

**WBC 2012 Britannia Tournament**  
**by Jim Jordan**

As always, it was a great year for Britannia at the WBC. Although the Britannia Plate is now officially retired, Ewan McNay, as the 2011 champion, was first to have his name on the Britannia Sword. I hope that the tradition may continue for long enough to put 20 names on the sword as there are on the plate.

Although we had a smaller crowd than usual this year, I was quite pleased with the mix. Most of the usual veterans showed up, but we also had a number of new players. The demo continues to work well and I want to issue thanks to all of the veterans for coaching the new players. In addition, we had four of the next generation with us, all of whom played in at least two heats. I hope the trend continues and the xxxxx.

I can definitely say that the competition is getting tougher. Folks were definitely working hard for the high score plaques. Well, there was one blowout high score, with a 313 point game giving Greg Hultgren the Red high score plaque. Chris Trimmer took the Yellow high score plaque with a 243 point score in a tightly played game. I pulled in a couple of the high score plaques with a Blue score of 266 and a Green score of 271.

Unlike last year, the 1 point wins were few and far between. So while there were a number of low point spreads (hmm, there's a statistic to look at checking out for next year) only Ewan McNay in the first heat captured a closest win plaque with a score of 235/234. Meanwhile, Randy Schilb was clearly understood to be a danger in his games in heats 2 and 3 as he had the close win plaques for both heats. The games were 239/236 and 242/228. That's the first year that one person has captured two of the close wins. Of course, for Randy, getting any win at all in that third heat seemed unlikely when he was reduced to three Romans at one point. It seems that Rome had decided to defund the British garrison a little earlier than usual.

My favorite award, Ethelred the Unraed, went to one of the troop of next generation players we had in the tournament this year. Thomas Morris, who had a score of 186, clearly showed that was simply some bad luck with the dice given his performance in the semi-finals.

Ah yes, before move to the semi-finals, a note on color balance. I was quite pleased last year when seemed to be moving toward a more balanced spread of color wins. That was after 2010, when Yellow won in 10 of the 19 heats. Well, this year, Yellow had rather the opposite problem. In the heats, there were 6 Red wins, 4 Blue, 3 Green and 2 Yellow. The semis, sadly only 3 three this year, and the final, did even thing out a bit for the other colors, taking the balance to 6 Red wins, 5 Blue, 5 Green, but still just 3 Yellow.

The semis were the usual close runs, with attention paid very closely to 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes. Only one note for your amusement from the semis, Barry Smith, with Svein and 3 Danes, attacked Mark Smith's Harald with 3 Norwegians, 1 die roll later it was an empty space, probably full of smoke arising from the blast of the dice. Anyway, in the end we had Thomas Morris, Barry Smith, Rick Kirchner and Randy Schilb surviving into the final.

First, I like to extend many thanks to Barry Smith for his detailed notes on the final. I was making notes myself, but I was also playtesting a potential new set of rules for Britannia. It will be interesting to watch as the rules develop and Lew Pulsipher, the game designer, looks for a new publisher for Britannia. More on what's happening with Britannia after the write up on the final.

With the usual random selection, the colors for the final went to Thomas Morris as Blue, Rick Kirchner as Red, Randy Schilb as Yellow (Randy is destined to always play Romans, good things it's his favorite color) and Barry Smith as Green.

Randy's Romans had a fairly easy time of it, starting with the usual Welsh withdrawal to five spaces so that the Romans could cruise on by. By the way, have I mentioned how much Lew hates the Welsh withdrawal? ;-) [Interjection from Lew: and it will be gone in the new version! Fight!] Anyway, with the Romans cruising along they managed to submit the Brigantes with only three areas. The Welsh got a break from that interaction as 1 Roman and 1 Brigante in March killed each other, so the Welsh promptly invested in some new real estate. The Picts were then submitted on turn 3 and the raids began.

Bad breaks for the Saxons and Jutes left the Saxons down by 2 and the Jutes getting Kent but losing all but 1. The Angles also lost 1 to raiding, but did take down the fort in Mar in the process. But none of that was the real news of the last turns of Roman rule.

Rather, the real news was the dance that was occurring in the north. Thomas's Picts agreed not to cross the Moray/Skye line with the Caledonians. So the Caledonians left 1 behind in the Orkneys for a better defensive position. So a hungry Pict promptly boats up to the Orkney's, not technically crossing the line and breaking the agreement. Yes, we can say that Thomas is a player to be watched! Nice move. Or it almost was. The luck was interesting though and the Pict and the Caledonian eliminated each other. Then, of course, the Scots dropped a couple of interlopers onto the island. Ah well.

So the Romano-British end up with 2 in the Downlands and 4 in Lindsey. Perhaps they were looking to balance the game out between the Angles and the Saxons. In any case, between Jutes in Kent, the RBs in Downlands, and the Welsh deciding that the Saxons were anathema, the Saxons were mauled as they came ashore. After their major invasion there were all of six Saxons left. Not auspicious for Red. On the other hand, the Jutes wangle an agreement to live in Kent until turn 10.

Then the Angle invasion rolled ashore. Unfortunately for them, there was a mountain of Brigantes in Strathclyde. Thus distracted by the attractive nuisance of the Brigantes and the threat of those hordes releasing on them, the Angles are stuck to the north. The Scots, meanwhile, come ashore and take Caithness, Skye and Dalriada, while the perhaps over focused Caledonians go back and kick them out of the Orkneys.

Naturally, with the distraction to the north, the Welsh easily waltz through a thin Angle screen to raid York on turn 8. Meanwhile, just because they can, 4 other Welsh do a little

dance with the Irish in Cornwall and Wales becomes entirely Green again. The Scots also take Dunedin, but it's practically a sideshow to the bold Welsh moves. Amazingly, the Angles do manage Bretwalda on turn 9, and there were a quiet and quick couple of turns.

Turn 11 things started heating up again of course. Rick's Red Norsemen stomped all over the Caledonians, taking both islands and wiping out one of the Barry's Green nations. Later that turn, the Saxons also finally kicked the Jutes out of Kent, ending another Green nation. Of course, the Barry's Danes snorted at that minor setback and easily raided all their areas with NO losses. Thomas decided that the snooty Danes weren't worth defending against, but that getting King was a great thing. So, near maxed Angles (go Thomas!!) and king for the Angles on turn 11.

Ivar and Halfdan roll through the Angles and anyone else in their way on turn 12. They lose only three units in the entire invasion and establish what, as I called it in my notes, was a perfect Dane Kingdom (OK, go Barry! Folks do listen to me! ;-) ) That is to say, Danes with a strong position in Lindsey and all the surrounding territories filled with lots of nice Dane armies.

On turn 13, Randy's Dubliners do opt for York, but the Danish score and unit count is still strong, setting the tone for the endgame. Cnut is easily King on turn 14, just having to reduce the six Saxon areas to four. Then the menacing armies of Normans and Norwegians assemble on the Saxon and Angle and Dane shores looking threatening.

It didn't look great for the Normans to start. There were two stacks all along the shield wall. The Danes held out in Kent, killing a Norman cavalry and infantry. But still, the Normans surrounded the Downlands, excepting Avalon, on turn 15, getting a decent set of reinforcements.

Then on turn 16 it got bloody... William started with one cavalry and one infantry in Essex. Svein the terminator moved in with four Danes and killed William. Of course, Svein managed to lose three Danes in the process, so it didn't look pretty for his defense. So, Harald comes along and kills Svein. Naturally, just to continue the merry go round, Harold comes out of the Downlands and pounces on Harald, naturally Harald dies, (I guess Harald got lost looking for the Stamford Bridge.) In any case, Harold's forces also manage to take three extra areas. It looks like the stage is set for a Saxon King!

Sadly, Thomas's Normans take back one Saxon area on a 1-1 battle, and the Dubliners, amusing enough, prevent Harold from becoming King. As we pull aside the curtains on all those deaths in Essex, we see Barry Smith as the winner of the Britannia Tournament for 2012, scoring 241 points as Green. Randy Schilb pulls into second with the Yellows at 233, Rick Kirchner's Reds claim 3<sup>rd</sup> with 223 and Thomas's Blues pull out respectable 215 to round out the game.

Congratulations to Barry and his name will be the second on the new Britannia plaque, which happens to be a sword. Take a look for me holding up the sword, along with the

silver plaque for the first 20 years, in some pictures graciously taken by the ever gracious Debbie Guttermuth.

Now, as to what's happening with Britannia. As many of you know, the last two printings of Britannia, what we all call Brit2, have been published by Fantasy Flight Games. They have now sold out and declined to print any more copies. The publishing rights have reverted to Lew Pulsipher, the game designer. Lew's looking around for a new publisher and having active discussions.

Meanwhile, there's a running discussion on whether there should be new rules for what will undoubtedly be called Brit3. If you want to follow along, check out the Eurobrit Yahoo group. You can also try out a playtest as Pekka Marjola has generously provided an addition to his great online site supporting Britannia to let the playtests run. Come on out and join the fun and I'll see you next year for more Britannia. Thanks and have a great year!

[The sword-plaque, an excellent hand-made wooden sword with display mount, was made by Jim Jordan to replace the silver plate, which is full of names. It is impressive. – Lew]