

THE BLEEDER

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

Issue 292 - June '08

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**WILLIAMS IS BACK -
EVENTUALLY**

CONTACTS CONTACTS CONTACTS CONTACTS CONTACTS CONTACTS

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

DIPLOMACY enquiries to Frank Clark (0)7917022657

Game R – Underway

Game S – 7 players and GM 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> |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|--|---------------|-----------------------|
| BU | Brussels | Mike Ruffhead | Joakim Spangberg; Michael Pargman; Rob Thomasson; Edward Denley; Simon Neale | | Underway May 2008 |
| BV | Switzerland | Jerry Attwood | Peter Williams; Frank Clark; Mike Ruffhead; | +1 | Underway June 2008 |
| BW | Middle Earth | Mike Ruffhead | Peter Williams | +5 | |

BRAWL IX Peter R. Williams 01473 348819

3 waiting, a lot more needed

18** John Shelley

John can be contacted until mid-October at: http://freespace.virgin.net/four.track/18xx/18xx_front.htm

FACE-TO-FACE ARMAGEDDONS, plus any other enquiries (membership, new games etc.) to
(SECRETARY) COLIN SHARPE 0181 395 5190

Contents

And in this year's 12-page "Bleeder" (which got a bit delayed):

- **"DIPLOMACY" GAME "P" – MAD PRESS RULES OK**

The continuing collected un-wisdom and ravings of people as sane, normal and decent as the crew of the "Lexx"...

- **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**

Robert Skynner leaves himself wide open

- **FRANK'S PLANK - PART 2**

The joys of running the London Marathon from the viewpoint of a club member

- **THE HEADMASTER'S HALF-TERM REPORT FOR THE GAME 'QIN SHI HUANG' (Spring 1903):**

Another game gets the Robert treatment.

- **THE DECLINE AND FALL OF ROBERT SKYNNER**

The story continues – whether you want it to or not...

Bleeditorial

Yes, I'm back and, yes, I'm apologizing again for the delay in producing the "Bleeder". Firstly, I found that I had to move house at two month's notice and although I found a nice place next door (literally - which saved on the removal costs) between packing, moving, seeing the bank, seeing the estate agent, seeing the solicitor, etc, etc) I had to hand over production of the last "Bleeder" back to Frank Clark to whom I pass on my grateful thanks. I would take back everything I said about Frank's slow production of the "Bleeder" in the past, but I've already had to do that. Frank has my express permission to have a very good laugh at my expense about this. If this leads Robert Skynner to think that there is a conspiracy to stop him ever editing the "Bleeder" again, this was done because there is a conspiracy to stop him ever editing the "Bleeder" again. Sorry, Robert, but having heard of your previous attempt to edit this publication and seen some of your unpublishable contributions, some of us feel letting you become editor again would be the literary equivalent of allowing Robert Maxwell to run the "Daily Mirror" pension fund. Not whilst I'm in control...

The good news is that Robert (Skynner, that is) is doing rather well as an unofficial recruitment secretary for the Board Games Club. Robert has sent the club international, which is no bad thing and we are now joined by Christopher Bailey, Thomas Butcher, Doug, Geerten Eijk, Tom Hayes, Linden Lyons, Michael Michaelson, Wayne Morrison, Michael Pargman, Paraic Reddington, Bill Salvatore, Adam Seage, Joakim Spångberg, Mark Stretch, Alan Sutton, Gina Teh and Brendan Whyte. I wish you a fond welcome to the club and hope you have an enjoyable time (at least until you discover what a bunch of nutters we can be!). One of our new entrants did ask for a gloss on a "Brit" [An Americanism if ever I heard one] term "cleaky" that Robert had used but we had to tell him it was a mis-spelling of "Cliquesy". I can only hope that coming from the land of nettles, brochs, wakes weeks, bungs for centre forwards, chip-pan fires, shielings, conker championships, hitting your own wicket, combes, the Glasgow kiss and knockers-up that our English doesn't get too regionalized for our international friends or our political jokes (Screaming Lord Sutch, Arthur Scargill, David Davies, Kelvin Mackenzie, etc) too obscure. Mind you, there are so many regional terms in this country that if I started to use lol (Cornish), rhyne (Somerset), tye (East Anglia), gorseddau (Wales), flash (Cheshire), baht 'at (Yorkshire), beltie (Galwegian) or thankit (Lallans) half the British audience wouldn't understand me!

Oh, well, on with the "Bleeder",

Peter R. Williams

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“Diplomacy” Game “P” – Mad Press Rules OK

Considering that before this game had started, the press had already reached new levels of insanity, once it started it didn't get any better...

“Considering how I feel at the moment I wish it [*Scotland -Ed*] really didn't exist...5 days of Scotland makes a man tired ...or does it have something to do with the beers and whiskies I had... NOOOOOO... Just too little sleep!

I am back lady and gentlemen... Girl and boyz... And u will live to regret that~!! Hahr”
----Oorspronkelijk bericht---- [*Dutch for something, I think -Ed*]

The “Pope” responds:

“The first orders are due noon Friday 16 June. Not existing will not be accepted as an excuse without a letter from your mother saying she did not give birth to you. It goes without saying that so-called "Rob Skynner" (Address Area 51, Nevada) is excepted”.

The response from Area 51:

“Lars is an excellent diplomacy player and will have disposed of you completely by Spring 1906 [*I do not know the logic, if any, behind this date -Ed*]. I'm going to enjoy watching you squirm. Would you be prepared to bet on it say a bet of one miniature bottle of whisky? [*No -Ed*] Oh yes for the Bleeder please add this: Dear Peter, having persuaded Lars and Geerten to join the BT & PO BGC, now comes the shocking realisation, that they've ACTUALLY joined a third rate club, run by fourth rate amateurs and with a fifth rate zine - where-ever it happens to get printed. No doubt they'll leave too, after this games conclusion, just like Phil Middleton and David Frost, none of whom have continued with the BGC due to its pathetic set up.

Yours sadly Robert”

The response from Lars:

“Robert first: I am devastated that he failed to highlight the attractiveness of my rather large breasts, but okay, that's one of the backsides of freedom of speech: You can't dictate people what they should say when using it.

*Cheers,
Ludmilla*”

Foreigners speaking funny English take a battering. Oh joy, that we invented one of the most difficult to learn languages in the world...

“Ludmilla,

If we are talking about the “backsides” of freedom of speech, I hope that's not where your “large breasts” are located otherwise you will have a very funny-looking body!

Alpha Male”

Meanwhile, in a different E-Mail chain a very old trick surfaces:

“If players are concerned that they may not meet the deadline, I am willing to receive orders from all players the day before, and collate them into one email to send to the GM. There will be no charge for this selfless action.

*Regards,
King Jeremy I*”

The “pope” responds:

“My son, Jeremy,

You are evidently a true Christian. And hence, somewhere there is, no doubt, a lion with your name on it. May you both be happy together.

Pax vobiscum”

Then Ludmilla makes the discovery that Robert Skynner tells fibs *in a “Diplomacy” game* [how long did it take her to work this out?]

“May I just add that in the last season, despite what Robert has probably told about my alter ego, Lars, I did NOT deceive anyone WHATSOEVER.

Robert, naughty boy, telling I can’t be trusted. Do you have a problem trusting ALL women, or is it just me?

By the way, have anyone seen a two-headed goat?” [*Not only do I not understand this, I am not sure I want to understand this -Ed*]

It gets worse:

“A...lion? I hope the two-headed goat is nowhere near him. Fingers off!”

This looks almost innocent but see what it sets off (not as bad as making a one-line remark to Mike Ruffhead about the U.S. electing a President being complicated - but that’s another story!)

“Children,

One player tried to send some amended orders late on Friday - in fact after close of business - and I had to reject them. Please note that deadlines are always NOON unless I say otherwise. This is to make sure I have the orders with me to adjudicate over the weekend at home. Because I am a forgiving Pontiff, I will at my total and absolute discretion receive late orders up until such time as I have notified players that the move is closed, but in general I will exercise my discretion only to avoid an NMR or to resolve a query I may myself have raised.

Pax vobiscum

His Holiness Pope Jimbo”

A brief history of time:

“Ah yes, but do you mean Noon CET, Noon UTC, or Noon BST? Do you use Daylight saving time in the Vatican or have you just got a deal with God to delay sunset by one hour? I don't know where Lars and Geert are located but I suggest that their noons might be different to yours/the UK.

King Jeremy”

Message sent 14:52 BST

Ludmilla gets in on the act:

“Submitting orders after the deadline is like showing up in Church after mass. Disgusting!”

This, of course, has nothing to do with the true explanation:

“Gentlemen,

My apologies for the fact that my provider ****ked [*A five-letter expletive ending in “k”? -Ed*] up the delivery of moves....and next time I will send them more than 12 hrs before the deadline!

Cheers,

(the almost otb) Geerten”

Then there is the actual press as opposed to various E-Mails whizzing around:

Firstly the allegedly Italian:

Mucho Popo Jimbo,

I am imprezza by the quantitito di prezzie that has already beeno sento by di competititos in di contesti.

Right, that’s enough vaguely pathetic pseudo-Italian sounding stuff. [*The reala funa is whena you putta itta inna da E-Mail and sento inna mistaka to di nona-player. It has happened - Ed*]

It seems to me that all the mentioning of Brazil is entirely appropriate, not because of the proximity of the world cup that Brazil will probably win, but because this game seems to have more than its fair share of nutters. As in Brazil nuts. I count myself among them of course.

Geert,

I hope you have caught up with all the pre-match banter, and that your computer hasn’t died under the weight of all the E-Mails! [*we hope - Ed*]

To all players: Resistance is futile! You will be assimilated!

To all players: I am your friend. Your only friend. Trust no-one else. Attack each other immediately and leave me to worry about all those neutral build spots.

To all player: The deadline for the next order is December 2009. I might have won by then as long as no-one defends their own territory.

P.S. All donations of supply centres, food, fuel, maps, vodka, spare troops, warships or zeppelins would be gratefully appreciated.

P.P.S. All donations of any other vaguely plausible winning strategies would be greatly appreciated.

The allegedly Turkish press:

Having concluded discussions and agreed with the esteemed Pope our GM the most reasonable terms of your surrender as resistance is clearly futile. I congratulate you all on a very wise decision and a well deserved joint second place. *[I think I see the same theme as the Italians did here]*

Sincerely your local neighbourhood *Sultan I Bin A Bit Daft Madeupname*

The allegedly German press under the GM's comment:

KAISER UNAPOLOGETIC.

Not a word about unprovoked attack on France.

Germany => Game O whiners: Regarding your whingeing about Summer and Winter, apart from them being official non-active "Diplomacy" seasons, please note that "Il Osservatore Romano" also observed this convention in Winter 1900! *[This goes back to a previous Game, where people couldn't tell Winter followed Autumn and Summer followed Spring - Ed]*

Alpha Male => Ludmilla: The only good thing about the size of your breasts is that they will provide more meat when we eat you. Welcome to the Board Games Club - and welcome to your first stab *[Proving the headline-writing GM cannot read - Ed]*. Prepare to be little DEAD Riding Hood! *[Given how Little Red Riding Hood fared in the fairy tale, this was an unwise allusion even if the game-end result lived up to it- Ed]*

Alpha Male => Austria: The only thing that going to stop me from tearing you to shreds is that you've got two neighbours who know what you're like and will probably do it first and a third who will soon find out what you're like and join them.

Alpha Male => Il Osservatore Romano: Re "Kaiser Bob holding a reasoned conversation with a socialist". Kaiser Bob? KAISER BOB?? Grrr Snarl! Arch-duke Bob, maybe, arch-pillock Bob more likely, but not Kaiser. If anyone was going to claim that title it would be me. How do you fancy a moon-lit dinner - as the main course?

Even a request for a deadline delay goes weird as the E-Mails start back up:

"Dearest Sugar Dadd... erm... I mean, Your Holiness,

As I will be on vacation from 29 June to 17 July I humbly request that the deadline for S1902 will be AFTER 20 July (the longer after the better) - which will give me a little time to plot against m....erm...I mean, co-ordinate moves with my friends. Had a great time in the Vatican the other nigh....whoops...., I mean,

Sincerely Yours,

Ludmilla"

This looks normal:

"I will accede to your request if you insist, but I should rather prefer to bring the order closure to 29 July. Please reconsider".

But:

“Dear Popey-poos,

1) I think there are some crossed wires here. Ludmilla said S1902 and you start talking about 29th July. How about leaving the deadline for A1901 at 30th June and having the S1902 deadline after 20th July?

2) Rumours that the papal elections have been rigged to exclude half the human race will be referred to the Equal Opportunities Commission...

Alpha Male”.

And:

“Your Holiness!

Far be it for me to suggest that you are not infallible but as I see it, Ludmilla is on her bended knee (a favourite position of mine) asking that

A) the deadline for the Autumn 1901 move remains 30 June, as previously promulgated (there is no reason she cannot submit her orders before departing for the clinic on 30 June)

B) Once she has received the all clear for that nasty infection picked up in Rome then the next deadline, for Spring 1902, can be set after 20 July in order for her to get back in the saddle (another favourite position) so to speak.

Yours humbly

King Jeremy I”

Not to mention:

“May I point out that King James’ point about the point I was trying to make is absolutely correct (and thus not pointless at all, which is the whole point). Got that point?

Ludmilla”

The allegedly Italian press from Autumn 1901:

The devious advisor of Il Duce was content! All of Europe was in utter amazement and joy about the civil war that seemed to have broken out in old Rome... Il Duce almost threw his advisor before the lions when he saw the movements of his feather capped armies... but somehow the advisor seemed to know that his leader was a very idle and feeble man. He said... look out of the windows and see Europe already dance on your grave...let them think you are already gone and that the people of Rome will see to your demise... That was what Bush Sr was thinking when he didn't march on Baghdad back in 1991... and we all know what came from that!

The allegedly German press from Autumn 1901:

Alpha Male -> World: Re Ludmilla and her fixation with emulating the “Fallen Madonna” of “Allo! 'Allo!” fame [*Ironically the programme is only just now being broadcast in Germany - Ed*]:- is it true that people's boasts about the size of parts of their anatomy (it's also true of men, just a different part of the anatomy) are inversely proportional to their IQ?

Alpha Male -> Czar: If your subjects are howling they're probably my subjects - prepare for the next full moon! Remember “Resistance is futile” and the curse of Wimbledon when you go to Sweden - Bjorn was once a great tennis-player, now he just joke-fodder for Trekkies!

Alpha Male -> GM: Apologies if my press isn't cryptic enough...

If France has stood me out of Belgium [*This was printed with the press - Ed*]:

Alpha Male -> Ludmilla: So we clash again. Stop sticking your bosoms where they're not wanted or you will get a mastectomy sans anaesthetic courtesy of my dental equipment...

The allegedly Russian press from Autumn 1901:

I've heard rumours that everyone is attacking everyone else, I assume that I'm not the only one. This makes no sense. What gripe would England have with Turkey? What have I got against France? Peace and love, man, Napoleon is forgiven [*Chirac is another matter - Ed*], and Ukraine for the World Cup!

The allegedly Austrian press from Autumn 1901:

Peter, you're going to get squashed by Lars and I will enjoy seeing you get beaten. from Robert

The allegedly Turkish press from Autumn 1901 headlined:

PARANOIA SETS IN [*Only now? - Ed*]

Istanbul: It is nice to be surrounded by so many wonderful friends and well-wishers!!!!

Think I will invest in an X-ray machine so I can see who has the knife!

I think I had better stop here before the entire "Bleeder" is taken over by this...

Frank's Plank - Part 2

As a BTHQ Member intrepidly runs 26 miles and 385 yards around London, here is Frank's story...

The day dawned sunny, but rain forecast for later - being the optimist, I hoped to have finished before the weather turned naff. We (myself and my wife Sharon) got up shortly after 5 a.m. to get to Milton Keynes police station. No, we weren't in trouble, and I wasn't borrowing a police uniform to run in, but that's where the coach, hired by the Milton Keynes Athletics Association, was departing from.

I had everything I needed. In fact I had way too much stuff - options for clothing, breakfast, snacks, drinks, after-race food, camera, mobile phone, "FRANK" label for the front of my T-shirt so that spectators could cheer me to the finishing line, and of course the all-important running number (18891) and timing chip to fix to my shoelaces. That was probably my greatest fear - not failing to finish, but finishing only to discover the timing chip had fallen off somewhere on the race, and so to have no officially-timed record of doing so!

Anyway, the coach journey to London was uneventful, except that it was noisier than I'd hoped for. To be honest I didn't get much sleep the night before, due to (a) the early start, and (b) pre-race nerves. And people say I'm laid back? Alas, not on every occasion! Anyway, I'd hoped for some kip on the coach, but the chief organiser from MKAA likes the coach microphone. A lot. And the sound of his own voice apparently. And to inform us of all the things he thinks we need to know. Bless 'im. His commentary was funny in parts, but not really funny enough for that time in the morning!

Arriving at the start area in plenty of time, pre-race picture taken, I finally made the decision about how many/which layers to wear, Sharon slapped some sun-tan lotion on the top of my balding head, I packed the unnecessary running kit options into my bag to load on the baggage lorries, slapped the all-important Vaseline in all the appropriate places, said good-bye to Sharon (who would then be heading with her laptop for a London library to do some writing, then to meet me at the finish), checked my timing chip for one last time, and took my place on the starting area.

We started slowly, as my race plan predicted, but then after only 3 miles I was up to my target pace, and the first 11 miles or so were really good - good weather, good pace, noisy crowd, plenty of people I didn't know yelling "GO FRANK, GO!!!" or similar positive sounding noises, and lots of children giving high-fives, even the occasional handful of free jelly-babies - all good stuff. Then the rain clouds gathered, to deposit light rain, heavy rain, and even (as I crossed Tower bridge) hailstones. There were a few really tall runners going at around my pace for me to try to shelter behind, but since the weather was mostly vertical [*Try Scotland - Ed*], I didn't benefit much from that strategy. After 15 miles, the rain took its toll on my paper "FRANK" sign pinned to my T-shirt, and it split into two and fell off, meaning I no longer got any personal encouragement from the sidelines. But anyway, I was happy, feeling good, and 30 seconds ahead of my schedule at mile 18, my target being to finish in 3:57 and having a full hour to complete the last 6 miles. Feeling good, that was, until I'd run 19.5 miles, at which point, with no notice whatsoever, my right hamstring got major cramp. And I do mean major. Not only that, other muscles decided to join in shortly after. "NO, NOT AGAIN!!!" I yelled, remembering a very similar experience from 2002. Or maybe I said something less polite, as I headed to the edge of the course to avoid being flattened by the people behind, I'm not sure. Now, to be honest, cramp is not something I'd encountered during my training runs. I was ready to apply some serious grit and determination to beat that "I want to stop" feeling, but not unexpected, unhinted at, unfamiliar (except for 6 years previous) big-time cramp. Back in 2002 there was a helpful St John's Ambulance person to massage my muscles to help get me back underway. Not this time, not as far as I could see. I struggled on, watching the clock tick faster as the miles passed slower, and after 21 miles I knew the 4-hour target was out of sight.

Now I really needed encouragement from the crowd, but without my nameplate, my agonising face failed to gain the support that really could have made a difference. So the last 5.2 miles were a real pain - not just in my legs, but my arms, and my back were now joining in the general complaining process between body and brain. "WHY DO I DO THIS??" was a question that frequently hissed out of my mouth as I mostly power-walked (with the odd bit of running) my way to the finish in 4 hours 23 mins and 5 seconds.

And when I'd finished? I was soooo wet and cold that it took me a good 10 mins to untie the knot on my kitbag. (Note to self. Tie it looser next time. Or just rip it open.) Then the text from friend Chris who got my finishing time from the website within seconds of me finishing. Then the hobble to find Sharon in the huge crowd, failing, queue for the loos, and then finally finding Sharon who hadn't got my texts and was beginning to get rather concerned!

So... for the record...the official FLM web site has the official timings recorded at http://results-2008.london-marathon.co.uk/index.php?lastname=Clark&firstname=Frank&club=&gender=&nation=&event_id=MAS&position=&split=FINISHNET&Submit=show+results+%3E%3E&a=d&o=s&start_no=18891&ostart_no=

The most positive assessment of this marathon run for me, was that my time was 10 minutes and 2 seconds faster than my previous personal best. To be honest, the problems from mile 19.5 were not a complete surprise, since for reasons I won't bore you with, I only had one training run under my belt of more than 16 miles, and that was... 17 miles. Not really good enough. Stretching? Warming up and warming down properly before and after training runs? Apparently these all help to keep muscles supple, but not something I'd actually done much of. Needless to say I have done plenty of reading since then about avoid cramp for next time. I'll also be making sure my "FRANK" sign is suitably re-inforced against the weather!!

Here's two pictures - one pre-race, before I got rid of the baggy trousers and long-sleeved shirt, and one taken today, 8 days after the event, with the appropriate medal and t-shirt.



FLM2008-1.jpg
(132 KB)



FLM2008-2.jpg (72 KB)

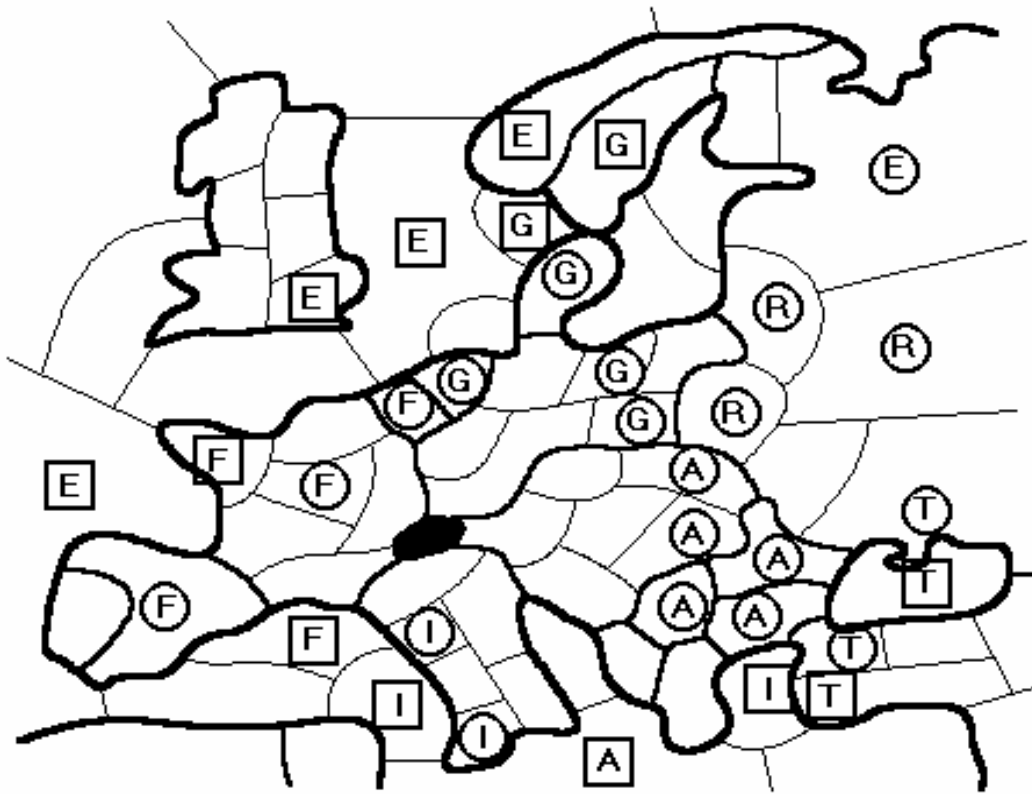
[Apologies to those with a printed copy of the "Bleeder", my grasp of technology, isn't up to printing JPGs - Useless Ed]

So... three final thoughts....

1. THANK YOU so much for all your support. You've helped me exceed my target of raising £700 for Mercy In Action, (current total £736), that will make a real difference to some seriously needy people in the Philippines.
2. Yes....I've entered for next year already, with zero expectation of getting in, but planning on being successful through the ballot after a few rejects in perhaps 3 years - April 2011 would be the first London Marathon after I turn 50, so perhaps I'll finally beat both cramp and the 4 hour mark then. Surprised? Those of you who know my competitive streak will not be.
3. My wife Sharon, and our friend Louise (she got both of us into running some 8-9 years ago, so yes, this is all her fault) have also entered next year's London marathon. That's a real surprise to all three of us, as both had previously said they'd finished doing such crazy things after 2 and 3 London Marathons respectively. They must have been inspired by something, I don't think it was the weather....or my legs!

[Editor's note. Well I could make a lot more jokes at Frank's expense, I won't. Although I did not catch sight of him when I went down to merely watch the Marathon - the dedication of these runners many, of whom like Frank, were raising money for charity - is impressive. Through the "Bleeder", I would like, if I may, to offer the club's thanks to Frank for his efforts]

The Headmasters half-Term Report for the Game 'Qin Shi Huang' (Spring 1903):



Here is the Headmaster's half-term School report on Form Q:

7th Place (Russia) Robert Skynner: 3 Units. An out of character dismal performance from Robert [*really? Out-of-character? Which character? - Ed*]. However the fate of this schoolboy was sealed from the very commencement of this game, when together with France and England they all conspired to attack Germany, but only Robert kept to the agreement and somebody (Drage?) also immediately decided to inform Germany of this deal. Turkey has also let him down, stabbing him for Rumania. Robert should hang his head with shame. Punishment: Write out 500 Lines; *'I will never trust Frost or Drage ever again.'*

=6th Place (Turkey) Gina: 4 Units. Poor Gina has stabbed her only ally (Russia) and now faces Austria and Italy without any help or support whatsoever. So it's only a matter of time before she goes out, probable first for the early bath before even Russia. She needs to learn that you can't win "Diplomacy" without an ally and facing a strong Italian-Austrian alliance that stabbing her only ally (Russia) was suicidal and so has sealed her fate. Punishment: 2 hours detention. Must do better next time.

=6th Place (Italy) Jim Williams: 4 Units. Jim entered this game with a reputation as one of the best players in the BT HQ BGC, however this reputation now lies in tatters. Unable to gain territory in the east, due to Robert feeding Gina accurate predictions of Jim's likely moves (until Gina stabbed Robert), I can't see Jim gaining any territory in Turkey as the greedy and nefarious Austria is going to clear up by taking over just about everything in the east. Jimbo does have the option of attacking France with English support. This is a much better option for him and so I'll look with interest to see if Jim takes up this offer, by throwing in his lot with Germany which could result in three rapid builds. The headmaster says; 'receive two strokes of my cane.' [*Sorry, this is now illegal under anti-child cruelty laws -Ed*]

4th Place (England) David Frost: 5 Units. David is fighting an extremely strong German-French alliance, but is doing incredibly well through his crazy policy of constant unreasoning aggression towards absolutely everybody else in the game. He's not also stabbed his only ally (Russia) by taking St Petersburg off him and then uttered the classic quote; *'don't worry Robert, I'm still your ally.'* But because he is currently holding MAO, he's consequently putting enormous pressure on France who by defending three supply centres (Por, Spa, Bre) cannot consequently invade England until he has first removed this French fleet in MAO; which he can't do for several years. If you go by the book, then David is a hopeless player, who doesn't have a clue about "Diplomacy", however this manic policy of his constant insane aggression towards everybody of his is actually paying off for him, he's the Sid Vicious of British Boardgaming. So well done David, the Headmaster awards you two gold stars and invites you to Matron's study after prep for some 'extra special private tuition!'

=2nd Place (France) Steve Drage: 6 Units. Entering this game as the 'in form player' who wins 50% of the diplomacy games that he enters, Steve's game is now in complete tatters. David's manic and lunatic strategy of constant attack has bested Steve, and yet Steve by threatening Jim Williams through his move F(Mar) - GOL, has gained the unwanted attentions of Jimbo's Papal units acquiring yet another enemy as well. Expect Steve to lose Belgium to Germany within a year or so and then to slowly implode. It all depends upon Pope Jimbo Williams who if he decides to take up Frost's offer and attack Marseilles rather than Turkey, will lead to a far more rapid French decline. Drage's sixth unit should have been a fleet rather than an army, for as even a novice players knows, you can't invade England with only two fleets. So the Headmaster has decided to beat Drage six times with his cane for carelessness.

=2nd Place (Germany) Jeremy Snelling: 6 Units. Expect rapid growth for Jeremy in the middle game, for thus far in Form Q the quality of his play has been flawless and his strategy exceptional. Little Jeremy has been one of the schools most underachieving boys for the past few years, however thus far in Q he has twice completely outsmarted Skynner. First, Robert's early threat from Warsaw and Prussia and then secondly he has also now taken Sweden from Robert for himself. Then Jeremy has outgunned David's attempt to take Sweden off him. If he plays his cards right, then his next builds should be Belgium and then Norway for with two additional fleet builds he'll then be in a good position to capture the North Sea and to quickly take out England. Alternatively, Jeremy could work with England, take Belgium and then head into France, using England and Russia as minor stooge players who are kept alive merely to do his bidding. He might well need Robert's meagre but subservient forces to counter a powerful Austria in the latter stages of the game. I've said in previous School reports; Jeremy has potential, so well done lad. However he will have to continue to improve still further if he wishes to triumph over Austria. He is going to have to give very careful thought to whom he can trust to use a stooge allies against Austria in the latter stages of the game, for it's unlikely that he'll be able to overcome the future massive Austrian onslaught all on his own. Can he trust and use Jim Williams? If so then Jeremy needs to head into France and help Jimbo into Marseilles and Iberia thus arming him against the Austrians. Is Robert Skynner now a trustworthy ally, if so then support his Russian unit in Warsaw against the Austrians and in exchange for Robert helping Germany into Norway, help Robert to retake Sevastopol from the Austrians in the latter stages of the game.

1st Place (Austria) Steve Watts: 7 Units. 'Awesome' is the adjective which immediately comes to mind to describe Steve Watt's progress this far in Form Qin. This lad is a credit to our School and also to our wonderful School Motto: *'Bastados todos et Sundry.'* Look at his incredible achievements thus far. All of the Balkans captured by 1903! His ally (Jim Williams – Italy) kept on as only a minor player on a short leash and thus of no significant threat to himself! Sevastopol likely to fall to Austria by 1904 and rapid inroads will certainly then be made into Turkey by the following year! Steve is an exceptionally talented player who is streets above all of his rivals in this game with the sole exception of the rapidly improving Jeremy Snelling. However how will a powerful Austria on between eight to ten units by 1906 play the middle game? Will he turn on Italy, having kept his former ally purposely weak for such an attack? Or will he turn north, attacking Germany instead (his only threat for a solo win) before Germany attacks him first? Or will he seek more Russian territory, by attacking Robert whose units by this time will no doubt be propped up by his new ally (Germany) [*Really? Did they actually ally with you? - Ed*]. My suspicion is that Austria is going to cut a deal with Drage to purposely weaken his two potential enemies Germany and Italy.

However, with England effectively tying down France for years to come with the English fleet in MAO, I think that he'll find France a declining power (chortle), too far from his home centres and completely unable to offer him any real and substantial support. The Headmaster awards Steve three gold stars and invites him to Matron's office for some 'extra special private tuition' immediately after the other boys have gone to bed. So well done Lad, your playing this game marvellously thus far, but prepare for a battle royal against Germany very soon.

Robert Skynner

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With apologies and a grudging recognition that they are far better artists to Gene Roddenberry, J. Michael Straczynski, Sax Rohmer, Ian Fleming, Mary Gentle, Stan Laurel, J. R. R. Tolkien, Terry Pratchett, H. G. Wells, George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Mark Twain, Anne McCaffrey, Mary Shelley, Frank Herbert, Jim Henson, Hanna & Barbera, Cubby Broccoli, Douglas Adams, Chris Carter, Terry Nation, Michael Crawford, Robert Llewelyn, Peter Jackson, Racist E. Howard, James Cameron, Sir Arthur "fairies at the bottom of the garden" Conan Doyle, Steven Donaldson, French & Saunders, Tim Burton, Gerry Anderson, Bram Stoker, JFK's speech-writers, the nipple- and "gratuitous shower scene"- obsessed producers of a program I don't even wish to admit to watching and (gasp) our very own Jim Williams

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF ROBERT SKYNNER - PART VIII

Revised and expanded

By Edward Orang-Outang.

It was a parody of an almost-forgotten "Diplomacy Game", left barely coherent by a terrible gap in the Bleeditor's production schedule, almost dead, but, gentlemen, we can rebuild it - stronger (if no-one complains about the language), better (if you believe that, you'll believe, anything), faster...

"If you think you're going to convince us that you will be publishing the "Bleeder" any quicker than you have done then you are very much mistaken" Clark-the-Unbeliever butts in from the dead-tiger-and-crocodile-cum-polar-bear-pit,

"And you call me dishonest!" Commandant Adolf Skynner splutters from the aviation-fuel-and-milk-bath

"And I left the club years ago," Smeagol-Middleton adds, "and I don't care how much it screws up your story-line, I'm leaving the vicinity of the aviation-fuel-and-milk-bath right now!"

"Just wait a minute," Clark-the-Unbeliever adds, "you only got there in the last instalment, "I've been waiting nearly two years to get out of the dead-tiger-and-crocodile-cum-polar-bear-pit, I go first!"

"Excuse we!" come two voices from the ten kilometre driveway between Smyrna docks and the entrance to der Skynner-bunker "We're Dr. Franken-Williams and Captain Goneaway, and we haven't been featured since November 2005 and even though the driveway is long we could have walked round the planet in the time since and the planet in question is Jupiter, by the way!"

The WA775Y droid's in the hot pants and tight T-shirt uniform standing under the 400 metre tall iron-pyrites plated statue which is dripping on his head chips in "I haven't been here since Part II, what year was that published in?"

Generic Assistant No 4 and 00PS, standing in the ruined garret in Rome decide to stay stumm as they think Edward Orang-Outang is making up a conversation so he can "remind the readers what is going on", that is, remember where he has put all the characters so that he can actually write this instalment.

"I haven't even appeared yet, darlings" announces Ludmilla floating over the scene supported by two unfeasibly over-large inflatable bosoms.

"Now, wait a minute" utters Leakey-who-thinks-he-is-a-god **"One: Ludmilla wasn't in this game. Two: Ludmilla isn't your character and if Lars has her copyrighted you're in trouble"**

"One: Ludmilla's such a fun character I couldn't resist. Two: It's been done before" Edward Orang-Outang ripostes.

"Where?" asks Sherbet Hermes, standing outside the linen-closet-of-the-booby-trap near the shores of another ocean, "Evidence, dear boy!"

"And don't think we didn't spot you trying to morph Conan-Doyle and Noel Coward either" adds Fat Son.

"Er, can't remember, but it may have involved Fletcher Pratt"

"I would ask 'who?' but this pre-ambule would be the entire episode if I did" Ambassador Dragey adds, last seen by a pile of boxes, tent canvas and horse doo-doo when Michael Howard was still Tory leader, "so get on with it!"

“Halt” yells one of the guards by the pile of boxes, tent canvas and horse so on to an ambulatory pile of gold chains, necklaces, medallions and other flashy bling.

“Ah, let me explain. We’ve heard you’re attacking Skynner and want to join in” explains a man behind the bling-pile, puffing on a two-foot cigar.

This is a very short puff as he is soon flattened by two dozen angry soldiers. “You may or may not have seen those notices they now have around saying ‘It is illegal to smoke in these premises’”, bawls Boss Williams barely resisting the urge to ram the offensive object up another orifice. “while around here we have seen the light, acting as if the human race were intelligent rather than rumoured to be so and have removed the last three weasel-words!”

“If I may ask, who are you, anyway?” Ambassador Dragey adds in a more politic tone.

“I AM AN INCONSIDERATE GIT WITH AN IRRITATING MOBILE RING TONE!”

“Tha’s not oos, laddie” protests the bling-pile in a voice that fires words like a machine-gun checking out a small diamond-encrusted box.

“I AM AN INCONSIDERATE GIT WITH AN IRRITATING MOBILE RING TONE!”

“Not me” Ambassador Dragey adds

“I AM AN INCONSIDERATE GIT WITH AN IRRITATING MOBILE RING TONE!”

“Whoever. Shut it up before I shu...” bawls Boss Williams.

“I AM AN INCONSIDERATE GIT” Finally the noise stops.

“HELLO, THIS IS MR SHOUTY!” screams a man with a small box anachronistically pressed to his lug’ole **“NICE TO HEAR FROM YOU!”**

“Shut the *@&! Up or I will ram this suicide aid” snarls Boss Williams waving the now extinguished cigar “where the sun don’t shine”

“SORRY” Mr Shouty yells **“HAVE TO GO. CALL YOU BACK LATER”.**

Edward Orang-Outang would like to point out that any relation between this character and certain people I have come across is entirely intentional and unaccidental.

“Getting back to ‘who are you’?” Ambassador Dragey quietly interjects.

“I AM AN INCONSIDERATE GIT WITH AN IRRITATING MOBILE RING TONE!”

“Not again”

“I AM AN INCONSIDERATE GIT WITH AN IRRITATING MOBILE RING TONE!”

Grab. Chuck. Smash! Crunch! Tinkle..

“HEY, THAT WAS MY...” Mr Shouty yells.

Grab. Chuck. Smash! Crunch! Thump! Wallop!

“Hey, that was Mr Shouty you did that to..” Ambassador Dragey notes

Edward Orang-Outang would like to point out that any relation between this character’s fate and a cathartic wish-fulfilment fantasy is entirely intentional and quite enjoyable.

“Before ye asks me agin, yon funny ’air style”, the bling-pile very rapidly “I happens to be G. A. Y. Attitude and this yon bloke here is my associate from old lang syne, Cannibal”, pointing to the ex-cigar smoker.

“Known, ye ken, as ye Gay Team. Hoots! We ’eard rumours Skynner in yon bunker oot there was not a likin’ us, noo, so we’ve come to rub it in and rub it out. It being Skynner, ye ken, mon”

“Well I suppose you can join us, but I can’t let everyone in, you know”, Boss Williams replies, “otherwise most of the planet will be joining us...and most of the planet is useless. But if you light up again you will be an ex-everything faster than you can say lung cancer, emphysema, really bad breath, throat cancer, heart disease, gangrene, mouth cancer or impotence.”

“Excuse my ignorance, but if I’m right about this parody”, Ambassador Dragey the parody changes the subject humbly, “aren’t there supposed to be more of you”

“There used to be but they met with, um, er, unfortunate accidents”, Cannibal replies.

“Involving yon man’s cooking pot, ye ken” G. A. Y. Attitude sounding like a Grand National commentator with an exciting finish.

Cannibal sums it up as, smiling unpleasantly, as he struggles back up to the ground, “I plan it when a love comes together!”