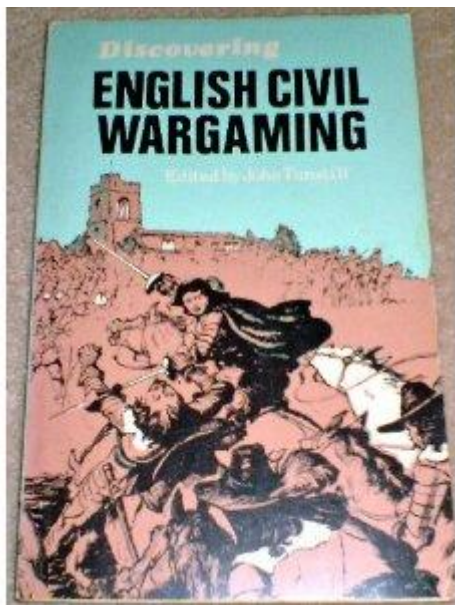


‘Discovering English Civil Wargaming’

By John Tunstall (ed)

Review by Paul Le Long

While John Tunstall is the name on the cover, the author of this book is really George Gush, who wrote seven of the 10 chapters. It’s a very short book – only 45 pages. But it is nevertheless really good and well worth a look if you have an interest in the period.



The chapters are “The English Civil War” which is really a short introduction to the period; “Warfare in the Seventeenth Century” which is an overview of military organisation accompanied by some diagrams. Then we have chapters on Infantry, Cavalry, Dragoons, Artillery, Standards (flags), Sieges, Melee and Morale.

Let’s take the chapter on infantry as an example – we get a discussion on organisation of forces, formations and tactics, weapons, dress and equipment and some useful diagrams of tactical formations.

The other chapters follow a similar pattern. The Melee chapter is slightly different because the emphasis is on wargames rules rather than on explaining the art of war in the period; though each chapter tends to finish with suggestions of how to reproduce this or that aspect of the English Civil War on the tabletop.

As I said, this is an extremely short book and many of you reading this review will learn nothing from it. But the value of this little book, apart from its charm, is that it explains some really simple, basic things that other, more sophisticated, works ignore. I wish I had read this before I wrote rules for the ECW because it would have made things much simpler. There is good, simple advice throughout the book – take cavalry, for instance: pistol fire from horseback was important, charges were fairly slow and the recipient of a charge was unlikely to break prior to impact and melee, and cavalry was very likely to become uncontrollable in pursuit. For artillery the advice is that rate of fire was very slow, effective range was short (no more than 400 yards) and that tactical movement and repositioning of guns during a battle was very difficult.



This is all great advice that brings the period to life but which many other books ignore, presumably because it is so simple.

For most readers though, I imagine the chief value of this book is nostalgia.

Details:

- **Publisher:** Shire Publications Ltd (1973)
- **ASIN:** B00113O1DM

This book is out of print and currently unavailable on Amazon.