchen area to an old loft room in the Stable Block, which had formerly been the furniture store. The usual problems of cleaning the area had to be overcome before the collection could be moved, plus some unwelcome intrusion from burst pipes and lack of weatherproofing in the roof. The not inconsiderable persuasive powers of the Curator prevailed on the Hatfield management to put these right, and the collection could move into its new home.

This was a far from simple relocation. The old showcases were three feet long and one foot deep, but the new cases built around the walls of the new room were seven or even eleven feet long and four feet deep. A complete re-think of the style of display and the thematic arrangement was needed.

There are now eleven showcases devoted to the collection, each showing a particular aspect of the world of model soldiers. Entering the exhibition, the visitor first sees a large and spectacular display entitled “London Ceremonial” which, while not attempting to recreate any single event, uses a parade scenario to display the toy style figure to best advantage. Using mainly figures from the Bamford Collection, the models are mainly the work of Britains from the era 1935 to 1966, but also include figures by Hill, Crescent and Timpo. Serried ranks of soldiers in full dress parade down a typical street, with a Royal coach central to the proceedings. Other models include guns, wagons, and figures in service dress, along with some interesting civilians as spectators.

The “Napoleonic” cabinet mixes single figures and groups, and scales from 25mm to 120mm. The groups themselves range from small vignettes such as “The Portrait”, which depicts a proud French Hussar having his portrait painted, to larger dioramas such as the “Retreat from Moscow” with ten 54mm scale figures, and colourful groups such as the Drummers of the 57th Foot and a large Band of the 2nd Foot Guards. A similar style of presentation is used for the “17th and 18th Centuries” display, where exhibits range from large scale single figures of a Roundhead cavalryman of 1643 and a superbly modelled musketeer of the same era, to a boxed group of flat 30mm figures depicting types of Frederick the Great’s army, all very well painted. Continuing to move back through time, the next case in this group shows the “Viking and Medieval” period and again the mix of single figures and dioramas is repeated. Contrasting styles can be seen in representations of a group of Viking raiders, all action and movement, and a scene of the collecting of information for the Domesday Book, where the more peaceful theme is reflected by the mixture of military and civilian figures, and even some farm animals, with interesting period buildings and accessories.

A change of style comes in a large display of “Britains Toy Soldiers”, showing the huge range of figures produced by this most famous of manufacturers. As would be expected, there are British soldiers of many regiments and periods, along with naval and air force figures, vehicles, guns, and even some early planes. Together with the British troops are a remarkable collection of overseas subjects, truly “Soldiers of all nations” showing the incredible range of figures available for the collector. The subjects range from Abyssinia to Venezuela, taking in the expected major powers such as France, Germany, Italy, Japan and

Russia, but also include some lesser military nations such as Montenegro, Poland, Sweden, Serbia and Uruguay.

Two major dioramas illustrate the art of this type of model presentation. "Trooping the Colour" by John Ruddle has already been mentioned and this spectacular representation of the 1907 ceremony, with its many figures of soldiers and spectators, and splendid background of Horse Guards, remains a fine example of toy soldier display. A contrast in both theme and style is "Nut City", a large diorama of US and German soldiers during the 1944 winter campaign of World War Two. Here there is a mingling of figures in combat with tanks, vehicles and buildings, many of the latter in varying states of damage, the whole set in winter with atmospheric use of snow effects.

The Second World War is further explored in the "Desert War 1940s" showcase, which contains the John Sandars collection. A large number of his small scale British and German vehicles are complemented by examples of his 1/35th scale vehicles and figure models. This display leaves no doubt as to the artistry and skill of this great modeller and is a fitting tribute to his memory.

"British and German Empires, 1840-1914" uses the medium of model soldiers to display the pageantry of the rival empires. For the British, the regular army is complemented by the Yeomanry and, of course, the Army of the Raj, while a large collection of figures show the myriad uniforms of the Imperial German Army. The case entitled "1914-1918" provides the contrast, showing the reality of war for these same soldiers. A diorama of "The Somme" shows trench warfare on the Western Front, and an early tank ploughing through the mud brings the beginnings of

mechanisation. "Petrograd Winter, 1917" illustrates the Russian Front, while "Lawrence of Arabia" brings a reminder of the conflict in the Middle East.

The lighter side of soldiering is seen in some of the models in "Army life in the 1930s and 1940s", the last case in the Hatfield display. This is the work of Jack Higgs, the many vignettes and dioramas showing his talent for capturing the real character of soldiers. Examples include "Cough" (a sick parade, 1935); a kit inspection in 1938; "Short back and sides" (a field haircut in the Western Desert); and "The Wooden Horse", the famous scene of the POWs in Stalag Luft III. There is even a model representation of the "Two Types" from the celebrated series of wartime cartoons. These snapshots of army life are an appropriate conclusion to the National Collection exhibition, showing as it does the best aspects of modelling, collecting, and the use of models to explore all aspects of military history.

Although the constant moving brought an immense amount for John Ruddle and his volunteer helpers from among the Society membership, it is undoubtedly true that each time the Collection has had to be relocated it has been to an area better than the last. The displays have grown in size to a startling degree compared with the first exhibition, and the presentation has improved beyond all recognition. Twenty years of evolution and growth has culminated in the best organised and laid out display of model soldiers ever seen in this country, from a National Collection which is rivalled in size and scope only by the Forbes Museum in Tangier.

The Society can have no better shop windows for its activities than the National Collection exhibitions.

Chapter 8

The Modern Society

*“For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be”
- Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

Although justly proud of its history and contribution to the development of military modelling, the BMSS is still actively promoting the hobby of model soldiers in the modern world, a world very different from that of its founders.

For the hobby, the “modern” era can be seen to have been ushered in with the 1970’s. Chapter Three detailed the rapid changes in the post-war years and the dramatic growth in the hobby through to the end of the 1960’s, together with how the Society both influenced and was affected by the changes in the modelling world. By 1970 the BMSS had all its main mechanisms in place and functioning well. Membership was at a peak, modellers work had reached unprecedented levels of artistry, and there was a burgeoning industry supplying the raw materials for the hobbyist. Indeed, joining the list of famous names in 1970 was Series 77, the products of John Tassel and Pat Bird, which set new standards in quality of sculpting, detail and casting, and also contributed significantly to the growth in popularity of the larger scale figure. Of even more influence was the arrival of the Airfix “Collectors Series” figures in 1971, the first releases being a British Guardsman of 1815 and a mounted 10th Hussar of the same period. These figures, together with many subsequent releases in the same series, opened up a whole new range of possibilities for modellers. They were produced as plastic kits, as were the well established Historex models, and as such had enormous potential for animation and conversion. Although of good quality they were not as well sculpted or cast as the fine Historex products but, importantly, they were very much cheaper. As a result modellers had no qualms about experimenting with the figures, performing radical conversions in the knowledge that there was no great loss if the result was a disaster but much to be gained from success. This atmosphere of experimentation encouraged originality and imagination, leading to great strides forward in techniques of all aspects of figure modelling. Also, and most importantly, these good quality figures were

at pocket money prices and in every High Street, bringing them within reach of young modellers who could be encouraged to develop their skills and gain great satisfaction from their hobby.

Some well known names were appearing on the BMSS Committee around this time. In 1970 Roy Dille, already famous through his published books and articles on model soldiers, was voted onto the Committee and the following year was elected President. Significantly, it was agreed in December 1971 to alter the rule limiting the Presidency to one year to allow a President to stand for re-election at the end of his year of office. Clearly, having secured Mr Dille as President the Society wanted to hold on to him as long as possible! Also in 1971 John Ruddle took over the post of Hon Secretary which he was to occupy for the next decade. Others joining the Committee in the seventies included John Cox, the South Hampshire Area Rep, who was elected to the new post of Junior Members Liaison Officer in 1974, and at the 1975 AGM Ian Webb was co-opted as a result of the work he had put in to the Society display at the Model Engineering Exhibition. Mr Webb was not only to be re-elected every year since but also took over the Treasurer’s post in 1977. His predecessor, Mrs Sheila Jackson (nee Watkins) had worked as Treasurer since 1970 and was presented with a silver salver on her retirement, in recognition of her splendid work as Treasurer through some difficult financial times for the Society.

The difficulties the BMSS had faced were twofold, a steep rise in expenditure caused especially by the rapid inflation in printing costs, and a slow decline in membership, from a peak of 1,171 in 1971 to 947 in 1977. The effects of the printing problems on the Bulletin have been described in Chapter Five, but the slow decline in membership was to be a recurring problem which the Society would have to tackle on numerous occasions. As the BMSS continued to offer ever improving services to members, including bigger shows and competitions, more meetings, and a Bulletin

of high quality with much improved photographic content, the Committee often found itself struggling to find what more could be done to retain members. In many ways it was an unequal struggle, for the most influential factors were outside the Society's control, among them the growth of the commercial modelling magazines which eroded the position of the Bulletin; the plethora of small, local clubs which satisfied modellers who did not feel the need to join the national Society; more specialist clubs which had broken away from the BMSS, such as the wargamers and military vehicle modellers; national economic problems; and just general changes in society such as the many alternative entertainments for young people.

Nevertheless, the BMSS never stopped actively seeking ways to improve the Society both to retain existing members and encourage new recruits wherever possible. In 1975 a Sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of John Sandars was established to undertake a complete overhaul of the Society's rules, to ensure that they met the needs of the new era and the evolving organisation. The report was presented to the full Committee in January 1976 and the new rules approved by the Annual General Meeting in February. As well as essential administrative matters, the new rules clarified such questions as the status of areas and branches, rules for competitions, meetings, officers, etc. A new wording for the Object of the Society was agreed which was admirable both for its clarity and brevity: "The object of the Society is to foster and promote the interest in model soldiers as a hobby in all its aspects, together with that in associated areas of military modelling."

The Junior Members Liaison Officer was working both to encourage the existing junior members and also reach out to others outside the Society. Much work was undertaken to cooperate with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, the BMSS assisting by setting the standards for military modelling within the hobby requirements of the scheme, although there were problems with the Award scheme administration's frequent changing of its own rules. Even more effective in introducing junior modellers to the hobby was the establishment of a Summer School at the National Army Museum. Each year the Museum held events for young people during the long school holidays, and the BMSS was asked to run a short school on military modelling as part of these events. The Society was very pleased to arrange this, to the profound satisfaction of the Museum, the BMSS, and, most importantly, the young modellers who learnt valuable skills from the Society's experienced members. This

became yet another of the Society's regular annual activities and over the subsequent years has introduced many young people to the hobby.

The BMSS offered members a new service in 1978, with the start of the Society's Information Service. Within the BMSS were many members with considerable specialist knowledge, both of model soldiers and related matters such as uniforms. The Information Service sought to tap this well of expertise for the benefit of other members. An informal Panel of experts was organised and the mechanism was very simple: members requiring help could send in their questions with a stamped addressed envelope and the reply would be posted back to them. The coordinator for the Information Service was John Sandars until his death, when the position passed to John Cox. The Information Service has received much praise from satisfied enquirers over the years, showing how an organisation such as the BMSS can provide valuable assistance to its members at little cost, thanks to the generosity of other members in giving freely of their knowledge and time.

Another innovation in 1978 was the introduction of the Accolade of the Society. The Fellowship remained the highest honour the BMSS could bestow, but the Accolade was designed to be awarded as recognition for particular services to the hobby and, unlike the Fellowship, could be awarded both to members and non-members of the BMSS. The nature of the Accolade can best be appreciated by a glance at the list of the first recipients, announced at the 1979 AGM. These were to Don Fosten, on his retirement as National Committee Chairman; Alastair Bantock, on his retirement as Northants Area Representative; Lynn Sangster, for his services in publicising the Society and encouraging plastic modelling in this country; Violet Sell, for her services as "doorkeeper" at National meetings; Wendy Dilley, for her support of her husband as President; Hugh Taylor, for publicising the Society abroad; 'Q' Jacobs, for many years loyal support for Society activities; Hugh Walters (non-member), for his work in making military modelling a feature of outside events such as the Aldershot Army Show and services to the Society at such events; and Mike Ferguson, President of the Military Figure Collectors of America, for services to the hobby. The Accolade has been awarded each year since to a wide variety of worthy individuals and organisations whose contribution to the hobby and the Society is deserving of recognition.

In Bulletin issue 1 of 1980 the President looked back with justifiable pride on a decade which had "achieved a transformation throughout the Society". This had

“prepared it to expand rapidly if the need arose in the future and to take its rightful place as the foremost organisation in its field”. The President underlined his argument by listing 12 significant achievements of the decade: complete revision of the Society rules; complete revision of the Competition rules; establishment of a display stand at the Model Engineer Exhibition; multiplication of branches from a handful to 25; establishment of the National Collection; change of venue of the Annual Competitions; establishment of the Interbranch event; publications of BMSS competition rules; new Bulletin format; improvements to judging procedures; introduction of the Accolade; and establishment of the National Army Museum Summer School. Here was a formidable list of successes, which gave every reason for optimism for the 1980’s.

In fact, the early years of the next decade were to present the BMSS with some problems. The first of these was the closure of Caxton Hall, the Society’s meeting place in London. Despite protests and appeals from many bodies who used Caxton Hall, including the BMSS, the owners of the building brought forward its closure date at very short notice. The last meeting of the BMSS in its old venue was December 1983, and from January 1984 the meetings were held in the Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre. The Secretary, David Pearce, had been faced with an exceedingly difficult task in finding another venue very quickly and, although not wholly satisfactory, this was the best that could be found in such a timescale. Among the problems with Westminster was that it was not available on Fridays, so for the first time in its history Society meetings had to be moved to Thursday nights. Neither venue nor day were successful, so the Secretary set about searching once again for a new location. A suitable meeting place was found in Napier Hall, Hide Place, Vincent Square. This offered a good sized room, facilities for making tea and coffee, easy access from Victoria and Pimlico stations, and it was available for Fridays. The meetings moved to Napier Hall in January 1985.

Even more worrying to the Committee was the declining Society membership. The slow decline which had been evident in the previous decade continued, causing much concern among the BMSS Officers. In a report to the Committee in 1983 the Secretary identified seven areas where action could be taken, including improvements to the Bulletin, more local contacts, better information provision, improvements in judging, more publicity, and the establishment of “exclusive services” for members. All were followed up, the start of the “exclusive services” (later renamed

Support Services) probably having the greatest effect. This was a small team under the leadership of Mick Beale whose brief was to look at ways the Society could further benefit members by making available goods or services available only through the Society. The first products of Support Services were the BMSS Postcard sets, the first release being five cards of Guards uniforms, published at the beginning of 1984. The next issue of the Bulletin was reporting “a great, indeed, runaway success. Sales at the Annual Competitions were very brisk to say the least, in fact many advance orders have already been taken for the second set of cards.” Many releases were to follow, illustrating contemporary British Army full dress uniforms. Support Services would go on to produce figures, Christmas cards and special publications for sale through the Society, and the team organised the very successful Jubilee shows and Model Soldier Spectaculars.

Unfortunately improvements take time to filter through into tangible results and in 1984 membership fell to 681, the lowest since 1962. So concerned was the Committee that a special meeting was called for a Saturday in October to give time fully to discuss the problems and action that could be taken. From this no less than 16 proposals were drawn up for measures to improve membership, covering areas such as re-organisation of competitions, better publicity, encouraging more branch activity, improvements in Bulletin content, and more displays of models. Although involving much work for the officers and Committee, these actions had the desired effect. The following year, 1985, membership rose by 102, helped no doubt by the publicity from the Golden Jubilee celebrations, but the upward trend continued through 1986 and 1987, restoring membership to around 850. At the end of the decade a full membership survey was organised, in the form of a questionnaire sent out with the Bulletin, which showed that there was a general satisfaction with the Society and provided much valuable information on the spread of members’ interests and their thoughts on ways the BMSS could progress.

In the Bulletin issue 1 of 1990 the President had another “review of the decade”, this time of the 1980’s. Reflecting on the last ten years Roy Dilley noted that they had

“brought outstanding success in standards of work, organisation of important events, development of techniques and exploitation of new materials. They also featured cut-backs in the volume of manufactured items suitable for our purposes at reasonable prices. As a direct result

of these reductions, together with the growth of interest in electronic games and pastimes among other factors, fewer young people appear to be coming into military modelling at junior level ... There has also been some “plateau-ing out” of membership numbers, thus proportionally reducing subscription income. However, very much to its credit, the Society has been able to keep subscription rates low, consistent with upward trends in costs of printing, post, accommodation, transportation and other charges on our available monies. The sterling work of our Hon Treasurer, Curator and Support Services Team, in managing our finances and providing additional sources of income, has been responsible to a marked degree for this subscription stability, and we thank them.

More success, as indicated by analysis of replies to our recent membership questionnaire, has attended upon the smooth handling of format, content and distribution of our Bulletin, with its associated Extra ... Rules have been reviewed to provide a better platform for vigorous competition into the 90's, with accompanying opportunities for raising modelling standards to even greater heights ... All organisers at national and local levels within the Society will continue to provide venues with ample scope for the membership to obtain a maximum of enjoyment from military modelling and its associated areas of interest.”

After acknowledging the work of all those who worked for the Society, the President finished his review with the firm conclusion that “We can look forward with confidence to the future.”

As we reach the middle of the 1990's, and with it the Society's Diamond Jubilee, it is worth reflecting on the BMSS today.

The main problem facing the Society remains the vexed question of membership. Once again the numbers have declined, again for many reasons outside the control of the BMSS. Even so, there is still a solid bedrock of dedicated members who actively support their Society and its activities. The BMSS is indeed fortunate in having such loyal members within its ranks, they form the foundation for the growth of the Society which will inevitably come when the climate swings the pendulum back in our favour.

The Society is as active today as it has ever been, and offers a greater range of services than ever before. It is seeking new members, has put strenuous efforts into its publicity, and still seeks to find ways of making

improvements better to meet the needs of its members. The traditional activities are still fundamental to the BMSS. Meetings are held regularly in London and by Areas and Branches all round the country. The Annual Competitions are still a highlight of the year, as is the Interbranch Competitions. Added to these are many local and regional shows organised by the many active branches. At all types of meetings are Society members with a huge range of interests, ever willing to join in conversations on all aspects of modelling techniques, military matters, or related topics.

The Bulletin and Bulletin Extra are issued regularly, publishing news, reviews and information, and providing a platform for communication between members wherever they may be. For more detailed problems or queries the Information Service supplies expert answers. Support Services' activities have grown, notably the start of the “BMSS Members' Collection” series of unique figures in 1991 and the issue of more “Special Publications”, alongside its long-standing activities of organising special events, such as the Jubilee Show, and sales of postcards and castings.

The National Collection, established over its two venues, is one of the Society's greatest assets. The BMSS now has the finest collection of Britains figures in the country, along with superb examples of all types of modern model soldiers. There is no better way for the public to see the best work in military modelling than at these permanent exhibitions.

Still the BMSS is looking to introduce more innovations for its membership. 1995 saw the beginning of an experiment to form “Special Interest Groups”, covering such topics as Britains figures, bands, conversions, artillery, and the Indian Army. These are designed to use the facilities of an organisation such as the BMSS to put enthusiasts in touch with others with similar interests, the better to exchange information and ideas.

After 60 years the British Model Soldier Society looks back with pride over its record of achievements, and at the same time looks forward with optimism to a long future as the premier organisation for model soldier enthusiasts.

Appendix A

Presidents of the BMSS

1935 - 1937	E K Milliken
1938 - 1947	P D Clendenin
1948	J C Sachs
1949 - 1954	J B R Nicholson
1954 - 1960	W Y Carman
1960	E R Reynolds
1961	R Broom
1962	W R Turpin
1963	L W Richards
1964	R North
1965	R W Tichband
1966	D S V Fosten
1967	F A Green
1968	H C Faulkner
1969	R W Gould
1970	D Hagger
1971 -	R S Dilley

Note: In 1960 a rule was introduced that Presidents would only serve for one year. This rule was altered in 1971 to allow the President to stand for re-election each year.

The President's Badge of Office

The Badge of Office worn by the President was donated in 1963 by Mr J E Walker, with the request that it be worn at all official meetings of the Society and when the President deems the occasion necessary. The badge is a collar of crimson silk, representing the Army, on which is a twisted cord of dark and light blue representing the Navy and Air Force. Pendant from this is the Society badge in silver and enamel, around 3.5 inches in diameter. To make the presentation, Mr Walker attended the Committee meeting of 8th August 1963 and invested the President, Mr L W Richards, with the new insignia.

Appendix B

The Principal Officers of the BMSS

Secretaries

1935 - 1946	W Lockwood
1946 - 1971	A G Clayton
1971	H C Faulkner
1971 - 1981	J T Ruddle
1981 - 1983	R Williamson
1983 -	D L Pearce

Treasurers

1935 - 1945	W Lockwood
1945 - 1946	J C Sachs
1946	L Barnes
1947 - 1963	J E Peck
1964 - 1970	L W Richards
1970 - 1977	Mrs S A Jackson (nee Watkins)
1977 -	I R Webb

Editors

1935 - 1937	F J Allen
1937 - 1939	W Y Carman
1939 - 1946	W Lockwood
1946	W Y Carman
1946 - 1961	A G Clayton
1961 - 1969	B K Fosten
1969 - 1976	B A Hornick
1976 - 1979	J R Sandars
1979 - 1984	M J Miles
1984 - 1990	P H Vickers
1991 - 1994	S G Westwood
1995 -	P H Vickers

Appendix C

Fellows of the BMSS

1968	R L Broome	
1968	W Y Carman	
1968	P D Clendenin	
1968	D S V Fosten	(deceased 1995)
1968	B K Fosten	
1968	J Nicholson	(deceased 1987)
1968	L W Richards	(deceased 1980)
1968	F A Green	(deceased 1990)
1968	W R Turpin	
1969	L Shrubsole	
1969	A C Rolston	(deceased 1978)
1970	H C Faulkner	
1971	R W Gould	
1972	D H Hagger	
1972	J C Edgcumbe	(deceased 1977)
1973	R S Dilley	
1973	R J Marrion	(resigned 1982)
1974	J T Ruddle	
1974	B A Hornick	
1975	M R Creese	
1975	T MacDonald	
1977	J R Sandars	(deceased 1979)
1977	E Roche-Kelly	
1978	D Buller-West	
1978	J H Cox	
1979	P S Sturgeon	
1981	P Wilcox	(deceased 1994)
1982	J B Jenkinson	
1984	I R Webb	
1985	T H Middleton	
1985	G Balchin	
1986	L Sangster	
1987	J B F Regan	
1987	J B Woodley	
1988	J Higgs	(deceased 1989)
1989	P H Vickers	
1992	M J Beale	
1992	A T Kettle	
1992	H T Miller	
1992	M D Thomas	
1992	D L Pearce	
1994	D W Disley	
1995	P Ledger	

The Roll of Fellows

The book forming the Roll of Fellows was presented to the BMSS by Alan Edwards in 1981. The pages are of handmade paper and it is bound in dark brown Morocco leather with gold tooling on the front cover. The title page is illuminated with the Society's badge in full colour with the initial letter and decoration in raised, burnished 18 carat gold, the calligraphy done by Bill Williamson. The names and dates of all Fellows are written individually on a page in the Roll. The book is displayed at official BMSS functions.

Golden Jubilee Special Awards

Two Special Awards were given in 1985 on the occasion of the Society's Golden Jubilee, to two members who had given exceptional service to the BMSS, and the details entered in the Roll of Fellows. The awards were made to M J Beale and Mrs M W Dilley.

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