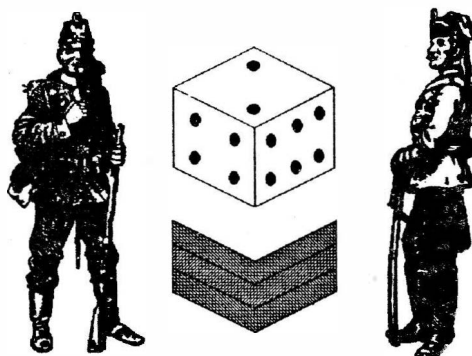


Rank and File



October 1995

Journal of the Tunbridge Wells Wargames Society

Issue 95/5

The Society

Tunbridge Wells Wargames Society meets every Thursday evening and each first Sunday in the month at St. Thomas Church Hall in Vale Road, Southborough, near Tunbridge Wells. Access is from the London Road (A26) turning down Doric Avenue by the Weavers Restaurant and Q8 Garage, then the first right.

The Sunday meeting normally has a lot of traditional wargaming with model soldiers going on. The Thursday meeting usually has smaller games such as DBA, Hordes of the Things, skirmish games etc., though there are also traditional wargames as well.

Membership

Basic Annual membership costs £5.00 for those in Full employment, £2.50 for others.

This entitles you to attend the Sunday meetings at the Hall, any additional meetings at the Hall during 1995, and to receive up to six copies of the Rank and File. Attendance at a Thursday meeting costs £1.00 or £0.50.

Annual Gold Card membership costs £50.00 or £25.00 (for non-wage-earners). This entitles you to access to all Sunday meetings, Thursday meetings, and extra meetings in 1995, and to the magazine.

Persons attending a meeting and not holding a current membership card will be expected to pay £2.00 or £1.00 for Sunday or Thursday meetings. Visitors to the club for the first time will not be charged, but it is recommended that membership will be taken out at the next meeting to avoid having to pay the £2.00/£1.00 rate.

Membership can be taken out or renewed at any meeting by contacting Andrew Finch.

Sunday Catering

At Sunday meetings tea and coffee making supplies will be available, and the kettle will be filled and heated up, however it is up to individuals to make their own tea or coffee, as at Thursday meetings.

Magazine delivery

Each new magazine will be available at the Sunday meeting after publication, and also to the Thursday meetings for about two weeks. After that, anyone who has not yet received a magazine will receive it by post. After all, if you are a member and have been unable for various reasons to get to a meeting, you are still entitled to the mag.

Club Membership List

You will find this displayed by the notice board for you to study, get phone numbers from, etc. Many of you will recall that Russell Hanson asked at the last committee meeting for more details about periods played etc. to be in this list. A few members responded to the questionnaire at the end of last year. I am therefore asking that you fill in or change any of your details when (if) you look at the list.

Dates for your diary

1st October

22nd October **Fall of the Doric Empire**

5th November **Committee Election**

3rd December **AGM**

Other events planned by the committee are:

One day naval battle Jutland will take place in New Year.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact the Editor.

Advertisements

Advertisements will normally run indefinitely, or until removal is requested. If you have an advert you would like putting in the "Rank and File" regularly, please drop me a line.

Rules for Sale

"Perfidious Albion" Naval Pre-Dreadnought

"Into the Laserzone" SF Ground Rules 4th Edition

"Angels One Five" WW2 Dogfight Rules

"Shooting Stars" SF Dogfight Rules

"Within the Laserzone" Campaign Rules for Laserzone: *available during October*

"John's Fighting Ships" compendium for Perfidious Albion: *available during November*

"Stringbags" WW1 Dogfights: *available by Christmas*

"Rolling Thunder" Modern Dogfights: *available by Christmas.*

Contact Andrew Finch or Alan Butler. £ 4.00 (Special Club Price - they are normally £5.00).

Printing Service

If you have any need for any small printing jobs, such as quick play sheets or rules extracts to make your game go more easily, or have a need for more game counters, then contact Andrew Finch for a quote.

Game damage and wreckage markers can also be produced if specifications are provided.

These can be produced in B&W or colour, as required.

WANTED

25mm Star Wars Figures, also any MPC / AMT kits (A Wing, X Wing, B Wing, Tie Fighters etc., made or unmade, or damaged).

Contact Stuart Hooker 01892-824716.

Painting Competition Results and League Table

August 1995

Class 1

- 1st: G Gush, 25mm Napoleonic Swiss Infantry
- 2nd: A Butler, Orcs
- 3rd: C. McLeod, 15mm Hanoverian Infantry 1866

Class 2

- 1st: A Butler, Bikers
- 2nd: A Butler, Imperial Guard
- 3rd: John Tutt, Eldar and Harlequins

Class 3

- 1st: Stuart Hooker, 1/76th PzKw III
- 2nd: G Gush, WW1 Halberstadt bomber

September 1995

Class 1

- 1st: Steve Little, Flagellants
- 2nd: David Knowler, Rogues
- 3rd: G Gush, Orc Army

Class 2

- 1st: A Butler, Soviet Command Group

Class 3

- 1st: Tony Wyatt, Walker
- 2nd: Andrew Finch, Adm. von Spee's Pacific Squadron before Coronel
- 3rd: Hugh Munro, Armoured Train.

The League:

Class 1

G Gush	4
S. Little	3
D. Knowler	2
A. Butler	2
C. McLeod	1

Class 2

A Butler	6
John Tutt	1

Class 3

T. Wyatt	3
S. Hooker	3
A. Finch	2
G. Gush	2
H. Munro	1

The Painting Competition

A general comment by Andrew Finch

You will see on the previous page the current league table. As we have already mentioned in a previous issue of this mighty organ, the competition is monthly, with wins equal to points, and what to points mean girls and boys ...?

PRIZES !

The competition will run in its present form until December, after which the league table will reset and run for 1996. You must remember to bring models and figures, for forgetting means no points.

The three classes are fairly arbitrary at present, and were intended so that colourful units were tested against each other, and drab units similarly. Please bear that in mind when putting your units down. The tag "SF" and "Fantasy" is fairly broad, so colourful SF should go in that section, etc...

I think the committee will have to review how the competition runs for next year. One immediate ruling I would put in now is that you should only be able to put one entry in a class, though you could enter in any class. A glitch happened in the first month as you will see. Perhaps Alan should be banned from entering one month having been red-carded by the ref. ?!

George rightly put in a ruling last month that you cannot vote in a class in which you have an entry yourself. You are also supposed to sign (legibly) your voting slip so the scrutineer can check you did not vote for your own class by accident (even if you vote for someone else your vote is void). In future unsigned slips will not be counted. In the case of a tie the points will be given to both entries at full value (at least until the end of this year). It is probably right that they should get the same points, especially if they tie first or second, because they have been judged better than those who came second or third, and should be rewarded accordingly.

Of course, it becomes a bit of a lottery, but as the votes are personal opinions anyway, so what.

The Profits of War(gaming)

by Andrew Finch

You may not have noticed in the business pages earlier in the summer that Games Workshop released their annual report for 1995.

Turnover was £ 32.1 million, up by 31% over the previous year.

Profit before tax was £ 6.02 million, up by 29.5%.

With their European earnings being £7.8 million, up by 56%.

Don't say there is no money in the hobby, there obviously is. Their corporate message was:

"The long term strategy is to establish and develop the Games Workshop hobby (*sic*) in each of the world's major economies. The new financial year has begun well."

Note that they refer to the GW hobby, not any other sort of game type. Whether this is arrogance on their part, or just red braces speaking is not of importance really. What they have done is what the rest of the hobby should try to emulate in some way (how I do not know, but watch that space as well). They produce excellent products, backed with well stocked stores. Production standards are very good, though their prices reflect this as well. GW seem to move very quickly if a product is not doing too well (i.e. their naval game probably did not suit their target group - hence their selling off what they may have felt was redundant stock at bargain prices, snapped up by wargamers for use in other games).

Mainstream wargaming has effectively had their local sources of stock swamped by GW, so all we have now as a source of models and so forth is a Club show somewhere, or mail order. Apart from some exceptions (Navwar being one of them) there is nowhere where you can go and browse. Many will say that the visit to a show is part of the fun of the hobby. You can meet old and new friends and chat, but the pressure is there for the trader to make a sale to as many as possible, so he has no time to chat, and the nine million people pushing from the back with their 5 sheets of A4 lists want you out of the way as well. It's a funny old world !

Rules Corner

Thoughts concerning Rumford's Rapid Fire W.W.II Rules

1. Troops that are armed only with SMG: Count each figure as 2 points, but shoot only to close range. Thanks to Clive for this one.
2. NKVD Commissars: In our games the Soviet player has lots of infantry, but the battalions are small and a bit fragile. You can buy a Commissar for 20 points. At the start of any turn in which a Soviet player fears his infantry might fail a morale test, he can choose to "encourage the others", by removing as casualties as many figures as he likes which are within 6" of the Commissar, and then adding this number to the dice when testing for morale.
3. Pre-registered Artillery fire: RF states that when artillery fires indirect at a moving target, or at a target for the first time, the player needs to roll a 5 or 6 to bring down fire accurately. This is fine, but I suggest that defensive artillery in an attack/defence game could have pre-registered targets. An observer can shoot artillery at a pre-registered target immediately. Each pre-registered point would cost 20 points, and to be fair, each of the points should be marked on the table by a counter. There could be additional dummy counters of course.
4. Visibility: We have always used the rule that all terrain features on the table block line of sight, unless either the target or the shooter is at a higher level, or either of them are in contact with the cover. This gives the battlefield a much more crowded feel and clear field of fire are vital. Hills become much more useful.
5. Visibility and spotting: RF has some simple rules to allow spotting of concealed targets. This is actually very important, because if you can't see a target, you can't shoot at it. The problem is that RF does not explicitly define what is a concealed target. Obviously, if an ATG starts the game at the edge of a wood and doesn't fire, it is concealed, but what about the ATG and tow that move up to a similar position during the game? Can it claim to be concealed straight away? If we want to use models on the table rather than card counters, then players need to know if a model is "concealed" or not. So far we have used the simple rule that if the model does not start the game concealed it is visible if you can get a line of sight to it. This works reasonably, because the battlefield is already littered with LOS blocking terrain. However, it is unsatisfactory because an ATG clearly could conceal itself effectively. I suggest introducing a concealment rule:

If a vehicle, support weapon or infantry company are in cover and do not move or fire during their own turn they may become "concealed", if they are not already within the autospot distance of an enemy unit. The unit may then not move normally without losing the "concealed" status. However, I suggest that a unit can move up to 1D6 inches in cover and remain concealed if they do not shoot. Concealed units should be marked with a suitable token and could have a bit of lichen dropped over them to add to the effect. This is in addition to the "reserve fire" rule.
6. Grenades: Page 20. Grenades thrown at a pill box require a 5 or 6 to go through the slit. Note that grenades are the only way infantry can attack pill boxes as small arms fire has no effect.

Ed.: Whatever happened to the great rules debate about George's rules ? Come on you guys, get writing.

Naval Wargaming Review

by Andrew Finch

I have subscribed to this journal, produced in the states, and have ordered back copies of the first year's run as well.

This is a well written journal with some adverts (low key) and concentrates on WW2 Pacific (if only because of the 50th anniversary). They include reviews of naval wargames rules and other games (i.e. computer simulations) as well.

The best part of the journal I have found is that they have put together campaign scenario rules for specific campaigns such as Java Sea (for example). This has orders of battle, options, and great fun are the indirect effects tables so you get random events from other theatres which historically happened, and which can have a distressing effect on your OOB.

These are obviously used for their own games, and some games they have played are also reported. I have sent a copy of our Tsu Shima report. Our style is very different, and I am not sure if Nathan Forney will print it, who knows.

I am willing to lend these to anyone interested.

Reading Colours

by Andrew Finch

I went to Colours more "on business" than anything else, having heard that it could be "a bit full". When I got there the queue went round the block. Conversations overheard were illuminating "... it's like this every year, they get loads of complaints that the venue is too small, they never do anything ..." All points we should bear in mind of course.

Anyway after going for a coffee I got in after a short period. It moved quite fast in fact. The trade stands were actually not too bad to get to (it was Saturday morning at 11.00). I had a good look round, and also had a chat with Kevin Brazier of Loughton on the Navwar stand. He had been telling his traders the jolly news about how much their open day was going to cost next year. New venue (as those of us who went to Loughton know, the current locale is having its use changed), as yet not divulged to anyone, but I was shocked at the price. Again, we should be canny about our Open Day and what we are paying, and whether we are getting value for money.

Back to Colours. the games were in the Civic Offices, which are right next door. They were holding championships, and the atmosphere was more like a University Finals Exam than a wargames room. There was definitely NO atmosphere (apart from round the SFSFW stand where there was clearly a lot of fun being had). I ran into TWWS luminaries Chris and Clive there. I think Clive would like me to say that I was standing there and he was passing, to protect him from the Mind Police.

I had a long chat with the Naval Wargames Society in the form of Stuart Barnes-Watson (ex Crowborough, ex TWWS apparently, now resident in the Reading area). I have picked up details of the NWS, and intend to join some time soon. I also picked up second hand from him some American Naval rules, which look quite promising. I'll review them in due course.

I was interested to see this show, which is clearly very popular and attracts large numbers of visitors (casual) due to its location. There were various other activities in the aid of charities going on, but all to do with the hobby.

Having complained about the lack of PA at our do, they had a bit too much PA, but it was audible and useful to new arrivals.

Catering was plentiful and varied, and there was plenty of seating.

The only mistake was, I think, putting people behind the "stage" in the tiny passage. In the space provided they needed a 1 way system really.

Somewhere in Epping Forest

Report by Andrew Finch

A great mob of TWWS (well, 5) went to Broadsword this year, which they appreciated. TWWS is now getting back into going to shows. I enjoy doing these demo games and OUR CLUB IMAGE is being improved, having not been to many. I think next year we must do SELWG (but would not do Salute that is too crammed, and Colours does not seem to be that sort of show).

We took a demo game of our Shooting Stars rules, which proved very popular with a small member of the Spain family, and had a thoroughly good day. The atmosphere was very much like our show... friendly, and almost a family affair.

I talked to some of the Loughton people and they had about 350 through the door, so they were happy. See my comment in the previous article about next year though...

This is a show we should support again.

++The Razor's Edge++

I track the incoming missiles with my forward-looking infrared sensors. Hard brother in vehicle 26 has an area lock and I feel the datalink turn green as his laser discharges, and pieces of burning missile scatter across the landscape, but as I am naturally cautious I check the operation of my point defence turret and scan out for further threats. I pick up incoming artillery rounds at 7 kilometres.

10 seconds to predicted artillery impact. Soft commander's eyetrack tells me he has other targets to worry about. Comm link shows a mech target painted at 2500 metres. Hand off data terminates the stream: my job now. The mass driver is already laid within 5 mills of the launch direction and the servos drive it towards to the new position as the capacitors charge to full effective. I check the wind speed and outside temperature for a last update to the ballistic program. Soft commander is tracking the next target, 500 metres to the right. Another mech with the same armour type and level, so it will need the same ammunition type. Simple kinetic energy. I key the autoloader for the correct type.

8 seconds to impact. Jolt as the main weapon fires: the doppler radar shows the shot going downrange to impact the turret of the target mech. Recharge the capacitors, sensors show the new target is ready to fire...shows a laser 5 charged...This is going to smart...The chassis bucks up and hits us, smoke and debris fly off the left side, carrying away the point defence turret as the laser fist strikes. The Data bus on the left is gone but the power plant is still running and the capacitors are charging. Hard brothers will cover for us. We will need it too, sensors show the incoming artillery at 5000 to be carrier shells for Wide area anti-armour. Plenty of time to intercept. I really hate those things.

6 seconds to impact. Where is the hand off data for the next MDC target? Ha... Soft commander's eye track is unstable and not viable. He has been stunned by the impact of the laser. Body monitor shows green but I need weapon release now... Comm link to hard brother in 37 is still there...query status priority target weapon release... Response is green. I have already tracked the MDC onto the target and the capacitor charge shows full effective.

4 second to impact. Soft commander's heart beats again, then the weapon jolts us back and another 10 kilos of DU launches downrange. Time to back up and disappear.

3 seconds to impact. I trigger the chaff launchers. 3 fire, but one hangs up in the tube. The damage must have hit the mounting... We will not have a full cloud to hide in. Hard brother in 26 is firing the area defence laser at the incoming dispensers, trying to catch the vulnerable half second window as the sub munitions pour out. The sky lights up with laser fire and exploding warheads.

2 seconds to impact. My MDC shot hits the hull of the second target and debris spin lazily off. The chaff cartridges blossom out.

1 second to impact. Will I need to fire again at the target? If we survive, perhaps. The capacitor charges. Soft commander's heart beats again. Here come the surviving sub munitions, their simple brains searching for our metal and plastic signature. Two fire into the chaff, missing. One is not fooled and fires at me. Earth and stones erupt close to one side. Missed!

Soft commander is now back on-line, so I prepare a sitrep for the last 10 seconds and a damage status diagram and put it on his head-up display. It's going to be a long day...

HIGHWAY TO HELL

An Into the Laserzone Scenario

A Juggernaut robot road building vehicle runs amok and threatens a civilian colony township which is in its path.

The player defending the town sets up the terrain, then the juggernaut player dices for which edge he will enter on. The Laserzone is measured as usual and the town set up on the opposite edge. The defender gets 1500 points worth of forces. Since it is possible to optimise a force for a mission of this type, the defending player should be restricted to either standard units which would be available to the town, or light Rapid Intervention Forces which could be called up.

Note that the juggernaut can cross any terrain by using the engineering pack, leaving a road in its wake! A hit on the tracks won't stop it moving, since it has two track units, and can repair itself.

Defenders

3 standard medium tank platoons

each of 3 tanks: Medium chassis DV3, Armour A, tracked.
 MDC 3, plasma 4 (hull), PDSys, ECM 3, APSys*3, designator

The Juggernaut

Chassis: Size 12. Tracks + Tracks mobility. Armour A

Primary mission pack: Engineering pack

Repair pack

High command

Defensive suite:

Point defence

Area Defence Laser

ECM 3

Area ECM

Chaff launchers

Anti personnel level 12

Route Clearance:

10 x Plasma Projectors grade 5 in turrets

Vermin suppression:

5 x Laser 1 in turrets

Somewhere in Byelorussia Mid 1944

A Battle Report by Chris Avery

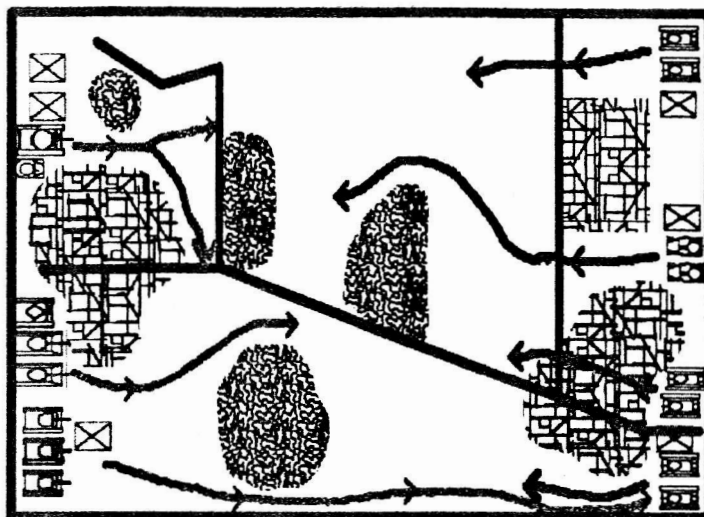
News had come through overnight that the Russian barbarians had broken through the front lines and were attempting to encircle a large group of our forces. Our orders were simple, to meet the barbarian spearhead and at the very least stop their advance and allow our forces time to withdraw.

At our disposal we had a below strength armoured battalion and a battalion of armoured infantry. In support we had a battery of Wespe SPGs. Although Command had been unable to provide any information on the advancing enemy forces we were confident that we would be able to stop the peasants.

As we moved forward, reports were received that the Russians were very close. A study of the terrain ahead revealed a good defensible position on our left with a hedge-lined road running North-South and woods in front of it. On our right the ground was more open, with only one clump of woods between us and the next village. We decided to deploy the bulk of our armour (1 Pz IV company and 1 under-strength Panther company) with 1 infantry company in support, on the right with orders to attempt to punch through the advancing enemy forces. On the left we deployed the remaining infantry companies, with their battalion heavy weapons (including PaK 75s). As extra support for our infantry we gave them our 1 troop of Tiger 1s.

Our infantry on the left had only just deployed along the N-S road when we heard the sound of the approaching enemy tanks. The strength of the opposition soon became clear, 3 infantry battalions, an armoured battalion and artillery support. They were advancing on a broad front and it appeared that their sheer numbers were hampering their co-ordination.

The barbarian tanks moved forward quickly, engaging our infantry AT guns in a prolonged duel, pushing (somewhat cautiously) through the village and with 1 tank company circling to the south. As this company moved forward our glorious panzers raced from cover to attack them. They were caught completely by surprise and the lead troop was left burning as the others fled the field. The Russian commander, obviously seeing his flank threatened, moved a troop of tanks from his centre across the village right into the line of fire of the 88s of our Tigers. He underestimated the skill of our gunners and soon, despite the extreme range, more Russian tanks were burning. This was too much for the remaining tanks in that company and their morale broke.



The enemy were clearly now in trouble with more than half their armour gone and worse was to follow for them. The duel between their last armoured company and our infantry had seen then inflict serious losses on one of our companies, but they had failed to destroy the AT guns and suddenly our gunners found their mark, wiping out the enemy tanks. Now completely without armoured support, their infantry were at the mercy of our panzers, and as our victorious armour moved to encircle the southern village, they decided that retreat was the only option. Once again the German army had proved itself a force to be reckoned with.

This battle was fought using the Rapid Fire rules, using equal points forces. Like George's rules units are scaled down, an armoured company would be represented by 2-3 tank models. The rules are relatively simple, but still manage to give a good feel to the game. This means that play is fast and you normally have little difficulty determining the victor within a normal gaming session. In this particular game the Russians suffered a series of disastrous morale failures which contributed to the eventual loss of their entire armoured force. German losses were trivial by comparison, 1 infantry company, 1 armoured car, 1 AT gun. This was by far the most decisive game so far.

Russian Commanders: John and Andrew

German Commanders: Chris and Daren

Umpire and General Heckler* Alan

By way of comment, from an impartial dead Russian, the mistake is to try and do equal points. The Russians would not have attempted the attack without at least 50% more points. Of course helicopter vision enables everyone to see everything. Here the game would benefit from using "Blips".

The visibility rules in Rumford are not clearly written. The amount of white paper round the text in the rules could have been better used for (better) examples. Some items are not explained at all. Tactically the Russians committed a huge blunder in that they did not use their artillery to smoke the area. Then the advance could have been very dangerous to the Germans. Rumford also does not allow for smoke barrages fired blindly, again this is a failure in the rules because you also cannot search reverse slopes with mortars. The reverse slope is where you hide (unless you know that he will search the reverse slope with mortars of course etc., and so on, blah blah, foaming at the mouth and falling over backwards).

What rules need to be able to do as well is define how many points you can pay for what equipment. Historically, some equipment was not available in large quantities. This is an area I want to investigate for my 1/300th rules.

* Trust the Germans to use their own troops as umpires.

Notice for Club Members only

Future of St. Thomas' Hall Meetings

The Club Committee met on 27th September and discussed among other items the result of the census conducted:

The final figures in response to 26 forms received were:

Sundays:	Camden Centre	16
	Await developments at St T's	4
	Committee decision	6
Thursday	Alternative evening	3
	Await St T's	7
	Imperial	2
	Committee decision	12

Since the questionnaire was put to the membership, further discussions have taken place with the PCC.

The situation regarding the development of the site at St. Thomas' Hall has not become any clearer, apart from the fact that the initial planning submission was turned down. This is now being revised for resubmission. This means that the PCC's initial view that it would be sold off at the end of the financial year is no longer tenable. Our contact on the PCC has said that mid 1996 at the earliest is more likely now as a date for redevelopment (assuming the planning permission is granted). There is no doubt that in the end the project at the Church will go ahead, which may have repercussions for us with a sudden rush to dispose of the land. *where the Hall is now.*

In view of this delay, and the complex question of the sale of the land with planning permission, combined with certain questions of available space at any new venue being less than what we have now, it was the committee's unanimous decision to stay where we are at present, and await developments, for both meetings. While this does NOT reflect the view of the majority regarding Sunday, the whole committee present at the meeting felt it was in the best interests of the Society.

TWWS must go into this with our eyes open, and must be clear that we may have to make a sudden move. Contact will be maintained with the PCC, and we ~~are~~ are sure to get adequate notice of any developments. We will also take steps to ensure that alternative venues are kept in mind for the future.

Club Elections

The Committee elections take place in November, and there may be some changes in the Committee and Club Officers.

When nominating someone for the election to any of these posts, or if you are interesting in standing yourself, please ensure that your nominee (or you) is/are able to attend about 4 committee meetings which would be convened in the Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells area on a weekday evening (usually Wednesdays).

Painting Competition

This was also discussed, and another adjustment has been made. Please remember we are trying out a new system and want it to be as fair as possible.

CONTRARY to what our esteemed Editor wrote in the current R&F, you can now vote for any item in any class, even if you have entries in that class (even for your own entry if you want to guarantee one vote). This is to overcome the problem that if many people put in entries (which we want to encourage) the number of votes is very low.

It will still be necessary to sign the voting slip.

We have identified the problem of how to judge ties, and will in 1996 have clear rules of how the scoring will work. 1995 should be regarded as the test case.

It has also been agreed that in case of doubt about classes in which an entry should be placed, George will be the arbitrator. In his absence Andrew Finch or Alan Butler.