

MISSION FROM GHOD — JULY 1992

Mission From Ghod is a product of The North Yorks Game Board: Hobby Services Division. You can learn more about the NYGB by writing to either The Grandmaster or to The Master Of Ceremony and Initiation Rituals.

Mission From Ghod is produced by The Ghods for cynical old hacks who, on the whole, have nothing good to say about the current crop of zines that litter the hobby. The aim of this zine is to reinforce the reader's impressions about the zines that are reviewed. We try to give an accurate picture of what the zine is like and if you should bother reading it.

This zine is not intended to be used by train spotters, computer nerds or neofans. If you fall into one of these categories and are worried that your purity might be endangered by reading this zine then **DON'T PANIC**. We're not going to waste our time mailing this zine to an insignificant little squirt such as yourself. If by some misfortune you are reading this then follow our advice and do yourself a favour by getting a god damn life.

The reviews in this zine were written by a select band of individuals. We don't really want some uninformed neofan writing uninformed reviews for the next issue, which is just as well as **Mission From God** is always short of uninformed reviewers writing uninformed reviews about zines that are, without a doubt, "one of the best in the hobby". Don't waste our valuable time by sending us your sick masturbational fantasies -- send them to Andy Key and Madelaine Smith who really appreciate them and who will, if you are nice and polite, print them in their next issue.

To give a fair review of each zine, we asked a cynical old hack to state an opinion. Sometimes the reviewers actually see the zine that they were asked to review.

We don't bother stating such things as games running, waiting lists, frequency, price and address. Some of these things are irrelevant for the readers of this zine. For almost all the zines that we review the frequency is far too often for our liking. If you can't work out the address of a zine we review then please let us know...

... We will want to take such a misinformed cretin of our mailing lists.¹

Price

Mission From Ghod is sent to everyone on its mailing list. If you're not on the mailing list it may be possible to add your name to it. Please send a Hobby CV to The Master of Ceremony and Initiation Rituals.

DEADLINE for next issue

Contributions welcomed from a pre-selected review panel for an issue that will appear for next year's ManorCovern.

Postal Mathematics

We are not interested in zines that cater for people that like to play with calculators or computers². There is only one suitable place for such people...

¹ If the MFG crew can't be bothered to get their facts right, why should we?

² or even themselves

Ac Mong Worthy winner of the 'Zine Most In Need Of Improvement' Award. This isn't to say that the zine is poor, far from it. But it could be much better. It's dedicated to historical variants and history articles. Unfortunately most of these articles are far too stodgy, did Gordon miss a career as a cook for school dinners? The letter-column is so-so as is the hobby news. The zine trundles on, but this could be a good zine if Gordon worked harder at it.

Age of Reason Famous as being the zine that Hobby Bond dislikes the most. Mainly because the **Age Of Reason** crew don't recognise Hobby Bond as being the living legend of Diplomacy that some others think he is.³

Yeah it's got dip games, it's got a neat A3 style lay-out and it's got really **Large TEXT**. It also has one of the best set of zine reviews in the country and is one of best places for hobby coverage. Oh, it also has diplomacy articles. Good Potential.

Arfle Barfle Gloop This is "one of the best zines in the hobbytm". This is despite the Morris' not really being too sure what the diplomacy hobby is, why people prefer the diplomacy hobby to pbm and what constitutes a diplomacy zine. This is also despite the fact that coming 5th in the 1992 Zine Poll ranks as a major achievement in Kris Morris' life. Sad, really sad.

Bloodstock Mick Haystack⁴ is not to be confused with a Mr Giant Haystack who is a wrestler of some repute. Still confusing Mick for Mr Haystack is unlikely to be as painful as asking the Giant for a quick game of 1830.

Borealis Small, friendly but not, thank the Ghods, furry. Bags of enthusiasm make up for the slightly scruffy presentation. Already attracting a hard-core of loyal supporters. Hobby coverage is the hobby norm, pretty pointless and barren.

C'Est Magnifique One of the top zines to get if you want hobby coverage. Recommended.

Cut & Thrust I only see this zine on occasion, which judging from those issues that I have seen is about as often as it deserves to be seen.

Diary of a Dead Raven If I were to recover my interest in playing games, Jean-Luc Stevens' zine would be near the top of my shopping list. An unusual selection of games, run well and it's always entertaining to read the reports. No concept of the wider Hobby, but a good zine to actually play games in.

Dolchstoß You won't find many zine reviews in here, well none actually. You won't find many article on diplomacy here, well none actually. You won't find much in the way of hobby coverage and discussion here.

Can this zine really be considered to be part of the diplomacy hobby?

Electirc Monk The master of blandness and presentation over content. On first sight this appears a sight for sore eyes. Pretty artwork, pretty layout, pretty longish lettercolumn and several pretty articles. But put in your pretty thumb, you will not pull out a plum.

On closer reading this zine has absolutely zero content of merit. It is full of pretty platitudes, pretty meaningless platitudes. That this zine is considered by so many to be **The Zine** is a sad reflection on the hobby. The intellect of this zine is comparable to that of a snail, and a small snail at that.

Recommended course of action: thermo-nuclear strike.

³please write to the Hobby Bond Fan Club, co 13 Merrivale Road

⁴You had to be there!

Excidio Letter column is normally so sparse to make one wonder why he bothers. Ditto hobby coverage. Ditto editorial. In other words a typical British zine. Friendly. Oh yes friendly.

The Finishing Touch Sad. Very sad. Why go to all the bother of writing programs to run your master-rating system when you make up the data base you are using? Wouldn't it make more sense to construct a proper data base and then *make up* the ratings, as if anyone cared what their *Dolchstoß* rating was anyway. In fact, why not make up the data base and the ratings? Why go through all the time of rerunning your programs each time a slight adjustment is made to the system? Why is it that after every tinkle with the system Sharp's rating increases?

Froggy This zine has been much more interesting over the last two years than in the years before.

Gallimaufry The proportion of written material to game reports is approaching an acceptable level. A strong contender for the 'Zine Most In Need of Improvement' Award. It has all the trappings of being a good zine: regular, dedicated editor, interesting editor who can write and a range of interesting letter column hacks. Yet this zine consistently falls behind its potential. If Steve gets his finger out this could easily win fame and fortune.

Garbage In, Garbage Out One of the worst zines ever to grace the UK Hobby. The only good thing that you can say about this zine is that it has folded.

Greatest Hits One of the top zines in the hobby. Excellent ratio of written material to game reports which more editors should strive to achieve. Never fails to entertain and provoke comment. Has a better idea of what makes a good diplomacy zine and what the diplomacy hobby is about than nearly all the other editors whose products are reviewed in this zine. If this were the only zine in the hobby, it would be a better hobby than it is today.⁵

Die Große Dampfmaschine This zine has achieved such a lack of editorial identity and content that the boys and girls at **Electric Monk** probably wet their beds just thinking about it. Hobby coverage pointless. Ditto zine reviews. Ditto letter-column. Only point of recommendation: Paul is supposed to have a great deal of dirt on Iain Bowen.

Hopscotch The acceptable face of Postal Mathematics. (ie over there and not over here.)

A Little Original Sin This zine has what passes for typical hobby coverage these days, that is to say almost none. Why she bothers with such a pointless hobby news section we don't know. Still the letter-column is entertainingly occupied by the usual selection of bleeding heart liberals, right on PC types and lefties.

Mission From Ghod A review zine so complete it even reviews itself. More regular than **Froggy** and more useful than the other review zine.

Mission From God A zine which contains the phrase "one of the best zines in the hobbytm" n times, where n is the number of zines reviewed. The policy here is to tell you nothing about the worth of the zine, but to give the reviewers a chance to lick the boots of their favourite editors. Sickening. Contains the opinions and writings of the hobby non-expert Action-Man.

The only plus point is that the zine is considerably better than it would have been had Joy Hibbert (the other candidate) taken over the zine.

Mopsy Reliable. Dependable. Tetley's.

NMR! Probable the worst zine ever to receive the accolade 'Best Zine never to win the Zine Poll'

⁵Birks is buying the MFGh team a round at ManorCovern.

Now Eat The Rabbit William ranks alongside Birks and Sharp as one of the top writers in the Hobby at the moment, and one of the best writers of all-time. Recommended.

Obsidian This was a typical hobby zine before most of the other typical hobby zines were started. If you want to improve your *Dolchstoß* rating by winning games this is the recommended zine to play in.

Ode Possible the least-deserving zine ever to win the Zine Poll? Marsden is still sulking because of **Ode's** placing in this year's Zine Poll and complaining that his trades voted him down. In fact the reason why **Ode** did so badly was that his subbers gave him low marks, and a quick look at the zine will tell you why.

Realpolitik Whilst never quite reaching the upper echelons of zines **Realpolitik** is one of the better zines to grace the hobby. If anything the style of writing is slightly too good and the content too mundane — ever imagined what the Times would be like if it were produced as a fanzine?

Recover From Limbo It's got GAMES, GAMES and GAMES with none of those pointless distractions such as letter columns, zine reviews or articles. Shurely this *must* be one of the best zines in the hobby?

Small Furry Creature Press It might be a good place to play En Garde but it is not a diplomacy fanzine and should not be allowed in the Zine Poll.

Smodnoc Toby Harris runs an excellent hobby service. This zine is packed full of computer weenies, train spotters and Turbo Phreaks. That means that all these sad people with no lives are not troubling us. Give the man a medal.

It's a shame that there is a considerable delay between the deadline and receipt of the zine.

Oh, you probable don't know but Toby has won the dip tournament at ManorCon for the last two years. Being very modest Toby doesn't mention this fact, very often.

Springboard Responsible for the decline in the number of zines, and for the number of newbies entering the mainstream. Responsible for driving out of the hobby almost all of the interesting newbies. Responsible for ensuring a continued stream of train spotters and computer nerds into the hobby.

The zine reviews are riddled with errors, the games are poorly run and Danny likes to treat the players as 7-year olds. Maybe he likes playing with little children? Who knows.

Danny doesn't have the decency to fold.

Recommended course of action: Two thermo-nuclear strikes.

A Step Further Out Adequate layout. Adequate presentation. Adequate selection of games. Adequate letter-column. Adequate editorials. And this is one of the best zine in the Hobby?

This should be the kind of zine which serves games-players by providing a good service and attracts little attention. That it is considered to be one of the best zines around...

Take That You Fiend They don't make zines like this any more. In fact, they've never made zines like this. A strictly one-off.

U-Bend Joy runs an entertaining zine, although we wish that she would stop Hobby Bond from occasionally producing the letter column; he only distracts from her own fine efforts.

Has not lived up to its expectations, but remains above average — although given where the average is these days that's not saying too much.

Variants & Uncles When I told James to 'go break a leg' I did not expect him to take my words at face value. Still getting pissed and then jumping over brooks is much more exciting than writing dry articles on unknown variants. Could it be that there is a reason for these games being unknown?

Has recently produced some excellent articles on the hobby and even variants, although there is some doubt as to the authorship of these articles. James is slowly becoming one of the best fan writers in the hobby, one of the best zines in the hobby for informed hobby content and news from abroad.

Y Ddraig Goch Will he, or won't he? For most of the past year Bowen has been unable to decide if he will carry on running his zine or if he should fold. This has been reflected in the zine. The occasional gem of an article has been hidden by a succession of uninspiring articles. Hobby news remains one of the most informed around.

Zines not reviewed

Arglebargle, Bela Lugosi's Dead, The Mark Nelson Experience. The Mouth of Sauron, Pigbutton, Phyrriic Victory, Rianna Games Review, Scorpio⁶, Sumo's Karaoke Club⁷ & Variable Title.

An Overseas Chappie

POPULAR CUTLERY 6 (*May/June 1992*) comes from Adrian and Paul Appleyard who despite hanging around the Australian hobby for a large number of years, Adrian was around when I started trading with **Beowulf** in 1987, have managed to omit their address from the current issue! They're not alone in making this mistake, Bill O'Neil makes Crouch's mistake in the last issue of **De Excideo**.

News on the Australian Tournament scene, as vibrant as ever, a small letter column and a neat new variant (Don Dip) which uses the Vain Rats approach of special powers — here there are only two special powers and each player may use each power once per year (sidestepping the problems of balance which afflict almost all of the Vain Rats games). Nicely presented in an A3 format. Could go far, provided they remember to include their address on future issues.

Also contains the return of **Beowulf**, issue 68, as a subzine. Andrew trundles on and on, running his last game to a finish — perhaps getting ready to relaunch **Beowulf** for the third time? Surprisingly only four regular dip games have finished in **Beowulf** (it mainly ran variants in its glory days) and the latest game finished in 1912 as a 25 center Russian win, impressive as there were only 9 NMRs in the whole game. Whilst not quite being a world record⁸ this is one of the biggest wins on record.

Andrew England, 3 Lacey Place, Kambah, ACT 2902. AUSTRALIA

⁶ not part of the hobby, although Mark Boyle's subzine is excellent — excellently written and one of the best places to read about the hobby. If only we could persuade him to launch his own zine/

⁷ not part of the hobby

⁸ which I believe is 28 centers in an early 1970's US dipgame

DARKSIDE ANALYSIS: A Self-Tasting Procedure

BY Karel Aleric

Procedure You will find ten sets of three statements each. Read the first statement in the set (“**A**”). If you agree with it, circle the **A**, and score 1 point on the set for the correct answer.

If you do not agree with the first statement in the set, read the second statement in the set (“**B**”). If you agree with it, circle the **B**, and score 0 points on the set for an uninformed answer.

If you do not agree with either the first or second statements in the set, read the third statement (“**C**”). If you agree with it, circle the **C** and score -1 points on the set for the antisocial answer.

If you agree with none of the three statements, reread them and circle the letter for the statement closest to your opinion, and score yourself as instructed above.

Proceed to the next set and repeat. When you have finished the last set, add up your scores, and read the analysis section at the end.

Set 1 — **Dunky Proffitt**

A Dunky was a fine example of the kind of young and enthusiastic new blood that this hobby needs.

B It's nice that Dunky spent his spare time playing with his fonts.

C It's good for Dunky, and better for the Hobby, that he is currently residing in a foreign jail.

Set 2 — **Garbage In, Garbage Out**

A This was my one of my favourite zines. It's a disgrace how some people attacked this fine, fine, zine.

B It's nice that Dunky had so many fonts.

C This zine didn't fold quick enough for my liking. Everyone who recommended it should be rounded up and shot.

Set 3 — **Toby Harris**

A Toby is a modest individual who works hard to offer orphan games a good home.

B Not many people know that Toby has won the ManorCon diplomacy tournament twice.

C Roby Harris is an *ex officio* crazed wacko whose dictatorial whims should be ignored. What's good for the hobby, is Toby out of the Hobby.

Set 4 — **Smodnoc**

A **Smodnoc** is an excellent zine, with an excellent turn-around and is an highly exciting read.

B This is one of the best zines in the hobby, even if it didn't reach the Top Ten in this year's Zine Poll.

C This zine is best described as an all too regular bowel movement from Sunderland.

Set 5 — **Danny Collman**

A Danny does an excellent job looking after all those nice young boys.

B It's nice for Danny that he doesn't have anything better to do with his miserable life than play with neofans.

C Danny is a crazed wacko with little understanding of either the diplomacy hobby or his place in it. What's good for the hobby, is bad for Danny.

Set 6 — **Springboard**

A **Springboard** is an excellent zine for diplomacy novices.

B It's nice that Danny wants to run novice-only games.

C The zine reviews are littered with inaccuracies, the hobby news section is best described as uninformed and the zine as a whole offers nothing constructive to the hobby. We would be better off with no **Springboard**.

Set 7 — **The Finishing Touch**

A Is an authoritative guide to game-end finishes in the UK. Steve Doubleday and Richard Sharp should be congratulated for the many hours they have put into this product.

B It's sad that two grown man have nothing else to do with their sad, twisted, lives then produce this zine.

C Is produced by two *ex officio* crazed whackoes.

Set 8 — **Mission From God**

A Is an authoritative guide to the state of the Hobby.

B It's nice for Madelaine and Action-Man that they both like sentimental sap.

C Is positively sickening in its goody-toshoes approach to the hobby, in which every zine is "one of the best zines in the hobby." It is bland, inaccurate, uninteresting, uncritical and a waste of time and effort. Shouldn't they have more interesting things to do with their spare time then wet themselves with excitement over which superlatives to use in their next uncritical issue?

Set 9 — **The Miller Numbers**

A The Miller Number Custodian should be able to assign Miller Number's to any game he wants to, even if it isn't a variant.

B It's nice that someone want to keep track of all variant games.

C Andy Bate is a plagiarist, a crazed wacko and unfit to hold any Hobby Office. Ignore him.

Set 10 — **The North Yorks Games Board**

A It's nice that everyday hobby folk want to meet up and have a pint or two together.

B What about the spanking and the secret initiation ceremonies, that's what I want to know.

C The NYGB are a bunch of crazed whackoes who like nothing more then to bitch about other people and to be nasty to fine upstanding hobby members. In short they know more about what makes this the god damn fine hobby it is then most of the rest of the people in it.



Analysis	
Total Score	
9 to 10 pts	Perfect. You should consider a career in secret police work.
6 to 8 pts	You're too good for this hobby. Why don't you leave?
3 to 5 pts	You've really been taken in by the Dark Side of the Hobby. Undergo a Reality Check before its too late.
0 to 2 pts	Uninformed. Ignorance is bliss.
-1 to -3 pts	You have a healthy scepticism: unfortunately you still believe too much Dark Side propaganda.
-4 to -6 pts	Bad Boy. Expect a Toby Harris plot denouncing you.
-7 to -9 pts	Antisocial and proud of it. You're the type of person who should be joining the NYGB.
-10 pts	You are more antisocial than The Crazyed One. Please contact him immediately about taking over an independent Hobby Post.

BLACK LIST THE BLACK-LISTER! PROBE⁹

In the last issue of *Y Ddraig Goch* Iain Bowen announced the introduction of a **Black List** for naughty diplomacy players! This is shocking and he should be denounced throughout Fandom for this anti-social behaviour. This shows that he is nothing but a white imperialist and a racist!

Why has he set-up a **Black-List**, why is it not a White-List or even a yellow-list? This is shocking behaviour, even more so coming from Iain Bowen.

This is intolerable behaviour!

Further examples of Iain Bowen's unacceptable *racism* is that at every Yorkmeet he asks people if they want **black coffee**! Why is he calling it **black coffee**? This is nothing but ideological racism! Why doesn't he ask people if they want "coffee without milk", there is no need to bring colour and race into it!

The hobby must unite together and tell Master Bowen that this is acceptable behaviour! Oops, I ment to say unacceptable behaviour... a slip of the tongue I assure you...

This is not South Africa where blacks are kept in their proper place and under control. We must strive to be more tolerant and show them that we really do like them.

This is the thin end of the stick. Next issue Iain will be saying that Muslims who don't like our laws and our way of life should get on the next back to the third-rate third-world nations they came from. If they want to practise their heathen religion then they should return to their heathen lands.

Whilst every right-thinking Englishman agrees with these admirable sentiments we must realise that white people are by their nature racist because they are white!

That's right! Right-on, brother. Only white-people can be racist because all other people's in the world are naturally tolerant of other races and religions. White-people are the only race who have repressed others, have set up and exploited colonys and have run imperialistic empires!¹⁰

⁹Brought to you by Spacefillers Limited

¹⁰some of the material in this article is satirical, some of it is the truth. Can you work out which is which?