

Megalomania 69

April 1995

A fanzine associated with the games hobby, published at the start of each month by its editor, Chris Tringham, 10 Jubilee Court, London Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 6JL (Phone 0181-683 2815, CompuServe 100343,362) Subscribers pay 30p an issue and waiting lists are open for Regular Diplomacy and nothing else.

Well, I think that this is going to be a rather pathetic excuse for an issue of Megalomania. I make few excuses for this - I just don't have very much enthusiasm for it at the moment, and last issue was a total nightmare, so I think that the best that I can do is have a month off and hope that I can manage a proper issue next time.

Last issue was fraught with difficulty. First I had horrendous problems trying to print it when my laser printer declined to print on the second side of the paper I decided to try the HP Laserjet at work, but that also refused. I then went down with what I believe probably was flu, (rather than a bad cold that you describe as flu to get sympathy and time off work) which knocked me out for two complete days and left me feeling decidedly under the weather for about a week. My boss persuaded me that I should go back to work, but in practice I did hardly anything for three days so perhaps I shouldn't have bothered.

Talking of work, I have been trying to get our HP9000 to talk to our network, something that on the face of it sounds quite straightforward but which actually took rather a long time to achieve (mainly due to incompetence, though not mine). I am also starting to discover that all my prejudices about Unix and so-called 'Open Systems' seem to be true: the AS/400 seems like paradise compared with an HP9000. I was talking to a friend who worked on an AS/400 project with me but who is now working with Open Systems, and she made similar comments (totally unprompted) about the problems her company are having with it. Next month: the renaissance of the mainframe (and I'm only half-joking about that...).

I celebrated 'my birthday by playing 6-player games of 1830 on successive days, which is fairly sad when you think about it. Well, that's not quite true - I celebrated my birthday by going to the pub at lunchtime with some ex-colleagues and in the evening with the old 'South London Mafia'. On Saturday we played games at chez John Harrington for the first time in ages,

which reminded me why I'm glad we don't go up there regularly any more - if there is an easy way of driving from Croydon to Enfield I haven't discovered it yet. It was fascinating to discover that Lin seems to have found time between producing small Harringtons and working full-time to completely rebuild their bathroom (at least I assume it was her handiwork).

We also played John's new game, ~~Office Politics~~ which looks quite promising though rather cut-throat for six players. I thought I'd made a good start, but soon learned otherwise and struggled before being virtually eliminated about half-way through. Both of the games of 1830 ended with 'voluntary' bankruptcies by players who could see no prospect of doing well if they survived. This was rather disappointing partly because both games had a lot of life left in them but mainly because Paul Oakes won both times.

Crystal Palace have had rather an up-and-down few weeks. The low point was the defeat at Wimbledon, when Palace played very badly and thoroughly deserved to lose. The nil-nil draw at Chelsea wasn't much better, but at least they didn't lose. Remarkably, Palace have recorded two home league wins, both 2-1 with the opening goal scored by Chris Armstrong, albeit over fairly moderate opposition (Sheffield Wednesday and Manchester City). The highlight was the FA Cup replay at Molineux, a game that Palace deserved to win, though the 4-1 scoreline was perhaps a little flattering. The amazing thing was that not only did they score 4 goals, but they were all of the very highest quality.

So another semi-final looms. Interestingly (if you are Statto or John Motson) since 1990, Palace have played in two FA Cup semi-finals and two League Cup semi-finals. Prior to 1990 they played in just one. Spookily, just like 1990, it is at Villa Park against arguably the country's top team. It is obviously too much to hope that the result will be the same, though the way Palace have been playing recently they could either win it or get totally

outplayed, and there is no way of predicting which it will be.

I have just watched the opening episode of 'Bugs', a new drama series that was recommended by one of the newspapers. It was created by Brian Clemens (of The Avengers and The Professionals), and has three central characters - stop me if you heard this before - who are committed to thwarting nasty people who do naughty things. The whole thing is totally laughable, especially the hi-tech gadgets that seem to be the main feature (in the first episode we had a camera hidden in a poppy, a device that altered people's voices so that they sounded like someone else, and something to disable satellites). Absurd rubbish.

Talking of TV, the documentary on Ted Turner was fascinating stuff. The man is obviously completely mad, and the clearest indication of this is the 'Goodwill Games', which was his contribution to ending the Cold War. They showed the one in St Petersburg, which was treated with total indifference by the general public and great enthusiasm by his own sports network.

In the same Channel Four series, 'Deadline' is a documentary about the Yorkshire TV early news programme, Calendar, hosted by Richard Whiteley. The first programme featured a very "tired" Lynne Perrie (Ivy Brennan from Coronation Street), a story about a missing child, and the launch of a new cheese. Ho hum.

I've just heard 'Wuthering Heights' by China Drum, and I think it's going to be a big hit. Just thought I'd mention it.

I am still thinking about going to Baycon, but so far I can't find anyone else who is going. It's a blank Saturday for Premiership football, so where better to go than the Exeter bypass? I probably won't make up my mind till a few days beforehand. I will be going to Furrycon next month almost definitely (for at least some of the time).

ARMAGNAC 94-BI (Autumn 1906)

Austria-Hungary (HARRY BOND)

A(Ser) S TURKISH A(Bud) - Tri

England (KRIS MORRIS)

F(Edi) S F(Lon) - NTH; F(Lon) - NTH (FAILED)

France (STEPHEN AGAR)

F(Lpl) - NAO; F(MAO) - ENG; A(Pic) - Bur;

A(Pie) - Tyr; A(NAf) - Tun (FAILED);

F(Tun) - ION (FAILED); F(Mar) - GoL

Germany (NEIL DUNCAN)

F(BAL) - Swe; A(Hol) - Kie; A(Bel) Stands;

A(Ber) S A(Mun); A(Mun) S A(Ber) (CUT)

Italy (TOBY HARRIS)

A(Ven) - Rom (FAILED); A(Boh) S A(Gal) - Vie

F(TYS) S FRENCH F(Tun) - ION; A(Gal) - Vie

Russia (RICHARD SHARP)

F(NTH) S FRENCH A(Pic) - Bel (MISORDER);

F(SKA) S F(NTH); A(Sil) - Mun (FAILED);

A(Den) S GERMAN A(Mun) - Kie (MISORDER);

A(War) - Gal; A(Rum) S A(War) - Gal;

A(Sev) - Ukr; A(Arm) - Smy;

F(Bul) sc - AEG (FAILED);

A(Con) - Bul (FAILED); F(StP) sc - Fin

Turkey (IAIN BOWEN)

A(Bud) - Tri; A(Rom) - Ven (FAILED);

F(AEG) - ION (FAILED);

F(Gre) S F(AEG) - ION

No press, he said, unsurprised.

Well, I certainly don't know what's going on...

Next Deadline:

Sunday 30 April

Not much space (or time), but I'll do my best. *TTYF* has three balloons on the cover to celebrate the Zine Poll win. There's more on the Thinking Man's Crummet debate, as Kevin defends Marina Sirtis. Can I nominate Fiona Glover from GLR's Breakfast Show? I do like her voice. There's a column from Brian Walker that attempts to be controversial, and the usual post-Zine Poll round-up, this one featuring reviews of the top ten (or at least most of them).

The Cunning Plan is a bit thin, and is missing Neil's usual zine reviews (cheers from Brighton). There's a letter from Richard Sharp, about a game in Springboard that seems to have suffered more than a bit from a succession of unreliable standby players (Richard refuses to recognise them for ratings purposes, which in this case produces a rather strange result. I suppose that Danny has a thankless task, in that novice games are always prone to dropouts; but perhaps he does encourage them by stressing that it is quite OK to drop out. I don't pretend to know the answer to this one.

Neil is continuing to have problems with his insurance claim following his car accident. My last experience of this was about four years ago, when my insurance company made what I thought was an absurd offer, and I managed to get an extra £500 out of them fairly easily - Neil doesn't seem to be finding things quite so straightforward.

AROUND THE ZINES

In a similar vein, Richard Sharp reports in *Dolchtoß* that the Manager of the Uxbridge branch of Barclays is playing in *Dolchtoß*, and reprints his letter in reply to Richard's plea for an unauthorized overdraft fee to be refunded - the answer is 'no'... unless he does well in his next game in *Dolchtoß*. I have my suspicions, but if true this is fairly amusing.

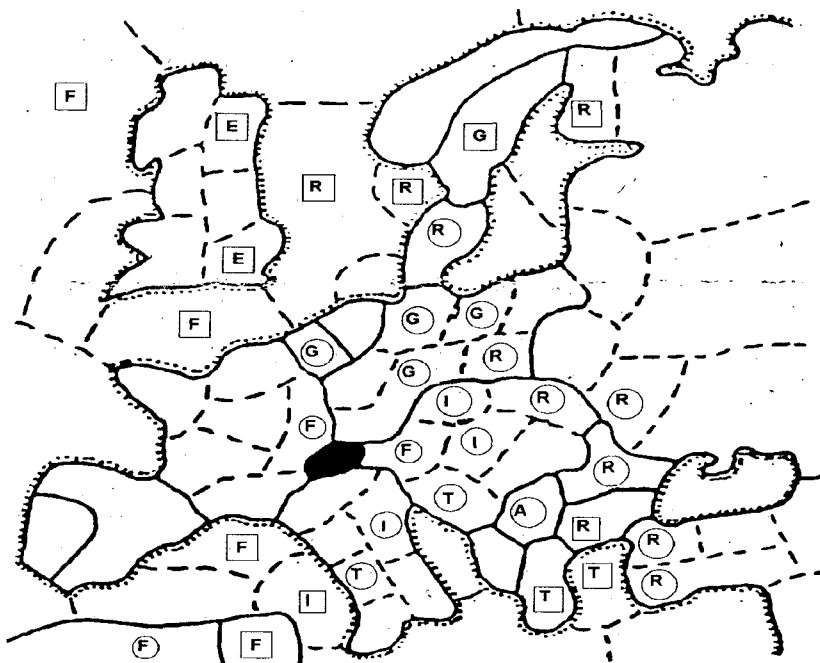
I must report that I have just persuaded Barclays Bank to refund not one, but two, unauthorized overdraft fees.

DIPLOMACY WAITING LIST

Paul Denham, Nicholas Chilton

Only 5 wanted!

Games are currently free of charge, though you will need to trade or subscribe (or persuade me to send you the zine free).



On The Game has a Pete Birks article on Bourse games, the forerunner of the horrendous 'Big...' games that people like Pete play, based on F1 Motor Racing or Premiership football. Actually there isn't much else of interest in this issue, rather unusually. Or is it me?

U Bend is another zine that uses the Zine Poll as a hook for a comprehensive set of zine reviews. They are surprisingly reasonable as well as readable. A new and intriguing feature 'Ten People I wish would return to the Hobby' looks like it ought to provoke quite a lot of feedback. For the record, Haz includes Pete Doubleday (of course), Mick Bullock, Richard Sharp, and Iain Bowen, the last two being current zine editors and so rather dubious inclusions, though I myself have commented on Mr Sharp's lack of interest in the hobby at large.

Apropos of nothing much, which zine editor complained about the lack of votes for *Where is my mind?* Silly person - I didn't vote for it for the simple reason that it wasn't eligible, and others obviously did the same.

And that's all for this month.