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What has it got in its pocket, my preciousss...

... it's the latest chapter in the continuing saga of THIRD AGE. After much humming and hawing, and an enthusiastic response during the first three days (during which the first game was filled!) we report the start of the first THIRD AGE game. The players are:

- ERIADOR -- John Morrison, 52 Miles Road, Epsom, Surrey.
- GONDOR -- Phil Jones, 85 The Downs, Alkrington, Middleton, Manchester M24 1TT.
- MORDOR -- Andy Davidson, Flat D5 Harewood Court, Marsland Rd, Sale, Cheshire.
- RHOVANION -- Richard Walkerdine, 15 Crouch Oak Lane, Addlestone, Surrey.
- ROHAN -- Geoff Corker, 92 Lancaster Street, Barnsley, Yorks. S70 6EW.
- UMBAR -- Graham Jeffery, 8 Rusholme Road, London SW15 3JZ.

Once the first game was filled, some mysterious sixth sense must have told takers to slow down a bit, since only four more appeared between then and now. Hopefully more will appear by the time the next issue comes out, so that we can start next time.

A few clarifications of the rules are necessary at this point:

1. Grey Mountains is a supply centre for Rhovanion, though I forgot to mark it on the map.
2. Mordor has a single army in Angmar at the start of the game, as well as all the others. Her total of separate units is 9.
3. The 2A which starts off in Minas Tirith is a 2A wherever it is on the board. When defending Minas Tirith itself against an invader, its strength is of course 3A because of the garrison.
4. MSh = Mountains of Shadow.

Hartley Patterson also has a few comments to make:

"I had a good look through the rules and couldn't see any inconsistencies or deviations from Holy Writ... except for the obvious ones, like Eriador not existing in 3018 (it was destroyed in 1975). Nor was Rhovanion a unified realm -- though this might have happened after the Battle of the Five Armies in 2941, it didn't. It could be considered an alliance, I suppose.

"I've not seen THIRD AGE played, but I do have a complete run of several MORDOR VS. THE WORLDS in Diplomania, and these aren't much different. In one, as I recall, Mordor overran Middle-Earth and the Ring played no part. Certainly, with those multiple armies Sauron is going to be difficult to stop." Hartley also asks me to point out a good book, 'Bored of the Rings', by the Harvard Lampoon, which contains much potential propaganda material. It's published by Signet and costs \$1 00 at ye import shoppes. I understand it is unlikely to be published over here owing to difficulties with Allen & Unwin, publishers of the real 'Lord of the Rings'. Now if only bloody Fred Vanner would give me back my copy of 'Bored'.....

NEWS (mostly pinched from various quarters): Richard Walkerdine, address above, has launched Mad Policy, another Dippyzine. I received his first issue, containing details of the first regular game and other bumph, last week. Lists open for another regular game. // Harry Bell's Precedent will not now appear due to lack of response and other commitments. // Michel Feron points out that players in the CHAOS game he plans to run in Moeshoeshoe will receive the zine free. Albion recently gave a version of CHAOS for 17 players, Michel, if you find you can't get 34... // Andy Davidson has taken a job as canteen janitor in Kellogg's factory in Stretford. Cereal-oriented PR's are solicited... Andy's latest literary acquisitions are 'Star Trek 6' and 'Runts of 61 Cygni C'. Still, what can you expect from a cleaner? // Things for sale dept.: back issues of Ethil, nos. 1,2,4-11, 2p each + postage. I also have a complete run of WB... £200 for the first person to offer to take it off my hands! Rules for ABSTRACTION & THIRD AGE, 5p each. // By the time you read this Hartley Patterson should have both Niflheim and the Midgard rules ready. Wonders will never, etc...

LETTERS

Hartley Patterson Graeme Levin seems to have explained his objectives very well. Backstabbing is all very well in game-playing, but outside it's better to have misunderstandings sorted out, and in this case where most of us are a bit confused having a public debate may help.

With game fees, Geaeme has fallen into the same trap as yourself. BDC games, operated by the BDC house rules, would give no more income than for the zine games on average -- in theory, a bit less. If players have a separate 'Winter' mailing each year, costs are 50% up. In Rod Walker's latest information sheet he attacks the 'two moves per year' system which is rare in the USA but common in Europe, on the perfectly reasonable grounds that this is an infringement of the Rulebook and can lead to players requesting retreats/builds that are not in their best interests. I wouldn't go so far as Rod in advising novices to avoid such games (naturally, since WB uses the system!) but prospective players ought to have the choice

That said, I think Graeme is moving into dangerous ground in suggesting that the profit motive should play any part in gamesmastering. There have already been a number of 'fly by night' GMs in the USA who have collected cash and then vanished. I do expect other GMs to be reasonably philanthropic, and I don't see how it could be otherwise. Running a zine takes a lot of time, and to compensate by charging for time would make games impossibly expensive.

This isn't to say that I have any criticism of the BDC finances -- since these are not directly concerned with games it's up to the BDC what it charges, just as it's up to the public whether they join or not. As long as most GMs are on a 'non-profit' basis we can easily harass profiteers by circulating their overcharged players, as you have already pointed out.

I doubt that the standby player system is any better in the BDC than elsewhere. Standbys must be following the game, and in the BDC this presumably involves receiving the game report. In the BDC game I've just started in WB I shall simply use standbys playing in other games in WB, so long as they are also BDC members -- a qualification which was my suggestion, not Graeme's. In the Turnbull games I believe Don is issuing them on separate sheets, which (unless standbys are getting them free) gives them a much worse deal than in the zines. This is a disadvantage built in to the non-zine system.

I'd also dispute the suggestion that standby GMs would be easier to find in the BDC. No GM is obliged to take on additional games, and whether the BDC or a gaffiating independent GM is arranging the transfer is not so important.

You will see in WB 35 a note from Michel Feron. Michel says he is in touch with the International Diplomacy Association, being the only European member as far as I know, and is finding out exactly what they can offer us. It could be that the IDA can offer us a 'complementary' service to that of the BDC, in the form of a specialist Dippy magazine. At present, all the decisions in Dippy (the new Rulebook &c) are taken in the USA and events in Europe are hardly mentioned at all in US zines. An international group would help with that, but as you say, a lot of people may consider that the possible dangers of organisation outweigh the advantages

(( Membership of the IDA is \$1 00 to the Interim Treasurer, Walt Buchanan, R.R.3, Lebanon, IN 46052, U.S.A. This entitles you to receive the IDA's newsletter for one year, and possibly other benefits. I'd suggest waiting till fuller information is available this end.))

Rod Walker May the voice of experience offer some advice? Avoid feuds. I realise the BDC may not be too thrilling in its initial stages, but give it a chance. Criticise, of course -- so long as Graeme Levin is adult about criticism, there won't be any feud.

(( Thankfully, there will be no feud. Hard luck, Andy.))

Phil Jones I don't know whether or not you've noticed, but your number of players is growing rapidly. You are now only two short of toppling the glorious Albion with your 28, compared with Don's 30. WB comes pretty low in the ratings, with only 16 players, you being one and playing in all five games!

(( I hadn't noticed particularly, but my postman must have, especially when about half the players send their orders in at the last possible opportunity! As for WB, deep in the dim and distant past I remember a time when it had 20 players -- about issue 7, I think. Of course, as soon as Hartley took over, the number plummeted!! ))

'B' Game (Abstraction -- 1972Kco) -- April 1915

Tunis The supply of dates has now ceased, and the fleet stationed here disbanded, because their staple diet has become non-existent. We have left the entire supply depot in ruins France is receiving no help from us'

Sicily. 'Ey, Luigi' Tell thisa guy with the encyclopaedia -- correction, corn-flakes packet -- to take-a hisa knife outa my back'

ENGLAND (Stuart). A Lon-Yor, A Nwy boards F Ska; F Bel-Hol; F Hol-Hel; F Nrg-Nwy S by F Nth, F Ang S A Den, A Den stands.

GERMANY (Davis). No moves received. A Kiel stands

RUSSIA (Feintuck). A Ber-Pru, F Rig-Swe S by F Bal, A Swe-Fin, A Dre-Mun; F Sin-Con S by F WBS, A Arm-Cau.

TURKEY (Maule) A Nap boards F CMS -- A/F CMS-Aeg, F MaS-CMS, A Cic-Dam

AUSTRIA (D.Christianson). F Alb-Gre, A Ode-Mos, A Bul-Rum, A Pec-Ser, A Mac-Con S by A Smy, A Vie-Boh S by A Mun, A Zur-Pie S by A Ven, A Bud-Gal, A Tyr S A Mun, A Cro S A Ven

ITALY (Jeffery) A Tus & F Ion stand

FRANCE (A.Davidson) F Mor-NAf, F SAO-WMS, A Sic-Rom FF by F TyS, F Mar-GoL; A Swa-Zur S by A Obe, A Lor-Bur, A Pie-Tyr\*.

\*Retreat. French A Pie-Mar ++++ See also the note at the bottom

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'A' Game (1972K) -- Spring 1906

Galicja. A vehicle carrying a large number of books was yesterday refused entry into the German state of Silesia. The driver's story of being a cleaner was ignored when a twenty-foot tank aerial was noticed on the vehicle's roof.

GERMANY (A.Davidson). F Nth S F Nwy, F Nwy S F Nth, A Swe S F Nwy, A Wal-Lpl; A Edi stands; F Kie-Bal, A War-Lvn S by A Pru, A Ber-Sil; A Sil-Boh S by A Mun.

RUSSIA (Jeffery). A Sev-Ukr, A Mos-War, F Bar-Nwy S by F Nrg & A StP; A Lvn-Pru\*.

AUSTRIA (Robertson). F Nap-TyS S by F Ion, A Pie-Mar, A Tus-Pie, A Gal-Sil S by A Boh\*; A Tri-Tyr S by A Ven, A Rum-Gal, A Bul-Rum.

FRANCE (D Christianson) F Mar-GoL; F GoL-WMS, F Tun-Ion, A NAf-Tun, A Spa-Mar, A Bur S (German) A Mun.

\*Retreats. Russian A Lvn disbanded, Austrian A Boh disbanded

\*\*\*\*\*  
'F' Game (1972??) -- Autumn 1901

Venice The Chiefs of Staff of the Italian Army have announced that the manoeuvres which took place on the training-grounds here last Spring were entirely successful. At that time, trials were carried out on the new army uniform, which is not unlike the old uniform back-to-front. Intelligence reports indicate that vast numbers of Viennese people were taken in by this subtle ploy, actually believing that the troops were running backwards'

Paris A reward of .002 centimes is offered for the capture of Rednaxela Trebor, the chairman of the French Anti-Tyrannical Anarchist Leagues, who is at the bottom of the wanted list.

Berlin (Govnt). The white elephant on its way to England was aboard the French ship 'Sans Espoir' which sank without trace en route Apologies are sent to the King.

London We were most pleased to hear of Germany's kind intention to send us a white elephant, but we wouldn't have been able to accept it even if it had arrived safely. There is a large surplus of these animals in the Royal Garages, and we intend to make a present of many of these beasts to the governments of certain other countries

Wimbledon No. 1 seedy Dan Druff has been banned by the LTA from participating in further competitions, following his admission that he is taking hormone treatments to regain his status as a male star. (( Moves, &c, next page ))

++++ 'B' Game Will RICHARD WALKERDINE please send standby orders for

ENGLAND (Durrheim) A Edi-Nwy C by F Nrg, F Nth-Bel  
 GERMANY (Morrison) F Den-Swe, A Kie-Hol S by A Ruh  
 RUSSIA (Williams) A Lvn-Swe C by F GoB; A Rum S (Austrian) A Ser-Bul;  
 A Ukr S A Rum.  
 TURKEY (B Davidson) F Con-Aeg, A Bul-Gre; A Smy-Con.  
 AUSTRIA (Davies) No moves received F Alb, A Bud, A Ser stand.  
 ITALY (Oliver) F Ion-Tun, A Pie stand, A Ven stand.  
 FRANCE (Alexander) F MAO-Por, A Bur-Bel, A Spa-Mar.

E 4 bases: Lon, Lpl, Edi, Nwy. Build F Lon.  
 G 5 bases: Kie, Ber, Mun, Den, Hol. Build A Kie, A Ber.  
 R 5 bases: StP, Mos, War, Sev, Rum. Build F StP (S).  
 T 4 bases: Con, Ank, Smy, Gre. Build F Smy.  
 A 4 bases: Tri, Vie, Bud, Ser. Owed 1, but no build orders received  
 I 4 bases: Ven, Rom, Nap, Tun. Build F Nap.  
 F 4 bases: Brc, Par, Mar, Por. Build A Par.

Note that Tom Durrheim's address is now Glendoick School House, Glencarse, Perth PH2 7NR (Tel. Glencarse 243).

Gregory Ward is on holiday till 5 Sept will KEVIN FEINTUCK therefore send standby orders for Austria in case Howell Davies misses again

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'C' Game (1972BK) -- Spring 1904

Galveo General Henry Pijohn has not as yet uncovered the skulking poison-pen letter writer known as Henry P. Pijohn, and has decided to hang seven runts instead because they seem to have been having an easy time of it lately.

Rome "A fleet, a fleet, my kingdom for a fleet!"  
 "Okay, you got a deal. Which is your kingdom?"  
 "Italy."  
 "The deal's off!"

ENGLAND (Taylor) A StP-Mos; A Nwy-StP, A Edi-Nwy C by F Nth;  
 F Bar-Nrg, F Swe & A Lon stand.  
 GERMANY (Maule) A Mos-Ukr, A War-Gal S by A Boh; F Bal-Den;  
 A Pru-Sil, A Mun S A Tyr, A Tyr stands.  
 RUSSIA (B Davidson) A Ukr-Sev  
 TURKEY (Jeffery) A Gre-Alb, A Bul-Gre; A Con-Bul S by F Aeg;  
 F Ion S (French) A Tun-Nap.  
 AUSTRIA (M Christianson) A Bud-Gal S by A Rum, A Tri-Tyr S by A Vie,  
 A Ser S A Rum  
 ITALY (Davis) No orders received. A Rom, A Tus & A Pie stand.  
 FRANCE (Bell) A Tun-Nap C by F TyS, A Bur-Mar S by F GoL; A Par-Bur;  
 A Spa stands

Mick Christianson has now returned to 117 Albert Ave, Prestwich, Lancs. Will ANDREW WALDIE please send standby orders for Italy, in case Martin Davis misses again.

\*\*\*\*\*  
'D' Game (1972BV) -- Spring 1903

Ankara (Govnt) The head of the Turkish government has sent official sympathies to the Czar, regretting his continued illness. The official team of specialist doctors, sent hurriedly across the Black Sea, were unfortunately refused entry into Sevastopol because of visa problems

Galveo The British Landrace Pig Society (not a religious body) extend their thanks to Grand Admiral Henry Pijohn for his assistance in freeing their members from the clutches of the Lusaka Girls' Choir, but would like to know who the hell he is

Eindhoven Our team of pig experts are now inspecting the Dutch sties to see if they are fit for our glorious pigs, now that the dirty filthy British pigs have been thrown out

London "... and furthermore we would warn Russia and Austria-Hungary to attack the German menace before it is too late... please? Pretty please?"

(( continued on next page ))

Cambridge. The editors of the Moscow 'Peasants' Herald & Information Letter', the Channel Islands news service, and assistant editors of the German 'Pig Fanciers' Weekly' and the Polish edition of 'PH&IL', together with the Russian ambassador to Tunis and the Harbourmaster of Bergen are presently attending an English course at the Bell School of Languages. We are confused as only one person appears to be here!

ENGLAND (I.Lawson) F Ed1-Nth S by F Lon; F Iri-Eng, F Hol-Kie\*;  
A Nwy stands

GERMANY (Jones) A Pru-War, F Den-Swe, A Bel-Hol S by A Ruh,  
A Mun-Kie.

RUSSIA (Shaw) F Swe S (English) Nwy-Ska, A Ukr-Gal S by A War,  
A Mos S F Sev, F Sev stand.

TURKEY (Oliver) A Smy-Arm S by F Ank, F Bla-Sev S by A Rum,  
A Bul S A Rum

AUSTRIA (A.Davidson) A Gal S (German) A Pru-War, A Bud S A Gal;  
A Tyr-Ven, A Ven-Tus S by F TyS, F Tri-Alb

ITALY (Waldie). F Nap-TyS, A Tus-Ven, F Ion-Adr

FRANCE (Bell) F Eng-Wal, F Bre-Eng, A Mar S A Bur, A Bur & A Spa stand.

\*Retreat English F Hol disbanded

Fred Hemmings has had to resign from this game owing to lack of time. France is now ruled by HARRY BELL (9 Eskdale Gdns, Lyndhurst Est, Low Fell, Gateshead NE9 6NS) All players were informed.

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'E' Game (1972CI) -- Spring 1902

Berlin At a press conference today, the King denied rumours relating to his mental condition, citing as evidence his Cambridge First which was, he said, more than some other petty princelings he could mention had managed to achieve. However, he admitted that he was unhappy with the political situation, it is thought that a rift may be developing between himself and Anna von Sudhaven, owing to her links with the sinister underground organisation, the Birthday Party.

Henry P. Pijohn Will all members of my fan club please return their simulated plastic membership medals to me as soon as possible for replacement. It has been brought to my attention that Henry Pijohn fans have tampered with our medals, hollowing out the plastic and filling the spaces with used chewing-gum. I'm sure all my fans will join in reproving Henry Pijohn and his friends for their action, and I warn these people that this sort of thing just will not chew.

Berlin. The Birthday Party will negotiate for this country to join Alcoholics Anonymous' We will fill in the mountains, level the rivers, and make jelly-tots the basis of our national economy' We will give out balloons on the National Health' Yes, it's fun for all with the Birthday Party, and remember -- only the Birthday Party has new added Bluinite'

'Wop' Land. The French scum have referred to us as a tiny kingdom, they have stated that we are cowards who go to war in ice-cream vans. Their threatening imperialism has forced us to ask our neighbour, Italy, to protect us

ENGLAND (Maule) F Nth-Hel, F Lon-Nth, A Nwy-StP, F Nrg-Nwy.

GERMANY (Mellish). A Kie-Hol, A Ber-Kie\*, F Swe-Den.

RUSSIA (Douglass) A Pru-Ber S by A Sil; F Bal-Den, A Rum stand,  
A War-Pru

TURKEY (Pijohn) F Smy-EMS, F Bla-Con, A Con-Ank, A Bul-Gre.

AUSTRIA (R.Lawson) A Mun-Kie, A Ser-Gre, F Gre-Aeg, A Tri-Tyr,  
A Vie-Boh, A Bud-Ser.

ITALY (I Lawson). A Pio-Mar, F TyS-WMS, F Nap-TyS, A Tun-NAF.

FRANCE (Walkerdine) A Bur-Bel, A Par-Bur, A Spa-Gas, F Mar stands,  
F Por-Spa(S).

\*Retreat German A Ber disbanded.

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Waiting Lists TWIN-EARTH Michel Feron, Phil Jones, Graham Jeffery.  
 ABSTRACTION Phil Jones, Phil Shaw, Graham Jeffery, Harry Bell.  
 THIRD AGE Gregory Ward, Hartley Patterson, Martin Davis, David  
 Christianson.

DEADLINE 8.30 a.m., Tuesday 5 September, 1972. Late moves will only be accepted if I have not already typed up the relevant stencil!

\*\*\*\*\*  
Will the real John Piggott please stand up?

.. it won't be easy, there are so many of us .. I expect a significant number of you may be asking yourselves who this upstart is, who publishes such a creation as Ethil and who pontificates about such things as the BDC. I don't guarantee that this little piece will in any way answer your queries, but it may serve to tell of one person's introduction to postal Diplomacy.

I spent most of my teens at a boarding school, which I found to be a fairly unsatisfactory environment. During my final year I wandered by accident into science-fiction fandom, and through this was introduced to postal Diplomacy. I entered during the first boom of British Dippy. War Bulletin, edited by Dave Berg, had just started and was gathering players like mad. I was assigned Italy in WB 'B' game, and did fairly badly at the start. This was, in fact, the first Diplomacy game I had ever played -- I didn't play it FTF till I arrived at Cambridge last September -- but during the first period of play I had an alliance with and much useful advice from Austria. By the time he double-crossed me the other players (including him) had started dropping out left, right and centre! Germany had inexplicably fallen in love with my letters, and assigned me control of her country, and thus at the end I was able to snap up supply centres more quickly than Turkey. The game ended in 1907 with a victory for Germany/Italy.

By this time control of WB had passed into Hartley Patterson's hands, Dave Berg having become disillusioned about the time of the great Postal Strike, and for a period it was almost static in size and number of players. For a time it seemed that Albion was the only hope for British Diplomacy, now over two years old, it showed no sign (and to this day, it doesn't) of faltering. But then Will Haven asked Hartley to run an Abstraction game. He refused, intimating that it was Don Turnbull's province. Well, Don didn't appear likely to start a second Abstraction game, so the only alternative was to start another zine. I wrote to Will saying this. From such small beginnings do Ethils grow. I'll talk about that some other time, if anyone's interested.

"Well," said Hannibal as the army marched through the dense forests of Belgica, "we're making good time, don't you think?"

From out of the trees a bearded savage approached. "Voulez-vous acheter un Moeshoesnoe?" said the savage, incomprehensibly.

Hannibal gazed in disgust at the savage's purple-stained fingers. "I suppose that's the woad they use to put on their faces," he remarked, idly knocking the savage aside with a stroke of his axe.

This is the special thin issue,

ETHIL THE FROG 12, from

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