

Albion

LET US GO FORWARD,
INTO THE FUTURE,
WITH OPTIMISM.
(CHURCHILL)



ALBION is a journal of board wargaming and allied interests. It is published on the first day of each month at a subscription price of 10p per issue, plus appropriate postage costs. Postal Diplomacy games are reported in COURIER, the section of ALBION created for that purpose.

Applications for places in Diplomacy games should be made to the editor - Don Turnbull, 6 St. George's Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire, England. The supply of games is a function of the demand. See the waiting list on pages 13 and 14 of this issue. Players awaiting a game are expected to subscribe to ALBION until the game starts. Players involved in a game receive both ALBION and COURIER free, having paid the game fee, until such time as either they are eliminated or win; they pay postage costs throughout the game.

ALBION is a member of the NFFF Games Bureau Diplomacy Division.

Diplomacy is a game manufactured and marketed by Games Research Inc., 48 Wareham Street, Boston, Mass. 02118, U.S.A. It can be obtained in the UK from various shops, but in case of difficulty please write to Hewitts Ltd., King Street, Knutsford, Cheshire. Cost about £2.40. Please mention ALBION when writing. Contributions to ALBION are welcome. They should be written legibly or typed. Please submit as far in advance of publication date as possible.

The editor doesn't necessarily share the views of contributors as expressed in articles or letters.

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The AHIKS British Region Members' Bulletin for February 1971 is attached to the rear of this issue. This is done in order to give non-members an idea of the activities of AHIKS.

The front cover is by R. Emerson. The cartoon at the rear is by George Forster. To both these people, our usual thanks. Note that all art-work is stencil-duplicated, off-set plates being far too expensive for the ALBION coffers.

EDITORIAL

January has been a bleak month - and the Manchester weather has had nothing to do with it at all. As I write this, at the month's end, we have been without mail for ten days, and there seem to be no signs that the situation will be sorted out in the near future. Just in case overseas readers haven't been reading their international press section, let me announce that the entire post office system in the UK has been on strike for more money (what else?). Entire, did I say? Well, the unions keep boasting about 100% support, yet quite a lot of telephone switchboard operators are back at work. I suspect that quite a few of the mail section would be back too, if there was any mail to deal with. Striking is fun, I imagine, when the union pays for your beer while you are 'out'. However if the union doesn't give you much cash, you start thinking pretty deeply about the morality of the whole thing, it being a fairly widespread characteristic of the human being that he doesn't think about such things until, all of a sudden, life becomes rather intolerable.

The British public has got rather fed up with strikes. During the recent strike of the electric power workers, when the country was plunged into darkness for four or more hours a day, the reaction of the public seemed to change abruptly from 'for goodness sake let them have their money and bring life back to normal' to 'we can stick this out; prices are going up enough already'. This is regarded as a welcome sign in some quarters, and perhaps it isn't being over-optimistic to predict that, in the near future, industrial blackmail isn't going to be the force we have so far allowed it to be.

Some have compared the attitude of strikers to that of a small boy who, playing a game with his pals and trying to dictate rules whereby he is certain to win, decides to take his ball home when the others in the game ask for a fair balance of play. We sneer at this attitude in individuals, but seem to have accepted it readily when dealing with industrial strife, at least until recently. Anyway, be that as it may, the hobby of postal wargaming isn't much of a hobby when the post fails. And compiling a magazine like ALBION isn't all that easy when the post fails to deliver articles, letters etc. Hence the fact that this issue of ALBION is short, and the next one is likely to be even shorter, if it exists at all, unless the postal situation is cleared up soon. My apologies are due to the readers for this - all I can say is that we will do our best under the circumstances.

The operation of the off-set press is now becoming clearer to us, and we are confident that this issue will be much clearer and more legible than the mess which you received last time. If this is indeed the case, the method will be retained for future issues of ALBION, at least as long as we have access to the machine. However COURIER will not follow suit, at least for the time being, since I have to use up my stock of paper somehow.

I would like to repeat the plea for articles. My own time gets more precious as the months roll by, and I cannot devote as much time to writing articles as was the case a year ago. Anyway, you don't want the collected works or meanderings of djt, you want a comprehensive magazine. Only by writing articles for ALBION can you ensure the thing isn't filled with rubbish by me. Please let me have your ideas.

Don Turnbull.

The Drawing Board

being the second in an irregular series of articles which look at aspects of game design.

by Michael Nethercot.

Avalon Hill's latest game PanzerBlitz is going to be a success; it may even prove to be the most important game issued since Battle of the Bulge. Readers of the recent survey of Tactical Game 14, and of S&T magazine, need no further explanation as to the reasons for this.

Simply, up to now almost all published games dealing with land warfare have been based on historical campaigns. In essence their format has been restricted to the use of counters representing relatively large battle formations: Divisions, Corps and Armies. A player needed to know very little about the principles of tactical deployment and of the relationship between fire and movement. To a large extent individual counters lack qualitative value, and because of the limitations imposed by scale, are only effective combat-wise when adjacent to an opponent.

The creation of solid fronts is the primary aim of defensive strategy in games like Stalingrad, Blitzkrieg and 1914. Given a reasonable parity of player skill and experience, the average game often degenerates into a mere slogging match between the contending forces. Perhaps this is historically correct for certain simulations, but it is certainly the antithesis of the concept of 'Lightning Warfare'. The S&T Modular Blitzkreig variant is an attempt to open up an already complex game, but this seems not to have caught on amongst the majority of players.

Most readers will probably have made some attempts to put their own pet theories into practice by designing their own games. I would guess that in the majority of cases the end product is not dissimilar to the standard Avalon Hill box of tricks. For true innovation is rare and, writing from bitter experience, it is most difficult to create a completely new concept.

PanzerBlitz and TAC14 are different because they simulate TACTICS. They are not conceptually new because table-top players have always fought this way. What Dunnigan, Nofi & Co. have done is to transfer some of the advantages of table-top techniques onto the map board. Whilst doing so they have had the good sense to avoid the pitfalls of incomprehensible complexity, and the parochialism which allows a player to add two points to the morale factor of the first platoon because the Captain's wife has blue eyes. Read Donald Featherstone for further examples. As the same group is responsible for the design of Avalon Hill's newest game, we can look forward to something very special indeed.

* Michael's 'look forward' may cause some query among American readers. The fact is that, although PanzerBlitz has been available in the U.S.A. for two months or so, only one or two copies have reached England. Delays in the mail over Christmas may have had something to do with this. djt*

One serious drawback in the representation of modern warfare on the table-top is the complexity of weapon systems. At the same time one has to overcome the inherent problem of scale. Using the standard 1mm to the foot, an AFV or truck will scoot across the table in something like a minute. This means that game turns must be related to very small time intervals. The position is made worse by the presence of units having different rates of fire, and

the difficulty in deciding whether my Sherman could have received a broadside from your Tiger whilst trundling across that open space between those two woods.

In many respects it appears that the tactical simulation of modern warfare may be better served on the map board than on the table-top. Of course the point has yet to be proved and as this new development is still in its embryo stages, the whole field is open for experimentation.

I hope that readers may be interested in taking part in the further development of tactical map gaming. Up to now nearly all that is new in our hobby has come from over the Atlantic. It would be a change for something original to emanate from these shores. Not that I intend any criticism of our State-side compatriots - if it wasn't for their original creative efforts the hobby would not exist in anything like its present form today. ALBION is an ideal vehicle to carry the word into every nook and cranny where map gamers dwell and have their being (perhaps we should exclude those areas which are hostile to repressive warmongers); so, if you have some special knowledge, or think you would like to do some constructive work, just drop me a line.

As an initial trial I want to develop a series of basic tactical games on the lines of those already published by S&T. Not that I wish to copy - as proof of my integrity in this matter perhaps I may quote Arnhem; this is an experimental game now being playtested. It was designed well before the convention at which I saw TAC14 for the first time. The basic format will comprise a map which can be used for all periods. Rules and unit counters will of course be produced for each separate period, and the interest will be maintained throughout the series by using descriptive introductions setting the scene, each game being placed in its historical context. As an important part of the programme, the basic system will be capable of adaptation and amplification in order to cater for play-by-mail, face-to-face and multi-commander games. Even to the organisation of a hidden movement full-scale divisional battle on the convention floor.

The first game will probably involve a British and a German mixed infantry/tank force somewhere in Western Europe in the summer of 1944. Anyone having an interest in this period please contact me. I will draw and reproduce the basic map and send out copies of the draft rules. The cost cannot, unfortunately, be included in your ALBION subscription, but I promise that it will be measured in New Pence rather than Dollars.

I will of course report progress from time to time via ALBION. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Michael Nethercot, 20 Moray Close, Rise Park, Romford, Essex, England.

Michael's article, and suggestions, hold promise of an exciting new venture in England. A number of factors point to the desirability of such a project - the many board wargamers who must exist in England without any knowledge of the spreading of the hobby, the dearth in English shops of games of any worth (coupled with the high cost of importing games from the U.S.A.), and the lack of cohesiveness which, until recently at any rate, has existed among devotees of the board wargaming hobby in this country. I hope readers are interested enough to give Michael support and assistance in this most valuable project. djt

A BRITISH IDIOT IN AMERICA

Being the totally biased and inaccurate account of the three-week holiday in the U.S.A. made by the editor, his wife and four-year-old son.

Part v. Annapolis, Maryland.

Starring: Bob and Jane McLaughlin
Suzanne and Stephen.

Also appearing: Fred and Inge Davis
Jim and Roz Crawford
Tom Shaw
Joe Seliga
Many other friends and relations, too numerous to list individually.

And: A waitress with much much talent
An invisible lady of ill repute
A charming and co-operative bank official
Various water-nymphs, good and evil

* * * * *

Don Miller very kindly offered to drive us from Wheaton to Annapolis, and decided to make a day of it, so Stella, Stephen and Sharon packed their swimming gear, and we loaded into Don's car, which luckily was large enough to take us all. Stephen and Sharon, by now accustomed to the foibles of Christopher, kept him out of mischief with superb efficiency and the minimum of effort - the products of three days training in the art. This left the car fairly quiet, so that Don and I could talk during the drive; as usual, when leaving somewhere, you suddenly remember all the things you meant to ask and to talk about, by which time it's almost too late.

We reached Parole Plaza, Annapolis, around noon on July 27th. I got out of the car and started looking for Hickory Farms, the McLaughlin emporium, where cheeses and other delicacies (including some magnificent cake) are sold in profusion. I blended perfectly with the Americans around me, with my off-white face, white right arm and red left, fourteen cameras slung round my neck, and looking the wrong way when crossing the road.

So here was I, in Parole Plaza, looking for the delicacy Mecca of Maryland. I strolled around for a while, then spotted the sign, and was steering a course towards it when I became aware of something approaching a riot in the car-park behind me. Turning, I realised with a shock that a total stranger (and darned good-looking, too) was embracing my wife with vigour and ferocity. She didn't seem to mind, either. Shouts of applause rose from the crowd of shoppers who had gathered round to admire the performance and to make detailed notes of the technique. Remarks like "Whoopee - another gorgeous redhead" drifted across the parking lot to me, and Don Miller started to take the hat round to cover the entertainment tax.

Of course, the stranger was no stranger at all, but Bob McLaughlin, who disentangled himself momentarily to say hello to me, then got back to the important matter of Anglo-American relationships. Christopher toured the crowd, shooting everyone with his cap gun. Eventually matters were restored to near normality.

We met Jane, Bob's charming wife, and Suzanne, Bob's daughter (who at the time seemed a very nice innocent girl - little did I know what devilry she had in store for me) and everyone piled into Bob's bus. We drove to the Wagon Wheels restaurant, on the road towards Baltimore, where we had the most superb lunch I have ever eaten. Stephen Miller (I'll have to append the surname to avoid confusion with Stephen McLaughlin, who we met later at Bob's aunt's house, where he was staying during our visit), Sharon, Suzanne and Christopher immersed themselves in vast ice-cream sodas. I ate a variety of marvellous things (crab cakes featured prominently) which activated my palate in a way unparalleled in the history of that well-exercised organ. We drank cool beer, ate the marvellous fish food for which Annapolis is justly famous, and talked.

The Millers then departed to try to find a beach, while the rest of us went to Bob's apartment.

So started a pleasureable, relaxing, enjoyable ten days with Bob and Jane. When I first started wargaming, my first postal opponent was Bob, and since then we have corresponded regularly and frequently, playing various games along the way. Of all the people I wanted to meet in the U.S.A., therefore, Bob ranked the highest. When we planned the trip, it soon became obvious that, because of various complications, some poor host would get more than his fair share of the Turnbells. Bob drew the short straw, so whereas the others only had to suffer us for three or four days, Bob and Jane had to have ten days of nervous exhaustion, wondering just what the stupid British were going to get up to next.

It would take ten issues of ALBION to recount all our experiences in Annapolis, so this account must be restricted to a few highlights. This factor has made this part of the erudite series of articles particularly difficult to write, since a number of incidents, memorable to us and of possible interest to the readers, have had to be omitted.

First, the McLaughlin apartment. Besides being accoutred with all the normal requirements of good living, this apartment was unique in a number of respects. First of all, the 200" reflecting telescope by the window, which would have looked at home in Mount Palomar. We arrived on a Monday, and the reason for this massive piece of equipment wasn't clear. However, when the next day dawned, no explanation was needed. You see, there is a large swimming pool, closed on Mondays, a short distance behind the apartment block, and the local beauties are wont to sun themselves when they should be doing the housework for their poor overworked husbands. American girls are constructed in much the same way as the British versions, to my inexperienced eye

Another structure in the house required some explanation. There is an inviolate house-rule of the McLaughlins - under no circumstances may liquor be consumed until the sun is below the yard-arm. With this in mind, Bob has installed a patent yard-arm adjuster, which can raise the yard-arm at will. I must assure everyone that at no time did we consume liquor before 7.15 a.m. despite this useful device.

Bob and Jane also warned us of the lady in the apartment below (although as it turned out, we never saw her during the entire stay). Apparently this lady, having no husband of any noticeable permanence, was accustomed to entertaining her 'friend' late at night, and the screams and smashing of furniture could have disturbed our slumbers. However, try as we might, we never heard a thing. Perhaps she'd joined the Female Liberationists.

Jane and Margaret got on together famously. Jane decided - quite unreasonably, I thought, but that's a woman all over - that her foremost duty was to assist Margaret in extracting from me 95% of my remaining dollars and spending it on clothes. To this intent, Jane and Margaret used to disappear from the apartment some mornings, reappearing at lunch-time with more purchases and demands for money, not necessarily in that order. Bob and I - true gentlemen to the last - endured these events with stoicism. However we both wondered how Jane could, after only 24 hours knowledge of me, devise such a wide range of methods of cash-extraction. Just wait until they visit us!

Prominent among the necessary purchases I had to make was yet another suitcase. The words 'Excess Baggage' drifted into my mind with increasing frequency, and I wasn't referring to Margaret either.

Suzanne McLaughlin is quite a remarkable girl. At ten years of age, she is intelligent, energetic, and most attractive, and some man is going to have real trouble dealing with her at some future date. She immediately decided to take control of Christopher, who never once demanded a weewee in a loud voice in public throughout the rest of our stay. She swam with him at the pool, played games with him in the apartment, and introduced him to all her friends, who were amazed to find that even young people from England spoke with an English accent.

The day after we arrived, Suzanne took Christopher down to the pool. Stupid father, all unsuspecting, followed. Now Suzanne has a bevy of female friends, all entertaining, all attractive, and all extraordinarily evil as far as I am concerned. I went to the pool for rest and relaxation, and spent the entire time being ducked, splashed, pushed in and generally half-drowned by this collection of ~~monster's~~ ladies. If ever anyone needed water-wings in a pool, it was yours truly.

We played many games during our stay, of course. Anzio, Stock Market (AH), C&O/B&O, Yahtzee, Gin Rummy and my golf game, to name but a few. One day we were visited by Jim and Roz Crawford, with a couple of friends, and we got a five-player Diplomacy going, plus some of the S&T games and Afrika Korps. In the Diplomacy game I drew Austria, and got on quite well. Bob and I were amused to find, after a long alliance, that we had stabbed each other at the same time. I think the result was a three-way draw between Jim, Bob and myself.

Roz Crawford has her own house-rules for the game. Playing England, her first orders were for a fleet to make the move Edinburgh-Norway. When we explained to Roz that ships have to cross the sea first, she nodded sagely and ordered both her fleets to the North Sea. England didn't feature much in the development of the game.

All my friends will tell you that I am extremely fond of my stomach - some of them will remark that there is plenty of it to be fond of. Now Bob is also a dedicated lover of good food, and our stay in Annapolis was punctuated by some of the most remarkable meals we have ever eaten.

Not that all these were at restaurants - Bob is an accomplished steak chef, and we ate luscious thick steaks, charcoal-grilled, on a number of evenings. Anyone who thinks they can get good steaks in England had better start revising their ideas - these were uniformly better steaks than I have eaten before, and under Bob's expert touch they became masterpieces for the palate. However you can forget the old adage that steaks are good for potency - we still have just the one child.

Eating out has always been a favourite pastime of mine, when the opportunity arises. Annapolis is justly famous for its eating places, of which we saw three or four during our stay. One particular place - I think it is called the Harbour Lights - springs to my mind in this context. Bob and Jane took us there one day for lunch.

Bob had recommended that I try a beverage called Planters' Punch and I, always ready to get paralytic on something new, decided to follow his advice. Ere long a young waitress hove into view. More correctly, certain prominent parts of the anatomy of said young waitress hove into view, followed at some distance by the young waitress in person. She moved to my side and asked for my order.

"Plahnters' Punch, please" I said, in best BBC.

"Huh?" she replied, intelligently.

"Plahnters' Punch, please" I repeated, raising my voice somewhat.

"Sorry, but I didn't quite catch ..." she said, on the brink of mirth.

"PLAHNTERS' PUNCH" I yelled, quite forgetting the standards of behaviour required of an English gent overseas.

At this point she burst into a fit of giggles. Her entire anatomy shook with gusts of laughter, seriously endangering the composure of a diner three tables away. The floor rocked, and the Harbour Lights restaurant shivered on its foundations, threatening to become a more integral part of the harbour than the designers had ever intended. Heads turned all over the room, anxious to see the cause of the commotion. Bob and Jane silently curled up with laughter.

In the midst of it all I kept my stiff upper lip, wondering just what the hell was going on.

Amid screams, she found voice. "Oh, you mean Planners' Punch" she chortled, totally omitting the letter 't' in the word. "Gee, you British are so cute".

The message finally got home to me (they usually do, if you allow them time). My impeccable accent was at fault again.

The diners turned back to their food again. After all, it was just another of those idiot Englishmen, and food is more important at any time than Englishmen, however idiotic. Bob and Jane tried to keep straight faces, but failed miserably. Christopher continued to examine, with interest and some amazement, the vital parameters of the waitress.

"In Jolly Old England" said I, anxious to preserve some notion of a victory, "we pronounce it Plahnters."

This only caused more laughter. I finally conceded defeat. However her final triumph was yet to come.

"Sorry" she said "there isn't any today", in the manner of an English waitress announcing that the Brown Windsor was 'off', and disappeared to the nether regions of the restaurant. The door opened a few moments later, and the heads of the entire staff emerged to examine the curious phenomenon which had somehow invaded their midst. All of a sudden, without previous training or experience, I had become the most looked-at man in Annapolis.

Finally the place quietened down again. The food was excellent, however, which helped to atone for the incident.

My last travellers' cheques had to be cashed in Annapolis, principally in order to keep Margaret and Jane quiet, and I quaked at the thought of running yet another gauntlet. However, to my surprise and pleasure, the bank official to whom Bob introduced me had no arguments at all, and gave me a good rate of exchange. Bob knows just about everyone in Annapolis - if you go anywhere with Bob you can be sure of getting good attention. I should mention that Bob is one of the organisers of the Annapolis Clam Festival, which wins him a place in the hearts of all sensible food-orientated people.

One day we drove to Fort Holabird to meet Jim Crawford. We then went on to the Ordnance Proving Grounds at Aberdeen, where there is a display of tanks, guns and armoured vehicles of all types and nationalities. This is an amazing display - if you visit Maryland you musn't miss it.

Another evening was spent with Fred and Inge Davis in Baltimore. Once again we enjoyed good food, wine and company. Inge is remarkably adept in the culinary arts. If you are a girl living in Maryland, you have to be pretty hot on the cooking in order to ensnare a husband, since they are all used to eating very well indeed.

There are many other incidents I could mention. However there is only space for one more - our visit to Avalon Hill, the Wargamers' Mecca. There we met Tom Shaw, who showed us round and answered our questions. In actual fact, there isn't much to see at Harford Road, Baltimore; it is really a printing set-up, and any visitor who expects to see keen-eyed boffins earnestly engaged in designing the next AH game will be disappointed. However it was very interesting to talk to Tom, and to hear his excuses for the Shakespeare game.

All too soon came the day when we had to pack our many suitcases in preparation for the journey home. Bob, Jane and Suzanne drove us into Washington for the plane, and Bob kindly paid for my huge excess baggage bill. It was a very sad moment indeed when we said our final goodbyes and climbed on the plane.

Our journey home was quite routine, except that the plane from Washington to New York had been overbooked, and officious boors in uniform kept trying to oust Christopher from his seat. However I'm damned if I'm going to pay for a ticket for a flight only to have Christopher sitting on my knees throughout, and we kept our three seats after some harsh words.

The plane from New York to Manchester was only half-full, and we hoped for a chance to get some sleep. This was rendered null and void by the presence, on the flight, of two drunken Scotsmen with their wives (?) who announced their intentions of drinking the night away. They continued their loud yammering and boozy chatter for most of the flight. We survived by moving to the other end of the plane.

We got to the customs office in Manchester, and dutifully went in the 'Something To Declare' section. The Scots party, by now smoking large cigars, went in the other door. We were delighted by two things: one, the customs officer didn't bother to open our cases, and re-worked our calculations so that we didn't have any duty to pay; and the wonderful fact that the Scots party just didn't re-appear from the customs, despite the fact that we deliberately stayed around for a while to see what would happen. Everyone else came out, but no boozy loud-mouthed Scotsmen, and we had marvellous visions of them being stripped to the buff and being generally gone over. Poetic justice, I reckon.

Finally, we reached 6 St. George's Avenue. Back to domestic bliss again. And to cap it all, it was pouring with rain.

x x

At this point it only remains for me to repeat my sincere thanks to all the good people who entertained us during this, the very best holiday we have ever had in our lives. I warn you all - we'll be back again sometime.

They already know that bed and board awaits them at Timperley, should they decide to pay chilly England a visit. And if we can do half for them, when they stay with us, as they did for us, then we will be assured that we have been good hosts. The four families we stayed with were Hospitality Unlimited and we can never hope to equal that. But we will try, our best.

Don Turnbull.

* * * * *

AVALANCHE - Rule Suggestions.

by Dennis Nixon.

I was much interested in the ALBION review of Avalanche and Cube Fusion, both of which I had noted in the shops, but had not sampled as commercial family games of mass appeal can be disappointing. However, the article induced me to get the game, and I am just as pleased with it as Don Turnbull was. It is wholly original and can be played as a light-hearted family game or on a more serious scientific plane. I do think, however, that the introduction of the colour element is an unnecessary and undesirable course, at any rate after one's first few games, and we soon decided on the following form for two or three players.

Each player takes one tray (20 marbles) colours being ignored. A turn of play consists of playing marbles one at a time until a fall-through occurs, and these are placed on each player's own cards, of which he should have two or three. Scoring is on the basis of 1 for every marble played plus 1 for each fall-through marble. Thus at any time a player's score is found by adding the empty spaces on his tray to the occupied spaces on his cards. Play ends when one player has cleared his tray (he will of course arrange to get a fall-through with his final marble) unless the remaining players have not yet played an equal number of turns with him, in which case they have one final turn each until all have played an equal number.

This makes an interesting and exciting game, and the allowance of points for playing marbles helps to keep the board pretty well loaded, thus increasing the chance of an avalanche. The most we have achieved at a time is 9, but I see that 11 is theoretically possible. Later we introduced an additional rule of 'nominations' under which if a player is trying for a fall-through he must say how many he expects to get, and scores them only if he is correct. Can be quite tricky when marbles are flowing down several channels.

Dennis Nixon.

Thanks for the suggestions, Dennis, which we will be interested to try. One thing - does the card (or cards) have to be complete at the end for the winner? And if it is complete, what happens to any excess? djt

ALBION Trades and Subscribers List.

Decimal Day is upon us. On February 15th England will convert to a currency system that we should have been using for years. With any luck, the Welsh, Scots and Northern Irish will convert with us. The radio and television continually blare 'One Pound Is a Hundred New Pennies' into our ears, and a 100% obnoxious 11-year-old lectures to us at 0820 each morning on the new system. Fair makes you weep. Very few people are going to find difficulty remembering 100 pence to the £ sterling, nor are sums adding up to 100 any more difficult than those adding up to any other number (i.e. I will still get most of them wrong anyway). What many people are going to find difficult is to reconcile themselves with sneaky increases in prices, under the pretence of rounding-off. As with combat in AH games, every sum is rounded up, not down.

In the vague hope that eventually we will get used to the system, I thought the time had come to demonstrate to everyone my utter incompetence in dealing with figures by converting all the ALBION credits and debits into new currency.

Explanation: British figures are given in 'new'pence (and £, when appropriate). Overseas figures are given in U.S.dollars, on the assumption that overseas subscribers will be more familiar with these than with the new English system.

All figures should be correct up to, but not including, this issue. COURIER 25A has been accounted - players therein please note.

T = we have a trade agreement.

TA = we have a trade agreement, copies of ALBION etc coming to you by air. Your credit or debit in this respect is given in (.....)

S = you subscribe to this magazine instead of paying a psychiatrist. Your credit or debit is indicated in (.....)

P = you are playing in one or more ALBION games. Your credit or debit for the postage costs is indicated in *.....*

A = you get this magazine free, for various undisclosed sins you have perpetrated.

In all cases, a figure preceded by a minus sign indicates that you owe me cash. Pay up, or else.....

1. Michael Nethercot, 20 Moray Close, Rise Park, Romford, Essex.
S. (£1.74½)
2. Malcolm Watson, The Firs, 37 Moss Lane, Timperley, Cheshire.
P. *0*
3. Colin Newcombe, 115 Longdown Road, Congleton, Cheshire.
S. (38½)
4. John Robertson, Upper Dungallass, Arbroath Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 1QN, Scotland. P. *-64½*
5. Chris Hancock, 17 Mallard Road, Chelmsford, Essex.
P. *22*
6. David Wood, 27 York Close, Gillow Heath, Biddulph, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.
P. *35½*
7. Rod Walker, 5058 Hawley Boulevard, San Diego, California 92116, U.S.A.
TA. (-81.21).
8. John McCallum, P.O.Box 52, Ralston, Alberta, Canada.
T.
9. Jeff Key, 4611 N. Pennsylvania, Apt. 1-D, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73112, U.S.A. T? What's happened to our trade, Jeff???
10. Dick Holcombe, 233 Orange Street, Oakland, California 94610, U.S.A.
S. (-84.81).

11. Ray Evans, 12 Mareth Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire.
P. *92*
12. Bob Johnson, P.O.Box 134, Whippany, New Jersey 07981, U.S.A.
TA. (~~\$9.99~~) Diplodeur vol. 4 no. 13 included.
13. Don Miller, 12315 Judson Road, Wheaton, Maryland 20906, U.S.A.
T.
14. Bob Thomas, 155 Coxford Road, Shirley Warren, Southampton SO1 6TX.
S. (-21)
15. Bob Stuart, 3 Millwood Road, Orpington, Kent.
P. *08*
16. Eric Slack, 26 Hartcroft Road, Bestwood Park Estate, Nottingham NG5 5JF.
S. (26)
17. Sheila Minion, 7 Beeley Close, Allestree, Derby DE3 2PY.
S. (39)
18. Charles Wells, 3021 Washington Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44118, U.S.A.
S. (\$2.06)
19. Terry Kuch, 7554 Spring Lake Drive, Bethesda, Maryland 20034, U.S.A.
T.
20. Larry Fong. DELINQUENT to the tune of \$3.19. Not receiving copies.
21. Edi Birsan, 48-20 39th Street, Long Island City, New York 11104, U.S.A.
P. *12*
22. Bill Heim, 27964 Edgecliff Way, Hayward, California 94542, U.S.A.
S. (\$3.66)
23. John Lilley, 112 Croydon Road, Reigate, Surrey.
S. (£1.31½)
24. Buddy Tretick, 3702 Wendy Lane, Silver Spring, Maryland 20906, U.S.A.
P. *\$3.80*
25. Fred Davis, 5307 Carriage Court, Baltimore, Maryland 21229, U.S.A.
S. (91)
26. Richard Redd, 16 Rechev Megadim, Yefeh Nof, Jerusalem, Israel.
P. *\$2.20*
27. Rod Blackshaw, 24 Oak Cottages, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire.
P. *19*
28. Bernie Ackerman, Box 2545, Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa.
P. *\$2.79* -Note change of address.-
29. David Jones, 4/58 Deveron Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire.
P. *04*
30. Allan Calhamer, 501 N. Stone, La Grange Park, Illinois 60525, U.S.A.
A.
31. Jim Dunnigan, Poultron Press, P.O.Box 396, New York City, New York 10009,
U.S.A. A.
32. Tony Jones, 32 Saxon Close, East Preston, near Worthing, Sussex.
P. *90½*
33. Ian Erskine, 315 Wood Park, Ballinteer Avenue, Dundrum, Dublin 14, Ireland.
S. (71)
34. Bob McLaughlin, Hickory Farms, 3 Parole Plaza, Annapolis, Maryland 21401,
U.S.A. S. (~~\$3.49~~)
35. Dennis Nixon, 49 Manor Street, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS1 4EY.
P. *33*
36. Omar DeWitt, 78 Wickham Drive, Williamsville, New York 14221, U.S.A.
S. (~~\$1.61~~)
37. Harry Tucker, 22 Salisbury Road, Seaford, Sussex.
S. (36)
38. Henry Radice (Lt. Col., M.B.E.) G Branch, HQ Northern Command, York YO1 4AU.
S. (44)

39. Jeremy Elsmore, 3 The Gorse, Tabley Road, Knutsford, Cheshire.
S. (15)
40. Joe Seliga, 15 Windswept Drive, Trenton, New Jersey 08690, U.S.A.
S. (~~8~~1.09)
41. David Karfoot, 9 Mountbarrow Road, Ulverston, Lancs.
P. *~~8~~1.52*
42. Simon Garrett, Bathwick House, Bath BA2 6NX.
S. (63~~1~~)
43. Jim Boskey, 19 Shire Hall Close, London N.W.4.
S. (76)
44. Steve Jackson, Students' Union, The University, Keele ST5 5BJ, Staffs.
P. *~~1~~*
45. David Berg, 17 Church Lane, Highfield, Southampton SO2 1SY.
S. (26)
46. Peter Robertson, 59 Upper Brockley Road, London S.E.4.
P. *96~~1~~*
47. Peter Roberts, The Hawthorns, Keele, Staffs.
P. *~~1~~04* -Note change of address.-
48. Stephen Cruse, 119 Gravel Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire.
S. (80)
49. David Taylor, 171 Lodge Lane, Hyde, Cheshire.
S. (11) -Note change of address.-
50. Charles Appleby, 2 Hulcote, Towcester, Northants.
S. (48~~1~~) -Note change of address.-
51. Stuart Clark, 84 Arkles Lane, Liverpool L4 2SP.
S. (28)
52. T.P.Rogers, 50 A.M.Q., St. Eval, Wadebridge, Cornwall.
S. (86)
53. Will Haven, 23 Teck Street, Liverpool L7 8RR.
S. (60~~1~~)
54. Chris Harvey, 30 Gorway Road, Walsall, Staffs.
S. (88)
55. Charles Winstone, 71 George Road, Erdington, Birmingham 23.
S. (38)
56. David Bell, 908 E 37th., Austin, Texas 78705, U.S.A.
S. (~~8~~5.08)
57. Michael Monahan, 15 St. Margaret's Bay Road, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
S. (~~8~~1.87)
58. Ted Holcombe, P.O.Box 268, Ft. Huachuca, Arizona 85613, U.S.A.
S. (~~8~~1.72)
59. Ian Livingstone, 109 Shaftesbury Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire.
S. (40)

Back Issues List.

Dennis Nixon (issues 3,4,5). Bernie Ackerman (issues 1,3,4,5).
Jeremy Elsmore (issues 1,3,4,5,6,11). Bill Heim (issues 1,3,4,5).

Games Waiting List.

Seven Country Game: Edi Birsan (USA); Mike Monahan (Canada); Ray Evans (UK);
Bernie Ackerman (South Africa).
International Games: Jim Boskey, Buddy Tretick, Ian Livingstone.

(cont. next page).

Abstraction (UK only): John Robertson, Jeremy Elsmore, Bob Stuart, Stephen Cruse, Ian Livingstone.

Abstraction (all-comers): None at present (Bernie Ackerman?).

UK-only games: Adrian Brine, Colin Bradbury, Ian Livingstone.

Remarks.

With the removal of Richard Redd (Israel) into the army, it looks like we are back to square one with the 7-country game. Pity, but to find another three countries (even calling Scotland a different country for this purpose only) seems to be an insuperable task at the moment.

However, if those on the 7-country waiting list will accept an ordinary international game instead, this could start at once, with two players from the UK, two from the USA, one each from Canada and South Africa, and Jim Boskey, who is in England at the moment but will be returning to the USA in summer 1971. On the whole, this doesn't seem a bad range of countries for all that.

If the four people involved agree, therefore, we can start straight away. Please would you let me know if you object violently to such an arrangement; if I haven't had word to the contrary by the middle of April (allowing for surface mail overseas and the machinations of the postal strike) then I will officially announce the game and fix countries, deadlines etc.

On other fronts, the UK-only Abstraction game is filling up nicely; two more players required, please. Let's try to get this off the ground soon, so that Fred Davis can see the fruits of his labours. I hope to announce the start of the game in the next issue.

P.S. One or two people haven't yet paid the game fee for 71/6, due to start on February 20th if the postal strike is over by then. I haven't extracted cash from credit to cover these game fees, but can do so if you don't wish to send more money at this stage.

* * * * *

MEMOIRS OF A BEGINNER.

by Rod Blackshaw.

(The author refuses to take any blame for slight exaggeration).

Into the brightness of daylight, out of the entrance, I walked. Steadfastly as a tin soldier (and not the one with only one leg). Bravely marching, bearing all the jeering glances of bystanders. With resolute purpose I pushed back the door

"I want Diplomacy."

"Oh yes, sir?"

"You know. The game? The one with the exotic purple box?"

"Ah. That one. I've just got to go round the back."

He stalked off, muttering something about yellow vans.

Returning, he informed me of the cost.

"49/6!?" quoth I. "Sacrifices, sacrifices."

Handing over the booty, I demanded my righteous supply of sticky, translucent tape.

It had happened - I had joined the merry, even if slightly off-beat, throng. Demanding participation in an ALBION game (I had previously subscribed for the Game Theory - MUG!) I thought that, in the words of the Poet Chariot, "I'd learn them."

Here I came a cropper. I knew the game had intrigues, but a double-cross in 1901?

The Cad. I know it is my fault. But when I look into a mirror and see my handsome face and big blue eyes I realise I am too trusting. Vast fortunes now disappear weekly towards the G.P.O.

Eventually I succumbed to fate again, and bought a wargame. After playing it twice I thought "This is easy. Any fool can design a game. They have experience, but I have freshness and originality."

"Woe, Woe and thrice Woe" to quote somebody.

From the depths of my mental cavity I dredged up thoughts of a film I once saw. Arrhem. Off I trotted to the library, then to a bookshop, expending vast sums on relevant literature, and then back again to the library.

Friends, imagine my feelings when, in the pages of a magazine (I'm not sure even which one) I saw mention of a new game. That's right. You have guessed it - Arrhem.

I am now nought but a penniless ALBIONite, hooked by that irresistible something that will ruin more marriages than any wenches, and will break more men than H.G.Wells could shoot down with his cannon.

This piece of writing will serve either as warning or encouragement. But good luck either way.

Red Blackshaw.

* * * * *

AL NOFI ON TAC14 (again).

I want to thank you for the two copies of ALBION that you sent me - I'm thinking of having them enlarged or framed or something. I'm particularly glad to note that the second, and more critical, part of the review dealt with matters of substance, not trivia.

There were, in fact, no crossbows at Adrianople, but what other piece could have been used? One 'critic' suggested that the crossbow ought to be more powerful than the English longbow! What he meant, of course, was that the crossbow was more powerful than the old-style short bow. Against the longbow it had hitting power but no range whatsoever.

It wasn't particularly accurate, either, as far as I am aware; the troops in Northern Ireland have just begun to face the crossbow in the hands of violent mobs - in addition to acid bombs, petrol bombs, and other normal means of peaceful protest - but so far there hasn't been anything said about anyone actually being hit by a bolt. Rather remarkable, really, considering the range at which they must be being fired. But thank goodness the crowds are incompetent shots. djt

Incidentally, did you know that it was once suggested to issue 'bayonets' to the longbowmen for attachment to their bows? That the longbow was not officially stricken from the yeomanry's armament until 1596, some turning out for the Armada? That the best English bows were made of Italian yew?

Treashery is designed to be terribly fierce - but then, remember Bosworth Field. And did you ever hear of an army that had 25% of its strength march off managing to win?

Al Nofi.

Thanks, Al, for the further comments. At Bosworth there were other circumstances to consider, of course, but in general I wouldn't argue too strongly with you on the matter. djt

LETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTRESLETTE

From Bob Johnson, P.O.Box 134, Whippany, New Jersey 07981, U.S.A.

Dear Don,

On ALBION: I like the new format, but I liked the old format too - I really enjoy ALBION. Sorry I can't help on articles, but - well, you know! I really couldn't complain about the letters section getting too big. It is my favourite section after 'A British Idiot' and Diplomacy rules articles.

The Berg letter has become a 'cause celebre', hasn't it? Well, it isn't uninteresting. However, a point - the subject of what belongs and doesn't belong.

I wouldn't have thought a discussion of the morality of certain 4-letter words and/or their proper/improper usage was really a subject of concern of ALBION.

But it has become so. Subjects of concern are dictated by editor/publisher and readership. Obviously enough people felt it a valuable subject.

I too like 'A British Idiot' and recognise it, which David Berg obviously didn't. His other comments demonstrate his lack of ability to make judgements, and therefore are easily dismissed.

Will Haven said much of David Berg's meaning, but was more lucid. I hope the ability of a person to relate to ALBION is not equivalent to his adequacy for life among people etc. Good Grief!

To David Berg and David Karfoot - it seems to me that Europeans seem awfully determined to find fault with the U.S.A., and they always seem to imply 'Thank goodness I live in this civilised land'. Well, I too find faults in the U.S.A.

Yet I didn't really see any great improvements in European countries that I gained any sense of familiarity with (UK, Germany, Greece and France) except perhaps the Netherlands. In fact, it was worse in many Asiatic countries.

If there were a better place, we'd all be there - right?

Hey! Don! I thought you spent £1,800 on games in the U.S.A. Lied on your customs form eh?

I read somewhere that one of the readers is coming to the U.S. for a visit.

Tony Jones, as I recall. djt Would you please pass on my enthusiastic open invitation for all to call on me for help in the NYC area or a visit etc. We are fairly well set in our new house now and have room to put up people fairly comfortably; and I enjoy meeting people. Warn them that I moan and grumble while getting beaten at games. It happens so often it is reflex.

Bob.

It's easy to criticise other countries (and other people as well, if it comes to that). Every country has its faults - over here they dress in suits and call themselves politicians. You will always find dirt anywhere in the world if you dig deep enough. djt

From Rod Blackshaw, 24 Oak Cottages, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire.

To Ye Ed:

You happened to mention a shortage of articles, so I wrote one for you. And if it is published no doubt there will be an even greater shortage.

How is it that no-one has compiled a comprehensive list of Diplomacy retailers? From what I have seen of most stockists, they only have one or two copies at any one time. There might be a time when Hewitts of Knutsford could not cope if there were any great demands; apart from the fact that it might be easier and cheaper, as well as quicker, if a prospective purchaser had a stockist nearby. So

how about it?

(from Rod Blackshaw, cont).

Just passing briefly to David Berg's, and partly Will Haven's, letter, I should like to add a short opinion on 'private jokes' etc. To my mind this familiarity is what lifts ALBION to its high place above other 'zines. There can be no real humour without familiarity. I am not petty about being on the outside once or twice, so carry on with the good work.

Yours, Rod.

I would be quite happy to print, in ALBION, a list of retailers of Diplomacy. If readers come across a stockist in their area, perhaps they would let me have the address and the price charged. Thanks to Rod for the suggestion. djt

* * * * *

MAGAZINE REVIEW - D-ELIM.

Recently I had a letter from David Isby, who had seen my request for the game Phalanx in the 'British Idiot in America' series and offered to get me a copy. He also sent me two issues of his own magazine, D-ELIM, saying that I was welcome to review them in ALBION if I so wished.

Over the last few years I have had a number of magazines of various types from the U.S.A. These have fallen into three categories - those worth reviewing, those certainly not, and those which I would review but for lack of time. D-ELIM falls into category 1, and here is a short account of the two issues I have seen.

D-ELIM is the official monthly newsletter of the Military Strategy Confederation, which is a wargames society run at St. John's University, Jamaica, New York. The editor, David Isby, can be found at 32-25 88th Street, Jackson Heights, New York 11369, or at the Poultron Press address in New York City (David is on the S&T staff). The magazine doesn't mention a subscription rate - perhaps non-members of the MSC have to make special arrangements; anyone interested in getting copies should write to David and ask his advice.

The issues, about 20 pages on average, are stencil-reproduced, although I gather they try to off-set most issues. The print is reasonably clear and legible - an electric typewriter is essential, in my experience, in the production of the best stencils.

The contents of the two issues are, I gather, not typical, since both were produced in a hurry after David's holiday in England during the summer of 1970. About half the articles are historical in nature, recounting campaigns, aircraft performance characteristics, ships at Jutland etc. There are a few articles on game playing - principally accounts of table-top games fought in the MSC - although there is quite an interesting article on the use of the Rommel unit in AK. Two comic articles rely for their humour on knowledge of the people involved, and therefore cannot be remarked upon.

Perhaps the most attractive part of the magazine is the inclusion of game rules. In volume 2 no. 6 there are some rules for naval wargames, in great detail. Although the article is headed 'Rules for Naval Miniatures - WWI' it seems quite easy to adapt these to other periods, and to play of the Jutland variety by suitable adjustment of the scale. I haven't actually put the rules into practice, nor have I seen more than three or four other sets of rules dealing with similar actions; however they seem quite workable, realistic without being over-complicated, and adaptable. The author is Robert Zubrin.

In volume 2 no. 7 there is a complete mini-game called COMMANDO, invented by Henry Kringsman and John Dundas. There is a map in two sections (hand-drawn but quite

attractive), a set of unit counters for mounting on card (again hand-drawn but not so attractive) and complete rules. The game involves small units only - i.e. it approaches table-top action - and the rules are simple, straightforward, and easy to learn. Combat is resolved in a 'table-top' manner - each unit has a 'saving throw', for instance - but there is no morale ruling, which might be regarded as a necessary inclusion. This game could provide an interesting bit of light relief for players who are weary of large, complex, actions.

On the whole I enjoyed the magazines and regard them as worthwhile buys. There are many amateur magazines on the American market at the moment, most being merely routine accounts of club meetings (of little interest to outsiders), Diplomacy magazines with few or no other articles, or a parade of inanities generated by a particular editor in order to satisfy his own pride (or whatever). The latter group are often characterised by the fact that they don't last long, to the profound relief of the readers. However D-ELIM belongs to none of these groups, and it is nice to see a genuine effort being made to produce a magazine with general interest, despite the fact that the editorial staff are obviously closely involved in a club group.

I look forward to seeing future copies of D-ELIM. Many thanks, David, for sending these two.

* * * * *

STRATEGY AND TACTICS - THE U.K. AGENCY.

Many readers of these pages will already know that arrangements have been going on (for rather longer than expected) to form an agency in the U.K. for the Poultron Press products - S&T magazine, the Test Series Games etc. The idea is that I should act as agent over here, and distribute requirements to purchasers etc.

There is a long history of things that have gone wrong with this arrangement, or rather with the initiation of it. The postal strike merely adds to the confusion. However, just before the strike started, I received a few copies of S&T 23 for distribution to long-waiting subscribers over here, and these will be going out as soon as the post office allows.

Things seem to be starting to move, therefore, and I hope to be able to announce something positive in the near future. At the moment, however, I am unable to publish a price list, for the good reason that Poultron Press haven't yet told me what they will charge me for the various goods.

If you are interested in subscribing to S&T, and/or in purchasing any of the Test Series Games, please prepare your order, but don't send it to me yet - and do not send me any cash for this. Be patient - they say it has its rewards.....

* * * * *

Thus ends this depressingly short ALBION.

This will be a very short bulletin. For one thing, nothing has dropped through the letterbox for nearly two weeks, and hence anything could have happened without my knowing. It's a matter of some debate when this will reach you all, in fact - I just hope it doesn't go on too long. Henry's usual book column hasn't reached me, so this will have to wait until next time. However, there is some good news, about new members and about the next regional meeting, so let's get on with it.

New Members.

We are pleased to welcome two new members to the region this month. One lives very close to Timperley, and I hope we will be meeting soon. The other is, with the exception of Richard Redd, the remotest member of the region to date.

1. Harald Sonesson, Sturevagen 8, S-182 74 Stocksund, Sweden. The mail strike allowed Harald's letter and cash to reach me, but maybe my reply has been delayed, and certainly he hasn't been able to tell me yet what games he owns and would like to play. I will announce these details just as soon as they are available.
2. David J. Taylor, 171 Lodge Lane, Hyde, Cheshire. Dave has Bulge and Stalingrad - please see the opponents wanted section.

The welcome of the region is extended to our newest members. We hope they enjoy their membership and the games. It is particularly nice to see the region extending into yet another country - the title 'European Region' will be adopted just as soon as my stock of headed paper runs out.

The D. Wood Nuptials.

David visited Timperley during the week before the wedding, and Malcolm and I allowed him to buy us vast amounts of beer in celebration. I presented him with a bill, which read something like this:-

D.J.Wood - Wedding Gift Account.

| | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Contributions: | 23 members @ £5 | £115 - 0 - 0 |
| | from regional director | 2 - 6 |
| | from M. Watson Esq. | 6 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | £115 - 3 - 0 |

| | | |
|--------------|---|---------------|
| Expenditure: | By stationary, letterheads, stamps, carriage, advertising, transport expenses, storage, wrapping, cost of this bill, and sundries | £146 - 3 - 0. |
| | | <hr/> |

DEFICIT: £31 - 0 - Od.

There followed a grim warning as to what would happen if this sum were not paid in full within the next seven days - distraint with COSTS, etc. A skull and crossbones completed the page, with the ominous 'YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED'.

Childish, really, but quite funny at the time. Anyway, I then presented David with a set of tumblers (the glass variety) from the region for his wedding present. At least he can entertain us presentably when we visit.....

Bulletin 22 Page 2.

I haven't seen David since the wedding, but hope everything went off all right. Eric Slack wrote me a very comic letter about the event, which is printed below.

Dear Don,

The cheque includes a little bit to speed David on his way. Regarding which, it seems to me that in addition to presenting them with a token of our esteem etc. (hex sheets perhaps?) it might be a prudent move to make Val a sort of temporary ICRK-Meister-ess. It is fairly safe to assume that in the palmy early days of the life of bliss David will be in no mood to think of wargames and wouldn't recognise an ICRK if handed one on a tray. He will probably be going around with that glazed expression commonly found in men just back from doing their bit of 'wilt-thou-ing' at the altar rails and also in men who have just been struck with a sockful of wet sand. Faced with the prospect of having to do the job herself, Val would be ideally fitted to snap him out of his trance-like state and making him capable of carrying out his solemn obligations. Still nothing from Poultron Press? Of course not. I seem to have been waiting for issue 22 and the games since early childhood. Where did I get the quarter-witted idea that it is possible to buy things from America?

Regards, Eric.

Changes of address.

Ian Erskine can now be found at 315 Wood Park, Ballinteer Avenue, Dundrum, Dublin 14, Ireland.

Tony Jones tells me that the postal authorities have changed their mind again, and that his address should be 32 Saxon Close, East Preston, Rustington, Sussex.

And Talking of Tony Jones.....

A few weeks ago I had to ring Tony about something. I hadn't a number for him, so I duly rang enquiries and was connected with the charming young lady that copes with that department. I gave Tony's name and address, and waited. She came back on the line. With a hushed solemnity, I might add. "Mr. Jones has an ex-directory number" she announced. "If you want to get in touch with him, you could try the Rustington ex-directory operator, ask her to ring Mr. Jones, and see if he will accept the call".

Somewhat baffled, I rang the Rustington exchange, and got connected to the ex-directory operator and explained my predicament. She asked me why I wanted to get in touch with Mr. Jones. Cunningly I said 'Diplomacy' adding that he would understand.

Immediately bells and sirens rang. The phone shivered in my hand, and out jumped a squad of secret police, armed to the teeth and looking very nasty-minded indeed. They took all my clothes off (standing in the hall, too!) and rigged up arc-lamps, thumbscrews, etc. I was grilled for seven days and seven nights without pause.

Finally, when I was a wreck of my former self (and my former self was something of a wreck already) they let me go, and connected me with Tony, who seemed to find the whole affair mildly amusing.

I never did discover what Tony does to make him such a difficult person to phone. MI5 or something, I wager. Anyway - be warned! Beat Tony at a game and he will have the secret police on to you. And don't ever try to ring him.

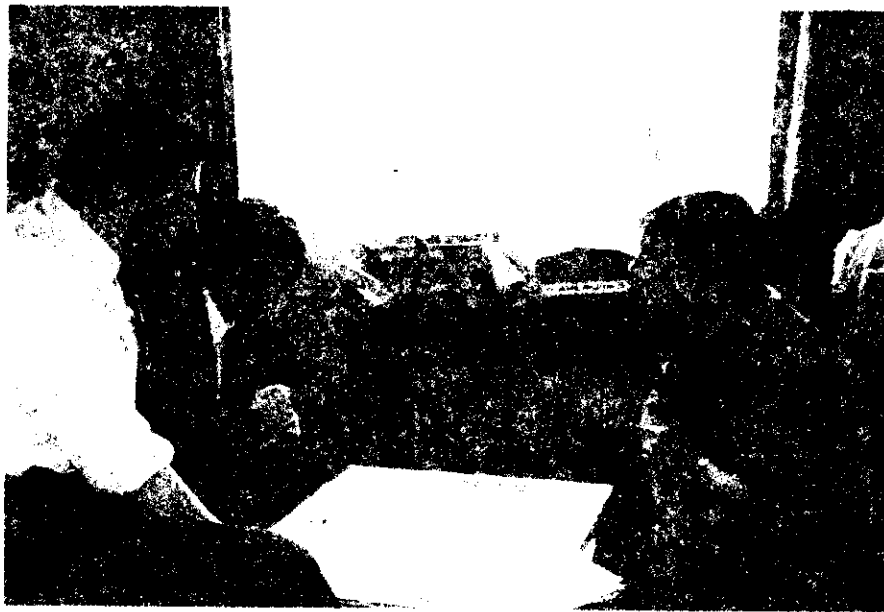
Opponents wanted.

Dave Taylor would like a Stalingrad game. Last bulletin Chris Hall also advertised for one, so there's a match. Would players please contact each other to decide sides, etc. And would David please arrange for an icrk to be sent. If Eric's forecast is right, you might get the icrk by June....

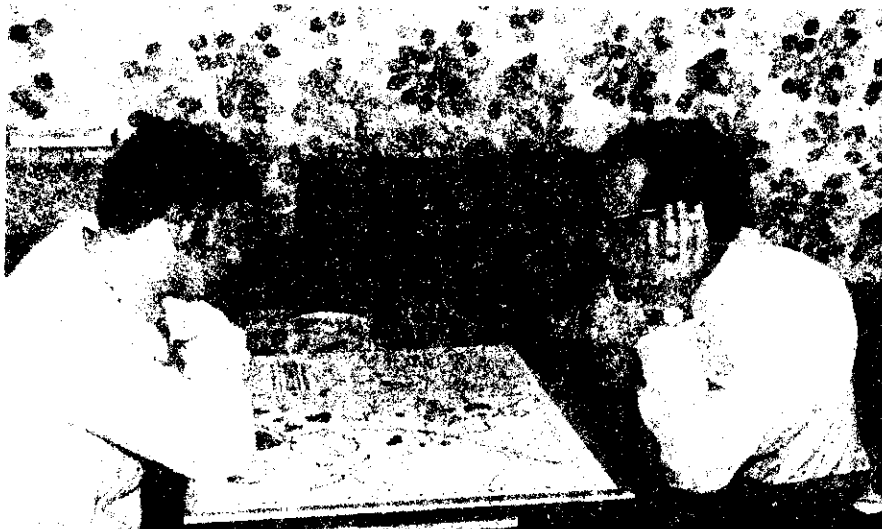
Other advertisers for this column have been frustrated by the post strike. Please let me have your requests for next time.

The Tunstall Regional Meeting.

Sheila Minion kindly sent me three photographs taken at the meeting, and I will try to reproduce them on this page, hoping to line up with this type. My apologies in advance if something goes wrong.



Eric Slack (left) watches David Wood and Chris Hancock playing ARNHEM. The bottle of dry ginger in the rear is just to confuse you.



Malcolm Watson (left) surveys the TAC14 board from which his men are running in terror. The R.D. on the right seems to be performing his well-known impersonation of a Great Ape. The beer is merely a stage prop.



The Terror Of The Desert, Henry Rádice (right) adjusts Ken Norris' troops while Ken is busy elsewhere. Michael Nethercot, centre, appears not to have noticed; you can't see the detail in the photo, but Slasher II, under the table, has Michael's leg in a vice-like grip. The arm on the left raising beer to the mouth belongs to the Bard of Rhyl, John Poole, who should have been watching the game instead. Note the beer mat carefully constructed out of sea zone E, and the hexagonal AHIKS die-shaker in the desert.

The rest of this bulletin has been written by Harry Tucker. My thanks to Harry for supplying all the following details, and my apologies that the mail strike didn't allow me to thank him by letter in time.

The inter-regional AK match.

Harry Tucker (British region, Allies) v Len Howard (Central region, German).

Since the last report the British forces have fallen back slowly, delaying the German advance wherever the opportunity has arisen. During June an attempt to isolate the 21/5 Panzer south of El Adem failed because the navy were unable to stop the Axis supply ships getting through (dud torpedos have been blamed). GHQ were a little disappointed over this, but compensation was obtained by the exploitation of delaying tactics presented by the disposition of the opposing formations in the desert. The attenuation of the enemy forces thus achieved is still apparent in the August 1 situation (see printed map). The Axis forces are strung out across the desert with very little chance of gaining any significant advantage in the next move. The defenders of Tobruch are well dug in and have abundant supplies of guns and ammunition.

Since the early failure of the submariners the expertise of the Senior Service in dealing with the Axis supply lines has considerably improved. For the past three moves Len has been denied extra supplies. In consequence he has had to conserve his one and only supply unit - this is well protected by 15/8 Panzer. So far no Axis formations have been destroyed - thus the DAK is still intact. But the British have only lost 8 combat factors in the nine moves so far carried out - a destruction rate of less than one per turn. This would seem to indicate

that the Axis forces are not doing too well at this stage. The comparative strengths of the two opposing armies now are Axis 38 (36 effective combat because of the garrison at home base), Allied 32: thus the total odds are 1-1 with the Allies having the advantage, because they are mainly on the defensive, of doubled defence factors in some situations. Current British strategy is aimed at maintaining as great a degree of flexibility in defence for as long as possible - rather a difficult task as a rule. A line running south from Matruh offers this, I think. One can use the high ground of the east-west ridge which runs parallel to the coast road to advantage, deploying units as required around the eastern end. With a bit of luck the Allied player can thus maintain a threat to the right flank of the Axis forces, especially if such forces are committed to an advance along the axis of the coast road. The mobility of the Panzers is certainly curtailed in such a case.

Len at the moment is, of course, deploying the majority of his forces out in the desert so the reverse of the comment in the above paragraph applies. He has the mobility out in the desert and prevents the British from exploiting their fast-moving units in that direction. But at the same time he is not able to do much along the road. He now has six moves left in which to break the British defence before the November reinforcements arrive. With Tobruch still firmly held in British hands, can he do it?

I must pop along now to the Desert Air Force HQ to see if I can scrounge a cup of coffee.

Harry Tucker.

The Next British Regional Meeting.

Harry Tucker has also been busy making arrangements for the next meeting, which is to take place on the south coast (in fact, virtually in the Channel, as far as I can tell from Harry's description). Here are the details:

READ, MARK, LEARN etc. THEN FILL IN THE ATTACHED FORM AND SEND IT TO HARRY.

The venue: Eversley Hotel, Marine Parade, Seaford, Sussex.

The dates: Friday March 19th, Saturday March 20th.

The items: Michael Nethercot and John Poole have been working on another multi-commander game for the meeting, this time based on the Russian campaign. More details later.
The usual programme, otherwise, with all games present.

The costs: Bed and breakfast costs 38/6 per head for those staying at the hotel (presumably most of us). Lunch and dinner will be served in the hotel restaurant, but one can also get a hotmeal at the bar if required. Harry isn't sure of meal charges yet, but reckons that dinner will be about £1 all in.

The rooms: We have the lounge to ourselves for the Friday evening and all of Saturday. I imagine we could also use it on Sunday morning if anyone isn't leaving until lunchtime.

Harry says 'It couldn't be closer to the English Channel than it is - it is only 15-20 yards from that rather wild and fickle stretch of water. In fact when a south-westerly blows, the sea comes right across the town and covers everything with salt water.'

The dress: Wrap up well, folks, and bring your rubber boots.

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I think that just about covers all the details for the regional meeting. Would you all please let Harry have the enclosed form as soon as possible, completed with all details of your requirements for the weekend?

Things will be rather rushed in the organisation, assuming the postal strike doesn't depart from us overnight (which it won't, by the looks of things), so it will help Harry enormously to have all details as soon as possible.

Finally,

I hope things start coming through the mail soon - we are losing touch with the games and with each other, and that's not on. I look forward to seeing you all at the regional meeting.

Best wishes to everyone, and hope this reaches you in 1971.

Don Turnbull, 6 St. George's Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire.

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