

# Military Muddling



Volume 10 Issue 2

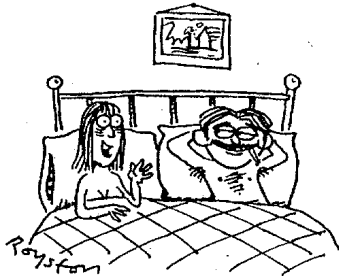
Chestnut Lodge Wargames Group's  
Newsletter

February 1999

## Editorial

Am I the only person bemused by the recent carrying on over Isandlwahna? On the one hand I am always pleased to see historical events in the public eye, but on the other I am suspicious at the treatment poor old Clío gets.

No doubt the Zulu's were fairly close to their historic fore-fathers, probably some



"I can't believe it, Jake. To think I actually thought it was an extra leg"

of them had relatives who took part in the battle. But why did we send a Welsh regiment, that proceeded to sing "Men of Harlech"? Is this not confusing a film with a historical event? I was almost expecting to see Michael Caine being interviewed about his experience of the campaign. This is not an isolated event, witness the fuss over the statue made to commemorate Braveheart, was it Mel Gibson or William Wallace?

In a similar vein: a small piece in the Daily Telegraph, 22nd August 1998, noted that coaches were queuing for parking space outside the World War One cemeteries. There is also a £2 million museum in the Cloth Hall, Ypres, bringing the horrors of trench warfare to life.. Almost as good as the real thing!

But I suppose any history is better than no history.

### Contributions for Military Muddling

Please send your contributions electronically if at all possible. Text files are best. I will attempt to re-type hard-copy if necessary.

If you have any images, pictures or maps please send them as hard copy if you can.

e-mail contributions are welcome:

*nick\_luft@compuserve.com*

Normal Mail:

Nick Luft,  
43, Finmere, Bracknell, Berks, RG12 7WF



**Deadline for next issue  
22nd February 1999**

# CLWG's Renaissance

## On the Remarks of an Inebriated Potentate

*Andy Grainger*

Once more unto the breach, dear friends... I suppose that in the last fifteen years I have responded at least four times to calls by Jim for greater participation by members, either in Chestnut or elsewhere.

With all due respect to Jim (and I owe him a considerable amount) somebody else should really be leading the assault by now.

Nevertheless, as usual, I will offer my three'pennorth although I must admit that as an inhabitant of a distant province, my attendance at CLWG is less frequent than ever.

I agree with Jim's analysis (no change there) and in particular agree that one should aim to put on events that encourage people to clear their diaries. This sounds a very good indicator of achievement. It clearly can still be done, as with Clash of Titans, although I guess it is more difficult to attract old lags like myself as we have often "seen it all before" - or think we have.

As for Jim's proposed solutions, they are all valid. The one thing they have is that they all require work (no change again) although not necessarily a great deal if everyone plays a part.

I will now make myself unpopular but fortunately I am 150 miles away and so relatively safe. By the same token you may regard my comments as those of someone who is out of touch.

I think the club needs to be more professional in its approach, particularly if it is to encourage people to "clear their diaries". I have in mind the following:

The MilMud in which this debate started was three weeks late and offered a deadline of three days (I said I was going to be unpopular).

There is no problem with people presenting Conference sessions based on little-thought ideas on the back of a fag packet (that is one of the great

strengths of it). But if a lot of people do it, and there are no visible results, then an attainer may begin to feel "So what".

If I am to come down to a session in London I do want to be fairly sure that, barring unavoidable disasters, the presenter will a) run the session as advertised and b) have enough support to do so.

This imposes a burden on the presenter to, for example, present a session advertised as a game and not, at the last minute, a design session because he lost interest. It also a responsibility on attendees both to turn up and be on time. In turn this means that the Committee needs to get agreement on the times that suit most people (not easy I guess).

I will confess that I don't know how much of a problem this is. But I sense it is a problem. And I do remember feeling very uncomfortable presenting my Bosnia game last January and not knowing how many people would turn up, or when.

### What can I offer?

I can offer cheap (more precisely, at cost and not necessarily very comfortable for a large group) venues in both Nottingham and Normandy which are surrounded with sites of military interest. In Nottingham I am close to the battlefields of Naseby, Bosworth and Stoke and there is a lot for the ECW enthusiast at Newark. (Lincoln is spectacular but there is not much on display). In Normandy there are sites galore; I have run a TEWT at Mortain for the British Commission for Military History. It would obviously be possible to include social events and it might just be possible to organise a speaker e.g. someone like Matthew Bennett might be prepared to come up to Nottingham. Or it might be possible to contact the local history society about Stoke on which we could design an excellent map/tactical game in the same weekend. If people were interested in such an event I would obviously offer a proper programme of events rather than just deciding where to go on the day.

Another good weekend event would be The National Armouries in Leeds, especially in the summer. The battlefield of Marston Moor and many village pubs are also close to it. I have no accommodation for such an event but the APEX train fare from London is probably pretty good value.

-----

### **Military Muddling Lateness**

*As usual no punches pulled. I accept the criticism for the late edition of the last MilMud.*

### **Games Running as Advertised**

*The designer should use e-mail to alert people to their game, push out the rules to those that want and generally market their game. I would feel a lot better if the game designer could spare a few minutes to confirm the game was running.*

### **Other Events**

*I have asked, via the CLWG re-mailer other members to join me on two Battlefield Tours, and I have added those details in the CLWG programme, at the end of Mil Mud. In fact this would be a good time to ask for extra contributions to the calendar, let's not stick just to CLWG dates, lets have more.*

- ed

## **CLWG Problems**

*Brian Cameron*

I'm afraid its taken me a while to come up with something for MilMud in response to Jim's letter.

I've been trying to write something which would sound constructive but I really can only see the problems not the easy solutions. Both the ordinary meetings and weekend events suffer from lack of attendance and hence games, etc going on. We can tinker with changing the timing of meetings (and I think it would be an idea to move to a 12 o'clock start if venues permit, it would certainly let me get few things done before coming to meetings) but it comes down to lack of people turning up.

As Andy Grainger has pointed out previously we actually have a large proportion of the membership living out of easy visiting distance. This reduces potential attendance and I suspect most of us have other distractions/responsibilities these days. I'm afraid I tend to disagree with Dave Nilsson's view - the programme for meetings is very thin, one's never sure whether the advertise game will be run or whether enough people will turn up.

Clearly I think that the malaise that Jim has identified extends (or originates) in the lacklustre feel of meetings. Both will only be solved by an active membership which puts on sessions (of whatever nature), sticks to a programme and attends meetings and events. Going for one weekend event this coming year may well boost attendance as the only opportunity to get together for the weekend. The problem I see with going away, is that a number of people can sometimes only attend for one day but it would give more of a feel to the thing. Certainly the atmosphere at Jim's Past Perspectives weekend has

been made in part by going away to Lodge Hill. Having been to events with guest speakers I'm not sure they add a lot to the weekend overall; its more down to the entire programme.

Sorry to ramble so much - as I say it is easy to identify the problems but I'm much less sure of the solutions.

I am not looking for responses to these suggestions at this stage since obviously progress would need to be co-ordinated with the Events Organiser.

## **Meetings**

*Simon Cornelius*

I write in response to the questions raised by Jim Wallman in the December issue of MM regarding attendance at club meetings. I believe I can justifiably claim to be one of the worst attainer of meetings in the club, having been a paid up member for nearly two and a half years I have in that time attended two meetings (one a picnic, the other a Christmas meeting when I came second in Eurovision). I am therefore not in a position to comment about the content of meetings (and whether it affects attendance) as I am never there to experience it. It is true that sometimes I look at the programme (wistfully) and think I'd really like to attend, and at other times think I'm not too worried but the games have never made the decision for me.

The question is, why don't I intend more? It is not because of location, we live in Streatham. Instead I blame the family. We have two small girls and for some reason (a) they like seeing their daddy at weekends, and (b) Carol (wife) likes a bit of a rest. My free weekend days are spent on hill-walking, conventions, megagaming and role-playing. That adds up to 16 days per year and squeezing more out is hard. I might make one or two meetings a year but getting a whole weekend twice per year - forget it. I'm never going to attend the conference or games weekend. [Next year I will be studying in my spare time for a further qualification so there is going to be even less time for CLWG.]

My personal preference would be for ordinary meetings to be in the afternoon at weekends (when I might be able to escape) or better still, be evening meetings (after sprog bedtime) on any day of the week. I'd even suggest that the conference be held over consecutive evenings if it weren't for (a) the inconvenience for those living further afield, (b) the prolonged damage to my liver.

Now I appreciate that as I involve myself little with the club, I should not have much of a say but I hope that the idea of midweek meetings is at least not dismissed out of hand.

----

*Simon, you are one of the people we need to hear from. Knowing why you do not attend can only help us re-vitalise the club to get you to attend.*

*I think your suggestion for an afternoon game a good one. Initially the Long Club Day was well attended with several offerings of games during the day. Now we are short on games, lets tailor our coat appropriately. I can understand how a few hours one day are better than a full day - speaking as a family man.*

*Evenings do not hold much prospect for me, but maybe the London membership might wish to consider this.*

- ed



## **Weekend Event: Reinvention**

*Mukul Patel*

**W**ell Jim asked for a response so here's my mine. I agree with Jim that the Weekend event are less well attended than they use to be.

Comment on solutions:

1) do away with the weekend.... possibly as long as considerable effort from the membership is put into making regular meetings more exciting. (By attending the meetings, bringing games and ideas , old or new, the meetings.

2) Shorten the weekend to a very full day event... That would we OK with me.

3) Invite illustrious speakers... Don't like this idea. I think their are more than enough knowledgeable people within the club who could lead a talk or debate.

4) Take the conference to a residential venue for the weekend...I don't think changing the venue within this country will help considerably without the weekend having a full or exciting program. Its the

content of the weekend that I believe needs to be urgently addressed rather than its surroundings.

5) Take the conference to a residential venue abroad for the weekend. As above.

6) Include a battlefield tour...don't know..

7) Include a larger game or Megagame in the weekend. I believe this would help. I think perhaps giving the weekend a big game or would lend it a much greater focus and so pull.

8) Make the weekend include a wider invitation to other gamers... I don't know.

9) Improve the venue. I think improving the content of the program of the weekend is more important.

10) Changing the timing... again improving the content is more important.

Sorry I haven't got any new ideas.

----



### **Speaker**

*In all the contributions I detect a lack of enthusiasm for a speaker.*

### **Joint Club Events**

*As for suggestion 8 we have been invited by several clubs to hold joint sessions - has anyone attended? The only one I can recall was when Trevor got some of his mates to go to last years Weekend Games Event, in North West London. This was quite fun. But I suspect it needed a personal contact to make it work.*

### **MegaGame at Weekend**

*I like the idea of pulling in the punters with a large club game / megagame. Maybe this could be opened to non-MegaGame Makers as a club game, but for a bigger canvas, without the full scale organisation needed for a MegaGame? There again a megagame event could cross fertilise back into the club, by drawing in new gamers to us. We did get an attendee at the conference, (Mike Young?) who was not a CLWG member but was invited along from a MegaGame.*

- ed

## CLWG's Future

### *Pickles*

Time to get those obligations sorted out. Following Jim's new events bit I have been thinking about the future of the club and I think it is time for a spot of fact facing. The level of attendance this year has been very low indeed with even usual regulars missing meetings. There has also been a real dearth of club games. I think only Mukul, Andy Grainger and I put on stuff that was not Megagame-game related (I assume Jim did too I just can't remember). This should not be too bad as game reports including Megagame reports have often been the part of MilMud most interesting to me. However these also seem to have dried up. This probably has something to do with the generally lower level of Megagame activity in terms of both the number of games and the number of players. I believe it also could have something to do with the growth of the MM subgroup and any invisible electronic discussions that now go on between them. When I started megagaming a lot of CLWG were involved in a postal Dreams of Empire campaign. This tended to dominate or at least feature very heavily in any post MG discussion down the pub. Its place has now been usurped by the Full Moon campaign, which holds all of its participants in thrall. I suspect that this draws of a lot of energy that might otherwise be dedicated to CLWG games.

Other problems are the residual feeling that we are a big club whereas in practice we are a very small one. The amount we spend on accommodation seems ridiculous when we could all fit into someone's front room. Along this line the only proposal of Jim's I had issue with was the idea of paying a speaker to talk to 3 men and a dog which would be embarrassing and very expensive.

Now neither of these huge cliques are bad things but I do think that they have more or less rendered CLWG an irrelevance. In a sense CLWG has done a good job. It has brought together a group of people with common interests. They have shuffled themselves into different like minded groups, which are thriving, and the commonality at the core has evaporated. CLWG tadpole has turned into MM and FM Toads.

I think that the future of CLWG does not at the moment lie with monthly (or even less) with bimonthly meetings where we play games we have made up. I think that Jim's proposal that we need to shake up the club events is along the right lines but not far reaching enough. I believe that we need to reassess the whole operations of the club - the

alternative being a withering death, or at least a coma until the next dose of enthusiasm.

I do not see the need for more than 6 days of game playing spread somehow over the year - unless people are going to put on one game each that 30-40 hours is loads. I do not include Megagame tryout stuff in this. CLWG is very sympathetic to megagames and I don't think there are any club members that object to playing or brainstorming over megagames. I think that there is scope for having dedicated play-throughs or design sessions for megagames. These should come under a different heading than club meetings and really they should be Megagame maker events not CLWG ones. Full Moon stuff is different and very open and parallel to rather than tangled up with CLWG activities. I do not think there is much room for crossover as anyone who wants to a can play in the Full Moon stuff. There might be scope for a big Full Moon game that attracted in some of the CLWGs that are not regulars - possibly due to travel. (Those of us who are not regulars are somewhat excluded from casual involvement by the depth of background knowledge that the full mooners have) The other function of the club is social as it provides a large body of similarly minded individuals. This is to some undefined extent predicated on common gaming experiences, which are fewer than they were, but it is one side of the club I am particularly keen to continue.

I would therefore suggest that a schedule like the following one is more in line with the needs of the club than the current:-

- 4 one day gaming meetings (even months except 8,12)
- 1 Picnic
- 1 Christmas do - sillier games, quiz and socialising
- 6 Social evenings - meal out and /or relevant movie, possibly midweek.
- (odd months)
- 2 Megagame tryout days for brainstorming and playthroughs
- 1 Full Moon special event day - a big fight, too big for an evening.
- 2 Events - the stuff Jim was proposing.

## Boer War and CLWG

*Andrew Reeve*

In response to Jim's request for comment:

Next year will see the centenary of the Anglo Boer war - around the end of October, the traditional conference date. I know that events are being planned to commemorate the war, and it might be worth considering a club visit. Downsides are that it would be expensive (£500-£600 depending on numbers) which may exclude those that cannot afford it. Secondly it is a long way and therefore a

weekend would be insufficient. However it would certainly be a change from the usual, and should fulfil the criteria of "looking forward to it all year".

Maybe you think I'm trying to run before learning to walk in proposing a long-haul destination but you never know.

<http://www.battlefields.co.za/centenary/index.htm>

## A letter from Aunt Sally

*Nick Luft*

Is this what we want?

If the club meetings can fit into an individuals room and we can have virtual e-mail discussions of games and ideas and we can run games that involve some, but not all, of the membership, we have no need for the current club structure.

We could meet ad hoc in our own houses, and we could set up mailing lists to run particular discussion forums (they are free on the Web), and we could run games that involve those we want to contact. We could have a virtual community.

There would be no obligation to contribute games and reports. We would not need a printed Military Muddling, we could exist via e-mail and web sites. We could invite mates to join in and groups could grow and break up as the need arose. We could have centralised e-mailing lists. We could be a loose federation of individuals.

Is this what we want?

I do not make these assertions lightly, because we could evolve into a virtual community. We have elements of this in the club now! I like what Pickles the Uncomfortable says - we do punch above our weight! We are not a big club. We are fragmenting into groups. Gone are the days when we all sang the Dad's Army theme tune.

I keep feeling the need to be nostalgic and so I will. I still remember the date I ran my first proper game, rather than a discussion, at CLWG - 6th March 1994 - Live and Let Live. To see my ideas come over and make some sense, to experience the game through others and communicate my ideas about the Great War. Bliss. Oh! and it was fun. I remember rolling marbles on the floor in the submarine simulator, a tale that has my non-gaming friends in stitches - but they're really jealous - well the blokes are anyway. I

remember turning the tables on the Macedonian elite after Alexander had died and calling upon the Persians, who thought I was the greatest, and defeating the Macedonian elite, or at least the rest of the players. I can recall me and my Piano, some tables and chairs and, whoops there goes another Whiz Bang.

I can recall many a time like this and I know I won't have them in the virtual community. I would work within it to achieve what I wanted - it would be just different, somehow.

Is this what we want?

Only you have the answer.

## GET ON-LINE or maybe upgrade?

Computer Modem US Robotics 14.4 Fax Modem with cables, software &c. Make me an offer ----or a swap for something fun - - if you're a wargamer or educational consumer; you're welcomed, indeed given preference. Buyer collects. SW16 or meetings by appointment.

John\_Rutherford@compuserve.com  
0181 480 7593.

## Onside Reviews

### An Evening At Sir Arthur's

*Jonathan Pickles*

This game was run at the 1998 Christmas special instead of a quiz (it is much better than a quiz I think). The game is a free form role-playing game set now with the assumption that anything paranormal exists. I have spent a lot of the last year playing free forms and they are currently my favourite gaming medium (except hexy wargames of course) They are not a million miles away from political games but you generally do not represent anything beyond yourself. They do tend to simulate literature and movies and crude stereotypes rather than history. I started trying to write what would effectively be a free form with my Riches and Reputation thing but this has rather stalled (for 4 years) and weird shit is much easier to put in a game. My game came about as I played on set in an Asylum in which several people had to be mad. This was fun for a while but hard work for 4 hours. I wanted there to be lots

of effects in the game that made people behave in a particular manner for a while but then wore off. This was not pushed quite as strongly as I had originally intended as I added lots of plot stuff. I intended the game as a dinner party game and wrote it with non gamers in mind - as they would be told how to act. It worked OK when I tried this and I was able to tighten up a couple of gaps. I wanted to try it at CLWG as I think it is very funny - both times I was rolling around. It is also an unfamiliar medium to CLWGs and also demonstrated some mechanisms that may be useful in other games. The events of the evening are too complex to describe in detail - I hope someone else writes off their own experiences. Most of the plots resolved OK. Several people got naked or ate styrofoam cups. A "Demon" was summoned and despatched - but left a little "present" with its summoner. (I am too wimpy to let it eat everyone and dropped hints to let it get done in) The crowning moment for me was Jon Casey's brilliant Hercule Poirot episode when he tried to obtain the best bid for his "retrieved" weird science artefact. He gathered everyone together in the library and then proceeded to "auction" the information that he had found the strange High tech device and what it was without his possession or lack of understanding of it becoming obvious.

I felt the game went well and I will try to give it one more outing - so if you were not there forget all you have just read Mr Nilsson. Mechanisms. There were about three mechanisms. Items people had were represented on little cards. Combat was the biggest wins with the traditional tie break, and other abilities were represented by cards. This is the most fun part I think and the most radical in a way. Abilities tend to be very on/off. If you use them on someone than they work unless that person has a specific counter. They are limited in on of a number of ways. They may be limited to a certain number of uses. They may be one use per opponent or they may be restricted to a certain situation. Some are on all the time but these are normally balanced by being less powerful. These are a departure from normal abilities in RPGs in that they do not normally involve randomness or dice - they just work or do not. This makes games flow much better and removes the need for umpire intervention - the only things I had to intervene in were stealthy things - where people do not give away that they have used say their pickpocket ability - or on gameworld issues - how much is he really worth. Oh and the satanic ritual which was the only set piece. Some games have more "World" added in with umpires playing roles and with big effects moderated by the GMs but I, as you might have noticed, prefer to have the player interacting amongst themselves (or with the systems in some cases) rather than with umpires. Any way I want write a Wild West one next for 60

players to take 18 hours so if anyone want to lend a hand....

(ps that is slightly serious - I propose to write modules for about a dozen players/3-4 hours, club games, and build them together so if anyone wants to contribute please...)

Game type definitions Jim's old glossary did not include the following which may be more relevant.

#### **Live Role Play**

Characters take on the role of a character they generate themselves. They take this character through a number of adventures and develop a history for the character. The Adventures involve interacting with other characters and umpires in a game world where the player physically represents the character they are playing. Mechanisms may involve dice or cards or rubber swords.

*Often know as LARP (Live Action Role Play)*

#### **Free Form Role Playing**

These games involve player taking on the role of another character and acting out their interactions. They play roles allocated to them by the game writer and will only play that character for one game. Normally the games are richly plotted and are like several novels interwoven with the situations and characters set up but not the resolutions. Never involve rubber swords.

I can see a continuum from Live Role play through Free forms to Political Committee type games. Some free forms do even involve moving armies about on maps. The main difference is that free forms are usually fictional and heroic and political games normally try to simulate some historical situation. but wait till I reinvent the Mexican Revolution Peace Conference Game as a Free form...

## **Impudent and Shameless Lords - Tryout Game (War of the Roses)**

*Nick Luft*

I was pleased that the attendees wanted initially to discuss the rules rather than play the game. This illustrated two things. One the difficulty of preparing the game bits and pieces, something I felt woefully inadequate in and secondly, the benefit of trailing the game and posting the rules via e-mail to the attendees.

As it is now I have a good working critique of the game, line by line almost, and some profound questions to ask about the game structure.

A Megagame has to fit its design more snugly than a club game. All roles must have something to do, all the time. The turns have to be challenging to complete yet not overpowering. I suppose this can be termed the tempo of a game. I would be more relaxed about a club game, as I know I could interfere with the design if glaring wrong, and succeed in carrying the game on - a Megagame has to carry on regardless.

My crucial problem in this design is still unresolved in my mind - how to fit military campaigns of a few real time weeks, but taking substantial game time, into a game that is essentially a series of political crises over several years. In an earlier game design workshop, two solutions were quickly prescribed.

1. Run the politics until it gets military, then call time out and fight the war to a finish and then return.
2. Fit a combination of military and political phases simultaneously in one turn.

After this tryout a third solution was proposed using the Clouds in the West example:

3. All turns are political, but only set times within the turn can have military action.

The game's tempo is not the only thing affected by these fundamental decisions. For instance how long-term will the politics be? If I can fit in long political turns of say three months, I can do several years worth of real time. Thus questions of economics, wealth generation etc. will need to be simulated. If I opt for a shorter real time I can ignore the longer term politics and go for short term goals.

At times like this I keep hearing Jim Wallman's admonishment that a game designer should write down his aims and design the game to fit. After this tryout, I feel I have a working combat system that is seeking a suitable mechanism.

My thanks to all for an interesting afternoon.

## **Reaction to Impudent and Shameless Lords - The Tryout**

*Jerry Elsmore*

**T**hanks for Saturday: I hope you found it useful - I certainly enjoyed the discussion and came away understanding a great deal more about the Wars of the Roses that I did when I arrived! As is usual with

Chestnut, lots of things were left unresolved and so I'm looking forward to the next rules draft.

*A typical CLWG club game, or so I like to think, the game teaches as well as entertains.*

*Brian Cameron*

**I** thought it was a very good and thought provoking session and I'm glad you found it useful. I'd very much like to see further drafts.

While I'm writing I'd like to chuck in a few thoughts.

You'd clearly like to do some of the more political and dynastic stuff but are limited by the timescale. The timescale is dictated by the detailed level of the military campaigning. Going by the limited experience of the campaign on Saturday I could wonder if having weekly moves is necessary. I can't help thinking that the broad brush of the strategy could still have been represented if each phase was a month and thus say you had a seasonal turn of three months covered in thirty minutes. Assuming 15 turns in the day you'd get through nearly 4 years, still not a lot but better. Alternatively could a turn have a political and a campaigning phase (along the lines of Clouds in the West) which would enable each (say) hour turn to represent 1 year. I suppose what I thinking really comes down to whether the detailed military campaigning will limit the scope of the game and perhaps encourage players just to indulge in the campaigning. Anyway, a thought.

*I think Brian accurately picks up on my points about the long term political structure of the game.*

*Jonathan Pickles*

**O** and while I am about it. It did really like the battle system and have a couple of suggestions which will no doubt come from other sources too.

I think + 1 for having a great lord would be a good reflection of the idea that these people represent legitimacy as well as the superior morale and better troops thing. Mostly this will be +1 to both sides. Also if you have a huge superiority in great lords then get another +1, say 3 to 1. This is again to represent legitimacy. The weaker side will be less confident in the justice of their cause so fewer would have turned out and so on. My other suggestion for this which I do not like so much is to allow 1 household per 10000men to count or some lower figure. The other thing is it seem there should be some advantage to numbers and there is a space for a +1 for (say2:1) odds. I



tried some odd battles using your system and got results I liked. The only oddity is the +1 for 2:1 blues. This makes sense from a game but not from a simulation as far as I can see as they are the same troops as red only worse. A mercenary army could suffer from a lack of them, possibly more a problem in theory than in practice. Say A has 19 Red. B has 10 red 1 blue. This is tied, while I think A has a much better force. Still swings & roundabouts.

I did not see much else of the session. Looks like there is plenty to do though!

*As usual Pickles drives a Scud and Launcher through my rules and then leaves me with the understatement that I have a lot to do still! If I ever need a to have someone whisper in my ear, "Remember Lord, thou art mortal", I'll know who to employ.*

## Offside Reviews

### Armageddon Year 2000

Offside ramble by  
*Mukul Patel*  
(Belial a Demon Prince)

This was a game that was meant to be a fairly light-hearted look at possibly the final battle of between Heaven and Hell. This game was a collective effort between some members of CLWG. 99% of the hard work came from Jonathan Pickles. Players in the game only represented the principals of Heaven and Hell, less GOD, and no humans. I don't really know if there was much infighting or jockeying for position in Heaven, but there was rather a lot in Hell as you could expect, especially as I played Belial who didn't really relish the prospect of the final judgement.

The mechanisms in the game whilst being completely open to all players and were distributed to anybody who subscribes to CLWG's email thing. They were perhaps in retrospect not always clear on the written page, and needed explanation from Jonathan Pickles, this slightly detracted from the flow game and created some discontent amongst the players. This would easily be solved in any possible subsequent manifestation of the game in two ways, more examples in the rules and walk through of the rules.

Highlight of the game. The Arch Angels invaded Hell and a verbal skirmish ensued between the Arch Angel

Gabrielle and Lucifer, during a long and protracted combat. The combat between Lucifer and Gabrielle proved inconclusive though and was broken off by a whimperish Lucifer due to a magnificent piece of bluff from Gabrielle who whilst nearly on "her last legs" managed to scare Lucifer into thinking that She was still very strong and quite capable of fighting indefinitely. This was a brilliant piece of brinkmanship and games play much to be admired.

I hope everyone enjoyed the game.



## Mind that Elephant

a SELWG Megagame  
Designed by Peter Merrit

Report by  
*Mukul Patel*

This was a game set in the same period as the Clouds in the West megagames. That is the second Punic war, or the bog one when Hannibal pops up with his elephants and storms across Spain and Gaul. It was sort of a humorous cut-down version of Clouds in the West.

The players in this game only played Roman Senators and not Carthaginians or Greeks or anything else. The game had some nice things in it. In no great order there were three things I really liked about the game.

Firstly the map, a simple map of modern day Europe overlaid with relevant information such as crude stylised provincial boundaries, Spain for instance was divided into three areas, the badlands of the west, Roman Spain and Carthaginian Spain. The map was simple and clear and jargon free and so easy to remember and understand, but this did make it lose some flavour, but the playability of the game was increased. This simplicity of names was also reflected in players' character names which were Asterix the Gaulish in that real Roman names were not used but rather names like Sensuous Tumultuous, Ambitious, you get the idea?? This meant we had no problem with tongue-twisting names, again some realism flavour lost, but more than made up for a whole lot of humour and bad puns.

Second thing I liked was the debating system or rather policy decision making system. The game had a nice fairly stylised decision making system, that mainly revolved around making deals rather than making speeches. The essence of the system is that endless debate was not allowed and some fairly crude but effective mechanisms helped push decision making along.

Third thing I liked was the trading or income generating system. The system involved turning playing cards into revenue, a bit like civilisation the board game. Each Provincial governor was given a number of playing cards. The Governors in a short five minute spell had a chance to trade cards with other players to create sets and runs of cards. These sets and runs had a greater trade in value for revenue than just a bunch of random cards. This system of generating revenue was just plain fun, and could be applied in other games. I think Mr. J Pickles says that he has a tried a similar thing himself so its not new.

I never fought a battle in the game but thought the Battle board system of resolving battles worked fine, but needed to be simpler.

Excellent game and a subject that would make a brilliant Weekend game for our club.

## Critical Reviews

### Berserker 0101

Andy Grainger

I enjoyed Richard Hands' report which told a great story about interesting characters in what must have been a chaotic environment. In his final paragraph Richard illustrates some of the frailties of character revealed when people and institutions are put under stress. Megagames can very good at doing this. Many of us remember Final Frontier 2 where these stresses were suffered but then surmounted by the winning team. As a player of historical games by preference I have to admit that SF games seem to be better at this aspect.

### Veracious Vomiting and Verisimilitude

Dear Sir,

I write to take issue with your correspondent Grainger, quondam Baronet of Noghstadt and evidentially a ranting dog of a Whig, or whining toad of a Tory, friend of Cranbourne, or verily Hague, (who doth commit the oldest sins the newest kind of ways) and who complained of his pleasure undermined by unrealistic anti-peristalsis, may Heaven preserve us, portrayed during the opening sequence of the entertainment entitled 'Saving Private Ryan; being a poor play in Three Parts: sub-titled; not to be taken as representing Truth save by

ye feeble-minded. Mr Holly Wood, Author. No Money Return'd'.

As a self-professed stickler for philosophical accuracy, and Man of Peace, homines dum docent, discunt, I must vouchsafe I have considerable experience of vomiting; not so much on my own part as a vomiter, volenti non fit injuria, forsooth, (for I sadly lack projectile force gastrically) but, I assert, frequently while leaping clear of the partially-digested ejecta of indisposed drinking colleagues, not excluding Jack Aubrey, RN, horribile dictu, whose contra-digestive symptoms (similar to many Naval gentlemen off their quarterdecks) are assignable to an over-hearty indulgence in the products of fermentation and distillation, albeit well-diluted, associated with excessive consumption of the most adipose and decomposed portions, seasoned with rat-excreta, of our sea-rations.

Perhaps more appositely, my experience of this disease, when occasioned not by alcoholic over-indulgence causing an overturning of the humours, but a profound thallassocentric intestinal unease (id est, sea-sickness,) was most memorably while crossing the English Channel, or 'The Sleeve' as Buonaparte and his abominable Frenchmen would have it, in the Year Two, in a small and unstable vessel (a five-gun sloop) incessantly suffering that life-threatening disease, (I jest not as to its peril,) oft the cause of unreasoning merriment among those immune to its misery, and called 'mal de mer', or Anglically 'sea sickness; what our Hungarian brethren will name 'tengeribetegseg' in faith, 'mihi placet, fortasse requiris? scio; non placet et excrucior,' resisting remedially the most diligent autodiagnostic physician, save the efficacious (yet sadly facetious) below-decks cure of sitting under a tree.

Mr Grainger is correct up to a point; vomiting at the commencement of a passage, near the English coast, would doubtless have been of the hearty, voluminous kind, in the American case presumably including relicts of such roborative and succulent delicacies of the modern Age as chili-dogs, coca-cola, coors-beer and hershey-bars, along with the inevitable diced carrot. Summon Huey and Ralph! Mais. Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle, a mon avis.

However, approaching Normandy, sixty-nine nautical from Weymouth, in a stiff swell in June 1744, why, I do believe the correct representation of the act of vomiting would be the production of a tablespoonful or so of dilute stomach acid, (spirits of salt, I declare!) or even that most exquisite agony known as the 'dry' retch; (whereby a sharp abdominal spasm produces nothing material via the buccal cavity yet causes a most dolorous actuation of the muscular processes of the digestive organs in a contrary manner.) I will maintain, after fifteen or more hours of sea-sickness afloat there would be little of the Colonial Delicacies provided by the American feeding-service, or 'PX', left inside the military tract, or gut, to 'throw', in the regurtitational sense.

Therefore, I maintain Mr Spielberg may be judged impeccable in this case; though I will agree he is egregiously guilty of anachronistic sophistication, and I will maintain with proofs, romantic idealism in many other cases.

I hope this will not be a cause of my Lord Nuggstudd to go out with me yet again; though if he doth wish it my seconds attend him instantly; for I would not wish to humiliate him again in such a facile manner as heretofore. Oderint, dum maturanant.

Yours sincerely,

Dr S. Maturin,  
Gleneagle Mansion  
4th Day of December, 1808

## Great War Trenches

*Andy Grainger*

I would like to pick up on the points made by Nick at the end of James Kemp's article: saying "*None of our soldiers lives are worth expending for a Bosnian or a Somalian.*" I don't think James said it in his article so who is making the assertion in the italicised postscript?

James seems to be suggesting that if we send our 14-15 year olds to Sanctuary Wood "*the less likely we are to fight another war and that surely must be a good thing.*" Well, surely it depends. Ordinary civilians in former Yugoslavia found themselves involved in a war between 1991 and 1995 because various political leaders had decided to have one. And those politicians were prepared to continue it to get a political or military result for their constituents. By and large, those politicians maintained and even increased their popular support even in the midst of siege, atrocity, starvation and that most problematic political factor - stagnation on the battlefield.

So it seems to me that the debate should not be about whether we should fight wars. We are adults and wars happen, despite best efforts to prevent them. The debate should be about whether and how to intervene. In other words, examining the costs of not intervening in a Bosnia or Ruanda, say, or consideration of setting up an interim military administration in an area where the civilian one has collapsed and bringing the sides together once order has been restored. Obviously this is not easy and, as long as the hand-wringing line on "*we must never fight another war under any circumstances*" is peddled by the media (or is it society) we will

continue to see Kosovo's and Somalia's on our TV screens.

## The Bridge

*Andy Grainger*

I mentioned this film in my review of "Private Ryan" last issue. I have now found the video so can offer it on loan. The tape has not been played for many years, however, so I don't know what state it will be in and I don't have a video here.

## I Love My Job

*Nick Luft*

I knew about the alleged misquoting or fabrication of the some references by historians, an example I have discussed with a Canadian Lt Col, was Denis Winter's book "Haig's Command", in which the officer attempted to find Winter's references to documents in the Canadian archives - with no success.

Well I have now experienced it first hand. One of the blissful parts of my jobs is the exceptional service we receive from official bodies, which includes the PRO. They allowed the JSCSC library to borrow copies of the WW2 War Cabinet minutes, bliss.

The officer doing his research found not only were the documents misquoted (or were they made up?) but in one case Vol 24 turned out to 1918 not 1940. Now that was a BIG mistake!

Date	Venue	Game	Author	Blurb
Sun 7 Feb	Bedford	• Invasion of the West	• James Kemp	• The reds are coming, the reds are coming!
Sun 14 Feb	Tewkesbury	• Battlefield Tour	• Nick Luft	• The local battlefield trust are organising a battlefield tour of the famous War of the Roses battlefield. Please contact me for further information. • A lift and accommodation can be offered.
Sat. 6 Mar	Riggindale	• tba	•	
Sun 28 Mar	Newark	• Battlefield Tour	•	• Tour of the 1644, English Civil War battlefield, the remains of the ECW siege works at Newark, and a visit to the War of the Roses battlefield at East Stoke, 1487. • Contact me for details. A lift and accommodation can be offered.
Sun. 25 Apr	Bedford	• tba	•	
Sat. 1 May	Riggindale	• tba	•	
Sat. 5 Jun	Riggindale	• tba	•	
Sun. 4 Jul	Bedford	• tba	•	
Sat. 4 Sep	Riggindale	• tba	•	
Sun. 7 Nov	Bedford	• tba	•	
Sat. 18 Dec	Riggindale	• tba	•	
The Pending Tray.		• Flushing the Wolf • Suez • Battle of Britain 3 • What is to be Done? • B3.1 • WW2 • The Lion Comes Home	• Mukul • Terry • Dave Boundy • Neil • Pickles • Trevor/ Mukul • James Kemp	

Games Organiser's Notes: - Contact Dave Nilsson (0181) 241 6858

- *Games in italics are provisional only and subject to change with no notice whatsoever.*
- **Riggindale** = Riggindale Methodist church hall, Riggindale Road, Streatham. Entry by entryphone, keys held by John Rutherford (0181) 677 5427 and Jim Wallman (0181) 677 5756.
- **Bedford Park** = Upstairs room at the Bedford Park pub, Streatham High Road. (Just along from Streatham station). Entry before opening hours by rear door - go down the alleyway to the right of the pub, come into the beer garden through the tatty back gate and go up the stairs.
- **Eardley** = Eardley School, Fernthorpe Road, Streatham. (Off Mitcham Lane). Entry by entryphone.
- **Richmond Park** = Richmond Park

All meetings aim to start by 1030-1100 - Cost of meetings: £3.00. (£1.50 for unwaged.)