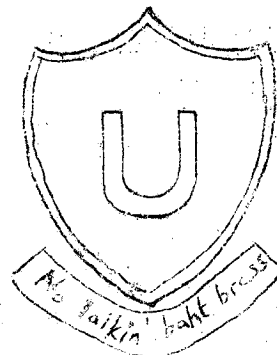


1901 AND ALL THAT...

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Bet you think this is issue 42 of 1901 and all that..., a postal Diplomacy zebie from Mick Bullock, 14 Nursery Avenue, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 5SZ, England. Tel. 61624; price - 4 p plus postage, don't you? Who's a clever boy then....?

All this and games too.

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Prolegomena, Causerie, and all that...

Lots of non-Diplomacy stuff to look at this time: Saddest receipt of all was the last Albion, number 50. Just how the board wargamers amongst you are going to manage without Albion is hard to imagine, 't will be a tremendous loss I've no doubt. Even to someone like myself, who hasn't been hexed by the hex games, the reviews of other games and general info will be sadly missed. Mr. Turnbull announces in its place, rising from the ashes no less, PHOENIX, a 4-10 side bi-monthly news and comments squib about the gaming hobby in general; oh well, we can but hope, tall oaks from little acorns etc. (How big was Albion 't?). Postal Diplomacy will still be carried (perhaps quicker?) in Don's other dipthing, Courier. Phoenix 1 is planned to turn up some time in May, the price will be 10p plus postage, orders to Don Turnbull, 21 Whitwell Way, Coton, Cambridgeshire CB3 7PW.

Enclosures with the last Albion included 3 brand-new wargames, which, admittedly, didn't do much for me, but were doubtless eagerly seized upon by the majority of the fraternity. Of more interest at this end were some of Don's other game reviews and recommendations, which I decided to follow up.

1901's non-Albion readers (about 65 of you) will have received with this issue a price list etc. for games and books from DAVID G. WATTS. Any Albion readers who were unlucky enough not to have received the list with Albion 50, lemme know, and I'll send you one.

On Don's counsel, I sent for a copy of one of the Railway Rivals series, plus the Pennine War, plus Sid Sackson's book 'A Gamut of Games'. Without doubt the £3 spent was the best investment I've ever made in a long and undistinguished game-playing life, with the exception of the purchase of my Dip. set. If, like me, you've been considering sending £3 to play in 6 of Will Haven's games, resist the temptation, and send your money to D.G. Watts instead. You'll not be disappointed.

Sackson's book is a masterpiece; Don said about it: '...no serious games enthusiast can afford to be without a copy.' - and I wholeheartedly concur. It contains 30-40 games, mainly for 2 players, which is a boon to me personally, but plenty for 3, 4 and more, hardly any of which (if any at all) you'll have seen before. (Games and Puzzles have printed a couple in the past, but I don't think they were necessarily representative of the standard of the whole).

The contents range through card games, to dice games, pencil and paper games, draughts/ chess-board games; make-your-own-board games, domino games - the whole shebang is superb value for money. Geddit.

The Railway Rivals game came in a large envelope containing several (16 in mine) sheets overlaid (or maybe -ayed, or even -lain) with the standard hexagonal design, otherwise blank; a sheet of playing instructions and a sheet of colouring instructions. You then make up your own board/map by colouring the hexes as per the colouring instructions. You can spend several hours making 'a good job' of it, or an hour if you ain't too fussy..The whole thing (4 (A4?) sheets in my game) is then best finished off by mounting it on stiff board and covering with transparent adhesive vinyl so that it can be marked (Chinagraphs or felt-tips (the recommended ones preferably)), and wiped .....

((Cont. p. 6)) ((Cont))

FOR THE EFFICIONADO:

Will Haven comes in for a lot of stick about his lommnnnnng deadlines, and I'm afraid that recently I felt I had no option but to resign from one of Bellicus's 4000AD games because of the slow rate of progress (if you've ever played 4000AD moving once every 2 months you'll know what I mean). To support this unfortunate decision I checked back to see just how many issues Will had produced in the past 12 months, and it turned out to be 7. This, I felt, was some justification for my action - some people seem willing to accept Will's slowness claiming that the amount of material he eventually churns out more than makes up for the delay - but I aren't one of them. And I aren't one of them either? Having gone thus far, I decided to get one or three facts and figures on the efficiency of all the established publications, many of which seem to have struggled through 1974 with alarming sluggishness.

And came up with the 1901 poor-man's Mad Policy efficiency poll. . . .

By comparing either the date of publication (why do so many UK publishers not print the publication date - ashamed that people like me will check up on their efficiency?), the postmark, the receipt date (where I've marked it on the particular issue), or the deadline date, or combinations of these, I managed to determine fairly accurately how many issues of each had been produced over the last year (greenhorns are excluded from this survey - your turn'll come).

No regard has been taken of the size of the magazine, the table merely shows how often you can expect to see each if you subscribe to, play in or trade with them, based on the experience of the past 12 months.

The first column shows the issue numbers produced over the period; subtract one from the inclusive total to find the total number of issues produced = column two. Obviously because of overlaps, underlaps, etc., it's impossible to check each's output over an exact 52 week period, so column three shows the actual number of weeks taken to bring out the total shown in col. 2. Column four is a straight average weeks/issue; column five is the one that will probably cause most backlash from other publishers as it's my impression (if I don't know for sure) of how frequent the thing is meant to be. I've used 3 weeks where I was uncertain, but may have queried it. Column six is a quick-reference guide to how inefficient (% lateness over norm) each mag is, though obviously this is rather dependent on col.5. Bearing this in mind I've decided to print the league table in sequence from column 4, not column 6. Also bear in mind that it should be easier for a publisher working to a declared 4 week deadline, to achieve his target than it is for the quicker deadline publisher. Note that Courier (almost always) and 1901 (in general) use the three season game year: avoid them if speed rather than realism and accuracy is your main consideration!

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
1901 and all that	24-41	17	52	3.06	3	2%
Fifth Column	6-22	16	52	3.25	3	8%
Frigate	5-21	16	54	3.38	3?(d)	13%
Pendulum	5-20	15	52	3.47	3	16%
Comet	1-15	14	50	3.57	3	19%
Hannibal	4-18	14	52	3.71	3	24%
Mad Policy	25-39	14	52	3.71	3/4	-- (a)
Dolchstoß	16-27	11	50	4.55	4	14%
Courier	68-88	20(b)	51	4.64	3?	55%
Black Spot	6-16	10	50	5.00	3?	67%
Der Krieg	27-37	10	52	5.20	3?	73%
OJ	5-13	8	50	6.25	4?	56%
War Bulletin	52-60	8	51	6.38	3?	113%
Bellicus	17-20	7	50	7.14	3?!	138%
SoB	6-9	7	50	7.14	3?	138%
Our Enry (c)	8-14	6	51	8.50	3?	183%
<u>Folded recently.</u>						
Grafeti	26-38	12	53	4.42	3	47%
TFTBF	6-11	5	52	10.40	3	247%
Bolshevik Star	8-12	4	52	13.00	3	333%

Notes.

- (a) Mad Policy changed from 3 week to 4 week deadlines in mid-summer, so column 4 may be slightly misleading, and column 6 would be irrelevant. Personal observation puts MP at the top, efficiency-wise.
- (b) The Courier total of 20 issues includes 9 'International' only issues; the production rate has been determined on the remaining 11 which carry the UK games.
- (c) Rather confusing, due to the appearance, or, more often, non-appearance of the enigmatic 'Your Albert'.

((Cont))

(d) Frigate originally ran to fortnightly deadlines - maybe column 6 should read 69%?

Aside from efficiency I've noticed a fairly strong trend for squibs that have folded to do so round about the dozenth issue.

ORION 14; BOLSHEVIK STAR 12; TFTBF 11; XL 13; OUR ENRY (struggling) 14; OJ (struggling) 13. ETHIL (46) and GRAFETI (38) are the exceptions. Interesting huh?

The last word on this efficiency subject is a quote of course. By John Piggott, in Ethil the Frog issue 25 almost two years ago:

'...though I'm afraid I cannot really recommend joining this zine ((Bellicus)) unless its frequency improves. In particular, 4000AD by post with one move every five weeks will probably be a real drag.'

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Who is this Craig Nye chap anyway?

Freely filched from issue 25 of The Mixumaxu Gazette (Bob Lipton, Box 360, Lafayette College, Easton, Pa. 18042, USA) is the following half-page space-filler.

LIME-GREEN IN ENVY

Today I received a new zine, RETIEF (named after Keith Laumer's galactic Diplomat, and thus one of the cleverest zine titles since "The Double-Handed Pushbroom"). This thingie came from Britain with a request for trade priveleges.

The first thing that struck me about this British zine (and, indeed, the other I receive, "1901 and all that...") is its beauty. In the U.S. the excuse is offered that a dipzine can not be as neat as an sf zine because the dipzine must meet a deadline. Well, the British give the lie to that. "Retief" and "1901..." look as if they've been professionally mimeoed. They do a better job than John Boyer's opii. Perhaps this is a matter of money spent (if I had been willing or able to buy a \$250 mimeo machine I could get perfect results), but I think not. The British are not (or don't seem to be, anyway) impressed by quantity as we are in North America but strive for quality rather than a large circulation. It's a very humbling thought to realize that I couldn't turn out a zine so error-free and beautiful as this third issue of "Retief", yet on the last page there is an apology for the sloppiness of this issue.

Fellow North American publishers, we have lost our predominance in the field. If the British took the Calhamer Awards this year by bloc-voting, it may have been unfair, but the British deserved to win. We are now number 2. Let us catch up.

Interesting, wot? Though I'm not sure what experience of the British scene Bob's comments are based on (never end a sentence with a preposition). If it's just 1901... and Retief 3 (mine had egg-stains on it...) then it's a wee bit dangerous. So I'll throw my two pennorth in (never end a .....). I reckon I've seen about 40 different American diptychs so I think I'm fairly qualified to comment.

As far as printing quality goes Impassable and Bushwacker are as good as 'owt we've got over here, much better than mine. The 'somewhere-on-a-par' group includes Pouch, Pocket Armenian, The Times. Most of the spirit-duped are worse than these.

Over here there are quite a few mags better printed/duped than 1901..., though probably slightly more which are worse.

Snippets: my duplicator is a hand-operated portable costing, currently (saw one only last week) £35.62 (\$ 90). Early Retiefs were offset printed; as from issue 7, recently arrived, they're to be mimeoed.]

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How I bridged the Straits of Gibraltar and changed the face of Diplomacy (almost).

I made a comment last issue about the move Spa-NAf which prompted this note from Rod Wheeler, who may have thought I was referring to him, and a request for clarification from another reader.

Rod says: 'I ruled at the beginning of Auction 1 ((his variant)) that an Army in North Africa could move into Spain (doubtless using captured fishing vessels etc) as an Army can from Denmark to Sweden, because the map plainly shows North Africa as being contiguous to Spain - the border lines adjoin. There is no water gap, as there is between Denmark and Sweden on the board. We may have some private knowledge that there is water between Spain and Africa but that is extra-judicial knowledge. The Diplomacy map does not know it. However, I think in future games I will follow the general ruling. The Rule Book is silent on the subject.'

Many years ago, two to be precise, in issue 4 of this epic series, I made a ruling, based on a player vote (one for, one against, five abstentions!) that direct travel... ((Cont))