

FUNGUS DOWN UNDER

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FUNGITORIAL



G'DAY all. I'm annexing this joint for the next 12 months, charged with the sacred task of convincing you Australia's the place to be once the thrill of Amsterdam's forbidden delights have worn off, leaving you craving nothing more than a cold beer and a burnt sausage slapped into a slice of white bread.

To that end, I'd best get some introductions out of the way, eh?

I first heard of *Diplomacy* when I mail-ordered a \$3 magazine, *Fire & Movement's Beginner's Guide To Strategy Gaming*, alongside my usual swag of birthday D&D stuff. Even without the recommendations from JFK and Kissinger, it sounded amazing...so I scored a copy for Christmas that year (1997, I believe).

The rules were impenetrable and, aside from an abortive attempt at a four-player game, I shelved it. Interested in theory, but in practice...nah.

That changed two years later, when I was in second-year uni. Procrastinating between classes in the computer lab, I was Yahoo-searching anything that popped into my head.

Soon enough, I found a *Diplomacy* zine, *Damn The Consequences!*, going strong in Melbourne. I subscribed and was soon in the midst of my first proper game, as Germany.

It was the beginning of the end. From there I was led to subscribe to the Ozdip email list, which was then in the throes of an interminable scoring system debate. (I still think they're a ridiculous waste of time, just quietly.)

FIRST-TIME FAILURE

IN DECEMBER 1999, I had my first job – Santa photographer. The pay was (a) appalling and (b) cash in hand, so I'd scraped together enough to attend my first proper *Diplomacy* tournament.

It was in Canberra and organised by a fellow named **Andrew Goff**. My grandparents drove me down (cos I'm a cool guy) and I walked upstairs into the student accommodation in which I'd be staying, ANU's Toad Hall, full of trepidation. Would these *Diplomacy* players be insular nerds? Would I be the cocky on the biscuit tin, on the outside looking in for the whole tournament? Would ANYONE speak to me?

I needn't have worried. As soon as I entered the common room, gentlemanly scholar **Dave Currell** warmly shook my hand, recognised we were working together in that *Damn The Consequences!* game and quoted my email signature from Ozdip (at the time a TISM quote, "Do as history teaches: die on Middle Eastern beaches.")

'THE RULES WERE IMPENETRABLE'

Everyone else was just as welcoming and friendly...if unforgiving of errors on the board.

In my first game – my first-ever face-to-face, you'll recall – I pulled Austria. Spring 1901 went as you'd expect, but in the Fall I moved Serbia to Greece, supported by Albania. I thought if you had been the last person in a centre, regardless of season, you owned it.

I ended the game on three non-contiguous centres, thanks to the warm heart of Mr Currell, and came 25th out of 28 overall. My *Diplomacy* career had begun, with a whimper rather than a bang. I didn't even score a Best Novice trophy.

INTERNATIONAL INFAMY

THE first World Dip Con I attended was also in Canberra, on the weekend of my 22nd birthday (2002, for those paying attention). For me, it was a memorable weekend for three reasons: being locked in a hotel room with a madman, being

accused of throwing the tournament to a fellow Australian and waking up at 4am on the morning of my birthday to scoop fresh vomit from the hotel room basin (the first and third memory are connected).

Well-known Aussie master **Rob Stephenson** took out the 2002 crown, and believe me, he didn't need my inept help.

I was Austria, Rob was Turkey and the rest of the board seemed more interested

'DESPITE WHAT YOU'VE HEARD, I DIDN'T THROW THE WDC'

in pursuing their own goals than helping an idiot like me do anything to stop a solo. The aforementioned madman, **Rohan Keane** told me he had been promised a 16-16 split, so all I could do was keep my fingers crossed that Rob would fight temptation as he moved through my centres in Spring and out of them in Fall.

Obviously he didn't, and the inevitable solo sealed his victory.

I'm marginally better at this game of ours now, but the key lesson to take away from all this is: Shane is terrible at playing Austria.

2009: YEAR OF THE CUBIS

LAST year I returned to *Diplomacy* after a few years' hiatus. I didn't expect much to come of this – a few beers with old mates, perhaps a Best Country or two, seeing **Tristan Lee's** Astro Boy shirts once again – but I ended up scoring my first solo, winning the Bismark Cup (Australia and New Zealand's Player Of The Year trophy...with an arcane scoring system) and reuniting with a bunch of great people.

I even made a new friend here and there. Then I backstabbed them.



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AUSSIE MASTERS (cos there aren't any Kiwi ones yet)

AUSTRALIA and New Zealand have an official player ranking system called **Masterpoints**, which let you know how you're going against local players past and present.

Based on supply centres earned, you begin as a novice, working your way up the ranks: Intermediate, Senior, Veteran, Champion and, finally, Master.

Since the system was established by Ken Sproat in 1988, Australia has produced five Masters. This is a tiny insight into the minds of two of them.

CRAIG SEDGWICK

Where are you from? What's a favourite landmark from there, for people touring Australia?

"I live at Prestons (near Liverpool) in Sydney. There's not a great deal out here of significance, but I guess I would say my favourite landmark for Sydney would be a bridge climb on the Harbour Bridge."

Tell us about your first experience with Diplomacy.

"My first experience was when Piotr Dydusiak (who played in a few tournaments) moved to my high school in about 1984. He showed a few of us the game and we played during lunch breaks in the science building - one of the players was our chemistry teacher..."

What's the worst reason to ally with someone? What's the best reason?

"Worst - you are scared of them and worried they will wipe you off the map. Best - when you have a good idea of

what their current goal(s) are and they fit in with your plans too."

How can losers like us become better Dip players?

"Experience, persistence, getting a decent reputation as someone who is sporting and tries to win and doesn't walk away from a failing position. Watching how other players interact when diploming - there are many different styles that work and you have to find yours. Tactics will only take you so far, it will be diplomacy that will make you a champion player."

Has the game ever cost you a friendship?

"No, not that I am aware of.... There have certainly been a few relationships go downhill after *Dip* games - that's why I will never play *Dip* with my wife! Chicks that you are in a relationship with take it very personally when you stab them ...in my limited experience."

Will you be attending the WDC in Sydney next year?

"Probably. I am no longer all that interested in *Dip*. I have been put off by the mega-gaming that goes on, and some of the decisions made by the DAANZ for the direction of the hobby. But I will most likely come along and support the hobby."

ROB STEPHENSON

Where are you from? What's a favourite landmark from there, for people touring Australia?

"Melbourne. Puffing Billy for kids. MCG for the best sport on the planet. Lygon Street for the meals. King Street for the strippers."

Tell us about your first experience with Diplomacy.

"One of my mates didn't show up for a game of *Dungeons & Dragons* so we couldn't continue the great

adventure. I was about 15 at the time. My mate grabbed this game of *Diplomacy* off his dad's shelf and the rest is history."

What's the worst reason to ally with someone? What's the best reason?

"When you lose. When you win."

How can losers like us become better Dip players?

"Practice, Practice, Practice. Listen and learn."

Has the game ever cost you a friendship?

"On the contrary the game has brought me friends all over the world. New Zealanders, Canadians, Brazilians, Americans and even some people in Australia."

Will you be attending the WDC in Sydney next year?

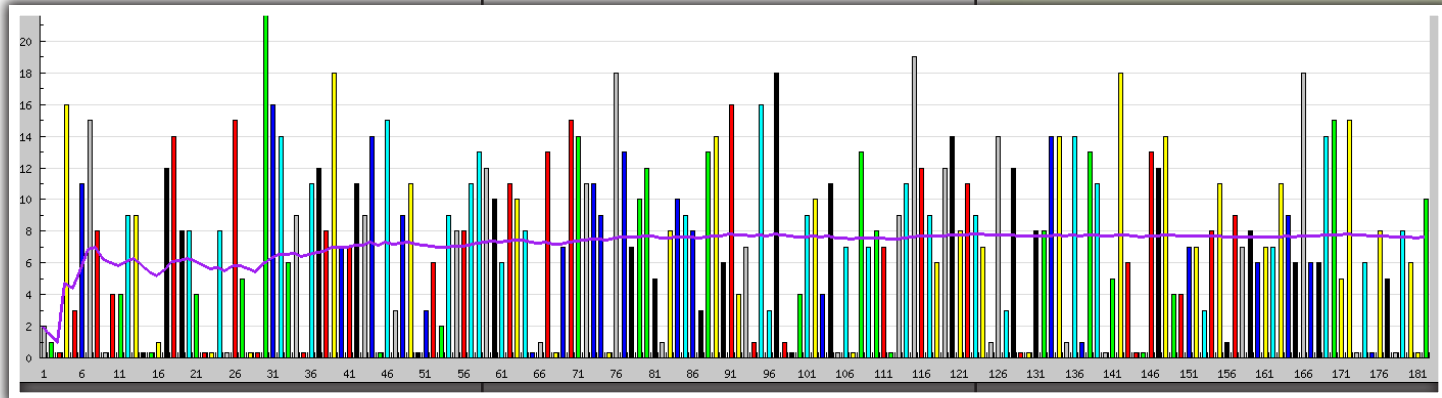
"At this stage I certainly intend to. It will be great to catch up with some old friends I haven't seen in a while."

Interviews by Daniel Pavatich

DISPATCH FROM AUSSIE WDC HQ

Accommodation

EVEN if the hotels and backpackers fill up, the class of billeted sleeping places is always first-rate.



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MYCONID MAIL

Toby Harris

HI SHANE. I genuinely wish you all the best with the new zine, and would be very happy to write some articles for you over the year ahead if you want them. But it's probably best that your first issue is relatively "Toby-free"... We all want to see what you can do to take the WDC database forward :-)

Thanks, mate. Hope you like the first instalment!

Jérémie LeFrancois

MAY I introduce myself: I am French, (nobody is perfect), *Diplomacy* player (sometimes) computer programmer (more than often). I have designed a website intended to make people play our favourite game. On this site, a big touanemnt "Diplomacy World Cup" took place between September 2007 and May 2008 - I hope you have heard of the event. The idea of this event originally comes from Dorian Love, native of the place where the actual Soccer World Cup is to start very soon from now.

We are trying another go for start of this great event in due to start in September 2010. I know that *Fungus* typically reaches the people that play well in face-to-face, and they are more than often linked to the people who played (and, I hope, will play) the DWC.

Also note that the French team(s) blalantly won the first event, so it is high time some other nation show they too have good *Diplomacy* players. Besides it may be noted that Toby did not play for England - he was probably afraid of the opposition).

Therefore I would kindly request that in some way of the other a little presentation I have written reach as many people as possible. Either by spamming them rudely (remember

I am French) either by inserting something in next *Fungus* - provided it is published not later than September 2010 of course.

The details are at www.stabbeurfou.org/docs/regles/en/Presentation_dw_c_II.html

Geez, Toby didn't warn me I'd have to deal with the French. Nonetheless: wish, command - yours, mine.

Grant Steel, DAANZ President

FIRSTLY, I would like to thank Toby Harris for his contributions to the *Fungus* Newsletter over the past year. It has been great reading about the events, plans and general chat regarding the upcoming WDC in The Netherlands next month. I hope that we are able to put together a tournament which will rival what looks to be planned for August this year. I personally am looking forward to playing *Diplomacy* on a different continent for the first time and hope to convince a few people to come down under next year.

DISPATCH FROM THORIN MUNRO

Venue Announcement: World Diplomacy Championship

AFTER assessing more than 20 potential venues, I'm very pleased to advise the 2011 World Diplomacy Championship will be held in the **Seaview Function Centre at the Coogee Bay Hotel, Sydney.**

The Seaview function room hosts up to 120 people banquet style, well separated from the busy hotel.

The room has natural light and a huge open-air verandah with stunning beach views.

The room is available from 9am-11pm daily (Saturday, October 1 - Monday, October 3).

The hotel includes multiple bars, beer garden (with giant screen for Rugby World Cup games) and brasserie.

Coogee accomodation options range from budget to boutique, as well as two backpacker hostels within 5 minutes walk.

Coogee Beach is located just 15min from Sydney airport (~\$25 taxi fare), and 20 minutes from the Sydney CBD by bus or car.

Plus there are all the expected beachside cafes and shops...etc, etc!

It's a big relief to find a great beach location that showcases Sydney to our international guests. It will be a very attractive tournament venue.

Even though we haven't even had WDC 2010 I can say that planning for WDC 2011 is well underway and I believe that the WDC organizing team under Thorin Munro are in a great position to deliver a fantastic event.

The down under hobby has a lot of people who work tirelessly to promote the game and they never get anywhere enough recognition for their time and effort. So if you are coming down to Sydney next year make sure you buy them a beer.

That goes double for overworked e-zine editors, by the way. Mine's a Boags Classic Blonde.



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WDC 2011

By Thorin Munro

THERE'S a classic Australian insult, "You couldn't organise a piss-up in a brewery." [Or a chook raffle, or a root in a brothel]. Well, to my mind, when you plan a drunken expedition to a brewery, there's a couple of important things to get right. First, find a good excuse for timing the party (particularly if participants need to negotiate with a better half for time away), choose a pub or pubs for the event, then contact all your mates and hope they turn up (typically, only expect about half the number who say they will).

Not much difference in organising the **World Diplomacy Championship!**

'A PISS-UP IN A BREWERY'

The good news for Sydney is that in 2011 our Kiwi neighbours across the Tasman have the honour of hosting the Rugby World Cup. And it's a conundrum that the *Diplomacy*

DISPATCH FROM ROB SCHONE

Aussie Glossary (By A Former Kiwi)

Bounce: What a kangaroo does
Supply Centre: Pub

Province: Some place in France, isn't it?

Great Power: X-ray vision

Army: Nickname given to someone who has lost both arms

Fleet: Something softcocks build

Coast: Take things easy for a while

Brest: Not used in the singular form
Ally:



hobby player base nearly mirrors the rugby playing countries. We have timed the 2011 WDC for the long weekend of October 1-3, which happens to fall right in the middle of the six week Rugby World Cup. The plan is to allow those keen enough



organised by **Rob Schone**.

After deciding on a time for the event, then you need to find a suitable venue. What epitomises Australia? Great weather and beaches all the way around it's coast.

Sydney beaches are no exception, so the task became somewhat easier for an organiser. Locate a beach suburb with atmosphere, transport, accommodation and great venue for world class Diplomacy... Coogee Beach in Sydney's eastern suburbs delivers all this and more at the Coogee Bay Hotel.

The final challenge, attract a world class turnout to support

to arrive early and see cheaper qualifying rugby games, or stay later for the finals series. And if the expense of the travel and tickets is prohibitive, at least you'll be in a great time zone to catch the games.

Anyway, enough about rugby, we're *Diplomacy* players.

Much more importantly, 2011 will mark the 25-year anniversary of organised tournament FTF

Diplomacy in Australia, one of the longest established hobbies in the world. Australia has twice previously hosted WDC in 1992

and 2002 and we believe hosting WDC will have a very positive impact on interest in our game for years to come. Complementing WDC is a three-week adventure tour across Australia and New Zealand

the championship and find the deserving 2011 World Champion. In many respects this is always the biggest challenge for any organiser. There's two important groups, local players and international guests. DAANZ has been focussed on nurturing a vibrant Down Under hobby where each year we run 6-8 FTF tournaments with more than 80 active players.



And while it's a long trip to Sydney from the northern hemisphere we hope to attract at least 20 international guests.

So where the bloody hell will you be in October 2011?

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DIP TOUR DOWN UNDER

By Rob Schone

SOME people would argue that flying to the other side of the world just to play a few games of *Diplomacy* is overkill. And there might be a grain of truth to this bold claim, so it's just as well that there is plenty more to do in this part of the world. There is a warm-up tournament in New Zealand the weekend before, not to mention the Rugby World Cup. And both countries have stunning scenery and unique experiences. So why not join the **Dip Tour Down Under** (DTDU, pronounced dit-doo) for part or all of our exciting journey through Australia and New Zealand.



Our plan is to come up with a schedule that takes in some highlights around the WDC itself. Here is a possible schedule, but bear in mind that this is just a suggestion, any eventual trip could be longer or shorter, or take a completely

'THE CITY WILL BE BUZZING'

different route. As we get closer to the event, we'll find out how much time you can spend in the region and what you all want to do.

Start in Wellington on Saturday 17th September, where there is a Rugby World Cup game between South Africa and Fiji. The city will be buzzing, it has a great atmosphere to start with, and with the RWC in town, anything is possible.

On the Sunday we travel up to Turangi, taking in the rolling scenery of the lower North Island on the way. Turangi is on the southern tip of Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake (and most powerful volcano, but don't worry it hasn't erupted for 1800 years). This is the start of the geothermal part of our trip and we can start to enjoy hot springs.

If people are up to it, we can do the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, probably New Zealand's most spectacular single day trek through a volcanic landscape with visible volcanic activity. This is a World Heritage Site and skirts the edge of Mt Ngauruhoe (now famous for playing the part of Mt Doom in *Lord of the Rings*).

If this seems a bit ambitious, there are plenty of other, less strenuous, things to do and see on the volcanic plateau.

From here we would make our way north, through Taupo and Rotorua - both with plenty of geothermal activity and Rotorua in particular famous for its bubbling mud pools and a constant hint of sulphur smell in the

air. And there'll be time fit in a visit to the Waitomo caves - a limestone cave complex featuring the Glowworm Grotto.

Then on to Auckland in time for the weekend. As well as the Auckland Diplomacy Championships, Auckland is host to the All Blacks vs France game, one of the most anticipated games of the pool play.



With two such major events in town, expect another party atmosphere.

On Monday, it's time to head across the Tasman to Sydney. The WDC doesn't start till Friday, but there is plenty to do and see in and around Australia's biggest city. Possibilities here include harbour cruises, visiting Bondi beach, climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge, enjoying the night-life in Kings Cross,

'EXPECT ANOTHER PARTY ATMOSPHERE'

Oxford St or Newtown (depending on your taste), day trips out to the Blue Mountains or Hunter Valley wine region. Even if you can't join us the week before or week after, this week should be a great chance to settle in, acclimatise and meet some of the other players.

After the WDC it's time to travel further afield in Australia. This is a tough choice as there are many very different areas in this vast country. But from Sydney, a possibility is to drive north towards Brisbane and the Gold Coast. On the way will be chances to see some of Australia's unique animals and many coastal towns with their own unique character, including Byron Bay. This is the easternmost point of the Australian mainland and a popular destination for backpackers, with a great beach and lively nightlife.

From Byron it's a short hop up to the Gold Coast and more theme parks than you can poke a stick at.

Other options in Australia include the Great Ocean Road between Adelaide and Melbourne, a trek into the Outback or into the tropical north.