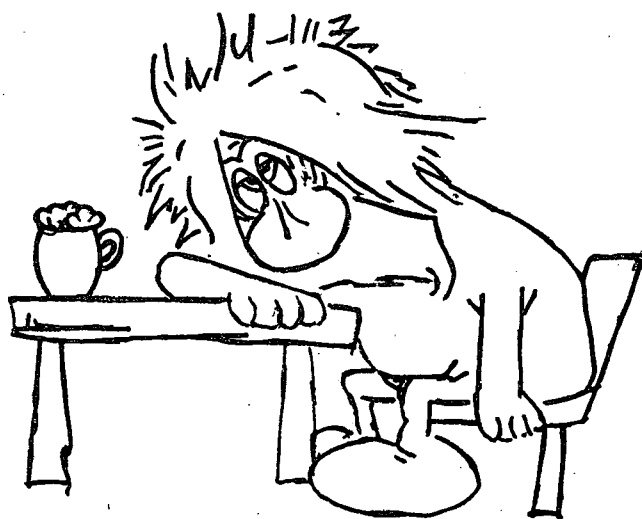


MONOMANIA 4



"SOME DAY I'VE GOT
TO GET ORGANIZED"

25p

This is the fourth issue of MEGALOMANIA, a Postal Diplomacy fanzine edited and published by Chris Tringham, 25 Auckland Road, London SE19 2DR (01-653 1532). Rod Rivers prints it at the Hanway Print Centre, 106 Essex Road, London N1. If you send 25p an issue (35p foreign airmail) or trade with me, it will arrive every 4 weeks. US Agent Richard Jarvinen, 2404 Sunset Avenue, West Linn, Oregon, USA 97068 accepts 65p airmail, 45p surface

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If this issue is rather less well-organized than usual, it's because I've spent this weekend in Dewsbury rather slaving over a hot typewriter. Providing that everything goes well, the zine should still arrive on time (Wednesday for players, Friday/Saturday for non-players), mainly because I managed to do a substantial part well in advance. Before I forget, I'd better apologize to two or three people who applied for games in the past few weeks and don't appear in either the gamestart or the waiting list - I lost your applications! Well, I'll start my fourth editorial with a report on the events of this weekend in Dewsbury

Dewsdipcon

I travelled up with Andy Wright, and at Hendon we were joined by Tony Crouch, the three of us going up to Hinckley for the first leg of the journey. After brief discussions about Ireland (the politics) and Scotland (the football team), Crouch kept reasonably quiet and chortled away to himself as he read my copy of Ethel the Canary. We were spared the sight of his absurd bobble-hat and scarf, since he felt that it was too hot for it, but he insisted upon wearing a white article, which he took off only once or twice all weekend! When we arrived at the Weaver's in Hinckley, Greg and Richard were playing Bridge - for the Weaver's, and such as Piggott and Doubleday were heckling them. Insufferability certainly is John's long suit, and he spent virtually the whole evening talking loudly about almost everything under the sun, with his usual mixture of arrogance and ignorance. After filling a fruit machine with 10p pieces, he proceeded to drop his pint glass on the floor and then quietened down. The Bridge match continued interminably until well after 11.30, by which time Steve was become rather worried about his own hunger, and we eventually set-off for another Indian meal. (I've never understood why it always has to be Indian, though Sharp says that it's because Italian is boring and Chinese is all chicken and veal.) Anyway, we had this Indian food, and discussed Eurocon, an event I intend to attend despite what I have heard about the last one. Doubleday was defeated by the grey-brown rice sludge they serve in such establishments, and actually failed to finish his meal. I was rather struck by the number of people at that meal who are employed by Local or Central Government: Crouch & Wright work in the Ministry of Defence, Piggott in the DES, and Baird in the Inland Revenue. Doubleday is a librarian, and Hawes and myself are students whilst Sharp fiddles his taxes, teaches Bridge and writes for a living. What is it about Civil Servants that make them more likely to play Diplomacy?

Accommodation for the night was provided in the Palmer residence, an amazing house with an endless supply of staircases, corridors and rooms. Everywhere you go, there are strange rooms full of furniture and books, looking as if it was once used but has now fallen into disrepair. They seem to happily accept that six or seven people need somewhere to sleep, and various people we have never met before greet us cheerfully before setting off to the other end of the house where they probably live. Glyn and Adrien were unable to come up to Dewsbury because one of the Palmer clan was getting married that weekend - 'It's not like a Palmer to get married during opening hours' someone remarked to whichever member of the family happened to be in the room at the time: 'No, she's marrying outside t'family' was the brilliant reply.

The following morning we set off from Hinckley on the hundred-mile journey to Dewsbury, trying to follow Richard's car. Unfortunately we missed the turn off the roundabout, and so (for the second time on the journey) had to go right round again - it just happens to be about the largest roundabout in the World, so it took a while to catch up. Then Andy misjudged the distance to Dewsbury and didn't buy enough

Motorway Petrol (@85p a gallon), so we had to divert off the M1 to find some petrol (the next Service Area was too far away) by which time we had completely lost the Sharp car. We did eventually find our way to 35 West Park Street without them, despite the absence of any kind of map, though Crouch asked someone the way when we were practically at the end of the road! When we arrived, John Keight, Andy Holborn and others were playing 'Cosmic Encounter', but most people were at the Bull Hotel: I met Mick Bullock for the first time, was quickly eliminated from the 'Over and Under' thanks to Steve Doubleday, and looked at someone's Eurocon photos. It certainly seems that it'll be different, if nothing else - just hope I survive the fortnight. Other people I had never met before were Bob Brown, the Nyes and Pete Birks, as well as the usual collection of 'people' that frequent cons.

Steve Doubleday suggests that it isn't a con unless you get hopelessly lost in a City you've never visited before - well this time it was Leeds. At Crouch's insistence we were looking for a Bowling Alley, to be the venue for the 1901 vs. Rhubovia match. However, Bob, Steve and myself got separated from Mick and Tony, and after the ritual roundabout encirclement we got hopelessly lost in the centre of Leeds. Every few hundred yards Doubleday leaned out to ask a passing pedestrian. As might be expected, most were 'only here for the day', though one or two told us that there used to be one, but they've pulled it down! Having parked we found it fairly easily, and discovered Birks, Bullock and Crouch well underway. My own efforts will doubtlessly be fully reported in Rhubovia, where I'm glad to say that no-one will be able to decipher the words. Suffice to say that I didn't do that badly for a first attempt, and provided some harmless amusement for those who were watching. I'm pleased to report that Mick beat the wretched Crouch, and saved the honour of 1901, though both scored about twice as many as I did, and I nearly beat Andy Wright for last place - it was a draw.

After that failure I didn't even attempt to play Snooker, though I think that even I could have beaten Piggott, and it amazed me that it took Tony Crouch so long. The venue for this remarkable display of appalling snooker was a Conservative Club, a rather strange place for the NGC to play - not because of it's Politics, but because it is a rather staid and respectable sort of place. Pete Birks looked most incongruous, as those who are acquainted with the publisher of greatest hits can probably guess: He is far too aggressive, presumably because he has an inferiority complex, and is always offering odds on whatever is or might be happening! - I find it hard to reconcile this with his intellectual style in gh. He was telling us of his intention to be World Poker Champion, with six years left if he is to become the youngest-ever, and explaining the importance of not equating 'Poker Money' with real money. Whilst I understand the reasoning, I can't see how it's possible to do this, unless you haven't any financial worries - I just couldn't calmly accept the loss of £150, since I simply haven't got that kind of money! Apparently Pete has won a lot recently, but can't spend it for fear of losing it in the future, which seems crazy to me, but then I'm clearly not a 'Poker Player'.

Just for a change, we then went off for an Indian meal after that. This was a quite amazing meal, and rather different from the previous evening, since we went by convoy into Bradford to a cheap and authentic place. For 60p, they provided a strange dish - a curried stew/mince in a bowl, plus two flat round starchy articles. No knives and forks in this place! I had intended to have something a little more English, but was thwarted by Simpkins' schoolmasterly approach to ordering the food. Steve Doubleday ate most of mine, and I ate the starchy object, a few of someone else's chips, some raw onion and drunk several glasses of water. It was certainly different, though I think you need several months hard traing to really enjoy it! Steve, who was the only person to eat breakfast, not only ate his own and substantial quantities of mine and someone else's, but also purchased 4 pasties to eat beforehand, which sounds like real masochism.

After the Italy vs. Argentina game on TV, I went to sleep to the strains of a game of 'Organized Crime' being played by Geoff Hardingham, John Keight and one or two others I failed to identify. John, incidentally, was constantly to be seen with a notebook and pencil making notes ostensibly for a con report for PTN, though given his occupation some people had other ideas.

Sunday morning's calm was shattered by an awful rendition of various 'popular classics' which must be the low-point of Paul's record collection, and a game of 5-minute Chess involving Birks, Fisher, Craig Nye and Doubleday - complete chaos!

The weekend was completed with a game of dominoes, after which we returned to London. My thanks to Andy Wright for the lift and Paul for the Con. See you in France!

Writing in the most recent Enigma, John Herlihy suggests that there is a new phenomenon 'creeping into the hobby', that of the editor who is interested in subjects other than Diplomacy, and therefore writes about such subjects in his zine. A few quotes should give you a good idea what he's saying:

"The type I'm referring to is, I believe, a fairly new phenomenon in the mainstream of the hobby; he has always existed on the periphery, appealing to a few devoted followers, but hasn't yet tried to influence the direction of the predominantly 'straight' magazines on which the continuing health of the postal game depends."
"If games are relegated to a minor role in a magazine supposedly devoted to games, if adjudications are repeatedly fouled up.....(the)players will very quickly lose (interest) in the Hobby."

"But if such magazines as Fall of Eagles and Pigmy are passed off as being barely adequate.....while all the new blood is resolutely steered towards such offerings as Scotch on the Rocks and Megalomania, then I fear for the longterm good of the hobby."

Humm....'predominantly straight magazines' - what the hell does that mean? I assume that he means zines in the mainstream of the hobby, running a large number of games, such as Jigsaw, FOE, Enigma and The Tinamou. What is it about these zines that makes them 'straight'? Penguin's English 'Dictionary' defines straight as "not bent or curved; upright; correct; level; even; unobstructed; tidy; frank; honest; outspoken; undiluted". I can't see that 'straight' is the right word, but this isn't a pedantic zine (I make enough mistakes myself!) so I'll try and deal with his argument instead.

I think that John is incorrect in assuming that people are attempting to 'subvert' his mainstream zines in quite the way he suggests, though there is no doubt that many people attempt to persuade editors to alter their style in some way or other. In zine reviews and letters, people will praise one part of a zine and criticise other parts in an attempt to inform the GM of their opinions, and influence the future of the zine. John Piggott, among others, does his best to persuade other editors not to run Soccerboss and other 'fairy games'. Is that undesirable? John's complaint is that people are producing zines with a larger proportion of non-games material, and expressing opinions on a wide range of subjects. It would be pointless to try and argue about the desirability of including particular subjects in a zine, since everyone has their own opinions and are unlikely to agree with each other & I feel that it doesn't matter.

The most important point to remember is that this is a fanzine, produced firstly for the benefit of the editor and secondly for the benefit of its readers: there can be no doubt about that, since there is no other possible reason for publishing (wealth, there is, but I'm sure that no-one would produce a zine just for the players unless he were making money out of it, in which case it becomes a 'Professional Fanzine' if one can have such a thing). Each zine is therefore the personal creation of its editor, and will contain whatever the editor chooses to print. This is MY zine, and if I am to retain my interest in it I must have the space to express my opinions on whatever interests me. If I lose interest in producing the zine, then it will fold, and a large part of the enjoyment from doing this comes from being able to express my opinions in this Editorial.

I intend to continue expressing my opinions and printing other non-games material - I've always made it clear, and anyone who subs to the zine will be aware of this before they are parted from their money. Clearly, a lot of people agree with me - why is John Herlihy so worried by it? It's hardly likely to destroy the hobby, and in my opinion it makes it more interesting, which is perhaps why he's worried: Perhaps he would prefer all zines to be small, boring and obsessed with Diplomacy? I know that a lot of people really do think this, but I would hope that they are a minority - certainly they're unlikely to be subbing to Megalomania - and it's a view that I find hard to understand.

If John is suggesting that I tend to treat Diplomacy games as second-rate compared with the rest of the zine, I plead not guilty: I would agree that they don't take up very much space, but I still comment on games that I find interesting. Game Three, for example, has one of the weirdest Autumn 01 seasons I've ever seen, and I will be offering my comments and analysis. However, I see no point in saying something unless it's worth saying, and the majority of Diplomacy games aren't very interesting (GM interference is not altogether a good thing, which is one reason for my reluctance to comment). As to the accuracy of adjudications, my only problems have been with an 'orphan' game (TH 'Elephant'), and Ethil maintains a high standard of accuracy. To suggest that the zines with interesting content will have an inferior 'games service' is just plain silly, and sounds like an attempt to rationalise an irrational dislike of a certain type of zine.

The response to my editorial of last issue was fairly predictable. To deal first with the Taylor/Piggott affair: I accept that I spent too much time on saying what I meant, and in doing so I probably obscured the meaning. I have no objection to the Taylor/Piggott feud, but I think that Roy is silly to take it so seriously, and John is at fault for always attacking 'easy targets'. He says that they are the only people who give him an opportunity to attack, which is probably true, but surely it would be more interesting if he tried directing his attacks towards people who manage to avoid controversy and see how they respond! We shall see.

Richard Sharp's comments in Dolchstoss about trading where more-or-less what I had anticipated. He defends his right to choose with whom he trades, argues that a credit-swap is the same as a trade, and denies that he refuses new trades. Of course he is right in the first argument, and I have never argued otherwise, but I still maintain that a credit-swap is inferior to trading, simply because it creates more work for everyone. I lose on most of my trades, but I accept that it's a necessary part of zine-editing, since I need to know what other people are saying - I didn't come into the hobby to make money, and I am not really concerned about a few pence loss on some trades. I trade because I want to see most zines with the minimum of administrative effort, because I couldn't afford to sub, and would almost certainly forget to renew my subs anyway, and simply because it's EASIER. I really cannot understand why Richard Sharp and Clive Booth are so reluctant to trade. I feel that Richard and other zine editors should encourage new publishers by offering a trade at the beginning, since it is quite possible to cut the trade if after a few issues you feel that it isn't worth trading. This is surely very much more friendly, and I would suggest easier.

Speaking to Mick Bullock, it seems that the preference matrix system may well turn out to be the most acceptable system both to him and everyone else for the next zine poll. I certainly hope that it is, since as far as I can see it achieves the nearest to an objective result. If you have any views on this interesting subject, I'm sure that Mick will be interested to hear from you (36, Greenroyd, Greetland, Halifax, West Yorks, HX4 8DT). On the subject of voting, the deadline for Richard Sharp's Dolchstoss Player Poll is pretty close, so if you're thinking of voting, do it NOW.

Entente 2 arrived a few days ago, and I'm pleased to report that Shaun has taken the advice that was offered about his first issue, in that he has cleaned his typer keys, and has a much better layout. It might still have problems surviving against the stiff competition from other new (& established) zines, but it does at least have a chance. My comments on his House Rules were sabotaged by problems with my typing: I meant to say that his rules read: "Removals will be ((made on the following basis if unordered)) ... c) A fleet in a home supply centre d) An army in a home supply ((sic)) e) Ambiguous removals will be judged by their alphabetic status." My point was that it is impossible to remove units if they are in supply centres (home or otherwise) in a Winter season, because that unit must have gained that centre in the preceding Autumn. If you think about it, you'll realise that only units in non-supply centres can ever be removed by the GM.

On the subject of second impressions, I must say that I was rather disappointed by Griffin's re-appearance. My doubts about his reluctance to print non-game material were confirmed, since G2 is something less than fascinating. I guess that the players are interested in reading about 'Rail Baron', 'Railway Rivals', 'Black Box' and others, I very much doubt whether anyone else will. What annoys me is that Keith obviously has the ability to produce a good quality well-written zine, and it'll be a pity if Griffin continues to disappoint.

The cutting on the right rather amused me when I saw it in TO recently, so I thought I'd reprint it.

Having seen the Scotland vs. Holland game on TV, it must be obvious to everyone that Scotland have only three midfield players of any class (Souness, Gemmill, Hartford), and Ally MacLeod was obviously crazy not to play the three of them together before the Holland game, and Scotland will be better without him. Wise after the event?

Given though that the construction does occur, what sort of world are they constructing? One of its most telling aspects derives from the positioning of the main cameras - raised up and at the halfway line. This is a neutral position, away from the partisan crowds behind the goals, but it is also the traditional placing of the main seating area preferred by the older and better-off spectators. The idea of middle-class bias in televised football no longer looks so ridiculous.

Ed Buscombe, in first drawing attention to this, has written: 'Of course it will be retorted that a position on the half-way line is quite simply the best one for seeing the game. This, however, is a matter of opinion. It depends, after all, on what you want to see, and how you conceive your relation to it.'

DIMENSION OF MIRACLES by Robert Sheckley (Panther SF 60p)
THE ROBERT SHECKLEY OMNIBUS (Gollancz SF/Penguin)

ALBUMS



Upon seeing that word 'SF' at the top of this review, a number of people will turn the page and look for something 'interesting'. Dagger, Sharp and others seem to be of the opinion that all SF is illiterate and over-scientific, an idea which isn't all that remarkable if one considers the 'public image' of the genre. To many people, it means 'Star Trek', 'Logan's Run', a second-rate 'space adventure' or Asimov's novels. Hardly surprising that people aren't very impressed with Science Fiction if that is their image of it!

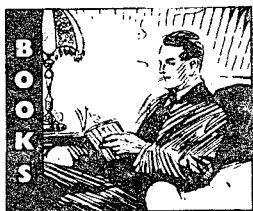
Robert Sheckley is an excellent author, being both a literate and witty, and able to put across serious ideas at the same time. 'Dimension of Miracles' is a journey through a variety of strange civilizations, starting and finishing on Earth. The characters are all essentially human, however absurd they may seem at first sight. In the Galactic Centre, where one expects efficiency, there are only glib civil servants and literally-minded computers. (Did anyone else see that John Bird/John Fortune programme on Heaven & Hell last year? That had a similar idea, with the bureaucratic tangles in Hell resulting in the fire always nearly going out, and all that sort of thing. Very funny indeed.) Then there's another Earth, where Dinosaurs are the dominant race, and one with permanent background music as if everyone where in a Musical, and one with intelligent, speaking cities. The characterization is brilliant, and even the weirdest situations seem believable.

'The Omnibus' is a collection of short stories, plus his novel 'Immortality Inc.'. The most interesting of the stories is again about a 'parallel Earth', at the other end of the galaxy, called Tranai. This planet is indistinguishable from Earth except that society is organized completely differently: There is no crime, no poverty, no police force, no bureaucracy, no wars and a stable economy. It isn't that simple, of course, since robbery is an accepted way of avoiding poverty, and there are government authorized beggars! Sheckley's sense of humour enables him to put across serious ideas without 'preaching' or resorting to heavy-handed satire. The other attraction of his writings is that he manages to avoid any complex scientific concepts, assuming their existence if he needs to, but never becoming obsessed with them. Matter transport and time travel both exist, and the reader simply accepts this to be the case, since there are more interesting subjects to be considered.

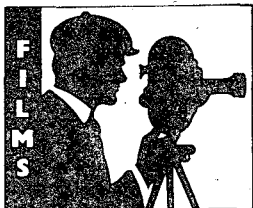
It seems incredible that whilst many infinitely less talented authors have achieved fame and fortune by writing SF, Robert Sheckley remains relatively unknown. Apparently he has yet to win any of the major SF awards, though the recent Skycon (the annual British Science Fiction Eastercon) had him as their 'Guest of Honour' (My thanks, incidentally, to Dave Langford who provided me with this information and part of the Skycon programme book with a Sheckley biography. If you are interested in SF, then Dave's fanzine Twill Ddu is heartily recommended: 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks RG2 7PW).

Quite a few Sheckley books are available in paperback, and better libraries have the 'Omnibus'. It's about time you read some decent books, anyway!

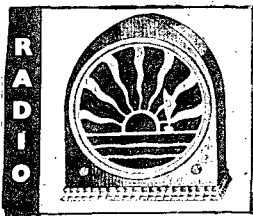
BOOKS



FILMS



RADIO



TELEVISION



REVIEWS

RAILWAY RIVALS: A game review

The most unusual aspect of RR is that it is not produced by one of the major companies, but is marketed by the inventor, Dave Watts from his home in Milford Haven. The mechanics of the game are quite simple, and the board consists of a large number of hexagons with a map drawn on top. Geographical features such as rivers, hills and costs are represented by different coloured hexagons (or in the case of rivers, lines between the hexagons). The map is therefore fairly simplistic, consisting of a number of different coloured hexagons plus some towns. In the first phase of the game, players build railway networks between the towns using the initial income of 20 units and additional income of 5 for the first player into a town. To build from one hexagon to another costs one unit, with hills and rivers being more expensive, and there are payments to other players for crossing or running alongside their lines.

The second stage consists of a series of races between cities determined by a dice throw or by running to a pre-determined turntable. The first player in each city receives 20 units and the second 10, and this income is used to extend the networks and to pay other players for the use of their track. After a set time, the player with the largest accumulation of wealth wins the game.

RR networks are drawn on the board using feltpens, and can be wiped off again providing that 'Touchdown' has been placed on to the board beforehand. It can therefore be used an unlimited number of times, which makes it very cheap indeed.

The attraction of the game is that it is very simple to understand and also to play, since there are no counters or pieces to move around or lose. The game also manages to achieve an acceptable balance between skill and luck, though this depends very much on which rules are used in determining the races (the 'tournament' rules, used for postal play, reduce the luck element to a negligible level).

Although an interest in railways might make the game more enjoyable it is quite possible to play this game on an abstract level rather than as an educational simulation, which was its original intention, since it is basically very simple. The simplicity of the game is however not at the expense of realism, and anyone with an interest in railways will be able to look at it more seriously and study the actual railway networks that developed in the areas concerned.

'RR' sets can be obtained from David Watts at 102 Priory Road, Milford Haven, Dyfed, SA73 2ED. Basic sets cost 48p, ready printed maps are 36p, and 'Touchdown' (self-adhesive transparent vinyl) costs about 35p-40p per map. David runs postal games in Railway Rivals Recorder, his own zine devoted almost entirely to the game. If you want details about 'RR' or RRR then write to David and he'll be happy to help. I am prepared to run one postal game in M, with David as the GM, if there's sufficient interest. The game-fee will be 50p, I think

Editorial (continued from Page 5)

I was thinking about the 'National Con' recently, since it all seems hopelessly disorganized at the moment. The whole aim seems to be to arrange something as cheaply as possible, with no concern for anything else. Is there no-one who thinks that we should organize a better quality event, along the lines of an SF Con, with everyone staying in one hotel and various events arranged there? I expect that such a venture would fail because of general apathy in the hobby, but I'd be interested to know how much people would consider reasonable to spend for accommodation at an annual national Diplomacy con.

Finally, I still need both letters and articles for publication, since I'm hoping to expand to 20 pages either next issue or sometime later, and will need enough material to fill the increased space available. I'm also interested to discover which parts of the zine you most enjoy (or dislike) - at the moment, I'm getting a very favourable response to the 'Dapper' series of articles, so I hope that their author will continue to send me contributions. Oh, and of course money as well.

dapper

The Professor sat patiently by the microphone, waiting for his cue. Totally prepared, he showed no trace of nerves in the last few seconds before the broadcast. The green light glowed in front of him. His voice was friendly, but with that touch of knowledgeable firmness which commands respect.

"Good Evening. In last week's talk, I examined the rise of genetic engineering. We saw how, from the early days of 'Test-tube Babies', as they were known, to the turn of the millenium, society accepted these 'new humans' without question as normal people; which indeed, apart from the manner of their conception and birth, they were. We found, too, from the minutes of Cabinet Meetings and military memoirs that as early as 1998, Governments were employing genetic programmers to produce people suitable for military service. Indeed, by 2035, almost the entire non-commissioned ranks of the Armed Forces consisted of people from this source, as well as a large number of the junior officers.

"This week we shall concentrate more on the social and economic effects of the so-called 'middle-period' of gen-del and the rise of the gerps. (??)

"Private enterprise was not slow in following the Governments' lead. No fortunes were made overnight, as it still took at least twenty years to program and condition a mature person, but over a few decades the results were spectacular. 'New people' were widely marketed as domestic servants, labourers, production-line workers, clerks and typists. The Robot and Android industries disappeared; the 'newps' were so much more efficient in almost every respect - memory function, dexterity, adaptability, durability (average life 90 years compared with 15 for even the best Android), appearance and conviviality. They developed models for entertainment, sport, and the leisure industries, and it became impossible for normal people to compete.

"However, it was not until larger, multi-national firms started breeding their own workforces that the human race became aware of the threat posed by genetic technology. The internationally co-ordinated 'Unemployment Riots' of 2044 in the Capitals led to the Worldwide 'GenDel' Conference of 2046.

"All private genetic development/production was to cease, and all state 'GenDel' was to be co-ordinated by the WGC. Production was to be standardised into models suitable only for mundane manual and service tasks, programmed for placid obedience. Safeguards were built-in: they were to be made sterile, and produced with an ingenious combination of racial characteristics that made them immediately recognisable. They had negroid features and colour, but with deep, clear blue eyes. They were to be known as Genetically Engineered Reproduction People, or colloquially 'Gerps'.

"It was a brilliant, and relatively simple, solution but there were some social side-effects. 'Gerps' became, almost overnight, the butt of everyone's ill temper, frustration and even cruel mockery. They were the successors to the Jews, Negroes and Indo-Pakistanis - a sub-race inferior to everyone else. Because they were so placid and hard-working they were made into slaves, to be used with unthinking, uncaring impunity. 'Gerp' became a term of abuse against the simple, unintelligent or idiotic; particularly applied by children taunting their dull, or weaker, fellows.

"'Gerps' became a part of everyday life. People were familiar with them, and therefore took them for granted. It was perhaps this, very human, failing that led to the human race's greatest shock - In the person of Arnold Whistler.

"Whistler was a mutant, a naturally-occurring blu-eyed negro. Little is known of his childhood, but we can imagine what he had to endure in the way of verbal and physical ill-treatment. Indeed, it may have been this hard upbringing that caused his determination to prove himself Human and achieve a spectacular revenge on society.

"Next week, I shall discuss Whistler's life, his raising of a quasi-Gerp armed force, how this presented Humanity with its greatest threat, and how they dealt with it."

The Professor left the studio and ran lightly down the steps to meet his wife. He greeted her with a kiss, and smiled as he saw his own, familiar, ebony face reflected in her loving, deep blue eyes. She smiled back.