

• UNDER • THE • WIRE •

(Editorial- from Column 2)

Completed in 1620, the building contains original painted ceilings (covered for years by a false ceiling) and was originally the home of an Edinburgh burgess, Thomas Gledstones. The reconstructed street-level shop booth displays replicas of 17th C. goods, and the first floor rooms have been furnished as a typical Edinburgh home of the period with kitchen and livingroom/bedroom. Low lighting levels try to replicate the feel of the original living quarters, making it difficult to read the information boards.

The ground and first floors are used by the NTS for their museum. The others are modern-ised flats in private ownership (though the top flat is let out by the NTS as a very popular holiday home).

A later (18th C. Georgian period) house is also owned by the National Trust for Scotland in Edinburgh and is located in Charlotte Square, part of Edinburgh's New Town, and provides an interesting contrast to Gladstone's Land. Both are open from April 1 to October 31.

Also on the Royal Mile, near it's top, is the High Kirk of Edinburgh, better known as St Giles' Cathedral. It has been, for over 1000 years, the city church of Edinburgh. Most of the building was done between the 13th and 15th centuries. In the 16th and 17th C. St Giles' was the centre of the Scottish Reformation, led here by John Knox (1514-1572).

Jill and I popped in on our way back down the Royal Mile after visiting Gladstone's Land, hoping for a little peace and tranquility away from the hustle and bustle of a Saturday afternoon in the centre of Edinburgh. Light streamed in through the high, stained glass windows, most dating from the tail end of the last century, but one recently completed. One imagines cathedrals to be airy, cool, havens of sanctuary.

However, the music emanating from the modern, angular, sculptured organ sounded more like it came from a pack of howling hyenas than from angel's harps, and it all but drove us from within. It was difficult to tell if the organist

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(Editorial- from Column 1)

was simply playing keys at random to test the organ, or whether he was actually following a piece of written music. As a piece of modern sculpture, the organ was quite stunning, though it would have been more at home in a modern cathedral than in the ancient walls of St Giles.

In the Scottish Borders there are many castles and ancestral homes dating back to the wars between Scotland and England. As the ground was fought over over several centuries by the many warring factions, defensive structures grew up, and were added to over the years. One such is Thirlestane Castle, just outside Lauder, and some 28 miles south of Edinburgh. Strategically placed to guard one of the access routes to the Scottish capital, Thirlestane is located on a prominent position on a slight bluff in the centre of the valley. A 13th C. fort once stood on this site, though the core of the present castle was first completed in 1590, but later remodelled and added to in the 1670s and in the 1840s.

The owners, the Maitlands, who have owned the castle throughout its history, came to Britain as part of William's army in 1066, and settled in Northumbria. Through marriage in the mid 13th C. the lands near Lauder came into the family, and a tower house - some remains of this original structure exist - were built there.

With each remodelling of the castle, towers and turrets were added making it one of the most impressive (stylish rather than brutal) castles I've seen. It looks more like a French chateau, than a traditional "castle", though the central keep's walls are thirteen feet thick. Thus one might almost call it pretty. Its balanced composition of multiple towers, turrets, and central keep, with (the only) access to the front door by a broad flight of steps central to the whole building reflects an architectural statement of style, rather than design by necessity. The rose pink sandstone used for the window surrounds and

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So, at last, the games are all over, and the last game end statements are in. I considered waiting until after our forthcoming trip to Orkney before putting this issue out, so I would feel that I had held my standards right to the end, and not gone out with a whimper.

Then I decided it would be more pressure on me if I did, as this final issue would be sitting around bugging me for the next three weeks.

And I wouldn't fully enjoy the trip as I knew it would still have to be produced on our return. As it is, the month of June already looks as though it will be a very hectic few weeks as Jill and I get married at the end of it.

And I also figured that it wasn't fair on you lot to have to wait at least a month past the deadline to get this issue.

As you are probably well aware, Jill and I often trail around old castles or houses. However, this year we have not had the time or inclination to get out and about - other things seem to have had higher priorities, and it's sometimes nice just to have a lazy weekend at home. Nevertheless, at one of the recent holiday weekends we decided we'd had enough of the house and garden and set off into Edinburgh to see a couple of the city centre tourist attractions.

"Gladstone's Land" is an example of a tenement building from the 17th C. and is presumed typical of the overcrowded Old Town which grew up along the ridge between Edinburgh Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse - the Royal Mile. The tenement is six storeys high, three rooms deep, but only one room wide. The cramped conditions of the Old Town determined the width of the lot on which the house was built, thus extension was only possible in depth or upwards.

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Editor: Wallace Nicoll
 Address: 3 Alnwickhill View, Edinburgh EH16 6XZ
 Tel: 031 664 7893 (home), 031 469 5343 (work)
 Email: wallace@lothian.demon.co.uk
 Work Fax: 031 469 5335
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TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF MURPHY'S LAW

(some more Folk Laws of Science)

General Engineering

A patent application will be preceded by one week by a similar application made by an independant worker.

The more simple a design change seems, the further its influence will extend.

All warranty and guarantee clauses cease to exist upon payment of the invoice.

The necessity of making a major design change increases as the fabrication of the system approaches completion.

Firmness of delivery dates is inversely proportional to the tightness of the schedule.

Dimensions will always be expressed in the least useful term. Velocity, for example, will be expressed in furlongs per fortnight.

Any important Instructional Manual or Operating Manual will have been discarded.

Original drawings will be mangled by the copying machine.

Mathematics

In any given miscalculation, the fault will never be placed if more than one person is involved.

Any error that can creep in, will. It will be in the direction that will do most damage to the estimate.

All constants are variables.

In any given calculation, the figure that is most obviously correct will be the source of error.

A decimal will always be displaced.

In a complex calculation, one factor from the numerator will always move into the denominator.

In any formula, constants (especially those obtained from handbooks) are to be treated as variables.

Production and Maintenance

Any metal cut to length will be too short. Tolerances will accumulate unidirectionally towards maximum difficulty of assembly.

Identical machines, tested under identical conditions will not be identical in the field.

The availability of a part is inversely proportional to the need for that part.

If a component needs n parts, there will be (n-1) in stock.

A dropped tool will land where it can do most damage (also known as The Law of Selective Gravitation).

A part selected at random from a group having 99% reliability will be a member of the 1% group.

When one connects a three phase line, the phase sequence will be wrong.

A motor will rotate in the wrong direction.

The probability of a dimension being omitted from a plan or drawing is directly proportional to its importance.

Inter-changeable parts won't.

Probability of failure of a component, assembly, sub-system or system is inversely proportional to the ease of repair or replacement.

If a prototype functions perfectly, subsequent production units will malfunction.

Components that must not and cannot be assembled improperly will be.

The most reliable component will fail.

If a circuit cannot fail, it will.

A fail-safe circuit will destroy others.

A circuit protected by a fast-acting fuse will protect the fuse by blowing first.

A pump will pump at the wrong speed if it pumps.

Failures will not occur until the vehicle has passed its final inspection.

A purchased vehicle or part will meet its specification long enough, and only long enough, to pass pre-delivery inspection.

If an obviously defective component is replaced in a vehicle with an intermittent fault, the fault will appear again after the vehicle has been returned to service.

After the last sixteen mounting nuts have been removed from an access cover, it will be found that the wrong cover has been removed.

After a component has been secured by sixteen holding down nuts, it will be found that the gasket has been omitted.

After an engine or gearbox has been fully assembled extra components will be found on the bench.

Hermetic seals will leak.

Any tool dropped whilst repairing a vehicle will roll underneath the exact centre.

When a vehicle with an operational defect is demonstrated to the manufacturers's representative, it will function properly.

Specifications

Specified parts are never available.

Any specified environmental condition will always be exceeded.

Any safety factor set as a result of practical experience will be exceeded.

Manufacturer's specification sheets will be incorrect by a factor of 0.5 or 0.2 depending on which multiplier gives the most optimistic value. For salesmen's claims these values will be 0.1 to 10.

In any given price estimate the cost will exceed the estimate by a factor of 3^{21} .

Systems designed to be foolproof will be used by fools.

(Editorial - from Page 1)

architectural details stands out against the rough hewn grey-pink stones that form the walls.

You can wander through about a dozen rooms of the house on the ground and first floor, all in reasonable condition, but most furnished from a mixture of periods. In each there was a guide to answer questions, and summary descriptions of each room and its contents printed onto (table-tennis bat sized and shaped) boards.

There is heavy and impressive ceiling plasterwork in some of the rooms - especially the first floor bedrooms (where, inevitably, Bonnie Prince Charlie once stayed - if not him, then Mary Queen of Scots!) and drawing room/music room. But apart from this, the inside of the house has a rather non-descript, characterless, feeling to it.

Being in private hands throughout its history, this property and its contents have not had, perhaps, the same careful attention to detail that a property, now, in public/trust ownership can have. Renovation of NTS, or similarly-managed, properties does tend to result in thematic rooms with genuine, or period reconstruction, furniture. Being part of a living and breathing family home through the years seems to result in the presence of furniture and accoutrements from many periods and in varied condition.

Cable TV finally reached us here, just in time to find that Star Trek - The Next Generation switched back to BBC2, and the original series started to be shown every day on Sky 1. At least they're still running Deep Space 9 on Sky 1 on a Sunday evening. A few of the channels have changed their emphasis over the past year, but it's still the same mixture of old and new programming.

We opted for the hi-fi aerial link up this time, which means we get stereo sound without needing a Nicam TV, and since it's running through the hi-fi, probably a better quality sound anyway than from a Nicam TV. Time will tell whether we use it to any extent.

Remaining subscriptions should be distributed this time in the form of cheques, though where the amount was insignificant, I may have opted to include some stamps instead. As I write this, I haven't checked out the remaining balances to see the overall picture, and thus can't decide whether I will just hold onto any odd trivial amounts. Some of you may actually get a note as well if there's any queries I have.

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CITY & SUBURBAN
MOTO-MORINI
 GAME END STATEMENTS

Ulf Jiretorn - JIR (2nd)

I don't really know what to say. I have to blush. Maybe I noticed the "end of game" section when I initially read the rules, but then I entirely forgot that section. I played the game believing that there would be no extra points in the last round.

That of course is the reason I stopped building so early in the game. In fact, I was surprised so many continued to build for so long. I must admit that this is my greatest rule error in my thirteen years of postal gaming.

Anyway, I tried to get a northern regional monopoly in the game. I hadn't played it before, and I thought that some sound RR tactics (build as fast as possible in the direction where the most cities are) would work in this game too. Obviously, I was wrong. I now think that one must build out of the city in more than one direction to be able to win.

Congratulations to Bill, thanks for playing to the rest, and thanks for running the game to Wallace.

Iain Smedley - LOTS (3rd)

I was surprised that Moto Morini ended when it did; if I had known that, I would not have made the ambitious builds. The result would probably have been similar in any case - although another turn or two and I might have squeezed into second. I do enjoy City & Suburban; it needs careful thought each turn but can be played successfully with little or no contact with other players; ideal if you are lazy or busy or (like me) both.

David Watts - PEMBS (4th)

I would have won but for the muddle over C04. I thought Ulf was going to win; then Bill became the threat, and I was in a quandary there since the only way I could take income off him was to build alongside and hence for a time boost his income. Then Eoin, for some reason, kept blocking my town development in the north east, and so I ended up with less income than I should have. The board's a bit crowded with six players - I think five is probably the best number. Thanks to the other players and GM.

Clive Davenhall - METRO (6th)

The Chairman of the Metropolitan Electric Tram and Railway Over-ground Company tendered his resignation amidst scenes of unprecedented disorder during an extra-ordinary general meeting of shareholders called on the occasion of the company filing for bankruptcy.

Well, coming last by a substantial margin can safely be described as a fairly disastrous result. It is all rather unfortunate, especially as I thought that initially I was doing quite well.

Unfortunately, all the other players seemed to come to the same conclusion, and I got jumped on in no uncertain fashion about half-way through the game. I then compounded my misfortune by building an ill-considered line out to the North East. This line was an unmitigated disaster; expensive to build and generating little or no revenue (a bit like Canary Wharf, really). Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but in retrospect I think that it would have been better to try to contest with Eoin for lebensraum out west.

It only remains to congratulate Bill on his win, to thank all the players for making it an enjoyable game, and, last, but certainly not least, to thank Wallace for his efficient and effective adjudication. I thoroughly enjoyed the game and hope to play it again at some stage.

Wallace Nicoll (GM)

Only two of the players (David and Iain) had played before so far as I know.

As Clive notes he suffered from an early lead as other players - Eoin and David - picked on him snatching income from his developments. The choice of suburban developments in hexes where shorter routes to the centre could exist was Clive's major mistake. David capitalised. And having concentrated in the south east, it was an expensive business for Clive to build out from the City late in the game. As Clive states, it was financial suicide to build alongside David's route to the north east and, I think, the money might have been better spent developing the south western corner of the board (perhaps in a series of joint developments with Eoin).

David's early route development was seriously restricted by other players, and I believe that haunted him throughout the game, and resulted in his relatively poor showing. Two towns in the south (developed by Clive) must have come with great satisfaction, though I know David felt aggrieved at Clive's retaliation when David felt that he (David) was not really in the running for the game win. David did make some ground in the end game with his north eastern developments, sharing revenue with Iain, and in some cases having the shortest route (though this was achieved at the expense of building through two hill hexes).

Eoin seemed to be playing a strange game. Firstly ruining Clive's early developments, and then it seemed he was attempting to end the game negative. I feel he could have played much more of a spoiling role by going against Bill in the south east much earlier, and by working with Iain in the west. Whether Eoin could have won by this approach I can't say.

Bill was a slow and steady developer and benefitted in the long run. There were a couple of strange builds in the north west

in an attempt (I guess) to thwart Ulf, but apart from that I think Bill played an ideal game. He could easily have won the game purely based on his south eastern routes. By the time it was looking as though Bill was in a winning position, no-one was really able to get back at him without major parallel costs (negating any gains in revenues).

Ulf came through in the middle game with his northern monopoly and as a result of this found revenue being taken away in the last few turns with costly builds by Iain. Had Ulf carried on developing through turns 11 and 12 I think he might have won. I'm also not convinced that you do have to build out of the city in more than one direction to win, so long as you have space to develop into - but it helps give you more options if you get shafted early on in the game.

Iain pulled off the biggest coup in the game by building through C24, and then developing it. By so doing he deprived Ulf of a major source of income, and a wasted rail spur to E42. Those hexes were to provide Iain with a large part of his income. Iain played a spoiler role against Ulf throughout, and I had a half suspicion that he might be in with a chance of the win at the end from early on.

Best tactics in the game? I've played two, and GM'd one. It's a bad thing to get into the lead too early on in the game, since you get jumped on. By all means go for the area where most towns are, but unless you get to go early in the first couple of rounds, go somewhere with potential rather than the quick buck. It's useful to get two routes out of the city, but not essential. Go for the routes that go to the corners of the board, especially if there are hills blocking routes to towns on these lines, and then spur out from them. It's worth building alongside another route to deprive another player of income, but check on the overall benefit to you, that player, and anyone else, of doing it. Try not to go into big negatives - Eoin, especially, paid the bank a lot of money in this game! Joint route development, and suburban developments to benefit both can only be a good thing - there seems to be very little of it in any of the games I've seen. It's so easy, and very beneficial to both players for the rest of the game.

I'd be tempted to agree with David about whether five or six is better. With five there is less likelihood of being boxed into one sector, though I'd be inclined to try to start with six knowing that there is a chance of at least one player dropping out as the game progresses. However, a big thank you to all of you for seeing the game through to its end, making it tougher for everyone else, even if it did come unawares to some of you!

(Folk Laws - from Page 2)**General Matters**

A bird in the hand is safer than one overhead.

A short cut is the longest distance between two points.

Never play leap frog with a unicorn.

Ink: A villainous compound of tannogallate of iron, gum-arabic, and water, chiefly used to facilitate the infection of idiocy and promote intellectual crime.

Mythology: The body of a primitive people's beliefs concerning its origin, early history, heroes, deities and so forth, as distinguished from the true accounts which it invents later.

Bacchus: A convenient deity invented by the ancients as an excuse for getting drunk.

Research causes cancer in rats.

X-rated movies are all alike...the only thing they leave to the imagination is the plot.

On his first day as a bus driver, Maxey Eckstein handed in receipts of \$65. The next day his take was \$67. The third day's income was \$62. But on the fourth day, Eckstein emptied no less than \$283 on the desk before the cashier. "Eckstein!" exclaimed the cashier. "This is fantastic. That route never brought in money like this! What happened?" "Well, after three days on that cockamamie route, I figured business would never improve, so I drove over to Fourteenth Street and worked there. I tell you, that street is a gold mine!"

**LETTERS...**

**Clive Davenhall
(Leicester)**

"So that's it then, the last *UTW*; sixteen and out. The chap standing quietly at the back wearing a black, hooded cloak and carrying a scythe was not a jobbing gardener looking for casual work after all."

WOL: I could actually make do with him if he is ...

Clive (cont)

"It only remains to thank you for running *UTW*. It was always enjoyable, even if the deadlines did come round with depressing regularity. I suspect that you'll continue to be involved in *The Hobby* in some capacity (at least I hope so). After all you'll need to find an excuse to buy a new Mac!"

WOL: Oops, too late, I'm afraid. Having seen the significant improvements in

performance of the machine at work over this elderly Mac Plus, problems of running everything on 40Mb of hard disk space, and an occasional flickery screen problem, I've ordered up a Quadra 610 - same as the Lindsay Brothers each have - but am still waiting for a confirmed delivery date. As for Hobby involvement, it will be "nice" not to have the zine to do - not that it's been too much of a chore for the last half dozen issues. I will certainly miss the writing, and the contact with most of you. I'm still playing in a couple of games, and I'm still running the Touchdown! league.

Iain Smedley (London)

"Thanks for *UTW* 15. I was blissfully unaware that Moto Morini was the last game to finish. I shall be sorry to see the end of *UTW*, and hope that you will be contributing to other zines from time to time. The news of your holidays and visits is always fascinating."

WOL: Whether I'll do any external GMing in another zine, or write articles, remains to be seen. I quite fancy a short break.

Tony Dickinson (Featherstone)

"Cheers for *UTW* #15. I suppose this is the last time! Quite sad really. Ho hum. So what to say? Well, it's been fun and I'm glad to have stayed the final chapter, as it were. If I'm to pick a favourite game It'd be "Its A Raid" with "Snowball Fighting" a close second - both very original and different to the usual Dip/Dip variants/RR etc. Thanks to you and Doug for all the GMing and zine running, and ta for



finishing it all off. One question, do you intend to GM PBM games ever again? Will you still be around in the hobby? (OK, 2 questions!) Here's another - why did you call it *Under The Wire*? Was it cuz it was imminent to end?! So, all the best for the future, may it be kind to you."

*WOL: Thanks for the kind words of appreciation for our efforts. However, there are many others whose efforts have been greatly appreciated over the piece. Mike Dean for giving us the nucleus of the zine when he handed *Psychopath* over in 1984. Derek Sutherland for running the *Diplomacy* games and introducing us all to *Touchdown!* and his interesting philosophy on life through the pages of the *Between The Wars* subzine. Pete Lindsay for stepping in to take on the massive job of running an *En Garde!* campaign when it looked as though it was going down the tubes as a result of Jon Conner's changing work responsibilities. And all the other external GMs that contributed to *PoW!* over the years. But with only GM's a postal games zine couldn't run. Thanks should also be given to the hundreds of players and regular letter/article writers that graced the pages. Thank you to you all - we couldn't have done it without you. Then there's also the various printers, paper and envelope suppliers, postal services, and so on. And finally I must thank Doug Rowling for all his friendship and shared responsibility in making *PoW!* into a zine we would want to get, and making it one of the top zines in *The Hobby*,*

*As for the name of this publication, I tried to think of a name that followed on the theme of the title of *Prisoners of War!* With Doug making his bid for freedom and heading for Australia I figured that I too should be able to make a break for it, and one way of doing that was to go out *Under The Wire*. I also had a graphic of a hand grasping a section of barbed wire which I intended running in the masthead, but never got into a digital form that could be used.*

The Lard Sprayer

"How far The Witch?" Martin Evans hulloood behind Mame. "Biking? Dumb con! Thighs will bleed on unearthed acidic sin. Evans! Give us this dayglo deliberate, um, forklifter's hour-truss (passes as wee) forklift those. Who trussed puss again?" Strauss, and leaders not into Tin Patents, buttered liverwurst from Neville for diners dunking damp flea powder. And thick Gloria? "Far heavier, and heavier, our men."

And as I reach the crest of the hill, I look forth onto a green valley. Trees clothe the slopes. A river meanders along the valley floor, through neatly manicured fields. At last I can truly say...

"I am free"