



Deadline for next moves: Last post,
Wednesday, 19th Sept.

September 1984

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EDITORIAL

Recently, I read somewhere that the contents of a game-zine (such as HT) depended not so much on what the reader wanted to read than on what the editor wanted to write. "Aha", I thought, "now's my chance. I've always wanted to edit a scientific journal". Thus, from now on, HT will be dedicated to the subject of bacteriological biology, although a small section may be included to help previous readers overcome the shock.

The major paper in this edition of HT is on the fascinating subject of the clamipit pongus, a new bacteria recently discovered by the authors of the paper. HT would like to thank the authors for kindly allowing the subjects of conversations with clamipit pongus to be games of postal diplomacy.

MAIN PAPER

The biological world is in uproar following the discovery of the clamipit pongus, the first known intelligent bacterium. This paper, by Edridge, Slurrage, and Porridge, describes conversations held with a colony of clamipit pongus.

Clamipit Pongus lives in symbiosis with the clam, living in the lattersequivilent of an armpit. In exchange for a warm and comfortable home, the clamipit pongus provides the embarrassing smells all civilised clams need as an excuse to have a bath instead of going to endless parties.

This unique species originally evolved in symbiosis with the Tyrannosaurus Rex, although the latters dinner manners (or lack of

them) often sickened the delicate social conscience-ness of the Clamipit Pongus. The bacterium took advantage of the sudden extinction of the dinosaurs and conned the relatively unintelligent clam species into thinking that not only did they need regular baths, but they also needed Clamipit Pongus in theirequivilent of an armpit to tell them when to have a bath. Indeed, it was investigation into the whole question of why the clam, an unwater species, needed to have regular baths that lead to the unexpected discovery of the bacteria.

Communication between human beings and Clamipit Pongus is achieved by telepathy, something which will not be discovered until the beginning of the next century.

VARIANTS

Diplomacy variants are versions of the game with something different; for example, a different mapboard, different rules or both. If anyone is interested, I am willing to run some. Examples include Mercator (18 players on a world map), 1939 (New map, new rules, including bombers and tanks), Holy Roman Empire, the Struggle for Hegemony in Europe, and the Song of the Night (Fantasy). All but the first require a copy of 'Diplomacy Variants' a booklet by Lewis Pulsipher. (99p)

Diplomacy can also be played for some kind of stake. It is a long time since a game was played to the death, although games are still being started where dropping out or being knocked out means the loss of a limb or two (this explains the number of mutilated people at Diplomacy conventions). HT does not intend to be involved with this kind of game.

CIVILISATION

Civilisation: Waiting to play are: Jim Tattersdale, Robert Horrobin and Ralph Atkinson. GM Dylan Harris. Game using experimental rules.

PAPER cont.

These conversations are between the papers' authors Angus Edridge (AE), Simon Slurridge (SS), and Peter Porridge (PP) with the Clamipit Pongus (CP). The esteemed editor of the journal in which we intend to publish has asked that we report some conversations on the matter of some games of Diplomacy, to help his previous readers overcome their shock.

AE: Waiting to play in game five are Paul Wiggin, Janet Redfern and Phil Challis, Mike Harskin and Ralph Atkinson
CP: Put us in. In the other armpit, the chances are none of these can dance, so we'd wipe them out. Don't bother after all.

SS: Game four has started, with Howard Cohen (Austria), Lisa Fordham (England), Nigel Gordon (France) Phil Alexander (Germany), Dylan Harris (Italy), Martin Hallwood (Russia), and Peter Ladanyi (Turkey). Gamesmaster is Clive Buckman.

CP: The USA is off to a bad start, with no one playing it.

PP: Er, actually, the USA isn't in the game

CP: Well, talk about bad diplomacy if it managed to get itself carved out of the rules. No wonder it never wins.

AE: The moves for Spring 1901 in game GYL/3 are as follows:

Austria (Clive Buckman): F Tri-Alb, A Bud-Gal, A Vie-Tri.

England (Peter Cook): F Edi-NRW, A Lpl-Edi, F Lon-NTH.

France (Kieth Edge): F Bre-ENG, A Par-Pic, A Mar-Spa.

Germany (Kevin Elliot): F Kie-Den, A Ber-Kie, A Mun-Ruh.

Italy (Richard Stringer): F Nap-ION, A Rom-Tus, A Ven HOLDS.

Russia (Phil Rimmer): F StP (S)-GOB, F Sev-BLA (FAILS), A Mos-Ukr, A War HOLDS.

Turkey (Becky Horrobin): A Con-Bul, F Ank-BLA (FAILS), A Smy-Arm.

Russia: With any luck the Liberal Revolution in Russia of 1904 will be successful this time round!

GM: Some players are worried that others may attempt to forge their orders. This would count as deception of the GM, which would mean, under Rule 12 of the postal rules, that the perpetrator would be thrown out of the game.

CP: Another game with no USA player. We wouldn't be surprised if Reagan invaded Nicaragua over this.

PAPER cont.

SS: The moves for Autumn 1901 in GYL/2 are as follows:

Austria (John Murray):
A Vie-Gal, A Ser HOLDS
F Alb s ITALIAN F ION-Gre (FAILS).
Adjustments: Ser.
Builds: A Bud.

England (Colin Warner)
F NTH-Bel, A Edi-Nwy,
F NRW c A Edi-Nwy.
Adjustments: Bel, Nwy.
Builds: None submitted

France (John Dennison)
A Par-Bur, A Spa-Por,
F MAO-Spa(S).
Adjustments: Spa, Por.
Builds: A Mar, F Bre.

Germany (Graem Peters)
F Den HOLDS, A Kie-Hol
A Mun HOLDS.
Adjustments: Den, Hol.
Builds: F Kie, A Ber.

Italy (Ralph Atkinson,
"Il Duce di Italio"):
A Tyr-Mun (FAILS), A
Nap-Tun, F ION c A Nap-Tun.
Adjustments: Tun.
Builds: A Ven.

Russia (Mark Holiday):
A Ukr-Rum, F Sev s A
Ukr-Rum, F GOB-Swe, A
War-Ukr.
Adjustments: Rum, Swe.
Builds: A StP, A Mos.

Turkey (Robert Horrobin, "The Thing of Turkey"):
A Bul-Gre,
A Con-Bul, F Ank-BLA.
Adjustments: Bul, Gre.
Builds: A Con, A Smy.

CP: Whoops, England.
You've left yourself wide open for an invasion from Niel Kinnock. I can arrange for this to be "accidentally" diverted to Mars if you ask nicely.

Many gamezines have 'subzines', some space devoted to an independant 'zine as part of the main gamezine. HT is pleased to include an edition of the new 'Peterzine', edited by Graem Peters, who plays Germany in game two (hence its inclusion here):

Peterzine

Hacking Times

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Hi Dylankidhowyadoin,

I've got a few comments about 'Hacking Times'. 'Not only did you try to undermine my self confidence with complete and utter lies and insinuations, but in your Games Masters 'Report' you then proceeded to give away the whole of my plans and strategy for the next two years. Now that my cover has been totally blown by your (to, put it kindly) mismanagement, I am left with no alternative but to tell you to put your money where your mouth is, and open a book on the result of each game.

It would be unfair of me, as a competitor to run a book. But in GYL/1 favourite must be Russia. He has many options and will make gains at the right time. The only countries who could stop him would have to, be, France or England. I would still tip France despite its recent change in position. Meanwhile in GYL/2 it is probably too early to tell, but as far as I can see there is going to be a sorting out process between Germany and England and either of those which establishes early control will be half way towards winning. I disagree with your opinion on the position of Austria. Admittedly, Austrias pieces are not positioned in any coherent formation, but I don't see it as being under any obvious threat from Turkey or Russia, and the problems caused by Italy can be overome relatively easily. Like any situation, which is indeed more relevant ~~than~~ in the case of Italy even from the start, Austrias problem is only a diplomatic problem, in that all he needs is one ally.

It is interesting to follow the similarities between game one and two. This does not augere well for me though. Anyway, lets cut the bull

Don't worry, rest assured everything will be alright,
Italy will retreat. France won't build in Paris.
England will take Belgium with a fleet.
Russia will keep out of the Axis countries.
Austria will survive &
Turkey will fail to submit moves.

love & licks, Graem

There is a varient called 'Bourse', which is a currency exchange game, based on and around a game of Diplomacy which is in progress. If people want me to, I'll start a game up. Dylan.

PP: The moves for Autumn 1903 in game GYL/1 are:

Austria (Graem Peters; see comments from him elsewhere in HT): A Gal s RUSSIAN A Ukr-Rum (FAILS), A Tri-Ser, A Bud s A Tri-Ser, F Gre-Bul(S) (FAILS) Adjustments: Ser. Builds: A Ven.

England (Richard Stringer): F SKA-Den F Nwy HOLDS, A Lon-Yor, F HEL s RUSSIAN F BAL-Kie. Adjustments: Den. Builds: F Lon.

France (Paul Wiggin) F GOL-TYS (FAILS), F WMS-Tun, F Bel HOLDS, A Spa-Mar (FAILS), A Bur-Mun (FAILS), A Pic s F Bel.

Germany (Miles Pratt): [[F SKA start swimming]], A Den-Kie (FAILS) NRP, A Hol s A Den-Kie, A Ruh-Mun (FAILS), A Mun-Ber. To Russia: Its about time your country had a revolution. Adjustments: (Den). Builds: None submitted.

A Statement from Kaiser Miles I of Germany: "I am also thinking of going to exile in Switzerland. This may not be necessary if the ten fleets of U-boats I have in Iceland are succesful. By the next move my Zeppel-

ins should be ready for action too. Failing this, it is possible that the German nation will become pacifists. In the present situation, we are thinking of declaring ourselves neutral, unilaterally disarming and then hoping for the best."

Italy (Nigel Gordon): A Pie-Mar (FAILS), F ION-TYS (FAILS), A Apu-Rom, A Ven HOLDS. Adjustments: (Tun). Removals: None submitted, so F ION (by postal rule 9).

Russia (Robert Horrobin, "His most Imperial Altitude, the Czar of Russia"): F BAL-Kie (FAILS), A Swe s ENGLISH F SKA-Den, A Ukr-War, F Sev HOLDS, F StP (N) unordered. Adjustments: None

Turkey (Clive Buckman): NMR, thus A Ser NRO. Adjustments: (Ser).

CP: What a mess! Turkey fails to submit orders, Germany does not order a build to which he is entitled, and Italy forgets to order a disbandment and so loses his only fleet. We feel that this is strong evidence of CIA infiltration of the Whitehouse.

AE: Well, what is your general opinion of the game of Diplomacy?

CP: It doesn't say very much for human intelligence. At no point in the game does the timing of your next bath play a part, let alone become the decisive factor that it is in real life diplomacy.

SPECIAL OFFER

Are you fed up with tuppence off a ton of muesli? Pissed off by free offers of a swim in an acid bath? HT has the answer; a real special offer (approved by CAMPOFF, the CAMpaign for real OFFers), so get ready to be startled. Are you ready? Ok. Every time you recruit someone to a game run by Greenwich Young Liberals (including yourself in another game), you can get a free game year. Quick call a doctor, someone's overcome with shock.

CREDITS

Hacking Times 2 was directed by Dylan Harris, produced by the photocopier in Youth Office, Executive Directors: Greenwich Young Liberals. Hairdresser: Margaret Thatcher. Wind Machine: Kathy's kat (lets put it this way, its name is "Fart"). Nuclear Bomb scene directed by A. Scargill based on a fantasy by R. Reagan.

Traveller is a Role-Playing Game published by Games Designers Workshop (GDW), an American company. It is basically a hard Science Fiction game, which is probably why I like it.

GDW have recently produced three new products to accompany their large range of Traveller products. These are 'Aslan', detailed rules for an alien race in the Traveller universe, 'Belt-Strike', a boxed Adventure set in an asteroid belt, and the latest edition 'the Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society', their quarterly magazine dedicated to the game.

Aslan contains 40 A4 pages covering all necessary information to enable a GM to set up and run a campaign in the 'Aslan Heirate', as the empire is called, including detailed character generation tables for 12 careers, and tables for the equivalent of Mercenary and High Guard (space navy) character generation. There is also the necessary information on the political and cultural nature of the Hierate, including new tables for world generation, weaponry, patron encounters and even randomly generated Aslan words.

Unfortunately, although the product is

clearly playable and easy to assimilate by anyone familiar with the Traveller system, it reflects the failure of GDW (and, to be fair, most other role-playing companies) to produce a society that is really alien, instead of modern Western society with a couple of changes; Aslan 'culture' comes across as a mixture of a simplistic misunderstanding of Eastern philosophies, feudalism, and capitalism gone potty. I personally think what's needed is a 'Cultures and NPCs' supplement. Ok, so role-playing in a society which has different assumptions to those of the West will require thought; but don't all good games? Worth buying if you're really into Traveller.

'Beltstrike' is the second Traveller boxed adventure, being the follow up to the excellent 'Tarsus'. It contains a lot of air, two booklets ('A reference to the Bowman System', in which the adventure is set, and a 'Belters Handbook', both 12 sides of A4), a pretty colour map of Koenig's Rock, the "capital asteroid" of the system, four folded A3 adventure scenarios, and twelve printed character reference cards.

Its not as lovingly prepared as Tarsus; indeed, none of the scenarios occupy much

more than 2.5 sides of A4. The most interesting thing is the Belter's Handbook, which contains lots of tables and useful information for asteroid mining in any adventure. It includes a revision of the Belter career (which originally appeared in supplement 4, "Citizens of the Imperium"). In general, I think this is worth getting, if you can afford it.

The latest edition of the Journal is devoted to Aslan, although it contains other articles, including a useful one on Trade & Commerce and an interesting short adventure on the original task of saving an inhabited planet from an asteroid. Unfortunately, the Aslan articles tend to highlight the cultural weakness of the Aslan supplement. The Journal also announces ... no, I'll leave that for players to discover themselves. This is an average issue of the Journal, which I feel is worth getting on a regular basis.

I have to admit I'd like to run or play a game of Traveller by post. This would mean revisions of many rules (especially combat), but if it can be done for D&D, it can be done for a better game. Anyone interested? Dylan.

Diplomacy World

20 YEARS ON

Diplomacy World was started way back in 1974 to present 'a broad overview of the postal Diplomacy hobby,' and has now become established as the "flagship" of the North American postal Diplomacy hobby. It is published quarterly and each issue contains articles on the Diplomacy scene, strategy and good play, a demonstration game with expert analysis, competitions related to Diplomacy, a Dip. variant, game reviews, rating systems, a few cartoons and some fiction and poetry, as well as the comment, information and news which relates more specifically to the North American hobby.



The postal gaming hobby in Europe has developed in different ways from that in North America; Dip. World aims to cover both the common interests in the game of Diplomacy and the varied characters of the people who play it. This new European edition brings the main contents of Dip. World to a wider audience. In North America the 'zine exists primarily as a hobby service rather than as the editors' personal zine, and as the channel for news and statistics which in

Europe are handled in other ways. The aim is to help and complement these hobby services, not to compete with them. So DW will give any new 'zine a plug, mention any forthcoming convention, or pass on any information as space allows.

Why not write for a sample copy. The cost of each issue is 90p (including second class or printed-paper rate postage) to anywhere in Europe, so a whole years subscription is £3.60. Cheques should be made payable to Andrew Poole. Editors are asked to give Diplomacy World a plug in their zines, and if they are interested in having a trade, then all you need to do is ask.

As such it has always had something of an 'international' appeal and circulation, but the rising costs of overseas mail and printing have made the price to overseas subscribers rather high. So a UK based edition is being produced, making it much cheaper to European subscribers and containing more news from the UK and Europe. As well as encouraging contributions to make it a more truly 'international' publication.

Diplomacy World is "a must for the serious Diplomacy player, for any European who is interested in the Diplomacy hobby in the USA, and the game in general".

(Simon Billenness 20YO 7)

Diplomacy World, Andrew Poole, 17, Montgomery Street, Roath Park, Cardiff, CF2 3LZ.

I have just got the latest copy of "Twenty Years On", a postal game-zine which "tries to list all the current 'zines available on postal gaming, FRP, wargaming and any other related zines".

It contains what must be over 200 game-zine entries, from Europe and North America. Copies are 40p each, or £1 for 3, written by Mark Billenness, 20 Winifred Road, Coulsdon, Surrey, CR3 3JA. There's a Diplomacy variant with 70+ players being run!! Urk!

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SOME MPS ARE QUITE NICE

I wrote to all the Alliance MPs, telling them about Greenwich YLs' postal diplomacy. David Steel MP gave my ego a nice boost by being "intrigued and impressed with the idea". Charles Kennedy MP seemed to fulfil certain dark sayings by Liberals less than fully enthusiastic about the SDP by admitting that "it sounds rather too complicated for" him. Paddy Ashdown thoroughly confused me saying that he though he "should take a 'rain check' on this occasion". Only a couple of other MPs bothered to reply.

FEEDBACK

Feedback please: what do you think of HT ?? Send you honest comments to us, and we may even publish it or them. Incidentally, talking about letters, the more the merrier.

GREENWICH

TIN

MINE

Hacking Times is not a serious, let alone political 'zine, despite the activist nature of its readership. However, the miners' strike threatens to determine the nature of the authoritarian regime (Blue fascist or Red fascist) forced upon the country for the next few years. Thus I have decided to include an article about the only mine in London, the Greenwich Tin Mine.

When the Fleet Line was first proposed at the turn of the century, doubts about the wisdom of building a tunnel under the Thames at Greenwich (despite, or rather because of the problems encountered when constructing the foot tunnel) prompted the railway company to sink an experimental shaft. The company was shocked to discover some tin ore, something which still forces modern geologists, despite extensive research into the phenomenon (after all, the ore is in the middle of the Thames valley, a sedimentary region).

The railway project was cancelled for economic reasons. Indeed, the Fleet Line seems to be fated to such problems, for despite being revived in the

early seventies, it was again cancelled after the construction of a small section of the line.

There is still no underground line through Greenwich.

The cancellation of the line at the turn of the century would have meant a loss, so the company decided to mine the tin ore instead. The populace of Greenwich was unhappy with this decision, but they could not stop the construction of the mine. The miners, brought down from Yorkshire, were not made to feel at home, with the result that people are reluctant to admit that they work for the mine. The railway company remained owners of the mine until they were taken over with the formation of London Transport. The mine is still LT property.

The doubts of the Greenwich population have proven to be correct. Subsidence is a problem wherever the mine has burrowed. Buildings in Woolwich have had to be specially strengthened, and Greenwich Town Hall had to be rebuilt due to subsidence following the collapse of an abandoned tunnel.

The effect of these problems is that the miners' strike is not

obvious in Greenwich, although it is taking effect. The tin miners are picketing the mine to prevent any local attempt to break the strike, but their picket is subtle. They do not need to stop anyone going to the mine; because the mine is small, employing only fifty three people, and because tin mining requires special skills, the pickets personally know all the miners and are confident that it is impossible to bring scab miners in from elsewhere.

Spending a few hours on the picket line is quite a pleasant thing to do. Thatcher appears to be ignorant of the mine, and LT don't seem to have reminded her, so the bobbies from the Met have not been ordered to assault the pickets. Indeed, the only time the police have come in contact with the pickets in any force was when a rabid dog escaped from the government laboratories across the road.

The miners strike seems to have passed Greenwich, and left it behind. Lets hope (if only for the sake of the miners, who are, after all, fighting for their livelihoods) things stay that way.

DHSS INVESTIGATION

Ace reporter Mark Holiday has stunned someone with the following report:

News has spread that thirteen men from around the UK have been the subject of exhaustive investigation by DHSS officials.

Four of the men: Mr. David Gower, 26, of Leicester, Mr. Chris Smith, 27, of Gloucester, Mr. Chris Tavaré, 30, of Canterbury and Mr. Nick Cook, 29, of Northampton have been particularly questioned in connection with an anonymous tip-off stating that they had been playing cricket during the summer months, whilst claiming unemployment benefit.

A close friend of the accused men, Mr. Alec Bedser, 96, said "Of course this is arrant nonsense. I have known these chaps for many years, and have never known them to have played cricket at any time during my association with them."

After firm pressure from Arundel Young Conservatives (a group notorious for its civil rights activities), a statement from the DHSS was issued, reading: "The men concerned have been investigated by senior staff who found no apparent irregularity. The matter will not be pursued further".

CORRESPONDANCE

Hacking Times always welcomes correspondence from players. We thought the following postal conversation might be interesting to our readers:-

Reader: "Please can you send me just game reports, and not Hacking Times. Its terrible."

GM: "No."

Reader; "Please PLEASE let me have game reports without Hacking Times. I once submitted an article for a magazine, and, although it was rejected, it means I have journalistic ideas, and I just can't handle the atrocious copy you put into HT."

GM: "No, we need you for our circulation figures."

Reader: "Please don't send me Hacking Times. To prove how much I don't want it, I'll eat my hat if you don't send it. In fact I'll eat lots of hats. I so hate HT that I'll eat all the hats I can get my hands on to stop it coming. Gibber gibber gibbon gibber...."

(Editor: this letter coincided with reports in the national papers about an unexpected hat shortage in Hammersmith).

GM: "No."

Reader: "If you don't stop sending me Hacking Times, I'll come round to the editors house and huff, and puff, and blow it all down. And I'll do it again and again until you stop sending me that disgusting, disloyal, nasty rag."

GM: "You might be interested to know that Hacking Times has changed its editorial address to the Houses of Parliament."

NEW RULES

In my usual democratic manner I've made some autocratic rule changes, mainly to take into account the regular appearance of HT. If you want a copy of the revised rules, let me know. In brief, the changes are that a copy of the rules is now kept in the home of the editor of HT, that a period between moves in a game may now be changed only to a multiple of the period between publication of HT, and that for any future rule changes to be effective, they must be announced in HT in advance. People who have received the new Diplomacy Starters Pack will have a copy of the revised rules.