

Spring Offensive 54



IMPORTANT

Change of Address from 11th September 1997

Stephen Agar and Esme Grant will be living at
47 Preston Drove, Brighton, BN1 6LA

Spring Offensive 54

Stephen Agar, who from 11th September will be living at 47 Preston Drove, BRIGHTON, BN1 6LA. Tel. 01273-562430. Email: stephen@spoff.demon.co.uk. 75p per issue (50p unvaxed, £1.50 overseas)

DEADLINE: FRIDAY 26th SEPTEMBER 1997, Midnight

COULD WE ALL START BEING NICE TO EACH OTHER, PLEASE?

This editorial is a rather unfashionable plea for niceness. In recent months there has been an unwelcome amount of vilification going on in the pages of some zines, mainly those produced by the group of editors who have become known as the self-styled London Mafia. As I said at the time, the attack on myself instigated by Toby Harris in The Freaky Fungus was well over the top, but that pales into insignificance compared to the outrageous attack mounted by Gihan Bandaranaike in the latest A Little Original Sin. I know both these guys well enough to know that a large part of the motivation for each piece was a desire to be controversial and initiate debate – but in their desire to become the Damien Hirsts of the Diplomacy world, they are turning a lot of people off.

As far back as I can remember, there has always been an element of feuding in Diplomacy fanzines, but traditionally it has followed three rules:

- (1) Always argue about things which are inherently unimportant (e.g. hobby organisations, novice packages, zines, Diplomacy etc.).
- (2) Be ironic and sarcastic, not offensive.
- (3) Don't let it get personal.

While I would accept that Gihan and Toby were within the spirit of the first rule (in that they clearly worked themselves up into a lather about things which are deeply unimportant), they did indeed break rules Nos.2 and 3. Now anyone who gets personal and offensive about things which are inherently unimportant (see rule 1) needs their head examining. Cool it, guys.

Far be it for me to rush to the defence of Richard Sharp, but he is someone who I find quite likeable, if infuriating. Those who have criticised him for making digs, especially at me, don't really understand that it is not at all personal – indeed, in a perverse sort of way it is almost a sign of mutual respect. I have always enjoyed making little niggling comments about Richard (some fair, some unfair) and it is always fun to see what comments Richard can come up with to retaliate (some fair, some unfair). Gihan's piece was not so much a critique of Richard, as an example of the "unadulterated bile" which he was accusing Richard of writing. Anyway, I am sure Richard will find Gihan's piece supremely entertaining!

There has also been comment about the incestuous nature of the London Mafia and the zines within their circle, Gihan even going to the extent of defining the Old Fart zines in the Hobby (apparently this zine isn't one). Well, those of us who have been around for a while have seen it all before - cliques of editors who socialise have always been around, and those on the outside have always had digs at those on the inside. But hell, it's fun to be a member of a clique (I imagine, I've never managed it myself) and it's also fun to criticise from the outside as well, so no real harm is done. Cliquey zines can be entertaining if you know enough about the individuals to appreciate the humour, but are usually a turn-off for newcomers. If that's a price the editors concerned are happy to pay, then so be it. All this has made me think about what motivates people like Toby, Gihan, Richard and even myself. Here are my provisional conclusions...

MY PERSONAL FETISH

Why is it that some editors such as Pete Birks, Richard Sharp or John Marsden go on forever, and yet others such as Chiz Chisholm, Mark Strangward, Norman Williams and Anthony Bourke can't make double figures (or in some cases even issue 2)? Why do people like Geoff Challinger, Phil Murphy, Paul Willey, Malcolm Smith and myself come back to zine editing after a break of years? And why do so few of the people who play postal games want to run zines? I think the different motivations and feelings that lie behind the desire to produce a zine can often explain some of the conflicts that periodically occur within the hobby and make intelligible why it is that two perfectly reasonable people who happen to be zine editors can fall out over something which to the outside world is completely unimportant.

The Editor as a Performer and Artist. An editor of a zine has a captive audience to whom he can perform on a regular basis. It is a chance to show off, to demonstrate how witty you can be, or how well-read you are, or even what an expert you are at DTP. Editors want to be appreciated and valued, and by displaying their wares in front of an appreciative paying audience, editors can feel good about themselves. Producing a zine can be a very creative act. There's layout to design and articles to write. Some editors are frustrated writers or journalists, for whom the zine is the nearest thing they'll ever get to writing their novel. Editors like this usually enjoy the literary side of editing and are inclined to ramble on about nothing in particular. Example: Pete Birks?

The Editor as a Control Freak. It's all about power. The editor controls what letters are printed, he edits the letters as he thinks fit, he has the last word. He determines whether orders are legal or not, he chooses what goes into the zine, subscribers have to wait for him. If you are not in a position to control your work life, or even your home life, then seizing control of anything, even a Diplomacy zine, can be a very satisfying experience. Example: Danny Collman?

The Editor as a Competitor. The game is called zine editing, being but a spin-off of the more popular game of politics. My zine is bigger than your zine, has more subscribers, costs less, runs more games, has a shorter turn-around time and did better in the zine poll. It's all about inter-zine competition, feuds, reviews and gossip. I have been known to act in this way in weaker moments, but even my worst excesses pale besides our prime example, Toby Harris!

The Editor as a Games Player. Some people just like running postal games (be they Diplomacy or otherwise). The games they run are important to them and the value they add to the postal games hobby is principally as a GM. It needn't be any particular postal game (though it may be). This editor just wants to provide a service. That is something which is difficult to do and time consuming, but is just about OK if its related to games. Hell, if you want to hear about the latest films and books go and get something from a newsagent. It is an interest in games which provides the zine its direction, rather than an interest in zine editing. Example: Alan Parr?

The Editor as Parent. A zine is like a child, love me, love my zine. If you attack my zine, you attack me. Running a zine takes a hell of a lot of time and effort, however big or small it is. If you edit a zine you have to make sacrifices - no you can't go away for the weekend, yes you do have to stay up until 3am typing and devote a whole evening to sticking stamps on envelopes. It is an organisational nightmare with orders, zines, cheques, changes of address etc. to manage. And then some editor with a competitive streak comes along and criticises it! Zines are living things that need nurturing and they can certainly take up as much time and attention as any child. Example: Chris Palm?

The Editor as Technocrat. Computers are wonderful things and running a zine is as good a thing to do with one as anything. Admire the fancy columns, the fancy fonts, the material I found on the Internet. Playing computer games is all well and good, but they can't begin to compare with being on-line. Example: Nic Chilton?

The Editor as Trainspotter. No offence intended to trainspotters, indeed the best editors to have ever edited a zine called Perspiring Dreams was a train spotter as an adolescent (and proud of it). Can anyone seriously deny that there is something very nerdish about spending so much time on an activity that is essentially pointless? It is naval gazing on a grand scale. Who cares that Chimæra was the first

zine in the UK to run Soccerboss or that The Cunning Plan started life as a sub-zine. There is not much to distinguish the hobby historian from the trivia obsessed anal retentive. Example: Stephen Agar!

The Editor as a Celebrity. The “There may only be a few hundred people in the UK who play postal games, but to them I’m famous!” Syndrome. Celebrity editors don’t necessarily run efficient zines, or even very many games, but the zine gives them a profile. The zine is a means to an end and likely to be discarded when the editor discovers that fame isn’t all its cracked up to be. Celebrity editors thrive on gossip under the guise of hobby news - they print plenty of the stuff about others in the hope and expectation that other editors with a similar bent will print similar stories about them. Behaviour such as that then mutually reinforces the editors perception of themselves as a celebrity. Such zines can be quite amusing, if a little like *Hello* without the pictures. Example: Gihan Bandaranaike!

The Editor as Fetishist. Now this may something which just applies to me, but I just *love* stationery. The whiteness of clean paper, the smell of mimeo duplicating ink, the pristine zines on fresh clean paper waiting for their envelopes. I love browsing in stationery shops and often find myself looking around *Office World* even when there’s nothing I need. At college, whenever I was behind with my work I would go out and buy stationery - much more satisfying than doing the work. So you could almost say that editing a zine can be a sensual experience. Example: Stephen Agar, but I always had my doubts about Iain Bowen...

The Editor by Habit. These are editors who started life with their prime motivation being in one of the other categories described above, but who now edit a zine because its so much a part of their routine of living, they can’t really imagine not editing a zine. This is not to say that all editors who have published for a long time fall into this category, but the tell tale signs are zines which haven’t changed in any significant way (content, layout, format, influx of new subscribers) for, say, 5 years and now appear to run on autopilot. Example: Richard Sharp?, John Marsden?

Now just consider the possibility for conflict here. A competitive zine editor, high on the gossip from the London Hobbymeet criticises a zine run by a Games Player, who puts out a warehouse zine full of game reports (diplomacy, football or otherwise). They are looking at the hobby from totally different perspectives, the former sees criticism as part of the game, the latter reacts like a Parent and sees it as an attack on his child. Worse still is if the criticism is of a zine run by a Celebrity, who will see it not as an attack on their child, but an attack on themselves and their status as a celebrity. An editor who’s a Control Freak can’t understand the Artist/Performer editor who has the temerity to accept late orders. That’s not how games should be run. The Celebrity editor puts out a couple of issues, discovers its hard work and gives up at the first obstacle.

What makes all of this worse is that most editors have most of the attributes described above, though the importance of each characteristic will vary both between editors and even for the same editor over time, though I’d guess that most editors have two dominant traits. I will leave it to you to work out which editors are which. This all reminds me of the various behavioural questionnaires they get you to fill out on management courses to determine how you interact with people and achieve self-knowledge. The fun really starts when you consider that the motivations and behaviours of subscribers are totally different and may even be at odds with what an editor is trying to achieve. So who are the typical subscribers? I think I’ll leave that piece to be written by someone else.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON ZINES

One zine which I have seen for the first time since last issue is Unlimited No.21 from Warren Gillham, but not for long as it is about to be “taken over” by one of its own subzine editors, namely Mark Wightman (who came top in the Diplomacy at ManorCon). Unlimited is a little detached from the mainstream, but seems a solid enough zine with quite a lot of Diplomacy and chat, plus a few other games. If this issue is typical of what has gone before then I regret not having tracked down Unlimited earlier and I look forward to its re-launch, presumably under the name of Mark’s subzine, The Sprouts of Wrath. Contact Mark at 52 Park Road West, Bedford, MK41 7SL.

Another zine new to me is Who Me? From Keith Smith. Wow. Just how do you describe this zine? Well, it's a very personal zine, it just oozes Keith Smith all over it. It's written in a conversational style which can mean that it is difficult to follow sometimes, but then it does give the zine something of a unique character. Keith basically writes about himself and the things that interest him and has this disarming tendency to talk about himself in the 3rd person singular, just like Julius Caesar. Keith and I go a long way back - he played in the first ever Diplomacy game that I ran back in 1976, and he really doesn't seem to have changed that much, which is strangely reassuring. Come to think of it, Richard Sharp or Pete Birks hasn't changed that much either, so maybe our personalities are fixed more than I'd realised. The story of how Keith met his wife was rather sweet, and the article on Poo was, er, memorable. Come to think of it, Kate is obsessed with Poo (but then she's not quite 3 yet...). Keith Smith, 19 Keir Hardie Way, Barking, Essex, IG11 9NZ.

At the risk of nit-picking, I just want to make a brief comment on Richard Sharp's editorial in Dolchstoß 224 on the subject of unordered removals. I completely support his simple rule, which corresponds to the rule used for Spring Offensive games. It's not often that we agree, so I thought it would be worth mentioning. Richard's rule is as follows: "Unordered removals will be made in the following order: sea spaces, non-centres outside the homeland, ditto inside, foreign centres, home centres. Fleets before armies where relevant; nearest "A" comes off first." However, I can't think of any situation where, using this rule, it would ever be necessary to remove a unit in a supply centre because by definition if all you have are units in supply centres then you don't need to make a removal. Or have I missed something?

Another issue raised in the Dolchstoß letter column, is when should a GM allow someone who has dropped out of a game to return and play another one. How long should elapse between dropping out and having the equivalent of a "spent conviction". I have only had to face this issue once, when an ex-subscriber sent me a cheque to renew his subscription nearly two years after he had dropped out and asked to go on the waiting list. To add insult to injury, the game he had dropped out of was still going on. I dealt with the situation by returning his cheque and suggested that he go elsewhere. That is not to say that I would not have someone back if they gave a convincing explanation of what had gone wrong before and convinced me that it wouldn't happen again.

In my view, people who dropout fall into two distinct groups. There's those who are always a bit unreliable, with the off NMR and late moves. I have fallen into this category myself over recent years as I have struggled to juggle Spring Offensive with playing games. Eventually they do it two times in a row and they're out (which is what happened to me in a gunboat game a few months back). This behaviour is of course inexcusable as it is laziness and disorganisation and the fact that I have done it myself does not stop me condemning it. What I find more mysterious are the people who are as regular as clockwork for months, if not years, and then all of a sudden they vanish. Nothing more is heard. Often they are even in good positions and may even have criticised dropouts in the past (Dave Allen springs to mind). I often wonder what has happened to such people - some personal private tragedy? Or did they just find something more interesting to do?

I have always adopted a policy in Spring Offensive of printing the name of dropouts in all subsequent game reports, so at least other editors have a chance to be reminded who the perpetrators are. In the 70's Mick Bullock used to print a Black List of dropouts in New Statsman, so at least editors would take people on knowing their past behaviour. Is this something we should revive?

Despite having both Hortons on the team, the One Man's Rubbish collective came an ignominious last at ManorCon, which is reflected in the cover of OMR No.22. Maybe if Mark Stretch actually played for his own team then their performance might improve? It was interesting to see a letter from Ian Harris (editor of Borealis) saying he didn't think he would play Diplomacy again, because it was such a nerve wracking and nasty game. Maybe this is more common than I suspected, because I remember Tom Tweedy gave me the same explanation as to why he no longer played Diplomacy (despite having once edited a successful Diplomacy zine, Dib Dib Dib). FtF Diplomacy is nerve-wracking (I have only once managed to play more than one game in a weekend) and very stressful, but I can't say that the idea of the game being nasty has ever put me off. Surely, that's part of the

attraction? On the other hand I must confess to being slightly mystified by the fanatical devotion of a small group of FtF Diplomacy players who seem to want to play the game none-stop at conventions. I have always thought that it was potentially a far better postal game than a FtF game, because FtF it simply isn't a sociable game and I thought people went to conventions to socialise.

I get the impression that I would quite like Chris Dickson's subzine in OMR, for some reason called Games In Testing (or GIT for short), but even glancing at it induces an immediate blinding migraine. Monospaced type, no blank lines between paragraphs and margins that small that even Alan Parr would be impressed, combine to produce a sheer wall of text which I find quite impenetrable. Am I alone in having this problem or am I just growing old? If you want to see if it has this effect on you, write to Mark Stretch, 48 Wilsdon Way, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, OX5 1TN.

It was pleasing to see that Chris Palm is enjoying a temporary respite from his illness and has found the time to put out The Ides of March 24. I notice there's lots of NMRs and Anarchies in the UKPDC games, which is a pity. I do hope Chris make a 110% recovery and I time can be persuaded to bring TIM back centre stage, rather than surrender the limelight to the Hall/Harris/Bandaranaik confederation. ☺

Having mentioned Gihan's contribution to A Little Original Sin No.50/51 earlier, mention must be made of the otherwise admirable issue which Vick Hall has just put out. This issue is in two bits, a celebratory issue 50, full of chat, articles, retrospectives, etc., and an issue 51 which carries the games plus a few letters. A magnificent effort from a zine which will do very well in the Zine Poll this year (unlike this humble rag). Definitely worth a subscription, write to Vick Hall, 115a Offord Road, Islington, London, N1.

While we are on the subject of celebrations, it would be a great pity if the appearance of Pigbutton No.100 went unremarked. Very few zines indeed ever make it as far as issue 100, so even though Pigbutton is a bit semi-detached from the Diplomacy hobby these days, hearty congratulations and thanks to Clive Palmer for his efforts over the past 13 years. Congrats are also due to Simon Cutforth who edits a sub-zine therein called The Amnesia Express which has also managed 50 issues. Rob Mullholland has also produced 91 issues of his sub-zine Ratadan as well. Great stuff.

Another zine deserving of a mention in the longevity stakes is Astradyne which has reached issue 171. If you would like more details of the longest running Soccerleague game in the UK write to Ian Lee, 13 Isis Drive, Upminster, Essex, RM14 1LJ. I heartily agree with Ian's observation about how obnoxious some of the Brighton supporters have been in recent years - all over Brighton there is graffiti to the effect that "Archer Must Go" or in some cases "Archer Must Die", and one supporter has just been released having served 3 months for threats to kill. It almost makes you want the team to do badly (which they seem to be managing without any help from me).

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

I've spent quite a bit of time on organising the zine archive in recent weeks, with a imminent house move likely I thought it essential to get rid of unnecessary duplicates and try and get as many zines filed away as possible. Over recent years getting this archive together has been something of a labour of love, and now that it is taking shape and becoming more usable I hope more people in the hobby will pay a visit and take a look.

All zines in the main collection are kept in foolscap envelope folders with the name of the zine written on the side and a number indicating whether it is the 1st folder for that zine, the 2nd etc. Greatest Hits holds the record at the moment with no less than 12 full folders to itself. Any zines which didn't produce enough issues to merit a separate folder are kept in miscellaneous folders "A", "B", "C" etc. For easy filing there is a separate set of folders for current zines and when a zine folds or a folder fills up it is put into the main collection. At the last count there were 11,656 zines in the main archive taking up some 48 feet of shelving. I dread to think how much they weigh and I am surprised that the floor of our spare bedroom hasn't collapsed already. When our projected move goes ahead, in future they will be kept in a rather spacious and damp-free cellar.

The main work which needs doing is that there are some 1,000+ zines which have already been catalogued, but need sorting and putting into folders - say two days work. Having done that, I think a stock-check would be in order. The current archive consists of donations from over 20 different people, plus material from the Hoosier Archive in the US and the old Hobby Archive held by Andy Bate. I am sure that I will have made mistakes when compiling the catalogue over the past three years - some zines will be duplicated, others will be marked as present when they are missing. Mistakes are inevitable. If there is anyone out there who would be willing to help with a stock-check towards the end of the year, I would be very grateful. We could even put someone up for the weekend.

Once that's done, there are a few remaining sources of zines that need to be gone through. I need to pay a return visit Andy Bate, to go through what he still holds of the old archive to try and fill any existing gaps. When I visited Andy last autumn I managed to get about 2/3 of the old archive into my car, but there is probably still some material there that isn't in the main collection. Pete Birks also has some material he is happy to pass on, so a visit to Dulwich is also needed. At one time Ian Bowen offered to let me have any of his remaining zines that I needed, but I don't know if that offer still stands. Is there anyone else out there with substantial zine collections who is willing to help?

I have a few projects which, in an ideal world, I would like to develop from the Archives:

- (1) An updated list of every Diplomacy zine ever published in the UK, the editors, numbers of issues published, start and end dates. Richard Walkerdine produced such a list in the early 80's, but it is well out of date and contained some errors. Such a list is essential to start tracking down missing zines.
- (2) A database of Diplomacy articles and variants in zines in the archive. Perhaps this could be done during the first stockcheck and then updated as new zines are added to the collection. The Archive could then provide material to other editors for a small charge to cover expenses.
- (3) An A-Z of British zines based on the above information. This is something which could be done over time, serialised in SpOff and updated occasionally. I would like to publish a comprehensive A-Z by the end of the century.
- (4) The definitive history of the postal Diplomacy hobby in the UK. Perhaps one day...

A Plea for Help

There now follows a list of zines missing from the Archives from current or recent zines, plus a few others. If you can help fill gaps in the archives, please, please do.

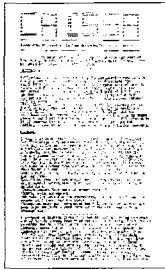
Arfle Barfle Gloop 42
BUM 1-16, 18-22, 25-27, 29, 31, 34, 54
Bad Connexion all...
Bela Lugosi's Dead 1-16, 18-27, 29+
Borealis 1
Born Losers 1
Box Frenzy 1
Bruce 95+
C'est Magnifique 114
Conquest all...
Courier 237, 242+
De Excidio 1-5, 10, 14, 16
Denver Glont 85
Die Grosse Dampfmaschine 1, 3-7, 14
Diplomacy all...

Dolchstoß 88, 90-93, 95, 98, 106
Eliminator all...
Entente 7
For Whom the Die Rolls 1, 20+
Gallimaufry 109-118
Geneva 1-30, 36+
Greatest Hits 170-171
Home of the Brave 72-75, 79-80
Hopscotch 108-109, 126-136, 151+
Lankhmar Star Daily all...
Lies, Damned Lies and Diplomacy all... [nb. This is not LiES]
The Mag With No Name 11
The Mark Nelson Experience Vol.1, 1-3
Megalomania 19, 30-34, 63, 75-76

Misr Al-Dig all...
Morrigan 7,
Mr Gladgrind 49, 51-52
NERTZ "96", "129"
Obsidian 1-5, 7-15, 17-20, 22-27, 29-35, 42, 44-47
Pax Britannica 3-5, 21-22
Pigbutton 50-52, 54, 72-75, 78-82
Prisoners of War 50
Quartz 2-4, 32-33, 35-40, 42-44, 46-54
Unlimited 1-20.
Veni Vidi Vici 52
Watch Your Back 1-30, 32
Who Me? 0-4
Y Ddraig Goch 2, 4-5, 7, 76

The Encyclopedia of UK and Irish Diplomacy Zines - "C"

by Stephen Agar



Caissa

Editor: Norman Williams
Issues: 1-6
Started: August 1976
Folded: February 1977
Zine Poll: (77) 35th

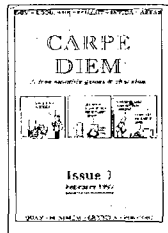
Norman launched Caissa while looking after Paul Simpkin's Bruce games for a season while Paul

was on holiday. Never really broke the 4 sides barrier, although Norman did start 2 games. Lack of material and subscribers meant that Caissa never really got going. Norman kept involved on the periphery of the Diplomacy hobby but sadly died a few years back.

Carpe Diem

Editor: Gihan Bandaranaike
Issues 1
Started: February 1997
Folded: April 1997

An excellent first issue which was unfortunately destined never to be followed by No.2. Lots of gossip and chat, Carpe Diem then agreed to take the games from Spring Offensive when that zine folded after issue 50. Issue 2 was delayed and before it finally came out Gihan had been given the sack by his employers for using their photocopying facilities without proper permission. The zine promptly folded and the games returned to a relaunched Spring Offensive.



Cassandra

Editors: Anthony Bourke and Damien Maddalena (Belfast, N. Ireland)
Issues: 1-8
Started: September 1985
Folded: October 1986
Zine Poll: (86) 11th



Basically a RPG chat zine with Diplomacy waiting lists, the idea being to run to 6 weekly deadlines with interim games-

only supplements (under the title The Wooden Horse). As the zine matured it had more and more Diplomacy chat in it and even managed a Diplomacy and an Abstraction gamestart. The zine had a lot of reading material, with articles on RPGs, history, Diplomacy etc. Both editors were at university, which probably explains its short life. Damien had previously edited The Guilder and had a short-lived sub-zine in Coolnacran.



Casus Belli

Editor: Mark Strangward
Issues: 1-3
Started: May 1981
Folded: September 1981

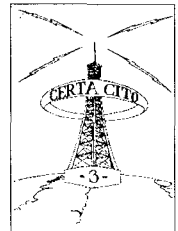
I only have a copy of issue 1, which was a rather unremarkable first issue. Strange sense of humour.

Certa Cito

Editor: Chiz Chisholm
Issues: 1-4
Started: December 1982
Folded: February 1983
Zine Poll: (83) 47th

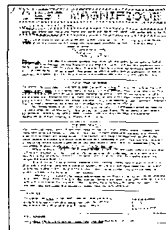
Started life as a Dip zine run to 2-weekly (!) deadlines. Certa Cito

No.3 took on the BR games when Malcolm Smith couldn't cope with BR anymore, and allowed Malcolm some space to himself in a sub-zine. The pair of them managed two issues on this basis and then they both folded their contributions into Richard Gooch's zine Ripping Yarns, only for RY to fold two issues later. Not one of the hobby's success stories.



C'est Magnifique

Editor: Peter Sullivan
Issues: 1-142
Started: March 1985
Folded: August 1994
Zine Poll: (85) 49th; (86) 34th; (87) 25th; (88) 38th; (89) 6th; (90) 8th; (91) 8th; (92) 6th; (93) 13th; (94) 22nd



Peter started C'Mag when he was a tender youth of 17, a schoolboy editor. Soon established itself as an efficient traditional mimeo Dip and variants zine, run to 3-week deadlines. Peter quickly became involved with the variants scene, reviving Miller Numbers as well as becoming the OGRE. Pete intended to fold at 50 (Jan 1988) and handed his games and subbers over to Will it Lead to Trouble?, carrying on C'Mag as a restricted circulation zine to finish off the Rather Silly Diplomacy. However, instead of folding, Pete restarted the zine at issue 70 (July 1989). It was if it had never been away and went from strength to strength. In the latter half of 1993 C'Mag became a sub-zine of YdDG while Pete took accountancy exams, and though it reappeared as an independent zine at the beginning of 94, Pete was not happy with the zine and folded suddenly in August 1994. Pete's international games were completed in US zine The Abyssinian Prince. Pete continued as a ManorCon Committee Member until 1997.

Chimaera

Editor: Clive Booth
 Issues: 1-102
 Started: May 1975
 Folded: July 1983
 Zine Poll: (76) 1st; (77) 1st;
 (78) 3rd; (79) = 3rd; (80)
 = 5th; (81) 4th; (82) 10th; (83)
 23rd



Straight in at No.1 in the Zine Poll, from the modest beginnings of a small spirit duplicated zine, Chimaera soon took the hobby by storm. Clive always intended to run more games than just Diplomacy, though it took a few months for games other than Dip to get started. In issue 6 Clive published rules for postal Soccerboss and by issue 9 the zine included a 9 page Soccerboss report. Since then football gameszines have developed a lot, but Clive got there first. Within a year of starting up, Chimaera was a massive mimeo zine, with lots of different games on offer and plenty of chat, including a postal D&D subzine. Clive could be pretty sharp in print and enjoyed mixing in with all the hobby politics of the time (often revolving around the NGC and Richard Sharp). The fact that the zine was run very efficiently put the seal on its success, winning the Zine Poll twice, and staying in the Top 5 for a further

four years. For nearly all of its life Chimaera was a very successful zine indeed, though towards the end Clive's enthusiasm was on the wane. Clive folded the zine very tidily, passing it all on, lock, stock and barrel, to Richard Morris to run under the name Boojuum. Very much a ground-breaker.

Chronicle

Editor: Andrew Knowles
 Issues 1-19
 Started: Mid-1990?
 Folded: April 1992

A one-game zine, two sides of A4 straight off a dot matrix printer. When the game finished, the zine died.



The Church Mouse

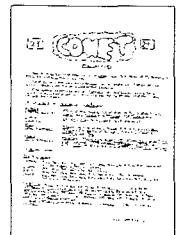
Editor: Dave Thomas
 Issues: 1-25
 Started: March 1982
 Folded: February 1985
 Zine Poll: (83) 19th; (84) 8th

Dave's first zine was called The Diplomatic News but was only for

colleagues at work. Bitten by the editing bug he started TCM soon after, though it was still a local zine until issue 6, which was the first to be widely promoted. A very entertaining and witty zine, Dave used cuttings from other sources in an anarchic and amusing way, rather like Men Behaving Badly ten years too early. Throughout 1984 Dave spent more and more time on amateur dramatics, so he folded the zine suddenly, but tidily. Dave was out of the hobby for quite a while, but made a welcome return at MidCon 95. Sadly Dave died on 27th August 1996.

Comet

Editor: Ken Jones
 Issues: 1-29
 Started: February 1974
 Folded: March 1976
 Zine Poll: (74) = 7th; (75)
 11th



One of the earlier NGC Dippy zines, Comet was always a mainly games warehouse zine, little chat apart from the odd Diplomacy article, with distinctive blue ink on white paper. Unusually

for the time, Ken gradually ran the zine down to a fold, passing on no orphans.



Coolnacran

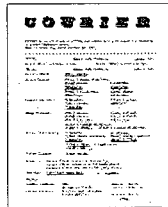
Editor: Nicholas Whyte
Issues: 1-5
Started: January 1985
Folded: June 1985
Zine Poll: (85) 9th

17 year-old Nicholas started Coolnacran while studying for his 'A' levels,

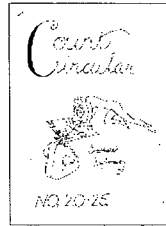
probably inspired by his brother's new zine NERTZ. Issue 1 was a pretty solid start some silly variants (Hitch-Hikers Diplomacy and Disney Sopwith), but with some serious Diplomacy articles by Geoff Tonks and general science content as well. Issues 2 and 3 had lots of chat, book reviews, zine reviews etc. but no gamestarts despite acquiring a sub-zine from Damien Maddalena (ex-editor of The Guildler). Issue 5 was shared with NERTZ No.58, but it proved to be the last. No games were ever started as far as I am aware.

Courier

Editor: Don Turnbull
Issues: 1-241+
Started: October 1970
Folded: February 1987
Zine Poll: (73) = 13th; (74) 11th; (75) 14th; (76) 17th; (78) 24th; (79) = 21st; (80) 20th; (81) 28th



Started as a companion zine to Albion No.22 onwards to run Albion's Diplomacy games. Although in time games other than Diplomacy were run, Courier was only ever games reports, no chat at all. Courier continued even after Albion was long gone, though it became less reliable towards the end. As I type this Courier holds the record for the most number of issues published by a UK Diplomacy zine, though you should remember that many issues of Courier were only 2 sides long, so they don't really compare to a more conventional zine. The last issue I have is No. 241 from February 1987, by which time there were no games of Diplomacy running, only a couple of games of Rail Baron. I would love to know if there were any more issues after that.



Court Circular

Editors: Gordon Beck, Merf Adamson, Ken Brown and others.
Issues: -6-20.25
Started: January 1974
Folded: November 1976
Zine Poll: (74) 10th; (75) 23rd

Unconventional numbering, Court Circular commenced with issue "-6" as a weekly internal Durham University Games Society Diplomacy zine, though external players appear in the zine by issue "-2" in Feb 1974. Never as regular as it promised, CC had difficulty using the University Reprographic Dept. and then had the vacations to contend with. Being a club, the Committee kept changing, as did the editor. A bit of a shambles really.

Coyote

Editor: Steve Jilks
Issues: 1-100+
Started: December 1984
Zine Poll: (88) 24th; (89) 33rd



Steve started this zine soon after entering the hobby - an interesting mix of pythonesque humour, Diplomacy, film reviews. Coyote stayed a relatively small low circulation zine. (and often didn't get enough votes to qualify for the Zine Poll). Steve took a bit of a break around issue 50 to get past his exams. These days the zine is still entertaining with a good use of graphics, but only appears 6-7 times a year. No longer runs Diplomacy, but is a good place to play Speed Circuit.

Cui Bono

Editor: Iain Bowen
Issues: 1-5
Started: November 1989
Folded: September 1993

A one page occasional newsletter put together by Iain Bowen for publicising the Zine Poll.