

# Octopus's Garden

## Issue Seventy-Six

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## Sub-editorial

HELLO, good evening and welcome to Octopus's Garden, the subzine with its very own Railway Rivals game. It's a subzine to Jim Burgess' [The Abyssinian Prince](#), which is now a subzine to Douglas Kent's Eternal Sunshine. Produced by Peter Sullivan, [peter@burdonvale.co.uk](mailto:peter@burdonvale.co.uk). It's also available on the web at <http://www.burdonvale.co.uk/octopus/>.

## Richard J. Walkerdine is dead...

**...but I don't have to believe it if I don't want to.**

The great American baseball player Yogi Berra (whom, sadly, most Brits only know via his cartoon bear alter-ego) once said "You should always go to people's funerals, else they won't come to yours." Which is a part, but actually only a very small part, of why I drove the six hours down to Gloucestershire on Monday, and the six hours back again the day after, for Richard Walkerdine's funeral.

Not many people would be able to say that producing over 100 issues of a poll-winning postal games zine was only the 4th most important thing they ever did in the postal games hobby. But Richard could.

There was also the Zine Poll itself, which he ran in two separate sessions in the 1970s and 1980s, and which became the focus of much discussion and debate every year, as people discussed the methodology, the results, and (most enthusiastically of all) the eligibility criteria.

The Walkerdine Archives, now held by Stephen Agar, was another example. Even after the first ten years of the postal games hobby in the UK, there had already been so many Diplomacy zines about that no one person would have had anything close to a full collection. But Richard had the personal standing that a whole host of people were happy to let him have what he needed to fill in the gaps – or even their whole damn collection – in order to build what has become and remains the definitive collection of the collective output of the British postal games hobby.

And then there was Manorcon, then as now the largest event in the board games convention calendar. Richard didn't invent it but, like Thomas Edison with numerous inventions, he perfected it. After the first event in 1983, run by the Birmingham University Diplomacy Society, he moved in as Treasurer, and changed it into the hobby behemoth that it still is today. This was a role he was to hold for almost ten years, during which time the event grew to over 330 people, and hosted the first and fourth World Dip Cons. My own spell as Treasurer afterwards was really just a phase of consolidation - all the hard work had already been done.

RJW a host of contradictions, and he revelled in them. He was the Anti-Vietnam War protestor who went on to work for a major defence contractor. The quiet, unassuming, efficient administrator who loved to play

up his allegedly outsized ego. The right-wing Thatcherite who was alife-long devotee of the music and songs of Bob Dylan.

The British postal games hobby had two great influxes of people – one in 1974 onwards, and one in 1985 onwards. Richard was already an established figure for both of these influxes, and was a mentor to many people in both these periods, including (I am proud to say) me.

One of Richard's more minor achievements -- and yet one that was typically him -- was that he was the only person in hobby history to win a Diplomacy tournament in absentia. One year, the Saturday of Manorcon clashed with a Queen concert he especially wanted to see. So, having done all his usual hard work in the run up to the con & setting up registration on the Friday, he left the Mad Policy All-Stars to compete in the Saturday Team Diplomacy tournament without their (notional) captain. They won. Needless to say, there was much teasing from the team members about having finally been able to drop "the weak link" and, hence, finally win. Needless to say, he loved this.

Richard put into words something that imbued the writing of both myself and many others in the postal games hobby when he said "Friends are the only ones worth insulting." which, even before I'd heard it crystallised quite so clearly, had been an aspect of my writing. And continues to be so, whether in the postal games hobby, science fiction fandom or on social media like Twitter and Facebook. Let this be the mad old fool's permanent legacy.

Although, it has to be noted, I'm sure he'd rather like it if we decided to name the World Dip Con trophy going forwards as "The Richard J. Walkerdine Memorial Trophy" as well. And I feel it would be entirely appropriate, given his key role in setting up the WDC concept.

-- Peter Sullivan

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## *Round 8 – "Hannibal Hamlin"*

### **Railway Rivals Map FR**

- 8) (22-44) Cherbourg - Lyon : FRAK IT 20-6-1 ; FWOGGIE 10+6 ; NERTZ +1.
- 9) (@3-62) Germany - Montpellier : NERTZ 20-2-2 ; RENAISSANCE +2 ; LOSER +2.
- 10) (35-55) Metz - Bayonne : LOSER 20 ; NERTZ 10-2 ; RENAISSANCE +2.
- 11) (43-34) Dijon - Reims : RENAISSANCE 20 ; LOSER 10.
- 12) (63-16) M'ille - Le Havre : RENAISSANCE 20-1-2+3+2 ; LOSER 5-2-3+7+2+1 ;  
FRAK IT 5-2-1-7 ; FWOGGIE/NERTZ (joint) 0-1 ; NERTZ +2+1 ; FWOGGIE +1.
- 13) (54-@2) Bordeaux - BeNeLux : FRAK IT 20-1 ; LOSER 10-1+4 ; FWOGGIE 0-4+1+1.
- 14) (11-26) Paris - La Rochelle : FWOGGIE 20+5 ; FRAK IT 10-5-2 ; NERTZ 0+2

### **Builds:**

NERTZ (William Whyte, USA.) [purple]

(S24) - Q23 [-1 Fr] [-1 Fr] [-1 Fw] ;

(N11) - T14 [-1 Fw] [-1 Fr] [-1 L] ;

(A59) - X17 [-1 Fr] - W18 [-1 L].

-12-4[Fr]-2[Fw]-2[L]=-20

LOSER (Geoff Challinger, UK.) [blue]

(J11) - I12 - I13 - H13 - H14 - G15 - Toulouse ;

(F55) - F50 - G50 [-1 Fw].

-12-1[Fw]=-13