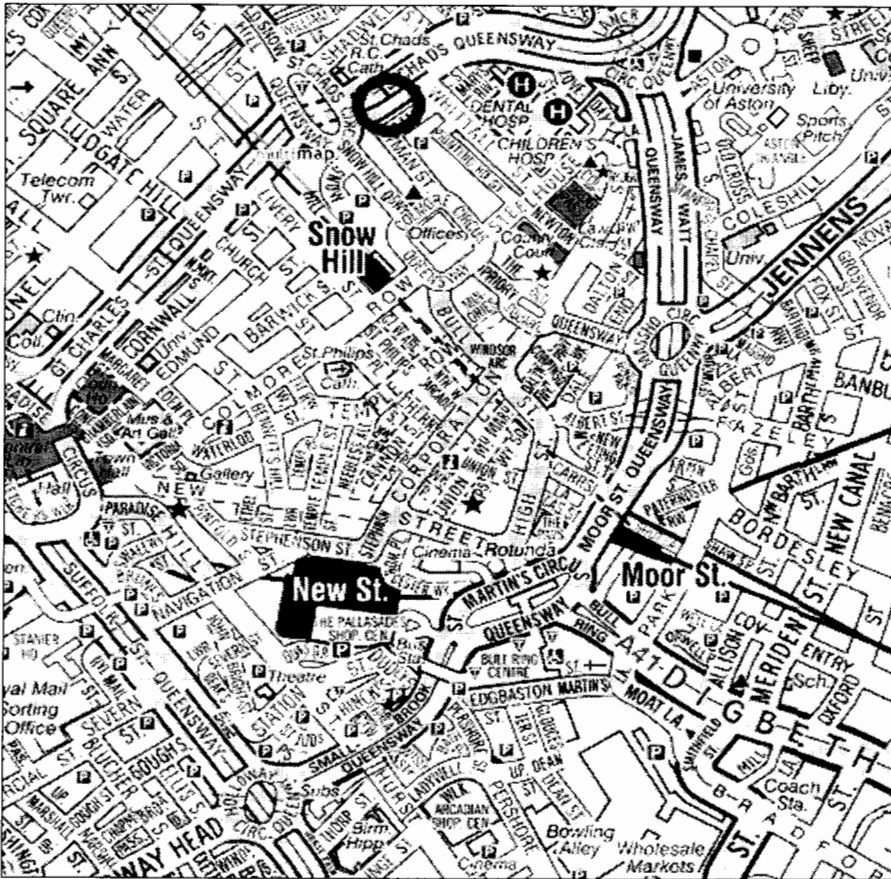


Central Birmingham

The Thistle Hotel is marked by an "O"



MidCon 2003

Thistle Birmingham City Hotel

14th – 16th November 2003

MidCon 2003

14-16 November 2003

Useful Information

Registration

The con registration desk will be open from 4pm on Friday until 10pm, and between 9.30am and 6pm on Saturday.

The Committee

If you want to speak to an organiser outside these times, ask at the trade stand, the Diplomacy desk or look for Jeremy Tullett, Danny Collman, David Norman, Peter Card, Don Shailer or Stephen Agar elsewhere on the second floor. Committee members will have distinctive badges.

Food & Drink

The hotel has a restaurant, bar food and room service. We have also arranged for a special menu for MidCon attendees, which will be available at the following times:

Friday 6.30-9.30pm

Saturday 12.00-3.00pm; 6.00-9.30pm

Sunday 12.00-3.00pm.

Food from this menu (which will include sandwiches and hot snacks) can be ordered during these times from the bar in the lounge area. Breakfast will be served between 7.00-10.00am.

Check Out

Check out time is noon on the morning of the day you are leaving (Sunday, for

most). We suggest that you check out between 10am and noon, to avoid large queues at the check-out desk. At this point, you will settle your hotel bill, and need to pay cash for anything like food and drink ordered after that.

Games Stand

The **Not Just Stamps** trade stand will be open for business Friday evening and throughout the day on Saturday and Sunday. The trade stand staff will take breaks but you should be able to spot them near the trade stand if they are still 'on duty'. And if there is not someone there or close by, there will be a sign on the stand saying where to find a Committee member.

Diplomacy

Friday games start as boards fill between about 5pm and 8pm, but the TD will decide when to stop beginning games, according to demand.

Saturday games start at **09:00**, and could last until 17:00.

Sunday games start at **09:00** as well, and will finish around 3pm.

MidCon Quiz

The MidCon Quiz, run by John Harrington, will take place on Saturday night at 22:15 in the Ariel Suite

Awards

Sunday - 16:00 - Wroxtton Suite

MidCon 2003



UK National Diplomacy Championship 2003

This year th Tournament Director is Mark Wightman. The format remains much the same as for the past few years. That is:

- Three rounds, on Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday. (Friday will having rolling gamestarts to suit late arrivals. Although no game will be *guaranteed* for late arrivals, we will try.)
- **Friday games start as boards fill between about 5pm and 8pm**, but the TD will decide when to stop beginning games, according to demand.
- **Saturday games start at 09:00**, and could last until 17:00.
- **Sunday games start at 09:00** as well, and will finish around 3pm.
- All three rounds to count, but players do not have to play in all three rounds.
- No top board.

All three rounds will run to a fixed end-point, with the Friday night being a shorter game than Saturday.

To avoid disappointment, please read carefully the tournament rules below.

Participants are *not* required to stay at this hotel, but it is more convenient. Information is available from the committee about cheaper accommodation options in the area.

MidCon 2003

West Midlands
B1 1RF
0121 643 7979

Maharaja Restaurant
23-25 Hurst Street
Birmingham
B5 4AS
0121 622 2641

Milan Indian Cuisine
93 Newhall Street
Birmingham
B3 1LG
0121 236 0671

Rajdoot Restaurant
78/79 George Street
Birmingham
B3 1PY
0121 236 1116

International

52 Degrees North
Arcadian
Hurst Street
Birmingham
B5 4TD
0121 622 5250

Apres
39 Summer Row
Birmingham
B3 1JJ
0121 212 1661

The Jam House,
3 St. Paul's Square
Birmingham
B3 1QU
0121 200 3030

The Living Room,

Unit 4, Regency Wharf
2
Broad Street
Birmingham
B1 2JZ
0121 616 6820

Mechu
59 Summer Row
Birmingham
B3 1JJ
0121 212 1661

Metro Bar and Grill
73 Cornwall Street
Birmingham
B3 2DF
0121 200 1911

Italian

Caffe Uno
126 Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 3AP
0121 212 0599

**La Galleria Restaurant
& Wine Bar Bistro**
Paradise Place
Paradise Circus
Birmingham
B3 3HJ
0121 236 1006

Japanese

**Shogun Sushi &
Noodle Bar Ltd**
113-115 Wharfside St.
The Mailbox
Birmingham
B1 1RF
0121 632 1253

Mediterranean

Bar Epernay
171/172 Wharfside
Street
The Mailbox
Birmingham
B1 1RL
0121 632 1430

Seafood

fish!
156-158 Wharfside
Street
Mailbox
Birmingham
B1 1RQ
0121 643 8630

Spanish

Chez Amis
7 Fletchers Walk
Paradise Place
Birmingham
B3 3HJ
0121 233 1533

La Tasca
Regency Wharf 2
Broad Street
Birmingham
West Midlands
0121 643 9888

Thai

Thai Mirage
7 Oozells Square
Brindleyplace
Birmingham
0121 643 3993

Restaurants – Central Birmingham

American	B3 1RL 0121 200 2515	B2 5EP 0800 079 09 09
Hard Rock Café 263 Broad Street Birmingham West Midlands B1 2HF 0121 665 6562	Bushwackers Lower Ground Floor & Basement Exchange Building, Edmund Street Birmingham West Midlands B3 2HZ 0121 236 4994	French / English
Santa Fe Restaurant 178-180 Wharfside Street The Mailbox Birmingham B1 1RN 0121 632 1250	City Café 1 Brunswick Square Brindleyplace Birmingham West Midlands B1 2HW 0121 643 1003	Bank Bar & Restaurant 4 Brindleyplace Birmingham B1 2JB 0121 633 4466
Chinese	Denial Restaurant & Bar 120-122 Wharfside Street The Mailbox Birmingham B1 1RQ 0121 643 3080	Berlioz Restaurant at The Burlington Hotel, Burlington Arcade 126 New Street Birmingham B2 4JQ 0121 633 1737
China Court Restaurant 24 Ladywell Walk Birmingham B5 4ST 0121 666 7031	The Old Joint Stock, 4 Temple Row West Birmingham B2 5NY 0121 200 1892	Michelle's Café Bar and Restaurant 220 Corporation Street Birmingham B4 6QB 0121 236 1171
Henry's Cantonese Restaurant 27 St Paul's Square Birmingham B3 1RB 0121 200 1136	Talk Bar The Orange Studio Cannon Street Birmingham West Midlands	Greek
English		Athens Restaurant 31 Paradise Circus Birmingham B1 2BJ 0121 643 5523
The Bucklemaker Restaurant & Bar Wright Wines Ltd 30 Mary Ann Street St Paul's Square Birmingham		Indian
		Café Lazeez 116 Wharfside Street The Mailbox Birmingham

Tournament Rules

- The Tournament Director's decision is final. However, if the TD is required to play to make up numbers then any TD decision required for that board will be made by the Deputy TD (and vice versa). There is no rule precluding either the TD or the Deputy TD winning a prize of indeed the Tournament.
- The basic game rules will be as in the 1971 (Games Research Inc.) edition. Spain is not adjacent to North Africa.
- A fleet that may move to StP, Bul or Spa may support an action in that province regardless of coastline. However fleets in dual coasted provinces may only support an action in a province to which they could legally move.
- Every effort will be made to find a game for every player who signs up for a game by the appointed deadline, and who turns up in time for the announcement of the board allocations. Players who fail to sign up before the appointed time or who arrive late for the day's play are not entitled to expect a game, although any game that may be organised for them will count for the tournament. Such games may be expected to run to brisker deadlines than 'regular' games.
- Composite orders are permitted (e.g. A(Par).S.A(Mar)-Bur is a valid order for both units). However, a unit ordered twice with different orders will be considered to be misordered. Note that an *unordered* unit may be supported to stand, but a *misordered* unit may *not* be supported to stand.
- Badly written orders that can have only one meaning will be accepted. Hence, it is *advisable* to include nationalities when supporting other players, but it is allowed not to.
Note: When supporting other players' units, the nationality, if specified, must be specified correctly, or the order will be deemed to be illegal.
- Retreats should always be written down, and revealed simultaneously. Any retreats not ordered in writing technically cause the retreating unit to be liable for removal.
- The game can end in one of three ways: (1) An 18 centre victory (2) The game reaches the final season (3) Unanimous player agreement. Note: it is usual for agreed ends to be for the position on the board at the time. However, alternative ends may be agreed provided players can demonstrate that:
 - the agreed end is in principle achievable,
 - all players active in the game accept the proposed end position and
 - the tournament director is satisfied that the end is not being rigged for purposes such as working the scoring system.
- Players will be given 45 minutes to get to the end of the A1901 adjudication. Thereafter, deadlines will be at 20-minute intervals, to include time for order writing, unless advised to the contrary.

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- Collection boxes will be supplied for orders. Orders not in the boxes when the lids shut will not be accepted.
- Players who persist in submitting late orders or who otherwise significantly irritate the TD will receive a Yellow Card. On being issued with a second Yellow Card, an entire season's orders will be forfeited.
- Whilst honesty and openness are not required in the conduct of a game of Diplomacy, it is assumed that players have signed up with the intention of playing to the best of their ability. Giving and accepting of bribes will therefore be penalised. Draws may be adjusted to ensure to split players whose personal relationship may cause the game to be unbalanced. The Tournament Director will exercise his discretion in this matter.

The Midcon Scoring System

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	162.00						
17	144.50						
16	128.00	85.33					
15	112.50	75.00					
14	98.00	65.33					
13	84.50	56.33					
12	72.00	48.00					
11	60.50	40.33					
10	50.00	33.33	25.00				
9	40.50	27.00	20.25				
8	32.00	21.33	16.00				
7	24.50	16.33	12.25	9.80			
6	18.00	12.00	9.00	7.20	6.00		
5		8.33	6.25	5.00	4.17		
4		5.33	4.00	3.20	2.67	2.29	2.00
3			2.25	1.80	1.50	1.29	1.13
2			1.00	0.80	0.67	0.57	0.50
1			0.25	0.20	0.17	0.14	0.13

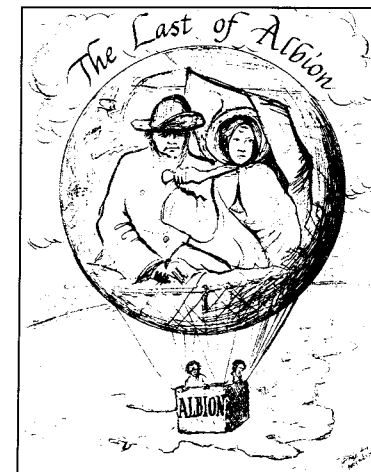
1. For each player, add 1 point per autumn season with a non-zero s.c. count.
2. An outright win scores 162 for the winner, zero for the other players.
3. In the event of tied places, the placing is averaged before any further calculation is done. For example, two players sharing the highest s.c. count are in position 1.5 (= [1+2]/2).

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averaging around 46 pages, with general wargames / boardgames content and the occasional Diplomacy article or variant (issue 39 included Rod Blackshaw's variant **Cold War**). Indeed, the strain on Don was beginning to show - issue 39 even carried an announcement that **Albion** would fold in six months time, though Don did change his mind. Still knocking out 50 page issues on stencils is not easy.

The last ten issues of **Albion** are probably those most remembered by mainstream PBM Diplomacy, which was taking off in a big way as **Albion** was entering old age. By now Don's formula was clear - a 50 page issue every two months or so on a wide selection of wargames and boardgames, a kind of **Sumo's Karaoke Club** before its time. There is too much in these issues to go through them in any detail, but through them you can see PBM Diplomacy taking off by the number of the Old guard that put in an appearance (e.g. Richard Walkerdine, Brian Yare, Les Pimley, John Lettice, Richard Sharp, Mike Sherrad etc.) By now the British Diplomacy Club (with Don Turnbull, Hartley Patterson and Richard Sharp GMing) had become the National Games Club, Don adjudicating BDC games in the **BDC Journal**. By the time of issue 46 (October 1973) Don really had had enough, so he announced a fold at issue 50 (and this time he meant it). Issues 47-49 followed the established pattern, but with issue 50 Don really went out with a bang. This time **Albion** had a circulation of 213 (136 UK) and was 109 sides long, including 17 articles and three complete games in supplements. An incredible achievement.

Albion had lasted for 4½ years, but that wasn't to be the end. Don managed to finish all the BDC games he was running in the BDC Journal (which folded in June 1974 after 169 issues) and to keep **Courier** going up until issue 242 - folding as late as April 1987 when he moved to the USA to take up a job in the USA.



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Bellicus, the 6th UK zine), supporting him. By this stage **Albion** (as opposed to **Courier**) was overwhelmingly a wargames zine, rather than Diplomacy - and given Don's AHIKS background this was perhaps inevitable.

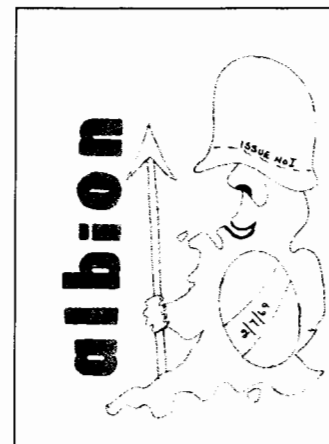
By issue 28 there was a hint of what was to come. Don reported on his discovery of Michel Feron's **Moeshoeshoe** (a Belgian zine) and rumours that a certain "John Pigot", a **War Bulletin** subscriber, was going to start a zine. By now the circulation topped 70, and by the following issue had hit 80, with almost all new subscribers being from the UK. Word was getting around. To give you an idea of how the focus of **Albion** had changed from the early days, issue 29 had articles on **PanzerBlitz** (a regular topic of discussion), a review of **Conflict** (a new board game), reviews of **S&T** and an article on wargame design.

Albion was 2 years old with issue 30 in July 1971. Signs that PBM Diplomacy were starting to develop elsewhere are evident, especially in a letter from Colin Hemming (future editor of **XL** the fourth UK zine) suggesting a hidden movement game of Diplomacy - players only get to see units in adjacent spaces. Issue 31 was the first issue with no Diplomacy material in it at all, though issue 32 did have the rules for **Diplomyopia**, Colin Hemming's variant and issue 33 had a long article from Fred Davis on the creation of **Abstraction**. By now names started appearing in **Albion** who were to form the backbone of the postal hobby in the early 70's. Will Haven and Colin Hemming have already been mentioned Hartley Patterson had taken over **War Bulletin** in May 1971 and letters from John Piggott and Graham Jeffrey appeared in No.33 (October 1971) while Andy Davidson and Graeme Levin surfaced in issue 35. Around this time the new rulebook (1971) came out and Don highlighted the clarifications and changes in issue 35. It is amazing that so much of what we take for granted in the basic rules of the game wasn't finally determined until 10 years after the game went into commercial production.

The news section of **Albion** 36 (Feb 1972) brought news that John Piggott was launching a zine called **Ethil the Frog** and that Graeme Levin was starting a professional games magazine called **Games & Puzzles** that spring. **Albion**'s circulation also broke the 100 mark. By now **Albion** was undoubtedly slowing down, as the Diplomacy games were running with clockwork efficiency in **Courier**, though each issue of **Albion** regularly went through the 30 page barrier. The PBM hobby was expanding quickly. Apart from the rules to **Atlantica**, Issue 37 carried with it a free copy of **Bellicus** No.1 (which started as a **Strategy I** zine), news that **XL** had started publication, and most importantly, information on the British Diplomacy Club. As Graeme Levin put it "The British Diplomacy Club has been formed to co-ordinate all postal Diplomacy games throughout the Untied kingdom. The aim is to recruit a large number of members and to promote the playing of Diplomacy." Initial membership was 60p a year, though **Albion** subbers got in free. At the same time Don announced that he wasn't accepting any more subscriptions as he was capping the circulation at 125 - anyone wanting to sub would have to go on a waiting list! (The policy didn't last long, by issue 44 the circulation was 170.)

Albion may have slowed down, being produced bi-monthly now, but it was certainly getting bigger each issue. By the time of issue 39 (the 3rd birthday issue) it was

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This has been a sad year for the boardgames hobby, with the deaths of Richard Sharp, Keith Loveys and Don Turnbull. Many will have memories of Richard, the NGC and his zine **Dolchstoss** and many again will have fond memories of Keith, the veteran congoer and erstwhile editor of the **Snorwood Gazette**. But I suspect that few will remember Don Turnbull who died on 5th August 2003.

Don hasn't really been involved with the postal hobby since the early 80's and few of those at MidCon this year will remember him, but with **Albion** he was the first person to introduce the concept of the amateur postal boardgames zine to the UK and as such I thought it would be appropriate to remember his important contribution all those years ago.

Issue 1 (price 6d) of **Albion** was dated 2nd July 1969. It was only 8 pages long (quatro, single sided, mimeo) but contained a gamestart and the first moves for the first game of postal Diplomacy in the UK, ALBION 69/1 (1969BG) (so Don had obviously sorted out the gamestart with a pre-issue flyer). Just for the record the first season in this first-ever UK postal game was as follows:

AUSTRIA (Michael Nethercot) A(Vie) S F(Tri); F(Tri)Std.; A(Bud)-Ser
ENGLAND (John Munro) NMR! F(Edi); F(Lon); A(Lpl) all Std.
FRANCE (Malcolm Watson) A(Par)-Pic; A(Mar)-Bur; F(Bre)-MAO
GERMANY (Colin Newcombe) A(Ber)-Sil; A(Mun)-Ruh; F(Kie)-Den
ITALY (John Robertson) A(Rom)-Ven; A(Ven)-Tyr; F(Nap)-TYS
RUSSIA (Chris Hancock) F(StP)-GoB; A(War)Std.; F(Sev)-Rum; A(Mos)-Lvn
TURKEY (David Wood) A(Con)-Bul; A(Smy)std.; F(Ank)-Con

Well, what do you make of that lot? The first ever postal Diplomacy game in the UK started with an NMR! Some of the other openings look pretty strange too: Austria using A(Vie) to support F(Tri) even though it can't be dislodged, a German player moving to Silesia while Russia orders A(Mos)-Lvn! The game generated 5 pages of press on the

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first move, something I doubt would ever happen today. The game system was quite different to what we would expect today - there was in effect a 4 season game year - spring moves, spring retreats carried in an interim supplement, autumn moves, and autumn retreats and builds carried in another interim supplement. The information from the supplements appeared in the next full issue. Issue 1 announced that Don had two trades, Rod Walker's Erehwon (USA) and John McCallum's Laurania (Canada), so the circulation was 9!

By issue 2 the zine had doubled in size. You'll no doubt be relieved to know that England didn't drop out and that A(Sil) stood while Germany allowed Russia to order F(GoB) C A(Lvn)-Swe. The press still took up 5 sides though. Don had picked up another US trade (Jeff Key's The Voice) and 3 new subbers - though only one in the UK. Don's editorial was a plea for all UK readers to sub to at least one US zine, to try and make the relationship with the US a bit more two way, and to that end he advertised the services of the "NFFF Games Bureau" (Chairman Don Miller) and in particular the Diplomacy Division (Chief Rod Walker). And all for \$1 per annum. The tradition of Diplomacy zines carrying articles which have nothing to do with Diplomacy started early, as this issue had an introductory article on the concept of a fourth dimension.

Issue 3 and the zine was still expanding - now up to 20 pages and printed on both sides of the paper to keep down the postage costs. Another UK subscriber took Don's UK readership to the dizzy heights of nine subbers (which explains why these early issues of Albion are so rare). By issue 5 the circulation was much the same, but Don discovered that he was losing too much money and asked the players in his Diplomacy game to cough up an extra 5/- each (the gamefee having been initially calculated to cover the cost of the zine for the entire game).

The rules for the first variant ever published in the UK appeared in issue 6, the fairly chaotic Hyperspace Diplomacy. Early issues of Albion were also characterised by quite serious articles on things such as quantum mechanics and game theory, though any letters published usually concerned rule disputes (this being pre-1971 rulebook). Although Don did manage to find a couple of new subscribers at the AHIKS UK Regional Meeting, the zine still ended 1969 with only than 11 UK subscribers, all (I think) AHIKS members, though Don did manage to start his second regular game in issue 9. Issue 10, the Christmas 1969 issue, saw the seeds of how Albion was to develop with the first review of a S&T game.

Albion No.11 had an original variant in Abstraction (also referred to as Aberration V) by Fred C. Davis Jr. And Don gave up trying to fill his Hyperspace Diplomacy list and opened one for Abstraction instead. That Albion was the first to publish a classic US variant is not surprising, as Albion was really part of the US Diplomacy zine (Don's US readership was larger than the UK). Another first in issue 14 when Don printed the rules for The Business Game designed by Rene Nokin and opened a waiting list, so the UK's first Diplomacy zine didn't stay purist for long (although the list never filled!).

Issue 15 contains a lot of heart searching from Don, partly on the various feuds going on in the US at the time (especially Walker vs. Tretick) and partly on the status of

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Albion in AHIKS. Don stated quite clearly that Albion was not an AHIKS zine (and had two non-AHIKS subbers), but that he did intend to move the zine towards being a general wargames zine, a trend even more apparent by issue 16. Don passed his first anniversary with Albion with issue 19 (yes, 19 issues in 1 year - and a typical issue was approx. 30 sides), though UK circulation was a mere 15 out of 31 readers.

With issue 20 came a 5 page letter from Rod Walker (one of the leading lights of the US hobby) giving his side of the feud with Buddy Tretick, which elicited a 3 page reply from Don. I won't bore you with the details, but it was the same sort of personal grudge feuding which more or less tore the US hobby apart in the early 80's. but is quite rare these days. Some people thought it all a bit too much and in the following issue complained about Albion spending so much space discussing a US "boardroom dust-up." Some fundamental changes were also announced in Albion No.21. In essence, Don had decided to put all the Diplomacy game reports (he was running three games at the time) into a separate companion zine to be called Courier (which still holds the record at the most number of issues for any UK zine). Initially Courier was to be numbered the same as Albion i.e. No. 22A, 23A, etc. but once Albion folded it had to revert to conventional numbering. From this point on Albion itself was less and less a Diplomacy zine.

The first of the new style Albions (Issue 22) ran to 36 sides and carried mainstream wargames articles - game review, S&T review, the AHIKS British Region members Bulletin etc. One diplomacy related letter from Rod Walker queried Don's habit of putting the starting position of every unit in brackets in the game report - apparently this was unheard of in the US at the time. Don confesses that he just did it that way because he thought it looked good and because Don did it that way more or less all UK zines have followed suit ever since. Rod also questioned why Don allowed players to sign their units over to other players, as this wasn't standard US practice either.

The big news in Albion No.23 was that Don had made contact with Peter Roberts and Dave Berg at Keele University (members of the Keele Wargames Society) as he'd heard via Don Miller that they were thinking of starting a PBM Diplomacy zine. This zine had in fact just been launched by Dave Berg a couple of months earlier under the name War Bulletin. The UK's second Diplomacy zine was born. However, the editors of our first two Diplomacy zines didn't see eye to eye. In Albion No.24 Dave Berg writes (of Albion) "Now, I have been running a Diplomacy magazine for the last 3 months, blissfully unaware that one of the same should ever be destined to be longer than one page...Who the hell, what inadequate type of person, can just read a thing like Albion regularly let alone pay 2/- a time for the privilege. We must live in worlds so different - and yet amazingly we seem to have one interest in common" Don wisely said nothing and let his readers reply for him in the next issue. With issue 24 Albion's circulation finally reached 50 (though only 29 UK subbers).

Issue 25 of Albion was produced using a primitive litho, another first for Don (although the quality was dire and the experiment not repeated). The rules for Abstraction were reprinted (with minor modifications from Fred Davis), as Don still hadn't managed to get a game started (though he did shortly thereafter), as were numerous letters condemning Dave Berg (and one from someone called Will Haven, later editor of