

THE BLEEDER

The official and **only** newsletter of the
BTHQ Board Games Club

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WHAT...2 BLEEDERS IN THE SAME YEAR??

SOMETHING CAN'T BE RIGHT....SURELY....(Yes, issue 290 was actually issued in January 2007,
contrary to the headline..... only around 14 months after the previous issue...)

CONTACTS: Enquiries about waiting lists, rules, GMs etc. on particular games to the person listed:

DIPLOMACY enquiries to Frank Clark (0)7917022657 or frank.clark@bt.com

Game P – COMPLETED – game end statements expected in the next issue.

Game Q – Waiting list full. About to start

Game R - 4 waiting. One GM and 3 players needed.

INTIMATE DIPLOMACY enquiries to Jerry Attwood 01273 418401

RAILWAY RIVALS Mike Ruffhead 01977 591056

<i>Game</i>	<i>Map</i>	<i>SM</i>	<i>Players</i>	<i>Wanted</i>	<i>Starting</i>
BT	New England	Mike Ruffhead	Peter Williams, Steve Wells, Gina Teh; Bill Salvatore	+1	October/ November 2007
BU	France?	Jerry Attwood	Mike Ruffhead	+4/5	
BV	Switzerland	Mike Ruffhead		+4	

BRAWL IX Peter R. Williams 01473 348819

3 waiting, a lot more needed



No, don't panic, these flags are not an indication of a sudden lurch to the political right, just a quick space-filler, and a visual reminder to any of our recent new members who are based overseas that the above phone numbers are UK numbers. Next issue I suspect these colourful little pictures will be replaced by boring "+44" in the appropriate places, but for once only, enjoy the vibrant colours, the brilliant design, the.... Oh alright, I'll just get on with it....

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Well....here it is. Or should I say “Welcome to the time-warp”!! Yes, on several counts, this could feel like a trip into history for all long-standing club members:

1. It seems like an age since the last Bleeder. And there’s a good reason for that. (Yes, I know you’re not supposed to start a sentence with “and”, so all you pedants can stop complaining now.) It has been a long, long time.
2. This is NOT Peter Williams writing. Who is it sitting in the Bleeditorial chair? What is going on? Has Peter been sacked? Is this Robert Skynner typing? Well.... It’s actually Frank Clark, the previous Bleeditor to Peter, back to edit what he hopes is just this one issue before Peter returns.

So, since I am not Peter, I’m not going to apologise for the delay since the last issue. Peter is in fact in the middle of moving house, so given the turmoil normally associated with such activity, I will resist the urge to tell him that he’s the worst Bleeditor in history in terms of production turnout. Not the worst Bleeditor ever - that honour falls to the person who shall remain nameless who edited one issue and generated so many complaints, breaches of copyright and slander prosecutions that the entire club nearly ended up in jail. Well, ok, maybe that’s a slight exaggeration, but it does have some basis in fact.

Right. Enough waffle about who or who is not the editor of this issue. What’s new? Well, quite a lot actually. The most important thing to announce is that the club has several new members, thanks to the excellent recruitment activity of Robert Skynner. Well done Robert, keep it up. If the club had an active committee, I’d nominate you for the official post of membership secretary, however since it doesn’t, it would be a fairly pointless activity. Anyway, welcome to Lars (who has just won the latest game of Diplomacy thanks to the combination of his own skill and me throwing away a seriously dominant position ... more of that to follow next edition of the Bleeder), Geerten (who was also in the game that Lars won and I ended up 3rd in, I believe he came 5th, one position up from Peter. Peter’s 6th might have something to do with my tactics), Bill, Wayne, Doug, Andrew, Mark, Christopher and Gina, who come from various corners of the known universe, several of whom have also joined a game waiting list. My apologies if you have joined recently and I’ve not given you a name check.

Now. Shall I mention the Post Office strike in England? No, this is supposed to be a non-political publication, unlike another publication of a similar name which this publication disowns entirely, although if those who still get this posted to you are reading it in November, you can choose who to blame: the strikers or the management, you pick. How about England suddenly discovering how to win at Cricket, and football, and Rugby? No, this is a board games club, not a sports club.

OK then, it’s gloat time. I am in the final stages of preparing for a trip to the 2007 Essen games fair in Germany, which I am told is the biggest games fair in the world. Hundreds of stands spread over many huge halls, you end up with serious foot ache walking around trying to see everything, wondering which games are worth buying, trying out so many games that your brain aches after learning so many rules in such a short space of time, but then back to the hotel after a quick meal for gaming until midnight or thereabouts, trying out all the games someone else has already bought, so you know which ones you didn’t buy earlier to go back for the following day. (Yes, I know that’s a really long sentence. Tough.) All in all, a fabulous experience, to be thoroughly recommended. I imagine the next issue will contain a few game reviews and recommendations to allow you all to order some deliveries in time for Christmas. Well, ok, maybe Christmas 2008!

Frank

A letter from Robert... including dodgy spelling and punctuation....

Robert Skynner heading for three straight wins!

Almost two years ago, Robert Skynner the Bleeders esteemed Cornish Correspondent joined Western Front, an Australian internet based Diplomacy club which features the excellent Zine Western Front, issue 88 is now available free from Brad Martin at westfront@westnet.com.au After a win in his first game; Pyrrhus, Robert who is also the 6 times winner of the Cornwall Boardgaming Championship, is now heading for a second victory in this club playing Kitchener, a Colonial Diplomacy variant where he's currently winning on 15 units and also a gunboat diplomacy game (no press anonymous moves) where yet another win is possible. Subscribe to the Western Front Zine for proof of this great players talents. Nobody in the BT & PO BGC can match my possible record of three straight wins in my first three games, beat that Dragey, Dopey Popey, Gruff and Sweetman if you can but you can't ha ha ha. Suckers and Losers the lot of you. I'm playing so well in this club because nobody knows yet what I'm really like, few people even dislike me because so few people have got to know me. I love to win games, hey I'm a genius!

If I do get three straight wins, I'll never stop telling Bleeder readers this fact.

Robert

The (temporary) Bleeditor (who once was not temporary) responds:

Well Robert, If England can beat the Aussies at Rugby for the second world cup in succession, maybe they're not so hot at Diplomacy either. Maybe the fact that you wrote this back in July, and have yet to tell Peter whether your 1 win has turned into two, or even 3, indicates that your bold expectations didn't quite materialise. Even if you did then claim to win 3 in a row, I would have to investigate. You will remember a certain game of squash against this esteemed temporary editor, which you lost, and then stated your intention to claim that you had in fact won. So predictable was both your loss and your plan to claim the victory anyway, that I secretly taped the post-match conversation, and played an extract of it to the then Bleeditor, a certain Jeremy Snelling. I have to suspect that old habits die hard, and your "3-in-a-row", if claimed, will prove groundless. Perhaps Steve Drage, who had the pleasure of eliminating you at the end of the latest game of diplomacy in this club on the final move to rob you of a possible joint third place with me, would care to reply to the editor for the next issue?

By the way (1), are you sure you're getting your game titles correct? You claim you won a game called Pyrrhus in a different club, which just happens to be the same as the name of the game you just came 4th in, and the game you wrote a half-term report on (see next article). Co-incidence? Or a little.... confusion?

By the way (2), perhaps the best reply to Robert's letter comes from my budgie, who is sitting in his cage chattering away while I type. He just said.. (and I kid you not...)
"Stupid pea-brain! Who's a fat hobbit?"

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PLEA TO SAVE THE PLANET.... (and Peter's envelopes....)

It has come to the attention of the temporary (and previously permanent) Bleeditor that a number of you STILL get this posted to you. This is bad. It's expensive (and remember you don't pay!), it wastes paper, it wastes ink, and most of all, it wastes Peter's time. Just maybe he's been a bit slow at getting Bleeders out because it takes so long to get many copies printed, put in envelopes, and sent out. PLEEEEEEEZE, grovel, plead, send Peter (peter.r.williams@btinternet.com) your email address so that he can move very swiftly to producing email-only Bleeders. He in turn will ensure that the size of the Bleeder (in bytes) does not get out of hand, so that anyone on dial-up doesn't get their inbox jammed up. Thanks!

The Headmasters' half-term

report. ((by Robert Skynner))

Hello fellow boardgamers and welcome to my half-term report on the diplomacy game Pyrrhus together with an assessment of its 7 participants in 1907.

Jeremy Snelling (England): Jeremy is a polite and well mannered little boy who tries hard to please. However, unfortunately, his 7th place doesn't please me and so I'm going to flog him (see picture right). He needs to become far more ruthless and less trusting, and especially in his negotiations with the other players who've come to regard him as something of a pushover. Strategically Jeremy is potentially a good player, he just needs to toughen up. He was been warned about Ludmilla's tendency to stab but he still trusted her all the same. ***Punishment: Six Strokes of the cane.***

Peter Williams (Germany): Another dismal performance (6th Place) from Peter and playing Germany this time, which is one of the strongest countries on the board. Nevertheless, he threw away this advantage, changing alliances constantly and completely Ludmilla's France by refusing to accept any warnings from Robert as to Ludmilla's likely moves! Why even Frank Clark has outplayed him. This is becoming an unfortunate habit Peter. ***Punishment: six strokes of the cane.***



underestimating

Geerten (Italy) 1 Unit: Geerten bragged at the start of the game that a recent Zine poll had voted him amongst the top 100 diplomacy boardgamers in the world, and that he's also in the World diplomacy championship semi-finals. However if he's so good, how come Robert Skynner stabbed him in 1907 taking both Vienna and Rome in one go? Clearly this little blighter is not as clever as he thinks he is and so he must try harder in his next BT & PO BGC game. ***Punishment: Write out 100 Lines.***

Robert Skynner (Austria) 4 Units: Robert is disliked by the other boys who constantly taunt him, admittedly he does have some disgusting habits such as lying, backstabbing and cheating. Nevertheless he's pulled it off spectacularly in this game, firstly by playing off Turkey, Russia and Italy against each other when he was almost defeated and out for the count and then by his stabbing Italy for two builds in 1907. Robert now faces a Turkey (Drage) intent on revenge, no matter the personal cost to himself and a powerful France who could steamroller Robert's Italian builds with the greatest of ease. But how will Robert deal with this? Russia certainly doesn't trust him anymore, but needs to use him to regain territory recently lost to Steve Drage. ***The Headmaster says: I'm going to promote Robert to School Prefect.***

Steve Drage (Turkey) 7 Units: Steve has made this classic error many times before, and yet he's still been daft enough to trust Robert Skynner once again! There really is no excuse and he only has himself to blame. Apparently Robert warned him several times before that he wasn't happy with the alliance with Italy, but Steve simply ignored these constant protestations and then continued to issue endless orders for Robert, which he assumed he'd slavishly follow. But just as soon as Robert saw the opportunity to gain two easy builds by stabbing their mutual ally Italy well we all know what happens in that situation don't we, all except for Steve that is. Nevertheless, Steve has done well to take Serbia (from Robert) and also Sevastopol from (Russia), though I can't help but think that this will be the high tide in this game for Steve now that he's facing Turkish fleets in the Med and both Austrian and Russian Armies in the Balkans, and all thanks to his one time ally Robert Skynner. I'll offer good odds that Steve will decline steadily from now on and get a 4th place. ***Punishment: Write 100 lines: 'I must learn never to trust that devious bastard.'***

Ludmilla Topholm (France) 9 Units: Well what can I say, not only is Ludmilla the weirdest and certainly the strangest player that the BT & PO BGC has ever had; for she's really a man who claims to be a transvestite woman with breasts, but she's also a bloody good player to boot and just about the lowest backstabbing, lying, double dealing scumbag that we've ever had in the club. Words simply fail me to describe how Ludmilla sweet talks you into an alliance or into a certain move only to then to stab you. However, having played Ludmilla in two games now, I've detected a pattern which could be a weakness in her game. For, she always selects France as her first choice of country, and then makes an alliance with England in which both countries agree not to occupy the channel. Ludmilla immediately breaks this agreement and after pleading a misunderstanding, goes onto capture London or Liverpool by 1902. After then capturing a second English centre in 1903-04, greedy Ludmilla having secured rapid builds then makes a firm alliance with either Russia or Germany and turns on the other with her newly found fleet builds. So, having taken out poor Jeremy Snelling who completely ignored Robert's profuse warnings, Ludmilla had the choice of allying up with a powerful Russia or a Germany played by a player; (Peter) whose just about as useful in a fight as a rice pudding. Obviously, it was no contest, and Ludmilla has cleaned up the low countries but is now embroiled in a fight with Russia in the north where her lack of fleets and loss of Brest to Drage might prove detrimental to her long term aims. In summary, there is absolutely nothing subtle about Ludmilla, she's an in your face, lying, cheating, low down scumbag, who's just about as subtle as a 800 pound gorilla learning to play the harp. But boy, those lovely breasts, her pouting lips, you're gorgeous girl gorgeous!

Frank Clark (Russia) 10 Units: Well done Frank, for with the exception of your recent loss of Sevastopol to Drage, in all other respects your play has been absolutely excellent and your timing faultless. However, much now depends upon your ability to maintain the alliance with the ever unstable and the completely untrustworthy Robert Skynner, for you certainly won't defeat a player of Drage's abilities, he has 2 wins in his first 3 BGC games, without Robert's help. In the north you possibly have a slight edge over Ludmilla, who now has to deal with the added disadvantage of a Turkish fleet in Brest. However, in order to progress from 10 to 18 units your development of a strong Russian-Austrian alliance is vital. And to think that I once called him a chocolate teapot, in this game he's playing like Ivan the Terrible, you're a genius.

((Well, as mentioned in the Bleeditorial, all did not go well for Frank from this point onwards... this might have something to do with the fact that he chose to trust Robert for 2 moves.... He paid dearly for taking such a stupid risk! The end of term report will make for some interesting reading!))

The Royal and Antidiluvian Order of Losers

((Introduction from our permanent editor, I believe, written before handing the Bleeditorial reins over to me:The following missive was sent, he claims in error, by Jim Williams to the players of “Diplomacy” Game “P”. I note that they are “Anti-” (against) and not “Ante-” (before) the flood but I do not know the significance of this, if any. I also do not know whether or not they are as bonkers as we are, but given the E-Mails above and below it must be a close-run thing. Maybe he should suggest that they join our “Diplomacy” games. As a member of the Club committee, I generous extend an invite...))

Losers and Loserettes,

A meeting of the Lodge will be held at the usual time and place. Alas I shall not be able to attend because of an infestation of clients who are turning up most inconsiderately. Next week too I shall be absent. I am called to the Great Tepee in Edinburgh, where I and my fellow Buffalos will compare the size of our totem poles and decorate them in the traditional manner. Meanwhile, the agenda:

1. Canonisation of Probationer Dutton - It has been generally agreed that Medal of Honour Loser and Chairman for Life, Brother Peter has been our hero, inspiration and role model, who only recently capped his long and undistinguished career by his appointment as Not-The-Sales-Director. In contrast Probationer Dutton has undergone a period of rigorous investigation because of suspicions that we might have a Secret Winner in our midst. Now, suddenly, like a 50:1 outsider he has broken from the ruck and come racing past us with an awesome achievement (if appearances are anything to go by), namely he has been appointed as Not-The-Pemex-Project-Manager, in which role he will generously accept the stress and blame of a failing project *but without any additional recognition or remuneration!* In a long life I have experienced many humbling moments (which we won't go into), but Eddie's dedication is stunning and one feels like awarding him a prize... say half a dozen extra kids? Instead, by the power vested in me as Chief Buffalo, I declare that henceforth he shall no longer be a probationer and shall instead be known as Saint Eddie Dutton. Details of his feast day will be released later.
2. Initiation of Probationer Procter - Sister Jo has issued her first progress report and things are on track. Her whip, boots and cat suit are all back from the cleaners and she assures us the blood stains have vanished a treat. The contortionist has pencilled in some dates and will get back. The only cloud on the horizon is the familiar one that she can't get any engineers for love nor money. Well... not for money, anyway.
3. Sister Angela is still wandering around long-faced in her new post and I can sniff the scent of defeat. I think we should ask for a report. I do like a good laugh.
4. Brother Eric reminds us that, as the summer draws towards its close, there are only a few weeks left to hire the Harold Shipman Impersonators Karaoke Band to lend that extra note of sophistication to weddings and bar mitzvahs. After that, it's back on with the red suit. As to which he points out that the new Working at Height Regs mean that every house in the country will have to be scaffolded up to chimney height before December. Hmm... the politicians seem to have missed that one.

WHAT???? REPEATS???? OLD STUFF RE-USED?? I WANT MY MONEY BACK!!! JUSTIFY YOURSELF, MR CLARK!!!

LIAR'S DICE - MAKE YOUR OWN

(Reprinted without permission, originally submitted by Mike Ruffhead many moons ago)

As I am perpetually skint, I can not afford to purchase all the games I would like to own. Liar's Dice is a game that fell into the "must own" category, but a) it was no longer on sale in the UK, and b) Milton Bradley's near equivalent "Perudo" costs a cool £12.99 for a boxful of air and a some dice. This is not my idea of value for money, so I made my own. The board is simplicity itself and I knocked one up on MS Word in ten minutes - with access to the right software you could undoubtedly do a much nicer job than my functional effort. Mounted on a suitable piece of thickish card, coloured to taste and covered in clear sticky-back plastic for durability, and you have a perfectly serviceable game board.

Six sets of different coloured six-sided dice are required (Less if you never anticipate playing with six people!) - five dice to a set, plus one larger die of any colour for use as the marker on the board. In the board game, the "ones" on the dice have been substituted with "stars" - which are wild. If you are feeling thorough you could over-paint the ones with stars - or maybe affix little stickers. However, if like me you are a lazy sod, and feel able to cope with simply remembering that the ones are wild, there is very little need to bother. Six dice shakers also are needed of sufficient size that all five dice can lie face down on the table when covered by the shaker. Any decent games shop should sell dice cups - I got mine from Just Games - but any old plastic beaker would do. Total outlay: £5 max.

The rules of the game are ultra simple. Each player takes one set of dice in a shaker. Having determined who will start, all players shake their dice, and whack them down on the table - still covered by the shaker. Players inspect their own rolls but keep them secret from everyone else. The starting player then states how many of the dice beneath **all** the shakers he thinks are of a particular number, e.g. "eight 4s" and then marks his bid on the board by placing the marker dice with the 4 uppermost on the "8" square. NB The stars (ones) are wild so he is actually stating that he thinks there are eight 4s AND stars (ones) under the shakers.

Play then proceeds clockwise to the next player who must do one of the following:

1) Raise the Bid. 2) "Show and Reroll" or 3) Challenge.

A **Raise** consists of increasing the bid by moving the marker die to a higher number on the board OR changing the number on the marker die upwards. e.g. if the bid is eight 4s, the legal raises would be eight (or more) 5s or 6s, nine (or more) 2s, 3s or 4s, or five (or more) stars.

Show and Reroll consists of the player showing **at least** one die, and rerolling the remainder which he keeps hidden as before. Having checked his own reroll he **must** then Raise. Dice which have been "shown" are kept openly in front of the player and may not be rolled again in a subsequent "Show and Reroll".

Challenge requires all players to reveal all their dice. These are then checked to establish the actual total of the particular number that there were.

If there are less than the bid, the previous player (**challengee**) loses a number of dice equal to the difference.

e.g. If the challengee bid eight 4s, but there are only six 4s and stars, then that player loses two dice.

If there are more than the bid, then **the challenger** loses a number of dice equal to the difference.

If there are exactly the number of the bid, then all players **except the challengee** lose one die.

("Lost" dice are best kept in the centre of the board so all players can see how many dice are still in play.) Following a challenge all players reroll, and play recommences with whichever player won the challenge.

The **winner** of the game is the last player with any dice.

A typical game takes fifteen minutes (*(depends on the number of players and their level of drunkenness – can take 45 mins or longer!)*) - a perfect light-weight filler at the end of a heavy session.

1	<u>1</u>	2	3	<u>2</u>	4	5	<u>3</u>	6	7
20								<u>4</u>	
<u>10</u>	L	I	A	R	S				
19								8	
								9	
18								<u>5</u>	
<u>9</u>								10	
17	16	<u>8</u>	15	14	<u>7</u>	13	12	<u>6</u>	11

(Board above is best printed on 2 pieces of A4 and taped together, the above version has been reduced to half a piece of A4 so that it fits in this magazine. If you want my 2 x A4 sheets MS-word file, please feel free to drop me (frank.clark@bt.com) an email.)

OK, so why have I reprinted this? Well, a number of reasons.

1. Because it's a really good game! (as recently discovered by Simon Neale and others)
2. Because it featured in the second film in the "Pirates of the Caribbean" trilogy. Hah! We were playing it years before Davy Jones used it to rule his ship!
3. Because there are a number of new members to the club that will have missed it first time around.
4. Because (oh alright, I admit it) I'm a bit short of copy and want to get this issued before I go to Essen.
5. Because... well, there is no number 5. Oh yes there is... you can't ask for your money back, because membership of the club is free! "Hah!" again!

Desert Island Games (by Jerry Attwood)

These would be my selected games to take to a desert island. Before I list them I must give you some background. My preference in games generally is for business style games and not for war games however one or two have slipped into my list both for variety and also because they represent something special in their genre. My list is purely in alphabetical order as it is difficult enough to reduce it down to ten without having to then prioritise them. I have also taken a further five games to the island which I consider fun games that I could start any fellow islander on before giving the full dose of strategy and tactics involved in my top ten list.

Top ten list

Amun Re : The best bidding game - gauging how much something is worth.

Caylus : Initially I thought the inter relationships between the different aspects of money, goods, buildings, gold, privileges and points was too complex. I have now decided that all you can do is maximise your play for every turn and only consider strategy from about halfway through the game.

Diplomacy : The ultimate no dice strategy game. You need to do exactly what it says on the box.

History of the World : Given how old it is, it has kept its appeal and its clever game play and built in disadvantages to the leader make it an excellent game.

Imperial : The newest game on my list and one combining war gaming with money. But if you can avoid conflict, you're more likely to win.

Kogge : Not to be played if you're feeling tired, hung over or have a headache. It does my head in every time and in my opinion is the most cerebral game on my list.

McMulti : Some very clever game playing mechanisms make this a must have game. Unfortunately I don't possess a copy of it. Someone will make a real fortune when it is eventually relaunched.

Powergrid : Excellent bidding and go first go last decision making make this a certainty on my list.

Puerto Rico : Although with the game being played so much some of its faults have come to light (some purple tiles costing too little eg the small market and others too much eg the university) it is still a good game with at least three different strategies to follow.

Ursuppe : Whoever thought of a game based on amoeba crapping in a tank has got a seriously warped mind. Also the idea of enhancing them with intelligence which is absolutely useless is brilliant.

And Just For Fun

Fiji : A bizarre just when you think you're winning you're not game.

Hey, that's my fish : Penguins on ice flows.

Niagara : Panned by many critics, but a clever mechanism for moving the water and canoes downstream.

Ritte sich wier kahn : Man the lifeboats - oh no my boats got a hole in it and I might drown.

Tonga Bonga : Seasick sailors and bribed crew make for an entertaining game.

*** END ***