
That was the year which was...1962

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That was the year which was... is a postal diplomacy fanzine of irregular frequency which discusses diplomacy games that started in the named year. Issue two of *That was the year which was...1962* will appear when any new information becomes available on the game that started in 1962.

That was the year which was... is edited by Mark Nelson. The last time I published a fanzine (about three decades ago) it was *de rigueur* to provide a postal address.

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But you might prefer to contact me on mnelson@uow.edu.au.

I suppose that publication of this title means that I am one of the few people to have published diplomacy fanzines from two continents. That's some good egoboo for me.

If you know your Hobby history then you know that, in 1963, John Boardman ran the first postal diplomacy game in *Graustark*. It might seem surprising that my account of postal diplomacy games should start one year before this date...

In 1972 Conrad von Metzke became the Boardman Number Custodian, being the fifth such person following: John Boardman (10/1963–8/1967), Charles Well (10/67–3/68), John Koning (3/68–10/69), and Rod Walker (10/69–10/72). Conrad started a special zine to report BNC business: *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Diplomacy, But Had Better Sense Than to Ask*. Subsequently BNC's maintained publication of *Everything* until at least the late 1990s.

The second issue of *Everything* (4th November 1972) contains the following statement.

The following regular game from an earlier period has recently been rediscovered and assigned a number accordingly:

1962A — no title¹ — von Metzke. A-Conrad F. von Metzke. E-Rod Walker. F-Leonard Garland. G-Frank N. Setchell. I-Lewis Perry. R-Jon Nicholas Sutherland. T-Charles Kelly.

Old Hobby hands should have smelt a rat at this point since at least three of the individuals associated with this game had long involved in the postal diplomacy hobby: Rod Walker, Lewis Perry, and, of course, Conrad von Metzke. How come none of these individuals had mentioned this game at any previous point in time?

¹Usually in this place the name of the fanzine running the game is provided. The implication of 'no title' is that the game was not run in a fanzine.

Conrad continued the subterfuge in *Everything* 4 (2nd December 1972), where 1962A was listed as a game for which Conrad had ‘complete information’, *Everything* 6 (1st February 1973), in which an ‘annual composite totals’ of Boardman Numbers shows that one game started in 1962 and that this game was still in progress, and *Everything* 7 (1st March 1973), in which a ‘Complete Listing of All Postal Diplomacy Games in History’ starts with 1962A. The game is listed, as before, as not starting in a fanzine and notes that it is currently running in *Seitenstetten*. The game may have continued in future issues of *Everything*, but I have not read those.

But what was the game? The game being played was not an old game of postal diplomacy. No, the game being played was something else... Sometime in the 1960s a feud started between John Boardman and Rod Walker². Rod and Conrad’s friendship dated back to at least 1962. The creation of 1962A was an attempt to continue the feud by suggesting that John Boardman had not been the first person to conceive of the idea that diplomacy could be adapted for postal play. For sure, he was the first person to successfully run a postal diplomacy game. But he was not the first person to have the idea.

Mark Berch wrote this about the 1962-A game in his “Lexicon of Diplomacy” (June 1980) and in his “Son of Lexicon” (March 1982).

1962-A The most famous of all phoney games, this hoax was perpetrated by Conrad von Metzke and Rod Walker for the principal purpose of getting John Boardman’s goat, since JB was proud of running the first postal game, 1963A. Walker now claims (1982) this was not a hoax, but a real game which did not get beyond 1902; and has produced photocopies of the supposed original zine in which the game was run, *Mongo*.

In June 2007 Rod Walker made the following contribution to the Diplomacy A–Z project.

1962-A *Mongo*. That was a bit of fun. I inveigled Conrad von Metzke into the plot, and we produced several phony issues of the zine, making sure that there were things about it that differed from normal Dipzine practice. I can’t recall if we did carbon copies or what. I have a set of copies in a file box somewhere. Boardman was of course furious, and just to needle him more I maintained that *Mongo* was an actual game and ‘zine for a long time — until now, in fact.

Future issues will contain a table providing details on games awarded a Boardman Number, such as whether they are really a postal diplomacy game. For consistency with what will follow in subsequent issues, Table 1 provides the details for the 1962 gamestart.

1962-A. The game that never existed in the year that did not happen.

²I remember reading about this feud in an issue of *Diplomacy Digest*. I believe that DD was one of the few zines that do not end up going into the Derby Council municipal tip. If so, my copies are somewhere in the garage... I don’t imagine I am going to find them anytime soon. If someone can track down the relevant issue of DD and supply me with the necessary details... Well, that eventuality would necessitate the release of issue two of this zine!

BN	Hoax	Regular
1	1	0

Table 1: Summary of games issued a Boardman Number with the year 1962. The only game with a 1962 designator was a Hoax and is not considered to be ‘regular’.

Bibliography

Diplomacy A–Z Version 6.0

A glossary of terms associated with the postal diplomacy hobby, building upon the work of several previous such collections. Available at <https://badpets.net/Diplomacy/AtoZ/Intro.html>.

Diplomacy Digest

A complete (?) run of *Diplomacy Digest*, from issue 1 through to issue 132/132, has been scanned by Doug Kent. They are available at <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/kent/d.htm>.

Diplomacy Digest #34–35–36 (April–May–June 1980) contained Mark’s ‘The Lexicon of Diplomacy’. *Diplomacy Digest* #57 (March 1982) contained his ‘Son of Lexicon’. I’ve had a quick squint through both of these and I could not find a reference to 1962-A in either — but presumable it is there somewhere.

Everything

A complete (?) run of *Everything*, from issue 1 through to issue 97, has been scanned by Doug Kent. They are available at <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/kent/e.htm>.