

DIPLOMACY QUARTERLY

the new and occasional magazine of the U.K. Diplomacy Stats Service,
from Peter Calcraft, 13 Ridgeway Rd, Long Ashton, Nr Bristol, BS18 9EX.

costs:- 11p per "section" plus 17p post: usually sent out in batches of three sections, so approx 50p/issue.

one "section" is basically one survey, or one "stats supplement" (because I first started publishing these as supplemental to spirit of the age): costs will drop or frequency/length of sections will increase when I get more subs in.

Central to the new Diplomacy Quarterly are the essential tasks of the U.K. Boardman Number Custodian, which means the allocation of Boardman Numbers and the publishing of In the Beginning and The Finishing Touch. The Boardman Number is one of the things you should be able to find at the top of each game report - for example, if you happened to be playing in Ode 30eme then the number is 83BA - and represents the only guarantee you have that hobby officialdom (such as it is) is keeping an eye open for problems (see reverse of this sheet), and that the game will find it's way onto your official playing record.

In the Beginning lists all the recorded gamestarts in the UK with names of players, countries, openings moves and Autumn '01 holdings. The Finishing Touch carries the results, with supply centre charts, of all listed games. With ITB you can keep an eye on what your friends/enemies/rivals are doing elsewhere, and with TFT what they've already done (and to whom).

Indexing ITB and TFT is another stats publication, inappropriately called Who's Where: this carries the abbreviated playing records of all players currently active in the hobby. Because of the enormous amount of work involved in compiling it, and also it's rather greater saleability, WW is costed separately at £1 for an issue. WW has in fact only appeared once in the last seven years, but is about to appear again.

Other items appearing in DQ and likely to be of interest to the dedicated Diplomacy player are the Openings Survey (frequency of all possible openings moves for each country over all games in the records: the next one will cover the first thousand games) and the Eliminations Survey (attempting to correlate "early" eliminations with the success rate of the various countries, to find out which countries statistically most affect the performance of each of the others).

Further features should/might/do include frequency/reliability surveys (of GMs, magazines and games), invitational and demonstration games, adverts and out-of-date news, reprinting of old Diplomacy articles (new ones if anyone cares to write them), Manorcon reports and maybe general hobby articles/chat. Also:-

HOBBY COMPUTER REGISTER: I am trying to set up (in DQ) a register of home computer owners/users in the hobby, so as to facilitate software exchanges (user-written only of course!), second-hand sales etc. No charge for inclusion.

NEW SERVICE: Extracts from WW/player records, in the form of the complete playing records of all seven players in a given game (provided it's in my files!). Cost is £1, but I'm sure all will agree it's likely to be money well spent, most especially if you don't already know who all the top players are.

SPECIAL OFFER: stats supplements 1-24 (nominally DQs 1-7 and not including a WW) for £3 - or the next 24 (from the present issue, including WW as number 25) for £4. Offers also open to existing subscribers, but with new money only (so no converting of existing subs to take advantage of new offers - defeats the point!).

an appeal:- in the period between the fold of New Statesman and the present 'launch' of Diplomacy Quarterly (during which time the whole set of records has been reorganised and re-written, and I've also been trying to get a degree) the stats service has been operating at a loss (total outgoings of £118.67 with only £78.43 coming in). The figure is only this low as I pay all costs except printing and

postage myself - and kept even these costs down by publishing no more than the barest minimum). I'm not prepared to simply pour money down the drain, especially not on publishing material that is primarily for the benefit of people other than myself, but the shortfall is not so great that it can't be made up with a little effort. The sale of back issues will raise a little, but if you think the stats service is a good thing and want to see it continue then you might add a small donation to your next sub (or send a donation anyway). For every donation received I'll donate an equal amount. New subs on their own, of course, don't help recover the old loss since they require further expenditure in the future - they just help avoid later ones.

THE OGRE, THE STATS MAN AND THE OMBUDSMAN.

As most of you will know, the UK hobby doesn't have an ombudsman of any sort (unlike the U.S. which has about twenty). It does, however, have some avenues for complaint should they be necessary.

The main job of the OGRE (or Orphan Games Rehouser) is that of finding new homes for games when GMs drop out. His main, or even only, power is his generally recognised authority to restart or officially abandon a game when the GM is no longer active: in most cases the OGRE will be working with the co-operation of the old GM.

The main job of the BNC (Boardman Number Custodian, or statsman) is keeping the official records. The statsman is usually only involved in a passive way, recording various details and watching that the game stays within the classification of being a 'regular' game. An 'irregular' game will still be recorded, but not usually count towards player ratings, official rankings etc.

There are various sorts of things that you might wish to complain about. If, for instance, you feel a particular game shouldn't be listed as regular, then you should inform the BNC of the circumstances (the GM is likely to be annoyed if you don't ask him about it first, though!).

Generally, the first person to take any sort of complaint to is your GM, whether it be a complaint about other players or about the GMing. Unless you've tried to sort the problem out with the GM then neither the OGRE or the BNC are likely to be interested. Only a very major problem will normally be dealt with by the OGRE, and he will normally work by referring it to his panel of "wise old men". A game can normally only be rehoused or abandoned with the agreement of either the GM or all the players, so if this isn't going to be obtainable the OGRE isn't going to be able to do anything himself.

In a case of this sort, or one too minor for the OGRE's powers to be applicable, the BNC comes into play with the ability to amend the official records. I will register any dispute, whatever I happen to think about it: you can register a dispute on the grounds that one of the other players wears the wrong colour of underwear for all I care. On the other hand, if you have a valid complaint (the most common are GM incompetence or interference/non-impartiality and illegal modifications to house rules applied to games in progress) you might get the result changed. The most probable change is that you might be allowed to withdraw from the game at the point where the dispute occurred (the other players would normally continue to a result, but the game would not count towards your playing record).

Whatever the dispute, it should be understood that the game is expected to continue, and you are expected to continue to submit orders. The current OGRE is: Nick Kinzett, 11 Daleway Rd, Green Lane, COVENTRY, CV3 6JF, (tel 0203-414759).