

Frodo is alive and well and living in Argentina.

This is WAR BULLETIN, the 52nd issue of a Diplomacy fanzine which is also Fred's Press 97 from Hartley Patterson 'Finches', 7 Cambridge Road, Beaconsfield Bucks, UK; HP9 1HW. Tel:04.946.4116.

MONO readers will find their fate decided inside. If they don't want to continue their subs could they let me know and I'll refund what remains. It's possible there might be a replacement for MONO, presumably with new games. We shall see.

Also inside is my periodic complaint over order writing. Apart from what's said there, it also helps if the actual orders are written in the form used in WB, though I don't insist on that and will accept such eccentric systems as other GMS use. It's worth recalling that if you are expecting support from a ally it is not necessary to put this in your orders: indeed by doing so you are signalling an expected alliance to third parties.

FTF

There was an FTF Meeting last Saturday at David Johnson's in Chalfont St Giles. As the first eliminated I have nothing further to say! When the trains are back to normal there will probably be meetings here again.

Deadline:

Friday 18th January.

Next time

Something on tactical board games from Mike and myself, another game review, and more books. Contributions are naturally welcomed!

Be Warned

Gestetner cannot guarantee delivery after January. Their prices are up 10% as from tomorrow. I anticipate many zine editors simply going out this year unless they stock up now.

MOVES

31/12/73

E 1971DS	Autumn 1914
G 1972BL	Spring 1911
1/72	Spring 4012
H 1972EK	Autumn 1908
I 1972AEcn	Spring 425
J 1973BG	Spring 1906
K Roses	Spring 1457
L Excalibur	Winter 449
M Downfall	Frery 1418

WAR BULLETIN is

5/30p inland
5/40p Europe
5/£1 USA Airmail

A list of Games Openings and Variant Rules and maps available on Europe can be had from Richard Walkerdine, 'Cheriton', 15 Crouch Oak Lane, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2AN, for an SAE.

Standby players

1971DS	none
1972BL	Feintuck Feron
1/72	none
1972EK	Davidson Dwyer
1972AEcn	Ovens
1973BG	Piggott Feron
Roses	Morrison
Excalibur	Feintuck
Downfall	none

I don't anticipate any of the current missed moves being repeated! If you want to go on the standby list please give specific games. If you get in you still have to pay a sub but avoid the game fee.

COAs

John Morrison, 9 Highfield Avenue, Inskip, Preston, Lancs
Geoff Corker, 92 Lancaster Street, Barnsley, Yorks S70 6EW until Jan 12th, then back at College.

Presumably other students will move on or about this date also.

MONOCHROME SUPPLEMENT

In the vote on whether to continue the existing three games, I have assumed that those not voting are not intending to submit further moves, and so in effect vote for an agreed draw.

HOG3: 2 players voted, one for abandonment, one for continuing.

DOG2: Same as above

BOG1: Three voted, one for abandonment, two for continuation.

Such overwhelming apathy makes things easy for me! All three games are pronounced draws by default at the positions recorded in WB48.

Response from GMS was much more prompt: I'd like to thank Andrew Herd of HANNIBAL and Martin Davis of UMMAGUMMA for offering to adopt games and Roger Sandell and Jeremy Elsmore for offering to take over MONO.

Mutter. With new games starting it's time to say my piece about writing orders again. In GMing games I first sort out the moves/propaganda into separate piles, then work through them. The House Rules state:

'Orders must be stated clearly and written on one side of the paper only.

Orders for different games must be on separate sheets. Each set must indicate game letter, country, season and game-year.'

This seems pretty clear to me: if these conditions are not observed I can simply chuck the letter in the bin, and I have done so in the past. I will make one exception to this and that is moves from abroad which may be on the same sheet. It also helps me a lot if you put propaganda on separate sheets as well and non-game comments (address changes, letters etc) on yet another sheet.

Ignorance of the House Rules is NO excuse, copies being free for the asking.

The Zine File

* ARENA 37 (Edi Birsan, RD1 Smithtown Rd, Fishkill, NY 12524. 9/\$2) has some editorial comments on Prophetic Builds. A quick recap: all US zines use the separate Winter deadline, which also exists in a few UK zines such as COURIER and 1901. WAR BULLETIN however started outside the mainstream and though players were offered the opportunity of giving up the conditional build system (WB14) the response was a unanimous 'no'. Since then most of the other UK zines have followed suit.

Birsan, after pointing out the obvious disadvantages of the prophetic build, suggests that the lower level of interest in tactics in the UK makes the prophetic build acceptable. He proposes to adopt it in ARENA with the qualification that players may demand a separate build season if they wish. Good idea.

* Interesting to note Brian Yare's opinion (in a recent GRAFFETI) 'that there is no variant that compares with the regular game for ease of running, balance of power and good design. My policy now is not to take on any more variants.' A remarkably similar attitude to that prevailing in the US after the initial wave of variants. It's possible we shall shift into the US trend of having entirely variant and entirely regular zines...as for WB I shall probably keep at least one regular game in the mag but not more, as there is another new variant awaiting publication (Roger Sandell's RED MIRAGE) to replace the three regular games about to end.

* One of the best zines to arrive here lately was the Xmas issue of GRAUSTARK, with book and game reviews running to some 30 pages. Also had issue 50 of SIGNAL, with illos by Kirk, Gilbert and Bode amongst others. The European Wargame Championships are set for Brussels in May, Diplomacy will be played and I shall be there. Info from SIGNAL POBox 830, CFPO 5056, 757 Baden Baden 1, W Germany.

* Some old (?) readers may recall the series on 'Strategy & Tactics of Diplomacy' by Larry Peery that I started to print in WB (but never finished as no one seemed to be interested). Well it's now available as part of a book from the author (C.200+ pages, \$8.00, IDS, Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102). Recommended, and it's cheaper if you order now rather than wait for it to appear.

WB52-3

1971DS Autumn 1914

- R: (VDwyer) A Sil-Mun. A Pru-Ber.
- T: (Feron) A Nwy wants to be a fleet. A Mos S A War throwing crottled greeps at hungry Russian soldiers. A Gal-Boh. A Bud-Vie. A Vie-Tyr. F Adr S F Eas-Ion. A Tri S A Vic-Tyr. F Apu-S F Ion-Nap. F Aeg S F Eas-Ion. A Con-Bul.
- I: (Feintuck) As Ven, Tus, F Nap unordered.
- F: (Sandell) F Swe stand. F Bal-GoB. F Eng-Nth. A Ber stand. A Bur-Mun. F Mar-Pie S by F GoL. F Tun-Tyr S by F Wes. A Naf-Tun. F Den unordered.

Retreats: I/F Nap disbanded by GM.
 Note: Crottled greep throwing banned by Geneva Conventions.

- R: ~~W~~ ~~W~~ Mun = 1. Removes A Pru.
- T: Con Ank Smy Gre Ser Bul Rum Sev Mos ~~W~~ War Tri StP Bud +Vie +Nap = 15.
Builds A Con A Smy. Oh! also +Nwy. Total = 16.
- I: ~~W~~ Rom Ven = 2. No change.
- F: Par Mar Bre Spa Por Lpl Bel Edi Hol Lon ~~W~~ Swe Den Kie +Ber +Tun = 15.
Builds A Par, A Bre, F Mar.

1972EK Autumn 1907

- G: (Eastham) A Mun-Ber.
- R: (Holborn) F Bel S F Nth. F Con-Bul. A Rum-Sev. A Ukr-Sev. A War-Gal. A Boh S AUSTRIA A Tyr-Vie. A Hol S F Bel. F Nth S F Bel. A Kie-Ruh. A Ber-Sil. F Edi S F Nth.
- A: (Sharp) F GoL S A Mar. A Mar & F Wes S F Gas-Spa(NC). A Tyr S GERMAN A Mun. A Gal-Ukr. A Arm-Ank. A Ven-Pie. A Ser & A Bul S A Bud-Rum. A Tri-Vie.
- F: (Yare) F Lon S A Yor. F Por S F Spa(SC). A Bre-Pie. A Ruh-Bel S by F Eng. A Bur-Mar.

Retreats: R/A Rum eliminated.

- G: Mun +Ber = 2. Builds A Mun!! Builds F Sev, A Mos.
- R: Mos War StP Sev Swe ~~W~~ Nwy Con ~~W~~ Den Kie ~~W~~ +Bel +Hol +Edi = 12.
- A: Tri Vie Bud Ser Gre Bul Ank Rom Nap Smy Tun Ven +Mar+Rum=14 Build A Bud, A Tri.
- F: ~~W~~ Par Por Spa Lpl Bre Lon ~~W~~ ~~W~~ ~~W~~ = 6. Removes A Yor, F Lon (GM)

1972BL Spring 1911

- R: (Davidson) A Arm-Sev. F Ank-Bla. A Mun-Sil S by A War. A Kie-Mun S by A Ruh. A Hol-Bel. F Nwg-Nth S by F Den. F StP(NC)-Bar. A Nwy-StP. F Wal-Iri.
 - I: (Davis) A Smy unordered.
 - A: (Yare) A Pie-Mar. F Wes-MAO. F Adr-Ion. A Gal-Ukr. A Vic-Gal. A Tyr-Boh. A Ven-Tyr. A Rum-Sev. A Bul S A Con. A Con S F Aeg-Smy. F GoL S A Pie-Mar.
 - F: (Haven) F Bre-MAO. F Bel-Nth S by F Edi. A Yor-Lpl. F Lon stand. F Mar-GoL S by F Spa(SC). A Bur-Mar S by A Gas.
- Retreats: I/A Smy disbanded. A/F GoL-Tyr.

Reproduction

Discerning readers may notice the 'clear' appearance of p2. This was done using slipsheets, ie putting a throwaway sheet between each sheet used while duplicating. It takes 5 times as long as simply switching on the electric gubbins and churning straight through. Wish I had time to do it!

1973BG Spring 1907

Montenegro: "...so that is the situation, Freddie," concluded Dr. Grace.

"By gum, this is serious," the King agreed. "von Metzke kidnapped by the Hong Kong Tong - Phillipides in hospital with peanut poisoning - and you haven't heard the latest I suppose?"

"Not -"

"Yes! The Keynsham Cricket Club have refused to release Horace Bachelor!"

Vienna: "Magnificent work Sir Joshua!" exclaimed the Emperor. "The O'Malley Sisters have been carried off to the Sahara by Omar the Terrible's warriors. But tell me - how did you gain the confidence of that Moorish savage?"

"My north country accent," replied Sir Joshua. "He took me for one of the Yorkshire Moors."

Montenegro: It is beginning to look (sighs Princess Naomi) as if the controversial test series may never take place. The team has been barricaded throughout the winter (the Montenegrin cricket season) in the Grot Hotel Jockstrapp, while below the windows menacing pro-German crowds have demonstrated against the recent misunderstanding that has placed the Franco-German entente in jeopardy. Now the notoriously corrupt Montenegrin judiciary has been bribed to take a hand. Various members of the team have been charged with treason, sabotage, rape, looting, arson in His Majesty's dockyards, fraudulent conversion, crapulent perversion, thuggery, buggery, cannibalism, Hannibalism, illicit relations with minors, illicit relations with Majors, gun-running, black-marketeering, white-slaving, tampering with mails, tampering with femails, cruelty to animals, insulting the flag, obscene libel, living off immoral earnings, highway robbery, piracy, impersonating a police officer, indecent exposure, blackmail, shooting Serbs without a licence, bootlegging, heresy, adultery, incest, shoplifting, murder and double parking. The last charge has been vehemently denied; the others are under legal advice at this moment. All carry the death penalty, at least.

Paris: Reaction to the latest outrage from Montenegro was swift and savage. Within hours, Marja Schlitt (86), mother-in-law of the Montenegrin Ambassador to the British Solomon Islands, had been arrested on a charge of misuse of Post Office electricity.

Paris to Berlin: Sorry... really.

Montenegro: Edward Fosdyke was in his office perusing the Guardian when there came a dreadful cry from outside. He sprang to his feet as Ockerby, the foreman, staggered in, his face white, clothes in shreds.

"Good heavens, Harold - what has happened?"

"Horrible - opened a crate of tripe slitters from England and they poured out! Little devils are all over the warehouse now!"

"Not - you can't mean..."

"Yes Mr Edward. Tripe eating wheelks!"

A Telegram: DITCHTRIPE MANCHESTER : BEASTIES GREAT STOP HALF STOCKS LOST STOP STAGE TWO STARTED STOP WARNING APEMAN AND ARABIAN KNIGHT ON TRAIL LONDON TABLE MOUNTAIN.

Victoria Station: "That was certainly good time from Austria, Burton. I've never known such cooperative customs officials."

"Yaas... Such a pity I have no more photos. And now we must make all speed."

Striding onto the forecourt the two travellers hailed a hansom cab.

"221b Baker Street if you please."

Montenegro: ((Wot - again? - HHP))
The publicans strike being over, the Cloggies sat snugly in the bar of one of the city's alehouses.

"Not a bad pint," conceded Stan. "Still we can't afford much more 'till after match."

"No need to worry lad," replied Neville. "I've made a packet selling photos of 'indu dirty sculpture to the locals. Picked 'em up off some explorer feller in Vienna."

Wars of the Roses Spring 1457

Cambridge: Richard, of Gloucester, brother to the Duke of York, stood before the royal pavillion. The cowardly Lancastrians had fled, but the King had unaccountably remained. Perhaps the rumours of his madness were true....

Entering he found his monarch seated on an ornate throne, with but one aged retainer before him. "Sire," he said, "I am overjoyed to have been able to rescue you from the Lancastrian traitors, who wish to replace you with your misguided son. Now you can accompany me to a place of safety."

There was no reply. Indeed, the king gave no sign of recognising the Duke's presence at all. As Richard came closer, peering in the dim light, an awful suspicion came over him. "Your majesty?" he continued, and then broke off. Stepping closer he touched the silent figure, who slowly toppled forward to the floor. This was not the king - it was a clever cardboard replica!!

"What means this trickery?" exclaimed Crouchback, seizing the servant. "Speak wretch, or your collups will be fed to my hounds!"

"Mnk...ah..don't know buddy," stuttered the old man. "He's been off his feed for weeks now...mm...poor old Jim Tigernuts."

"Jim Tigernuts?"

"He couldn't get the wood you know."

London: Will Shakespeare stamped his feet moodily as he stood in the inn yard holding the horses. Would Major Bloodnok never leave that bar? Just then the door swung open and the Major emerged, accompanied by an elderly white-bearded man. "Good news, laddie," he wheezed. "We've got an ally here. Man after my own heart he seems. Says his name's Sir John Falstaff."

GM: Several missed moves below! Barbi Sharp never got her copy of WB51, Les Pimley also rang to apologise for missing.

RED: (Davis) Fs Tnt, Nor2. As Cch, Bks, Lon, Roc unordered.

WHI: (Clark) A Bed-Cam, grabs mad monarch. A Rut-Fly. A Der-Lei. F Tyn-New. S by A Dur. A Lan stands amazed at Scots & Percies changing places. S by A WRid, A Don-Sou. F Yor-Lin.

PER: (Pimley) As Ber, New. F Dum unordered.

NEV: (Sandell) A Ntn S A Cot-Oxf. F Sev S A Glo-Bri. A Here-Glo.

BEA: (B Sharp) As Oxf, Sal. Fs IOW, Snt unordered.

SCO: (Piggott) A WMor-Bwk S by A Rox. F Car stand.

FRE: (Prevot) F Str-Nor2. S by F Cal. F ECha-Str. A Lew-Wea.

Retreats: RED/F Nor2, PER/As New, Ber, BEA/A Oxf all disbanded!

Excalibur Winter 449

Londinium: King Vortigern sat despondently as his chamberlain thumbed through the latest issue of the Heroes Directory. "So it's that bad," he said finally. "Hannibal, Hercules, Robin Hood, Sherlock Holmes and Dorian Hawkmoon all fully booked."

"I fear so, sire. Wait a minute - here's two already in this time sector. Hengist and Horsa, currently stationed in Germany."

The wild eyed soothsayer looked up from his pile of entrails. "No good will come of inviting the strangers," he intoned. "I see rivers of blood, I see men in white coats coming for me, I see..."

"Oh do be quiet Enoch," cut in Vortigern. "If it hadn't been for you we wouldn't have left the Roman Economic Community and we wouldn't have had all this trouble."

GM: In absence of Martin Davis' deployment I picked a space at random. If anyone objects please say by return.

SAXONS - Ger. ANGLES - Tha. JUTES - Ech. FRISIANS - WCh.

Downfall Frery 1418

What about the date? muttered some players. Well we are of course using the Bree calendar. Next move is Solmath. Don't forget builds!

I retyped the rules including amendments. The major change reads:

'...If a unit and a piece enter a space containing the Ring at the same time, the piece claims the Ring. A successful supported attack on a space containing a piece carrying the Ring deprives that piece of the Ring, though it is not dislodged.'

The victory criteria is defined so as to allow victory for a player with, for example, Sauron surrounded in Mordor.

Harad Roads: Wearily I looked upon the world. I had been here and seen this situation so often before. Again it would hinge upon my diplomatic and tactical skill if good were once again to flourish. I remembered the last War of the Ring. That was when I pretended to Sauron that I was truly duped by the white sheets which 'alf a thorn had donned in an attempt to convince us they were ghosts. We laughed so much that many of us were slaughtered by our erstwhile allies. It became clear that all men's (and other assorted creatures') hands were and would be against us. I needed Extramediterranean aid. Specialists in Geography and various forms of exotic games theory would be needed. The first would tell me where to go and the latter would tell me what to do when I get there. Which is more than one could say for the rest of the intransigent occupants of this benighted world. Who was I?...who else but Ego-Prime!

Isengard: 'Well, well,' intoned Saruman indulgently, his golden voice oozing like balm over the prostrate figure before him. 'Your late royal employer does not appear to have been ... ah ... ecstatic over your abilities. This document would make a better change-sheet than a reference. "Dishonest ... snivelling ... spiteful ... dirty ... deceitful." Dear, dear. Well, Grima, as a privy councillor I should say you were a rank fellow, and I expect you'll make a lousy butler too.'

Carrock: Beorn banged his gavel and glared round the table. It was certainly a motely company. Three hobbits, two squirrels, several woodmen, a stranger from Vale, a black slimy creature from Gladden Fields.

"Friends, I declare the first meeting of the Revolutionary Committee for the Restoration of Rhovanion open. Particularly welcome are representatives of the Eriador Liberation Front (the Hobbits rose and bowed). Apologies for their absence have been received from the spiders of Mirkwood, the Standing Conference of Stone-giants and a number of dragons. I have also a proposal from certain trolls that future meetings be held after sunset."

Isengard to Gandalf: Put that computer away! Cheat.

Isengard to Lothlorien: Ethilfrog Webbedfeet backs twenty-three
In games hast thou stabbed, but steer clear of me.
If thou leavest thy slime trails on my parquet floor
Thy green head shall sit on green shoulders no more.

Gulf of Lune: The small rowboat ran ashore in a sandy bay on the southern shore of the Gulf. From it stepped a tall figure clad in boots and breeks of silk, a sleeveless hauberk of dark meshmail and a horned helmet. He moved with the dangerous ease of a panther, dragging the frail carft above the high water mark before turning to survey the landscape with keen blue eyes.

"By Crom," he muttered, "this land seems too quiet to me."

Even as he spoke there came a strange whirring sound, and before his very eyes a wierd blue cubicle materialised from thin air. The barbarian drew his broadsword and took up a fighting stance, muscles tipping smoothly under his bronzed skin, as the door of the cubicle swung open...

Dunland: Bedbug bites!

Edoras: Eomer and Theoden received the Doge of Venice, Umbarian Ambassador to the Court of the Eorlingas, in the Great Hall. The dark-skinned, armour-clad Southron marched in without ceremony.

"Greetings, my Lords. I bring you good news from Umbar...." and so saying, he handed each of them a Christmas card.

WB52-7

Downfall cont

- FLV: (Piggott) F GHa-Fld. A Riv-Rhu. A Lor-Sil. A NMI-Crk.
- DWA: (Davidson) A Blu-Fcl. A Val-Crn S by A Iro.
- GON: (VDwyer) DA MFI-Ano. A Lam-Los. A Leb-Sit. A Bel-Lcb.
- ROH: (Sherrad) A Eas-WEm. A Edo-Gap. A Hel S A Edo-Gap.
- SAU: (Ward) DA MMO-Sit. DA UBU-NIt. TA BAR-MDo. DA Nur-Kha. A Crn-RRi. A DOL-Anu.
DA OB-NRh. DA OB-SRh. A OB-Nur. Nazgul hidden by low cloud.
- SAR: (RSharp) DA ISE-Gap. A MOR-Sil. A Dun-Hol.
- UMB: (Doubleday) F Cit-BAY. A Hrd-SGo. A Hav-Hdw.
- GAN: (Holt) is around somewhere. Hm: Retreats: none!

1973BG cont

- G: (Waldie) A Sil-Ber. A Kie-Den. A Mun S A Ber-Kie.
- R: (Clark) F Swe-Skag. F Bar-Nwg. A Nwy goes ya boo sucks to French fleet.
A Gal-Boh. A Pru-War. A War-Gal. F Rum unordered.
- T: (Cousins) F Ion S FRENCH F Wes-Tyr. F Aeg S F Ion. A Gre MS A Bul. F Con S A Bul.
- A: (Sandell) A Ven-Tus. A Tri-Ven. A Vie-Tri. A Bud S A Ser.
- I: (Morrison) F Tun-Wes. A Nap-Rom. F Alb-Ion.
- F: (RSharp) F Wes-Tyr. F Nth-Hel. A Hol & A Bur S A Bel-Ruh. A Par-Pic.
F Eng-Nth. A Edi bandies insults with cowering Russians. F Bre-Eng. F Mar-GoL.

Retreats: none.

1972AEcn Spring 425 BC
(What - no propoganda? -- GM))

- ARG: (Jeffery) F Argo-Hydr S by F Troi. A Kori MS A Siky. A Kleo S A Kori.
- ATT: (Morrison) F Hydr-Zara S by F Myrt. F Thor-Saro. A Mega-Kori.
F GKor S BOETIAN F Phks-Lok2. F Knid-Dori. F Skyr-NAeg. F Saeg-Ikas S by F Khio.
F Kykl-Patm S by F Lyki. F Cret-Lako S by F Kyth. F Anap-Cret.
- BOE: (Davidson) F Lari-Ossa. A Eher-Lari. A Phth-Tslt S by A Dolo. A Lok2-Aini.
F Phks-Lok2 S by A Aito. F Pela-Mend S by F Magn. F NEub-Pela. F Tana-NEub.
- EPI: (Cousins) F Dodo-S F Nion. A Ambr S BOETIAN A Aito-Akar. A Amph S A Ambr.
A Molo S A Tymp-Hlpa. A Edes-Tymp.
- ION: (Piggott) F Troy-NAeg. F Lesb-Aiol. F Samo-IkaS. A Pkai-Smyr. A Ephe-Mile.
A Eryt-Ephe.
- LAK: (Corker) F Zara-Gyth. F Lak stand. F Cion-SIon. F Taph-CIon. A Plln-Thyr.
A Akar-Elis C by F Kaly. A Patr MS A Azan. A Thyr-Zara S by A Sell. A Spar stand.
- MAK: (Davis) As Paio, Pell, Thma, Olym unordered.
- THE: (Bullock) A Elim-Hlpa.
- PER: (Clark) DA EThr-WThr. DA Lydi-Mysi. DA Indo-Hali. DF Toro-Mend. DA Lemn stand!
Gs EThr, Byza, Kher, Smyr, Indo.

Retreats: LAK/F Lako-Pylo. ATT F Hydr eliminated.

1/72 Spring 4012

- ALG: (Davidson) Mra-10. Sab-7. ~~Ag1~~, Abn, Men, Pol, Ham, Mar, Sol, Veg-1.
Ag1 1(AY-29). 5(EY-3)Atr.
- ANT: (-) Spi, Acr-2. Rut, Thu, Sar-1.
- PAV: (Corker) Alt, Veg-3. Mar, Pav-5. Gem, Anb, Fom, Amn, Dnb-1. 3(LR-10)Mer@Mer
1(FY-9)Pux. 2(KY-12).
- REG: (Walkerdine) Reg-15. Bet, Bel, Rig, Avi, Adh, Dba, Mer, Pux, Sir, Pro, Cas-1.
Reg 1(CY-14). 2(BY-15) + 3(CY-16). Ag1*

Notes: Pavo fleet cannot land at Merak, which requires 4 moves to reach from LR.
Algol has one move left to recapture home star before elimination.

GamesFOXBAT AND PHANTOM

This is SPI's second try at an air war board game (the first was FLYING CIRCUS, WWI). It covers modern scenarios ranging from Western Europe through the Middle East to Vietnam, and offers most of the current supersonic fighters.

There are some resemblances to FLYING CIRCUS. The symbolic counter representing the aircraft on the hex grid board does still bear a number corresponding to the height in '000s of feet, the rest of the information being carried on sheets peculiar to the type of aircraft. Devotees of the earlier game are however in for as much of a shock as Albert Ball (see Wars of the Roses!) would have if asked to fly a Mig-21 -- the tactics required are completely different.

There are three ways of shooting down an opponent (one hit and he's dead - so much for sophisticated equipment and good ejection seats!), by cannon fire, heat seeking missiles or radar seeking missiles. The guns necessitate your being on top of or adjacent to the target at the end of the move. For heat seeking the requirements are similar to gunfire in FLYING CIRCUS: flying straight at the target and being within range...you must also be behind him for a decent shot. Radar missiles have the singular advantage of being able to change direction in mid-flight, and are best fired from as far away as possible (within their range that is). They can change level too.

By now you're thinking the games should be over in a few moves, with all this hasty weaponry. Well....speeds are arranged so that the plane can only change direction by two 60° turns at most per turn. Careless pilots are liable to fly right off the board. To reduce speed involves a manoeuvre called 'fading', climbing a level or two in doing so. To reduce height calls for a vertical dive down a set number of levels with compulsory acceleration at the end. The problem is to combine all the restrictions to get where you want. The practical result is that ~~only radar missiles are of any real use.~~

For example, I had three Phantoms assigned to intercept Roger Sandell's bomber unit escorted by a single Mig. The bomber appear at a set height and toddle across the board at a set speed trying to get to the other side. Sounds easy? Well, I got one out of five...in another scenario without radar missiles I claimed a moral victory for the Israelis by being the only person to fire a shot!

That fits I suppose. Dispatches were describing lengthy dog-fights concluding in one party giving up and running for it, in the last Arab-Israeli conflict.

Oh, there is an 'idiocy rule' for inexperienced pilots. A wrong dice throw and they can't think what to do next and consequently don't touch the controls next move. Last player not to inadvertently fly off the board is the winner!

Major omission - non-supersonic aircraft (Harrier, Skyhawk). Realism - Yes! Accuracy - informed sources say in detail not too good. Playability - interesting but won't be a stayer.

S&T News from SIGNAL 49:

SINAI is delayed. No guesses why....EAST IS RED is apparently a strategic level game on the NATO system. MOVES 13 will feature a lot of additional scenarios for KAMFPANZER, the game in S&T41.

NATO, which had a good review in ALBION, gets a qualified one in SIGNAL 50, most of which I agree with. Briefly the review proposes replacing the silly Tactical Nuclear rule: give each side a stock pile of TACNUC factors which can be used against any target within 5 hexes of a friendly unit; suggested factors are Soviets 160, NATO 280. The lack of airpower is also regretted.

WORLD WAR 2 is apparently going to be a winner, accurate and fairly simple. LEYTE GULF on the other hand might be a bomb. Oh - we haven't got around to playing SOLOMONS CAMPAIGN yet. The rules are of USN complexity almost though it should play OK once we've mastered them!

CONFLICT 6 apparently has DIEN BIEN PHU and HUE in, strategic and tactical respectively.

Books Yes, I am an SF fan, but I also read other stuff.

THE HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF BRITAIN Geoffrey of Monmouth. (Penguin)

Geoffrey was an Oxford cleric who wrote his History in about 1136. It purports to describe the history of our island from its first settlement by Brutus to the final defeat of the Britons by the Saxons. It is this work that has, more than any other, kept the Arthurian myth alive; for the King and his Knights are the central figures of the narrative. One has but to point to Shakespeare's King Lear, Malory's Morte d'Arthur, and Disney's Sword in the Stone, all examples of works inspired by Geoffrey.

The story starts - where else? - at the siege of Troy. Brutus is the great-grandson of Aeneas, born in Italy, and after various adventures in Greece and Aquitaine leads his followers to Britain. Only giants live there - the most renowned, Gogmagog, is still the patron of the City of London and appears in effigy in the Lord Mayor's Parade each year to this day.

The rest of the story ranges from complete fiction - such as Brennius' siege of Rome - to comparative truth, like Julius Caesar's landings, Claudius' invasion and the rest. It's a thrilling tale, with battles, marvels and heroic speeches every other page. Eventually Merlin turns up (he proved so popular with readers that Geoffrey later added an extra chapter with a full account of his prophecies, heavily borrowed from Revelations) and the Arthurian story unfolds.

One puzzling part of Geoffrey's popularity is that his work was condemned even by contemporary historians - attacks which merely served to encourage further derivative works.

BY SOUTH CADBURY, IS THAT CAMELOT... Leslie Alcock. (Thames & Hudson)

This is the story of the excavations at Cadbury Castle 1966-70, full of maps, diagrams and photos. It divides into two parts, the first describing the digs themselves and the second giving a chronological history of the Hill.

Cadbury was a typical Iron Age hill fort of the type that are found all over Southern Britain. It was evidently besieged and taken by a Roman army - but not during the Claudian invasion (AD43) but in about AD70.

The hill was reoccupied in the 5th century, a large hall and a Roman-style gate having been discovered. This would fit in well with Arthur, whose most important battle (Badon) was fought c. AD500.

Following the British defeats Cadbury was again abandoned, only to be reoccupied by Ethelred the Unready in 1010 in response to Danish threats. It was finally abandoned by King Canute.

I found the whole book fascinating, with plenty of detail included while remaining quite understandable to the layman. Recommended.

CONAN THE ADVENTURER / CONAN THE WARRIOR Robert E Howard. (Sphere)

For various obscure reasons this is the first appearance of the Conan stories in British editions. The Lancer books series is used with Sprague de Camp's introductions and editing and a map of the lands covered in the books.

Howard wrote for WIERD TALES for some 5 years before his death in 1936 at the age of 30. Conan is his best known creation and remains the greatest hero of swords and sorcery, besides whom (in my opinion) Moorcock and Norman pale into insignificance. The lands he wanders through are recognisably European, but according to Howard are post-Atlantis and pre-history, the actual geography being considerably different.

Final advantage: the original Frazetta covers rather than some cruddy British imitation (as happened to the Lankhmar series).

THE PRINCE Niccolo Machiavelli. (Penguin)

In Marlowe's JEW OF MALTA Machiavelli appears to speak the prologue, being identified in the Elizabethan mind with diabolical reasoning he makes an excellent introduction to this tale of mayhem and intrigue. Yet THE PRINCE did not appear in English translation till 1640, and has remained more quoted from than read. In recent times it has acquired a fresh reputation for corruption, being one of Mussolini's favorite political works. This translation includes his essay on the work.

Machiavelli (1469-1527) was a Florentine civil servant and diplomat under the Republic (1498-1512); following the restoration of the Medici he found himself out of office and his energies were perforce concentrated on the

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production of treatises, verse, plays and essays, all intended as advice for the rulers of the day.

Italy at this time was divided into many small city-states, slowly coming under the domination of the Great Powers - France, Spain and Austria. Machiavelli in THE PRINCE urges the Italian rulers of his day to keep the 'barbari' out, holding up as his ideal rulers the great Romans and, a more contemporary, Cesare Borgia. The meet the ruthless power politics of the foreigner; Italians must be equally ruthless. Here is set down in plain terms how the Ruler may seize power and how he should act to hang on to it. Many illustrations are drawn from current political events, but the message is applicable to all times; and as Mussolini points out, the representative government should not neglect Machiavelli: 'can you imagine a war being declared by referendum?...when the supreme interests of the people are at stake, even ultra-democratic governments take care not to refer them to the judgement of the people.'

Yes, we've heard that arguement recently I think....

RED SHIFT Alan Garner. (Collins)

Garner is a childrens' writer, or at least he claims to write for children because they understand him better, and because the genre is a better discipline than 'mainstream'. That said, RED SHIFT is no more a childrens' book than ALICE or LORD OF THE RINGS.

The bulk of the story concerns the romance of Tom and Jan, present day adolescents living on a caravan site in Cheshire. But through the locality they are linked with events in Roman Britain and the Civil War, the narrative turning from one to the other with increasing rapidity. Exactly how all these are connected takes some spotting. It's also a violent book - the physical violence of the historical sections contrasted with the emotional violence of the main part. Whether you like it depends on your current outlook on life....I'm not sure right now if I do or not, but it was certainly worth the read.



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Inside: Vortigern encourages immigrants! The Red Flag rises in Middle Earth!! The MONO SUPPLEMENT dies!!! Plus some editorial mutterings, book reviews and game comments!!!!