

The Back
Not much to add, really, is there?

Waiting Lists
Let's not be silly

Changes of Address
Ian Beardsmore to: **190** Staines Road East, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex TW16 5BB

The Unpleasant Bit
The following all have subs of less than £1.50: Sandra Bond £1.10, Tony Dickinson £1.08, Peter Sullivan 96p, Neil Duncan 87p, Chris Dickson 66p, Steve Jones 54p, Kim Head 32p, Nick Parish -28p

The Pleasant Bit
Yet another new subber! Two in two issues, lawks a-mercy, whatever is the world coming to? Welcome to Peter Sullivan, of Sunderland, who risks a £1.50 trial subscription - though whether he'll still be interested after a half a year's delay remains to be seen. Then Alan Coulthard contributes a healthy three pounds, before Ian Beardsmore piles in with a stonking ten pound cheque - fire up the stove ma, you 'n' the younguns done be a-eatin' this month!

The Sad Bit
Goodbye Simon Ives (cancelled sub)

.....And Finally

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 Deadline for next issue: oh let's make it some time in the new year

Saturday January 17th, 2004

Borealis

It's been a funny few months. Working twelve hours a day and seven days a week, interspersed by not one, not two but three holidays since the last Boris appeared - well, if you count ManorCon as a holiday it's three. Four days among pleasant company pursuing agreeable pastimes away from the grind and routine are what I would call a holiday, anyway.

The second holiday was a camping trip, my first time sleeping under canvas in over thirty years. If it is thirty years before my next such expedition, I shall be very happy. Lacking all the necessary equipment to make such an venture at least bearably comfortable, I emerged from our tent on the first morning with a posture not unlike that of Charles Laughton in his classic portrayal of Quasimodo. I have subsequently learned that air beds or foam sleeping pads are *de rigueur*; most of the family simply resorted to sleeping in the car. Also useful would have been insect repellent; as it was our whole party exhibited great enthusiasm for a twitching, shrieking, arms flailing exercise we dubbed the Wasp Dodge Dance and which occupied, well, every waking moment between dawn and dusk, really. And whilst a barbecue no more than, say, once a month between late June and mid August can be mildly entertaining as well as a reminder of just how nice it is to sit on chairs, round a table, eating food which has been prepared in an oven, having barbecued sausage in a bun for breakfast followed by barbecued sausage and burger for lunch before rounding the day off with barbecued sausage, burger, a wasp and a packet of crisps for evening meal becomes slightly tedious midway through the third day.

Our third excursion was back to the delightful island of Majorca, this time to the north eastern resort of Alcudia. This trip at least had the advantage of being hot, though a little "Hi-de-hi" for my taste:- after yet another British evening meal in the hotel I sat with my British beer in my hand with the rest of the entirely British guests listening to the British entertainer informing me that "the Premiership football is just starting in the lounge. After the kids' disco in the show bar there'll be the nightly quiz, after which the bingo tickets will be on sale." Sigh. I could have walked fifty yards to my local workman's club and found an identical scene. And saved myself a couple of thousand in air fares.

And I only won the quiz twice in the ten nights we were there. And the bingo once.

Other than that I've been in yet another car crash, transferred to yet another department at work, and discovered I'm to become a step-grandfather. My eldest daughter has gone away to university, my bank has taken to sending me 'you are overdrawn - fined twenty pounds' letters every other week, and my computer printer and I are no longer on speaking terms. Lightning struck the house a few weeks ago, taking out the cable box, the video recorder and the Playstation - not the TV, oddly, which I would have thought the most susceptible to damage. Christmas is cancelled, I have decreed, due to lack of time, lack of money and the generally cantankerous mood I find myself in as I wallow ever deeper into middle age. Each passing issue of Boris I find harder to put together.

So, no change there, then, since last time, eh?

Palindromes

Tim Deacon: Glad to see Boris 53, in a quicker turnaround than 52. Not only that but the Bourse game was fairly readable. Hopefully, you've regained some enthusiasm for the zine - especially the printing of it etc., then it won't fold. This would be a pity, considering the shrinking number of zines.

IH: The future is the Internet, to be sure, but I hope proper paper zines continue forever. Could you imagine if ever Boris was the *only* paper zine left? Shudder.

Simon Ives: Many thanks for the latest Boris. I see my subs have slumped to 8p so have decided to call it quits. I've enjoyed my time with the zine and wish you every success for the future.

IH: Thanks for letting me know Simon. See you around the hobby.

Alan Coulthard: Glad to see another issue of Boris. I totally agree with your assessment of our police force, and the crazy topsy turvey world of our (in) justice system. Mind you, if you did go into politics you would be part of the government's interests and therefore protected :-)

Tony Dickinson: So the police have been getting your back up a little then have they? Same here Ian, another story another time.

IH: It's not so much the police, it's everything; the justice system happened to be topical at the time I wrote last issue's rant. I used to think, in my naivety, that this country was a fairly OK-ish place to live. I think what opened my eyes was my run in with the CSA, shortly after Rebecca was born. I look around and see oafs and louts everywhere contributing nothing to society yet living a lifestyle I can only dream about, while I work myself into the ground and have over half my wages taken away for the crime of having fathered a child with a woman who claims benefits. Once the anger started, I was looking for someone or something to lash out at.

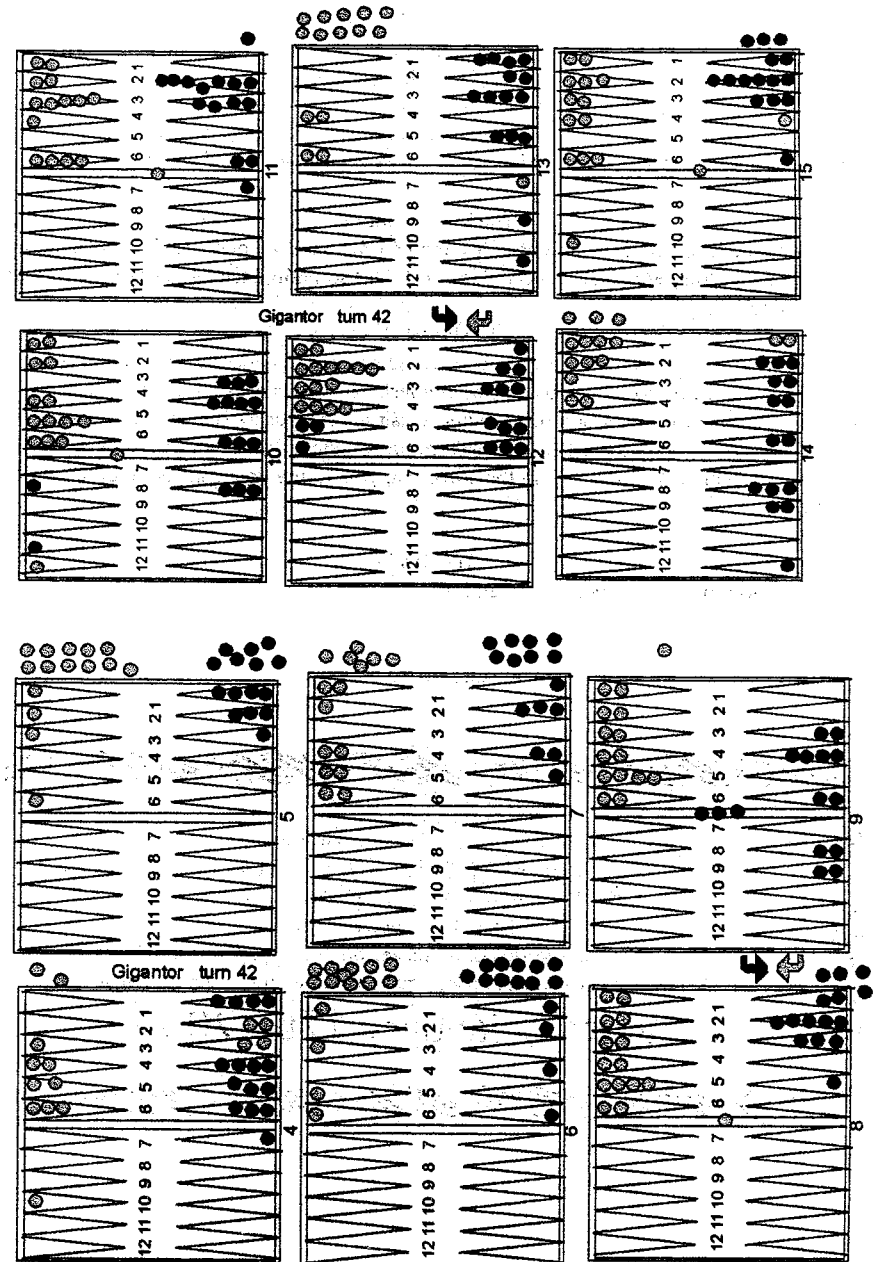
Ian Beardsmore: First please note my house number. I actually moved three years ago and I am sure I told you. I noticed the wrong address on a Boris last year I think, but never got round to telling you. Luckily the new house is only a few hundred yards down the road, the address only three characters different, plus my name is distinctive and I get loads of mail. So I still get at least some stuff with the wrong number on it including Boris.

IH: Odd, I'm fairly crap at everything else but usually quite good at keeping up with address changes. This issue should have gone to your correct address.

Ian Beardsmore: This letter is not about my move but your editorial. Frankly my first response was a bored so tell me something I don't know. In essence the police like everyone else are being driven by targets and the numbers game rules. If the target for today is 'reduce unsafe cars by X% that is what will happen. Logic, need and common sense, I assure you, have no place.

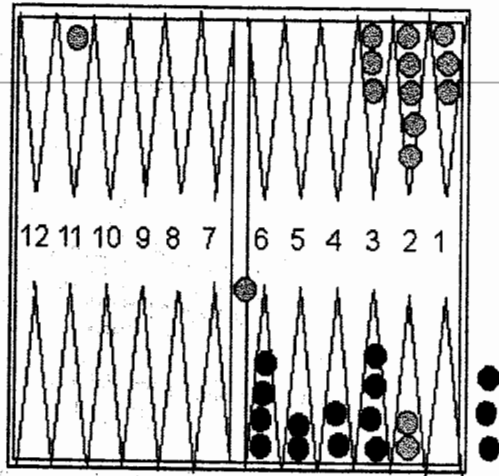
IH: Aaargh, targets and numbers. I hate the bloody things. Never mind the terrorists, it's the target setters who'll bring this country down.

Ian Beardsmore: To get a handle on this sort of thing there are two routes. The practical route is lots of prolonged public protest, residents meetings, letters to the press, hassle your local councillors. If you have them then mega grief to your county councillors is necessary. In Sunbury or to be precise Lower Sunbury the Residents arranged a meeting with the police. So many turned up that the meeting was moved on the night to the Church itself. 6-700 people, about 9% of all adult residents turned up. There was a long and very robust exchange of views and finally the penny dropped. But this was the culmination of two years of increasing complaints. Enough reports of crime will trigger a response on a spreadsheet in the bowels of police HQ. This helps. So make sure you get a crime number when you report a crime, even if they do not want to give you one. (By law they must)



Gigantor Backgammon Turn 42
(Black 1-5)

Board	white	black	moves	stake
1	Kayley	Bob	6-1*,1-OFF	2W
2	Sam	Graham	6-1,1-OFF	4B
3	Edmund	Sandra	6-5,6-OFF	4W
4	Bob	Sam	6-1,5,4	2B
5	Graham	Edmund	1-OFF,6-1	4B
6	Sandra	Kayley	1-OFF,5-OFF2B	
7	Edmund	Bob	1-OFF,5-OFF4W	
8	Sandra	Graham	6-1,6-5*	2W
9	Sam	Kayley	no move possible	8W
10	Bob	Graham	3-8,10-11	16B
11	Kayley	Edmund	12-12*,12-7	2W
12	Sandra	Sam	BAR-5,5-6	4B
13	Bob	Sandra	10-9,9-11	8W
14	Graham	Kayley	12-12,12-8	2B
15	Sam	Edmund	6-5*,5-OFF	2W

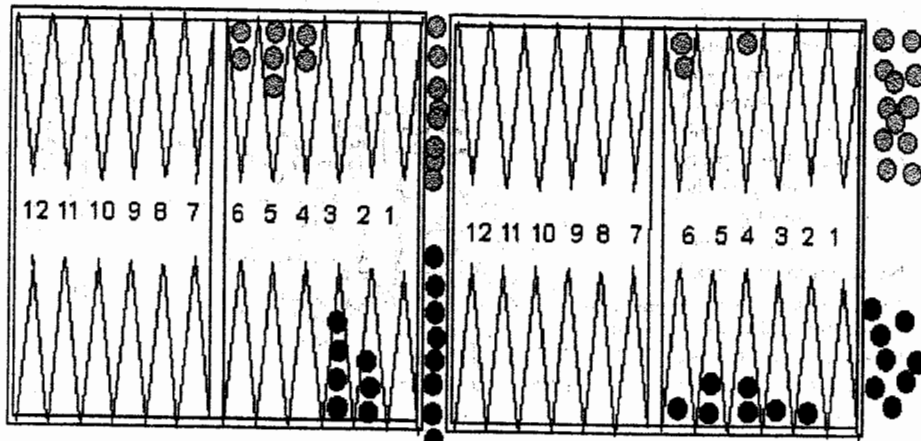


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next

WHITE 6-4



2

3

The theoretical route is via the CDRP (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) They DO have powers to influence local policing, and money to go with it. Of course as it has real power the government set it up in such a way that no one you vote for is allowed to be present at it's meetings, let alone have a vote, on issues or priorities. Basically it is made up of senior officers from your council or councils, and the police. But again you are in a two-tier (County/Boro) set up, the CDRP is run by the borough, but the police authority is the county. Simple really.

You as Joe public want to get to the CDRP. Next joke. (Oh by the way YOU fund this body via your council tax.)

The CDRP do have to publish a strategy, this will be be debated or at least presented to you local council and as such is a public document. In theory you make representations to you local councillors who will then of course make representations on your behalf to the non-elected people on the CDRP who will of course take your views fully into account when formulating their next strategy. This is what the government call increasing involvement in local government. Stake holding is the current buzz word.

Meanwhile back on planet Earth enough grief from enough people for long enough will filter through. Huge amounts depend on the quality of your councillors and this can be very wide. The ruling group can influence the CDRP, the question is will they? Can they be bothered? The best time to start dishing grief is about nine months before an election assuming the ward where you live is not a one party state controlled by the ruling group. You then play the opposition off against the ruling group, make no mistake if the opposition win the set up imposed by government is rigged to make it very difficult to actually achieve anything unless you can get the members of the CDRP to support you. I know I am about to try and take a small scheme through the process and I hope to have some money attached. I am one of the few local councillors with direct access to our borough inspector. But I am the wrong party and officers know which party rules. Luckily there is a huge feud inside our local Tories and I hope to play one side off against the other as well as burning up a lot of brownie points in the next few months. DON'T tell me this is ludicrous way to try and get something useful done, and wish me luck.

Do you have the brains to go into politics? I would argue that not being in politics is a function of intelligence. Hell in May I won my 5th election on the trot yet it is only because one of those wins was an aberration, and some real luck, that I am now for the first time in twelve years in a position to do something about local policing. Why do you think that every time I come up with a game based on politics it starts as a cynical form of junta and ends in unplayable contempt. Believe you me the current debate on the constitutional changes is nothing compared to the way local government has been stitched up in the last few years.

I do have one advantage over you. The main thing I am involved in is planning. Take it from me if you want a subject to really make you scream with fury and frustration then it is the planning system. Now that really is in the control of developers. I have no doubt the planning system is a violation of the Human Right Act but who has got £n million and n years to take on a joint alliance of the government and big business....

I'll stop there. Keep to policing it is so much easier and much less stressful.

IH: I hope none of this was meant to make me feel better as it's had quite the opposite effect. I feel I want to shake somebody by the throat.

Ian Beardsmore: Quiz: Who said 'If the primates we sprung from had I realised that politicians would emerge from the gene pool they would have given I evolution up as a bad job?'

IH: It sounds quite Douglas Adams-esque but I suspect it isn't.

Tony Dickinson Football is a taboo subject right now *mutters* *mumbles* *'kin bastids*

IH: And on that cheery note, we draw a veil over these proceedings.....

Toolbox

One of the highlights for me of this year's ManorCon was my finally working out how to play Puerto Rico. I'd played it twice already over the last year or so with not the slightest clue what was going on or what I was supposed to be doing, but it suddenly clicked this time. I would certainly never suggest that I am by any stretch of the imagination a good player, you understand; but at least now I feel that I am having some actual input into the game, rather than being a powerless bystander. Sadly, I could not afford to purchase my own copy of this excellent game, yet so enamoured of the intricate mechanics of it am I that I have knocked together a Puerto Rico rip-off which can be played with a standard Settlers set plus a few additions. This may stave off the withdrawal symptoms until I can afford my own proper set.

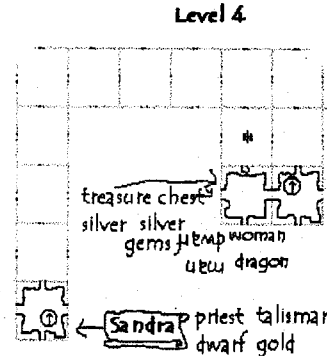
Settlers of Puerto Rico

This is a Settlers variant using all the normal Settlers cards and pieces other than the dice, and all the normal Settlers rules, except where amended below. A supply of victory point tokens, one hundred in total, will be needed.

1. Create seven cards of handy size. Mark one with the word 'Governor', and decorate it to stand out from the rest clearly. On the remaining six cards write the following occupations: Producer, Trader, Builder, Councillor, Robber and Judge. Create sixteen further cards of a different size to the occupation cards, and mark each with one of the following: Factory, Refinery, Market, Customs shed, Bulder's yard, Transport department, Town Hall, Civic centre, Courthouse, Treasury, Police station, Fire station, University, College, Tax Office, Stock exchange.
2. Shuffle the occupation cards, and deal one face up to each player until one player is dealt the Governor. That player retains the card, and becomes the first player for the first turn; the remaining cards are placed face up in the centre. Take one more development cards than there are players, from the top of the pack and place them face up. Each player builds two towns and two roads as in normal Settlers.
3. The first player then chooses any of the face up occupation cards and follows the instructions below relating to that occupation. The player to his left then chooses one of the remaining cards, and follows the instructions likewise until all players have chosen an occupation and followed the instructions. If at that point the game has ended, each player's victory points are totalled up, the player with the most points being declared the winner. If the game has not ended, one victory point is placed from the stock onto each occupation card not chosen this turn, then the remaining occupation cards are replaced in the centre, the Governor card passed to the player on the left of the player currently holding it, and play continues with that player choosing a new occupation. Should a player choose an occupation card on which there are one or more victory points, he places these points in his own victory point pile.

Marvin the Paranoid Android Sorcerer's Cave Turn 33

The Sandra Bond party only appear to be playing every other turn or so at present; yet again they NMR and so remain motionless in the NSEWU cave with the priest, the dwarf, the talisman and the sack of gold. Pshaw, that's one of the best collections I've ever seen in a cave on level four in any game of Sorcerer's Cave, as well.

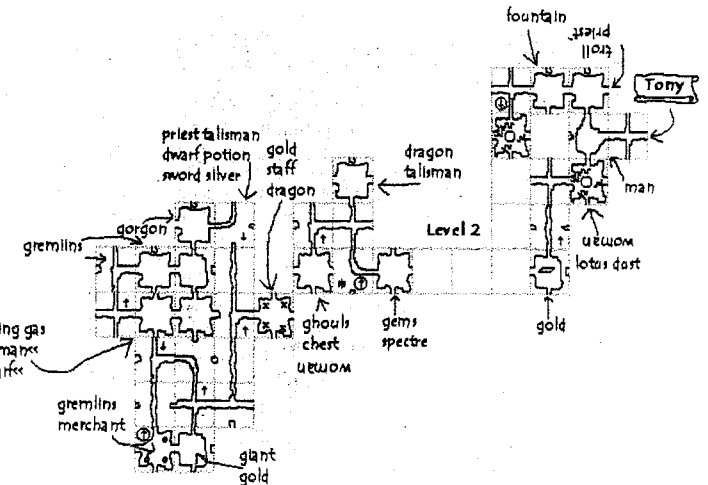


Tony Dickinson meanwhile gushes "Thanks for that marathon explanation of things 'Sorcerer's Cave', you deserve a medal for going through all that! I am happy with the whole 'splitting parties up' thing now, thanks. Also thanks for the reminder that I have the magic carpet thing (and that is as well as normal actual movement then is it? So in effect I get a double move?)" Er no, actually. Using the magic carpet constitutes one turn, taking the place of your normal actual movement. Use it wisely. Anyway, the Dickinson party decide to approach the man now quaking in his boots

before them in this NSE cave. Hero Elric clears his throat, steps forward, and puts a conspiratorial arm around the man's shoulders. "Put it this way", explains Elric, "we are a Hero with a combat of five, a giant with seven, a troll with four and two wizards with seven each. You are are lone man with combat three. Potentially, me and the giant could take you on with a combined combat of twelve, with the two wizards standing behind adding their magical power of five each. Total twenty two. Assuming we roll a one, you still need to roll twenty, on a six sided die mind you, just to draw. Not very likely, I'm sure you'll agree. Or of course you could join us, return to the outside world and get a share in all our treasure. What do you say?" "Hmmm, let me think about this a moment," muses the man. ((reaction table H-H-I-I-F-F. Die roll 2+1 for Hero's charisma=3. Indifferent)) "Actually, I think I'll just stay here, if you don't mind", the man finally decides, "see if a better offer comes along. I mean, you never know...."

Bemused at this reaction, the party shrug and file past the man, muttering and shaking their heads. Now, which way next?

After. ooh, at least a millisecond's discussion, they elect not to risk the viper pit but to instead see if they can work their way around to the stairs up by going East. It's a good start: the Eastward passage leads them to a Tunnel with exits North, South, East and West. Getting exciting, this, now - will they find the way out before the area cards run out?



GAMES and stuff.

- l) Courthouse (Judge phase): owning player takes one more victory point than he is entitled to during the Judge phase.
- j) Treasury (Judge phase): The owning player takes one resource card of his choice for every full five victory points he has at the end of the Judge phase.
- k) Police station (Robber phase): owning player is immune to having a card stolen by the Robber. He must still discard half his cards if he has more than the limit.
- l) Fire station (Robber phase): owning player may keep up to twelve cards, instead of seven, during the Robber phase.
- m) University (Game end): owning player takes ten victory points at game end.
- n) College (Game end): owning player takes one extra victory point for every three he has normally at game end.
- o) Tax Office (Game end): owning player takes one extra point per town, two per city, three per metropolis, two for longest road and two for largest army at game end.
- p) Stock exchange (Game end): owning player scores four extra victory points for every metropolis that he owns at game end, including the Stock Exchange.

These extra victory points may be noted on paper at game end and added to the player's final total if necessary. I think all these rules should work OK together, though I'm not sure if a mere one hundred victory points will be enough. Maybe two hundred or even two hundred and fifty would be better. Also, I suspect that with the huge luck element of Settlers removed, empires will grow extremely quickly, and then the successful player will be the one who can snatch an odd victory point here and there.

My latest boot sale acquisition is a book of games best played after or during a heavy drinking session. Here's one I like the sound of, though I haven't tried it yet, called "Death by Winking".

Secretly decide by any convenient means which player will be the Killer. The way suggested in the book is to take one playing card for each person, all red apart from a single black. Deal out the cards face down, and whoever gets the black card is the Killer, with all other players being Victims. From this point on, no talking or gesturing is allowed.

Players should now examine each of their opponents, trying to deduce which is the Killer. Care must be taken though, since the Killer has the power to 'kill' any of his opponents, simply by winking at them. If a Victim looks at the Killer, and is winked at by him, he must silently count to ten, drain his glass, then "expire" as noisily and dramatically as possible and drop out of the game.

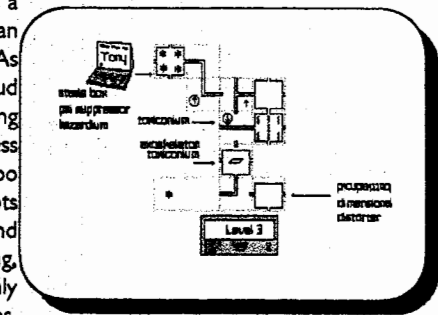
If a Victim thinks he knows which of his opponents is the Killer, he should look at his suspect and blink twice. If the accusation is correct, the Killer reveals his card, then buys his accuser his next drink as punishment for being found out. The game is over. If however the accusation is wrong, he blinks back once at his accuser. Again, the accuser must silently count to ten, drain his glass, then "expire" and drop out.

When there is only the Killer and one Victim left, everyone will know who the Killer is, so the last remaining Victim must automatically die as above. The Killer wins if all the Victims drop out, either through his winks or their own blinks. He then skips paying for his next round.

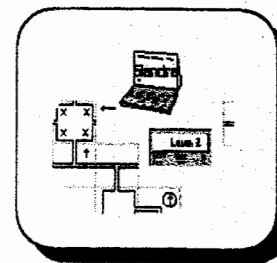
Anyone found to be cheating - giving erroneous winks or blinks, talking, gesturing or giving the game away either before or after being knocked out - must get the drinks in as punishment.

Zen Paranoid Sorcerer Turn 21

The Tony Dickinson party, unsurprisingly, elect to head West. The human, alien and two clones stride confidently along the corridor into a large room with exits North, South, East and West. "Cover me," hisses human Ponte-fract. "I'm going in." With that, he commando rolls through the door, coming up on one knee, KiLO-Zap laser pistol at the ready. The centre of this room houses a large information retrieval terminal, while the walls are lined with rack after rack of data chips and memory cards. "Careful," Ponte-fract warns, "this is a Data Repository. There'll be one more thing here than there should be on this level." And how right he is. As the rest of the party enter the room, a dark cloud billows out from the information terminal, heading with an eerie determination straight for the hapless adventurers. "Nanites! Get out!" yells Ponte-fract, too late, as the billions of microscopically small robots swarm over and envelop the party, invading and pervading their every orifice. Twitching and writhing, the party are powerless to fight back, and can only wait and suffer the attack until it is over. ((Nanites.



Hazard. Every member of the party is attacked with fighting strength of 2. Nanites v human: nanites roll 3, human 4. $3+2=5$ v $4+5=9$. Human survives. Nanites v alien: nanites roll 5, alien rolls 3. $5+2=7$ v $3+5=8$. Alien survives. Nanites v clone: nanites roll 4, clone 2. $4+2=6$ v $2+3=5$. Clone killed. Nanites v clone: nanites roll 2, clone rolls 2. $2+2=4$ v $2+3=5$. Clone survives)). The attack ends, and human Ponte-fract, clone Chester-le-Street, and the as yet unnamed alien stagger unsteadily to their feet as the nanites vanish back into the terminal. They then notice that clone Durham is not moving, and in fact has an hollow, scooped out look. The nanites have sucked out his vitals, converting his internal organs into fuel for their own processors. "Now that's gotta hurt," Ponte-fract notes. There's no time for dwelling on their fallen comrade, however, as there are three more things to deal with in



this room. Carefully, they survey their surroundings. Ooh, it's not too bad at all. First up there's a EternaFresh Stasis Box. This bulky contraption weighs the same as four standard fuel containers, meaning only aliens or battledroids can carry it, but can be carried between two characters if necessary. It can be opened at any time with the roll of a die; on a roll of one the box contains a virus which infects every member of the party, deducting one from every dice roll from that moment on; a roll of two triggers the box's defence mechanism, which attacks with combat strength of five and can only be countered by psionic powers; a three and the box is empty; a four and it contains

Lethalium for five victory points, a five means it contains Hazardium worth ten victory points, and a six shows the box contains Toxiconium worth twenty victory points. It's up to you what you do with it Tony - your alien could carry it, or you could leave it here, or you could open it now. Next in this room is a small, inoffensive looking device: a Lobotomies-R-Us Psionic Suppressor. This device, once removed from this room, blocks any Psionic powers in any area it enters and automatically shuts down Defence Grids. It need not be taken, but once it is, it must be kept else it releases a virus similar to the one detailed above. Note, it is worth zero victory points. Finally in this room is a good old fashioned container of Hazardium worth ten points. Nice.

Sandra Bond once more NMRs so her party has a little rest.