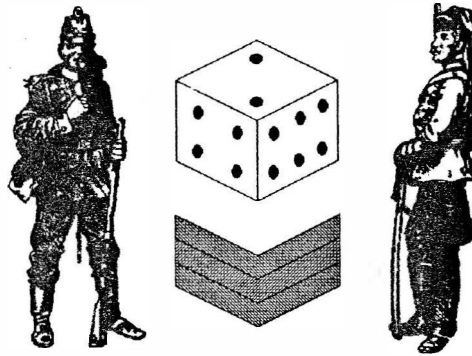


# Rank and File



**May 1995**

**Journal of the Tunbridge Wells Wargames Society**

**Issue 95/2**

## **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.

## 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 magazine.

## Membership Lists

I was asked some time ago to provide a membership list to the current members. I have left this for some time, as Russell made the very valid point that it would be helpful to have information on what games we like to play. For this reason I circulated a form with the January Rank and File, less than half of which have been returned. The membership list will be updated when I get more forms back. If you have not returned yours, please do so.

## Dates for your diary

4th June Painting Competition

2nd July

8th July Ashford WS Open Day

22nd July Eastbourne Open Day

6th August

3rd September Bring & Buy

1st October

5th November Committee Election

3rd December AGM; Painting Competition

**Other events planned by the committee are:**

A Hordes of the Things 1 day tournament

One day naval battle Jutland.

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**

Naval Pre-Dreadnought rules for sale: "**Perfidious Albion**"

Contact John Hurst or Andrew Finch. £ 4.00.

Also "**Into the Laserzone**" SF Ground Rules 4th Edition **NOW AVAILABLE !**

Contact Andrew Finch, Chris Avery, or Alan Butler. £ 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.

## **Ashford Wargaming Society**

Peter England has asked me to draw your attention to their meetings on the 3rd Sunday of every month. They are organising an Open Day on Saturday 8th July in the Stour Centre, Ashford. For further details contact Peter England on 01233 640 927. We still have to receive confirmation that this event will actually be taking place.

## **Eastbourne MAA Open Day**

This annual event will be held at the Redoubt Fortress, Royal Parade, Eastbourne on 22/23rd July 1995. We have been asked to put on a demonstration game there, and Alan, Chris and myself have provisionally said that we would do so on one of the days. As this is a two day event, is anyone in the club interested in doing a demonstration on the other day. If so, please let me know as soon as possible.

## **Club AGM**

As usual this took place at the December meeting. The Committee had been re-elected unopposed (a vote of confidence, I am sure).

A report was presented regarding the Thursday meetings which had been a general success over the year. It was agreed to carry on with these meetings. Arising from this was a decision that we would maintain an attendance record of each meeting, including Sundays, so we can assess the Club's activities better.

There were a number of items for discussion and two proposals, for a revision of the Subscriptions and for a Charitable Donation to be formally made from the profits of the open day. Both were overturned.

## **Membership lists**

This was also raised at the AGM and a request was made for these to be circulated to members. This will be done as soon as possible, after the bulk of members have re subscribed. At the same time, we will try and get a better picture of the Club's activities and for this purpose a questionnaire has been produced. Please fill this in and return it to Andrew Finch as soon as possible. The details will be incorporated into the membership records giving us better information on our interests.

## **Cavalier - TWWS Open Day 1995**

In February Tunbridge Wells Wargames Society held its annual Open Day at St Gregory's School. Once again this was a great success and Clive McLeod must be thanked for all the effort which he put in to organising the event. Thanks are also owed to all those who made themselves available on the day and actively lent a hand.

We had traders from all over the country, many of whom had been at the Newbury show the previous day. It is useful, I am sure, to time shows so that there is a benefit for all concerned and no clash of dates. We did lose a couple of traders who went to the T&T event at Folkestone over the same weekend.

The show was a good mix of trade and games, with most major periods represented in Participation games. There seems to be a feeling that Participation Games are the better bet for shows. They offer newcomers the chance to try out the hobby, being guided by experienced wargamers, but usually fighting against other newcomers, so the balance of play is not upset. Demonstration Games can only be successful if they have a commentator who can answer questions from the public and can generate interest in the product by describing what is going on. This is not easy to achieve.

This show has an atmosphere not found in many of the bigger events, which are more like Trade Fairs. It is popular because it is the informal feel of a group of people involved in a common hobby enjoying themselves. There are space constraints at the venue, but you would not have believed that there were nearly 500 people through the door.

## **Thursday Meetings**

Tunbridge Wells Wargames Society holds regular Thursday evening meetings from 18.30 onwards at St. Thomas' Hall, Vale Avenue, Southborough, Kent. There are normally two to three games operating, ranging from DBA and HoTT to full-scale 25mm battles. Normally the games being played are agreed between the players the previous week, but the Club has its own equipment and troops stored at the hall, so games can be laid on at short notice.

If you have not been to a Thursday meeting, and would like to know more, please contact Andrew Finch

## From our International Sporting Fixtures Reporter

a.k.a. A. Non

Eric Cantona's tackle on an Anglo Saxon peasant was, whilst vigorous, entirely within the spirit of a thousand years of Cross Channel fixtures.

Take King Harold, playing away at Stamford Bridge in 1066. A difficult game against an aggressive Danish team, renowned for their professional fouls and notorious for going berserk in the penalty box. Alright, he had a result. A full 3 points and only a couple of thousand red cards, but before Harold could get out of the shower a surprise fixture was arranged against a touring Norman team. With no choice but to play or forfeit the chance to go through to the

next round, Harold hurried down south, but arrived at the Senlac Ground with a team full of reserves and no subs on the bench.

having won the toss he decided to play down the slope. After six hours there was still no score and Harold, playing a tight game in the centre was getting the better of things. Then the Normans, with typical Gallic duplicity, feigned injury and theatrically retreated down the hill towards their own dressing room. Harold unwisely pushed his Anglo-Saxon strikers forward, only to find them caught in the offside trap by his wily opponents.

A thousand red cards for that, and to cap it, Harold got something in his eye at a critical point in the match. The celestial referee showed Harold the black card, and he went off to take an early bath.

These spirited games, and many since, uphold Cantona's contention that his tackle in no way infringed the time honoured rules that apply to Cross Channel fixtures.

## **DBA**

There is a new edition of DBA out, which has some quite important changes in game play. Some units now cost more to move (Elephants) and some tactical situations are tidied up to remove anomalies. Warbands have become more dangerous.

We are getting half a dozen copies of the new rules for the Club.

Alan Butler has actually compared the two versions in detail, and he can give you the full details of the changes.

## A Letter from Paris

**from Mark Summers**

Please find enclosed... an article for the next edition of the magazine. It may well be somewhat radical in what it proposes, and I apologise in advance that it is on the Gush WW2 rules, but I hope that it adds some fresh ideas to the current debate. Please ask George and Russell not to take what is said to be a personal attack on either of them or their abilities to write wargaming rules.

I'd also like to think about running a one day game of Edgehill after I get back from France, possible in mid-September, so could I possibly prevail on you to provisionally fix a date if this is possible and to ask people who are interested to send me lists of the troops that they could provide, so that I can get busy organising it now. ... I think that the game would not be possible without the participation of George, Dennis, Graham and Malcolm, as they have the vast majority of the figures required. ...

... Hope all is well at the club and that the Open Day goes (or by the time you have read this, has gone) well.

Yours sincerely

Mark summers

*Ed.: All those interested please contact Mark direct. The committee will organise the date and the hall nearer the time.*

## More Observations on the Gush Rules 1930-45 (Groan !!)

### **From Our Man in Paris (Mark Summers)**

I have long been a great fan of these rules, mainly due to their simplicity and playability, however given that they seem to have been put under the spotlight recently, I thought that I would add my meagre observations to the debate. They are offered extremely apologetically and I am very happy to be shot down by George, Russell, et al. over them.

For me the rules work fine up until the end of 1942, that is until the real heavies (i.e. Tigers, Panthers, JSs, etc.) appear. The best games I have ever played with these rules seem to have been the Spanish Civil War and 1940 France games, where the only seriously destructive weapon is the good old 88mm, whose effectiveness is limited by its lack of mobility. The games are always fast and furious fun with a high degree of unpredictability and mobility, many of the AFVs are merely glorified tractors or vans with a tin can and machine gun, or very low powered AP gun on top. No gun or armour gets above value B, so there are no super weapons and everything depends on tactics and of course good old-fashioned luck.

Then enter the serious piece of equipment and the possibilities of keeping the game within the bounds of realism and playability diminish rapidly, essentially the problem is the log scale, which is an ingenious system, but becomes just too restrictive. Unfortunately, the alternative is to have a playing area of the size we normally only use for one-day games, which is totally impractical. The idea of limiting the awesome power of the German superheavies is of course undeniably correct from a playability point of view, but I just wonder if it couldn't be achieved differently. Essentially what I am about to propose is two sets of rules, one pre- and one post-Dec. 1942. The problem in effect is that it is all too easy for a group of moderately good Allied tanks (e.g. Shermans or Cromwells) to rush head on into a Tiger or similar and take it out, with the loss of maybe only one or two tanks. As we all know, if the tank concerned is isolated in the open this is not unreasonable, but this usually is not the case, the defending player attempts to position his tank(s) in appropriately defensive positions, to little avail. Until serious losses are incurred there is no morale test for attempting such a suicidal mission, and even the test is easily passed. On the other hand such an advance of Allied tanks can be easily blunted by the suicidal use of light vehicles by the German player, who can easily disregard any infantry and light AFC support that the Allied player may have tried to tactically place with the tanks. As we all know, both of the above scenarios are horrendously unrealistic, taking out German heavy armour on the Western Front was nearly always a case of carefully outmanoeuvring the tank concerned and then letting the weight of numbers tell, rather than just playing a game of probability where the one principle that if you throw enough tanks at the problem, one of them is sure to succeed with no regard for losses.

However, I don't believe that the morale system is particularly to blame for a very Russian approach to destroying enemy armour. It is in my opinion far too easy to damage enemy vehicles and keep them suppressed in a condition of permanent heavy or light damage, hence never giving the defending player with fewer or better tanks a chance. However, I do not feel that the heavier tanks also get it far too easy, whether moving or not. A King Tiger is almost certain to knock out anything it hits, however hitting is not a certainty. The charm of the Gush system is that it combines hitting, armour penetration, and damage in one dice throw, and this is not something I would seek to change as it considerably speeds up the game, but the system uses the ever-popular D6, which severely limits the number of possible outcomes. If, however, the system were to be changed to use say a D10, then everybody's chances of hitting and causing damage could be considerably reduced as the Atk fire tables would be increased in size. A Sherman closing at speed on a Tiger would therefore only have say a 3 in 10 chance of causing any kind of damage, and a 1 in 10 chance of getting that extremely lucky hit below the gun mantlet, which was reputedly the only way of destroying a Tiger with a 75mm. The return fire from the Tiger, standing at close range, might only get a 50% chance of hitting, but with a 4 in 10 chance of knocking the Sherman out. These probabilities are straight off the top of my head, and should not be taken as well researched, but are merely intended to show how playability and realism could be increased for late WW2 battles. Personally, I would be in favour of extending the ranges of the heavier guns at the same time; this would probably not affect the normal club games as we always have far too much scenery and vehicles on the table to make firing at even 30" a practical proposition, however it would increase the realism of the one-day games, which are inevitably more open. A maximum limit of 42" might be placed on the ranges with, say, a Jagdtiger's 128mm (the most effective gun in the rules) being a D or E gun at this range, and other guns adjusted accordingly. Extra boxes on the fire table would have to be used to accommodate these changes, say categories of up to 12", 12-24" and over 24", with respective standing and moving sub-categories as before, thus creating 5 types of box for the table. This would of course increase the complexity and size of the table (probably to cover one side of A4), but I don't see that this would make any difference to the speed or playability of the game, as I've never seen anyone actually bother to memorise the fire table and gun classifications anyway, so everyone always looks everything up in any case. We already use special dice for artillery deviation in any case, so I can't see that using a D10 should bother anyone too much, except the die hard traditionalists who were brought up on 6 sided dice. I'd like to get some feedback on these ideas, which are somewhat of a radical change as I'd like to experiment with and develop them when I get back from my year in France.

On the subject of Brens and other LMGs, I did get the opportunity to use the Bren in the cadets at school and found that, yes, it has got a relatively slow rate of fire, but it did have two distinct advantages over its belt-fed rivals, it is light, you can run and charge with a Bren gun if you feel so inclined, and it is reliable and quick to reload. On the other hand I have handled and fired an MG42 while here in France and I can tell you that you couldn't run with one, and that feeding in a new belt is fiddley and time-consuming. Hence, I would personally be in favour of leaving the rules on LMGs alone for fear of making them too complex. The overall effectiveness of the two weapons is much the same.

That's all for now, I hope to get some inspiration on possible changes to the aircraft rules soon, as I've never really got the hang of George's ones, although I'm not trying to get on the "change for change's sake" bandwagon; until then I'll start putting my ideas for AFVs into a more formalised format.

*Ed.: This continuing debate is what this mag should be made of - keep it up.*

*To wear my non-Editorial hat, but as a recent convert to Rumford, some of the problems which Mark has identified, but does not seem to want to address, are catered for there: the morale effect of having tanks shot out of a platoon is unpleasant unless you are elite. If you are the Tiger in the bushes, and the Allies are supported by infantry, there is a definite reaction in morale - do you want to creep up on that Tiger, and if you do, does the Tiger want to be crept up on. On tank fire, Rumford separates out the "to hit" and the damage rolls. Hitting i.e. getting a **damaging** hit is affected by movement of firer (and target in the rules as written). If you hit, the damage is determined by range.*

*Light damage has no effect, other than you don't want another. Heavy damage (2 lights) stops you moving and firing for one turn while you mend the broken bit and makes your unit test for morale. 2 Heavy damages cause destruction.*

## **On the use of Dice**

**by Andrew Finch**

I have probably mentioned this before, but I feel that we need to have thoughts about how we use dice, and what dice we are using. Now before the members of the Klan for Korrekt Kriegsspielung start burning crosses and putting on the white pointy hats, let us examine what is on offer:

- D6 - very good player, has been around for a very long time, and can be relied on, usually. Gets timid when threatened with nutcrackers. Can react well to persuasion to come up with the right score.
- D10 - comes in two guises, as a genuine D10, but sometimes masquerades as a D20 in disguise. The real D10 can generate some interesting results. It is precise in its results and does not suffer from wobble.
- D20 - older members of this family are reliable, delivering a good clean result, but younger family tend to be very vague about their results, often changing their minds when you are not expecting it.
- D100 - this much sought after trophy can be found in the rough at most golf clubs. Is well known for rolling around on the table, onto the floor, then behind the central heating, where it sits, pretending to have scores 100, but usually 13. This device is not to be taken seriously, and the use of two, reliable D10 to generate the 10s and the units is safe. Strife often ensues among players when the score comes up 00. This is in fact 100, you are after all rolling from 1 to 100, not zero to 99.

And now for some exotic varieties:

- D4 - KKK members may reach for their lighter fluid now - was created for spiky commie deviant mutant scum type games, popular with many ex-members of the society. This dice provides an interesting, though limited, repertoire, and can be relied on for a result. Innovative in that you get three results at the same time.
- D8 - A quite popular player, now not seen too often, the D8 gave a good result, but is overshadowed by the prominence of the D10. Underused.
- D2 - a prehistoric dice, to be found in E. Kent, where the original move stick was also recently unearthed.

## **C.R.U.D.**

The Campaign for the Right Use of Dice is here to guide you to the path of true dice rolling. No more rolling the dice against the terrain, claiming it is cocked unless it is a six. No more sliding the dice deftly onto the table, so it looks as though it rolled, but in fact the only roll it did was 180 degrees on the hand, then landed. The code is simple:

- Dice must roll on a hard surface.
- Use a beaker when possible.