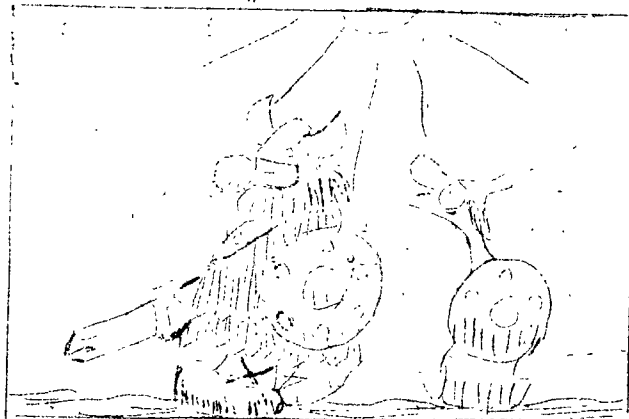


DIB DIB DIB

ISSUE

12



This is issue 12 of a Diplomacy zine (which includes a touch of Sopwith) called Dib Dib Dib. Which comes to you from an editor, who frankly, is at a loss for words (at this present time), called Tom Tweedy. The price for getting this excellent piece of literature to you, costs you but a mere 1p a sheet + postage - surprising value for money these days (even with my letter column!). If for some obscure reason you have to get in touch with me (for a chat or to send money) my address is: 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513

EDITORIAL

Ah, what a month this has been. Riots, in New Zealand, Dublin, and major cities of our own country... Chaos rules. And/for what? Thank goodness we had THE WEDDING to focus the world's attention instead of war. It was like a breath of fresh air: people enjoying themselves just for the hell of it. Did anyone NOT see it? (Jan didn't. She got sick of hearing, reading and seeing so much stuff about it, she couldn't be bothered to actually view the ceremony. Of course, I enjoyed every minute.)

But getting back to the riots for a moment. It rattles me to see so many of our police abused and injured without anyone apparently to stand up for them. Even their own superiors seem to be against them - the poor old bobby seems to be perched out there on a rotting limb all on their own!

Maybe I've been reading too many Daily Mail articles. Perhaps I'm just biased by their way of thinking, but it does get me angry seeing the respectable, middle-of-the-road politicians getting away with blaming the police for the riots by saying they "over-reacted"; using them as scapegoats because they don't want to face up to their own inadequacies. To many, just for the police to be there, is an over-reaction! How on earth are they supposed to do their job?

What makes it so sickening though, is the fact that if you were to ask the people who are trying to destroy our police force (for that is what they are surely doing) what they would do if they were set upon by thugs; have their house burgled etc; their reply would be: "Oh well...yes..but the police have to do their duty..."

Yes. As long as they don't 'over-react' by picking up a suspect, etc. But enough of this - don't want people to accuse Dib of becoming serious....

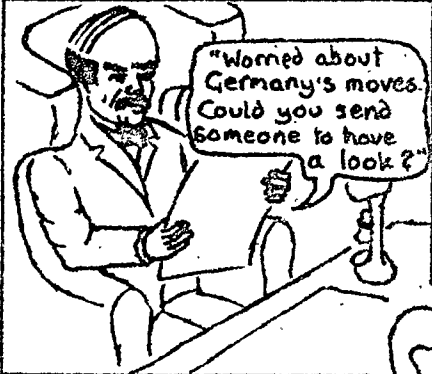
It's come to my attention that Hopscotch (a 'games' zine edited by Alan Parr) not content with just shocking the hobby by becoming a chat zine, is also considering the prospect of including Sopwith games in ~~xxx~~ its lists of other games. This is certainly good news from my point of view because now I can have a game. Anyway, I've put my name down. Nicholas Clifton will be Gfing them I believe. And if you want my advice, anyone wishing to play in a game better get their names down quick, as it's my guess (if my list is anything to go by) that the games will fill up quickly.

Talking of my Sopwith waiting list, it occured to me that it might be a little unfair to make those waiting on the list (Sandy Peters, George North, Keith Loveys, Dave Tant, Paul Simpkins, Peter Davies and now - ready for the next game - Richard Bass) wait any longer. If those on the list wanted the game to start straight away, then I could start it as a Dib supplement (adjudicated on a separate "Idem" sheet). Every now and then when Dib ends on an odd number, or when one of the other games finish, I can include the game in the zine. Mind you, before I start it as a supplement, ~~all the players will have to agree.~~

Although I mentioned last issue that I was taking over the CGS (Central Gamestart Service) job, I forgot to ask other editors to publish the fact (although some of the more observant have). Because there's still people out there (which recently included one zine editor!) who don't know that the CGS exists, I would appreciate it if other editors spread the news.

I've just sent off my last seven names to Puppet Theatre News, but there should be more coming in. Paul Simpkins asked me to keep a fatherly eye on Richard Sharp (for the benefit of newcomers - an old Gf and original custodian of the CGS), which I did. I gave Richard a ring just before he went to EuroCon and it turns out he's got half a dozen or so enquiries - which he'll let me have when he returns. The zines I have on my list requesting gamestarts are:- Duel Purpose, Last Stand, Bats,

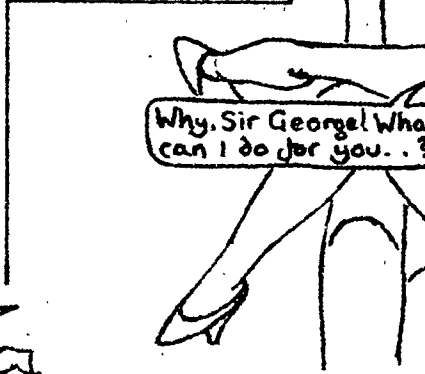
LONDON, 1901. THE PRIME MINISTER, SIR GEORGE DAVES, RECEIVES AN URGENT CABLE FROM FRANCE:



"Worried about Germany's moves. Could you send someone to have a look?"

Operator? Get me Barchester 42 42

AT THE OTHER END OF THE PHONE — GABRIELLE THORNE, TROUBLE-SHOOTER!



Why, Sir George! What can I do for you...?

Maurice — Prepare the Plane...



Right away M'Lady

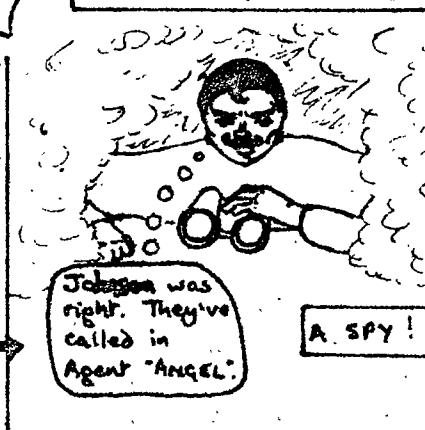
ANGEL

in THE BRIGIDA INCIDENT

THE PLANE: A MIRACLE OF MODERN ENGINEERING, YEARS AHEAD OF ITS TIME, BUILT ON A DESIGN THAT IS LATER TO BECOME KNOWN AS

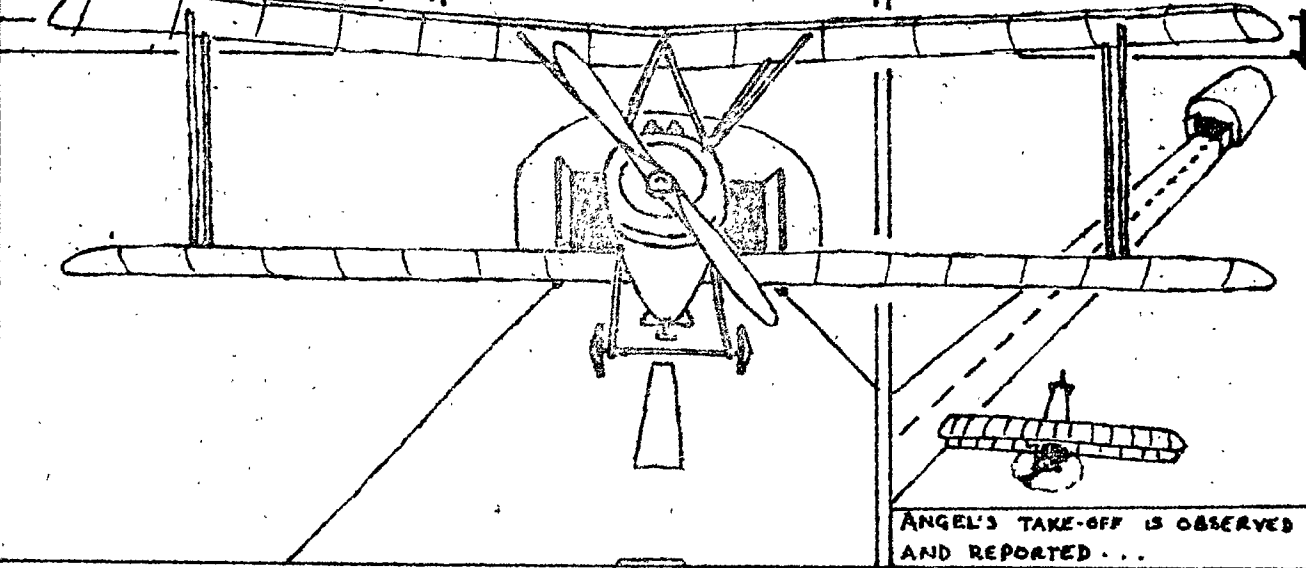
THE SOPWITH CAMEL!

BUT NOT VERY FAR AWAY A HEDGE CONCEALS:



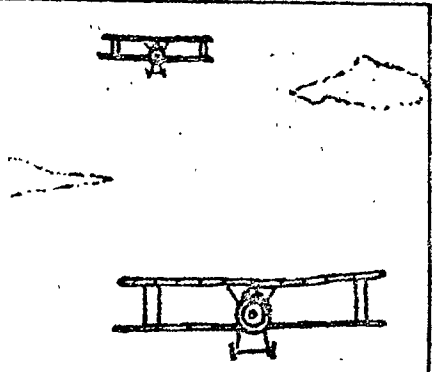
Johnson was right. They've called in Agent "ANGEL".

A SPY!



ANGEL'S TAKE-OFF IS OBSERVED AND REPORTED...

LATER, OVER BELGIUM — A PURSUER: "GOD'S HAMMER" JOHNSON!



Venio, volens, volens!

ROUGH TRANS: "HERE I COME, READY OR NOT!"



Time I wasn't here...!

THE NGC RATING SYSTEM (for May 1981)

Originally printed in Ode and copied by kind permission of John Marsden (editor of Ode) and Wink Thompson (who compiled the list).

It seems a long time since the Diplomacy player ratings list was last published - the last time, I believe, was in Mick Bullock's stats zine New Statsman (which, sadly, is no more). It has been said (by John Marsden if no other) that the list has been allowed to fall by the wayside because of lack of interest by other editors. This hardly seems likely, because most GM's/editors are, so it appears to me, quite keen to give their subscribers a good service. (Of course, there are exceptions....)

Mind you, talking to Wink it did seem as though he isn't getting the help he needs to make this sort of job easier. It's essential to get all his information (game-ends etc) from the Boardman Number Custodian - namely Pete Calcraft.

Pete went after, and accepted, the job from Mick Bullock, but seems to be having some trouble finding the time to do the job (due to exams and suchlike). Fair enough I suppose, but it does leave things a little up-in-the-air. Perhaps when Pete manages to wind down sota (which he firmly intends to do) he'll have more time to do stats - which he likes. I hope Wink and Pete eventually get together on this, as I think both jobs are very worthwhile.

The purpose of rating players in Diplomacy games is, quite simply, to provide a sort of players "form". It's also nice to see your name at the top of the list. Whatever, I think it's worthwhile publishing it because it's an 'easy check' to see how good, or dangerous, the players are in your games.

METHOD: To qualify for inclusion a player must finish 4 games. New players start with a nominal 100 rating (which acts as a damper). Game rating (total of 7 individual ratings) is shared 30%, 20%, 15%, 10%, 5%, 5% and 5% (DAMN this sodding machine - the percent key keeps missing) in finishing order. Remaining 10 percent apportioned by final S.C. holdings. New rating = cumulative points/games played +1. POS = Position; R = Rating; G = Games.

<u>POS</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>POS</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>POS</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>G</u>
1 David Phillips	274	7	32 Simon Dally	183	13	63 John Effemey	145	4
2 James O'Fee	274	8	33 Allan Ovens	180	22	64 Stewart Wright	144	6
3 Martin Feather	260	16	34 Richard Scott	176	16	65 Dave Tucker	144	9
4 Rob Chayman	238	5	35 Chris Rick	174	5	66 Clive Booth	142	5
5 Andy Holborn	238	7	36 Peter Hawkins	173	5	67 Ian McDonald	141	6
6 Steve Pratt	225	8	37 Harry Turner	171	7	68 Andy II Evans	140	6
7 Richard Walkerdine	221	14	38 Mike Ingham	171	11	69 Lionel Bidwell	140	4
8 Gary Silk	221	6	39 Peter Croft	170	5	70 John Miller	138	8
9 Ray Evans	216	10	40 Jon Palfrey	164	8	71 Mike Lean	136	11
10 Mike Close	215	5	41 Mike Nicholas	163	9	72 Iain Forsyth	136	7
11 Bob Tucker	214	5	42 John Marsden	162	4	73 Bob Lloyd	135	8
12 Norman Nathan	212	9	43 Mike Lay	161	6	74 Paul Simpkins	135	11
13 Tony Ball	209	10	44 Ron Fisher	160	9	75 Colin Harden	132	6
14 Alan Watson	209	10	45 Alan Bustany	160	9	76 Ken Williams	131	17
15 Roland Prevot	206	6	46 Brian Williams	159	5	77 Dave Tant	131	15
16 David Barnes	205	14	47 Nicky Palmer	159	8	78 Vic Smith	130	9
17 Tim Sharrock	205	5	48 Graham Buckell	159	5	79 Richard Sharp	129	27
18 Richard Hucknall	203	14	49 Pete Swanson	157	14	80 Denis Love	129	4
19 Tim Roberts	201	9	50 Bob Brown	155	12	81 Paul Cook	128	10
20 Neil McDonald	200	8	51 Pete Hearn	154	6	82 Roy Taylor	128	23
21 Mick Bullock	200	16	52 Graham Jeffery	154	5	83 Bill Orr	127	6
22 Alan Sedgewick	199	7	53 Peter Robertson	153	7	84 Martin Styler	127	6
23 Stuart Dagger	198	5	54 Greg Hawes	153	7	85 Edwin Godfrey	126	7
24 Doug Wakefield	196	8	55 Willy Haughan	152	18	86 Arthur Nunn	126	6
25 Roger Collins	195	5	56 Laurance Barrat	152	8	87 Norman Williams	126	7
26 Chris Farmer	193	4	57 Bruce Little	151	7	88 Nick Clennett	125	6
27 John Balson	190	7	58 Tony Mitchell	151	7	89 Eric Willis	124	26
28 Tadek Jarski	189	8	59 David I Johnson	149	6	90 John Herlihy	121	7
29 Paul McGivern	187	7	60 Frank Dashwood	148	10	91 Clive Waterhouse	119	9
30 Chris Day	184	4	61 Paul Ward	147	19	92 John Piggott	119	34
31 Phil Stimpson	183	5	62 Kim Bailey	146	12	93 Chris Tringham	119	10

<u>POS</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>POS</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>POS</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>G</u>
94 John Horst	118	4	135 Peter II Smith	95	4	176 Ian Jones	75	8
95 Stephen Dowcra	117	26	136 Steve Plater	93	24	177 Craig Ilyc	74	9
96 Chris Bishop	116	18	137 Paul Hurlley	93	4	178 Nick Baker	74	4
97 Andy Davidson	115	64	138 Pete Sydenham	93	11	179 Tony Scrace	73	4
98 Jim Roberts	115	8	139 Mike Allaway	92	19	180 Colin Walsh	73	14
99 Paul Willey	115	9	140 Graham Box	91	9	181 Stephen Andrews	73	4
100 Andrew Parsons	114	5	141 Stove Doubleday	90	10	182 John Robertson	73	5
101 Jeremy Tullett	114	4	142 Nick Shears	89	6	183 Larry Pringle	73	6
102 Mike Groom	114	9	143 Steve Howe	89	4	184 Andy Wright	73	7
103 Adrien Baird	113	4	144 Scott Horis	87	4	185 Peter Munn	72	4
104 Peter McDonald	112	9	145 Bob Armitage	87	4	186 Bill Dove	71	15
105 Wink Thompson	112	6	146 John Walsh	86	4	187 Tony Cox	70	4
106 Doug Mills	111	5	147 Ray Miller	85	5	188 Chris White	70	4
107 Peter Charlton	110	21	148 Jeff Garret	84	7	189 Eddie Goffin	70	4
108 Alan Humphrey	110	5	149 Martin Rundlc	83	17	190 Tony Woodrow	70	4
109 Andy Norman	110	10	150 Richard I Sykes	82	5	191 Michel Feron	69	7
110 Pete Birks	109	16	151 Chris Side	82	18	192 Terry Hill	68	11
111 Peter Berlin	108	6	152 Richard Jarvinen	82	4	193 Paul Willis	68	10
112 Geoff Challinger	108	12	153 John Lettice	82	17	194 George North	68	5
113 Peter Tyrell	107	9	154 Iain Drylie	81	4	195 Allan Powis	66	9
114 Paul Humphreys	107	4	155 Adam Quanton	81	10	196 Dave I Allen	66	14
115 Anthony Taylor	107	4	156 Pete Cousins	81	14	197 Tony Crouch	65	15
116 Ian Ossaway	106	6	157 Eddi Birsan	81	6	198 Rich Sealy	64	4
117 Stephen Agar	105	14	158 Hans Swift	80	4	199 Doug Pringle	63	7
118 Andy Tringham	105	7	159 Duncan Adams	80	4	200 Brian Yare	62	8
119 Andy Allars	105	5	160 Steve Side	80	9	201 Richard Bartle	61	9
120 Duncan Morris	105	9	161 Barry McManus	79	15	202 Dave Ross	60	8
121 Shaun Derrick	104	9	162 John Meadon	79	17	203 Steven Frow	59	4
122 Gary Hurkin	103	14	163 Ray Lee	79	4	204 Keith Smith	59	9
123 Jon Lovibond	102	8	164 Bruce Davidson	78	6	205 Mike Jarvis	57	8
124 Malcolm Brown	101	10	165 Ian McLaren	78	5	206 Geoff Page	56	6
125 Martin Hammon	101	10	166 G. Hardingham	78	7	207 Brian Clark	55	5
126 John Rayns	101	9	167 Ian Pringle	77	25	208 Sellick Davies	54	5
127 Jim Botten	100	6	168 Dave II Pratt	77	6	209 John Foulger	54	11
128 John Gough	100	4	169 David Sinclair	77	4	210 Don Brown	53	9
129 Richard Nash	100	31	170 Ian Hardle	76	5	211 Henry Olsen	52	6
130 David March	100	5	171 Hark Sandler	76	4	212 Hans Vermulen	50	4
131 Ron Keitz	98	4	172 Dave Pollard	76	7	213 Pete Lindsey	49	10
132 Bob Howes	97	16	173 Ray Harper	75	9	214 Colin Grubb	45	5
133 Keith Loveys	97	25	174 Howell Davies	75	16			
134 Tony Bartle	97	8	175 Boh Innes	75	5			

Phew! that was harder to do than I thought. Make of the list what you will. I would have thought that if one player had the same rating as another, but scored it in less games, that his position should be higher. This appears not to be the case. Perhaps it's just a rough guide... I shall see.

Any and all enquiries of the rating list should be sent to: Wink Thompson, 7 Peat Road, Bridge of Weir, PA11 3LU, Scotland. (Tel: 0505 613930)



EDITORIAL (cont.)

Perspiring Dreams, Dib Dib Dib, Outposts, Bohemian Rhapsody, Fall of Eagles.

If anyone else wishes to go on the list please let me know.

I've just seen the results of Dib's own personal cartoon strip, "Angel" - it's turned out very well. Chris is using a full page for the cartoon to get the story started, it may stay as a full page spread or he may cut it down to a block of six at a later date - he's not sure yet. Whatever, it looks a good start (although he did forget to print: "Continued next issue." on the bottom). Well done Chris...

Don't think there's anything else to include in this section (if I've forgotten anything ~~xxxx~~ I'll have to remember to put it in 'Dibs and Drabs'), so it's on to...



RESULTS OF THE GLADYS AWARDS

I'll just give the results on who came first and second in each category. To do any more than that would take up two or three whole pages (as it did in Pyrrhic Victory). Those who do wish to see the full results should write to, Mike Allaway, 60 Poynter Court, Gallery Gardens, Northolt, Middx. UB5 5PA.

- 1. BEST ZINE (max score 5).....1st Greatest Hits 3.52
2nd NMR! 2.645
- 2. BEST GM (max score 3).....1st Bob Brown 1.91
2nd Richard Hucknall 1.61
- 3. BEST LETTERCOLUMN (max score 5).....1st Greatest Hits 3.95
2nd NMR! 2.84
- 4. BEST FOR HOBBY NEWS (max score 4).....1st Ode 2.88
2nd NMR! 1.98
- 5. MOST IMPROVED ZINE (max score 5).....1st Pyrrhic Victory 2.938
2nd Voice in the Wilderness 2.791
- 6. BEST NEW ZINE (max score 3).....1st Ripping Yarns 2.12
2nd Perspiring Dreams 1.81
- 7. BEST FOR DIPLOMACY (max score 4).....1st Tinamou 2.503
2nd Fall of Eagles 2.283
- 8. BEST FOR GAMES--PLAYING (max score 4).....1st Chimaera 2.97
2nd Hopscotch 2.31
- 9. BEST DIPLOMACY VARIANT (max score 4).....1st Mercator 2.64
2nd Rather Silly Diplomacy 2.17
- 10. BEST LOOKING ZINE (max score 5).....1st Ripping Yarns 3.298
2nd Pyrrhic Victory 3.226
- 11. ELDER STATESMAN OF THE HOBBY (max score 4).....1st Mick Bullock 2.672
2nd Don Turnbull 2.065
- 12. LES PINLEY MEMORIAL AWARD (max score 4).....1st Mick Bullock 2.60
2nd Paul Simpkins 2.38

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTERS: 48

Not a great turnout. Although Mike's to be congratulated on taking on this onerous task - and it must be remembered it is his first go on the awards - I think he's made a couple of mistakes this year: (a) he treated the Awards far too seriously, and (b) the results came after the Zine Poll. I've always thought the Gladys were supposed to be a fun-type sort of National Opinion Poll, leading up to the main one.

I'm not too sure whether it's a good idea to include the Les Pinley Memorial Award in with this list (Les was a well-known, long-standing hobby member, who died, of Cancer I think, at an early age). After all, the Gladys Awards are supposed to be light-hearted. On the other hand, where else can it be included? Anyway, to a couple of points about the Awards.....(Have to cram them in here -- no space anywhere else!) I was a little surprised to see Bob Brown get the BEST GM and BEST FOR DIPLOMACY awards. Although I don't manage to subscribe to Tinamou, all I've ever been reading whenever anyone mentions 'efficient Diplomacy games', is how good Richard Hucknall and FOE is. Now someone pips him to the post? Ummm.

"GERMANY SHOULD PROTECT AUSTRIA" - - - - DISCUSS

by Alan Sharples

When I started to play Diplomacy (1972ish) with the Will Haven/Allan Owens group at Liverpool University the last thing on the mind of a competent German player in Spring '01 was to threaten and dictate to Russia. As Germany one would either grovel to the Tzar (usually) or attack him (very infrequently). If anyone playing Germany at that time had the notion that Austria should be protected at the cost of falling out with Russia, then it certainly was not apparent to me.

I have recently started two games of postal Diplomacy (one in "Chimaera" and one in "Dib") as Turkey and Russia respectively, and I have been surprised to find that the German player in both games warned Russia that any aggression towards Austria, particularly a move to Galicia, would result in being stood off in Sweden. This threat was delivered with varying degrees of good humour but with a consistent firmness!

I first came across the concept that a thriving Austria is essential to the success of Germany in Richard Sharp's book "The Game Of Diplomacy". He went on to propose that the way to protect Austria was to blackmail Russia and Italy. Russia should be threatened with a Swedish stand-off and Italy with the more nebulous concept of Austro-German reprisals if any offensive action is taken against Austria. I do not know if Richard was the original developer of this master plan but, like many other points that he makes in his well written book, I believe that he was wrong on all counts.

The mechanics of his "protection" are wrong.

Firstly, Diplomacy is a game of people and personalities. No strategy which is based upon a stereotyped reaction to a given situation can be correct. If you want to manipulate (a nasty but accurate word!) your fellow players the key concept is to know your man. If your first correspondence with a stranger is a lightly veiled threat, then you are never likely to get to know anything but his offensive capabilities. While it may be possible to "come the heavy" (excuse my scouse) and achieve the desired results with certain players, it is my experience that the majority of Diplomacy players react badly to being threatened. Most people in the modern world are scared of many things: the boss, skinhead gangs, the wife.....whatever. They play Diplomacy, and most other games, as a form of relaxation and escapism and they do not want to carry any lack of self-confidence over into their fantasy world.

Secondly, the threats that Germany can make are not likely to carry much weight. A typical Italian reaction, rather than servility, might be to form an alliance with France or Turkey, perhaps to Italy's long term detriment, for the short term satisfaction of kicking the s---t out of Austria and Germany. Russia, in particular, is not likely to be greatly influenced by German threats for several reasons. Even if he refrains from moving to Galicia he can still be stood out of Sweden (and often is). Why should he trust a player who threatens rather than negotiates? In any event, Galicia is more important than Sweden to Russia. If Russia believes that Austria will move to Galicia as part of an an attack, then he must move to Galicia to stand off the Austrian unit or he will soon find his country in tatters. If Russia can not come to an agreement with Austria then it makes sense for him to move to Galicia (and from there to an Austrian home centre) because it is worth two units to him (one more for Russia and one less for a hostile Austria). Whether or not Russia moves to Galicia will depend upon his assessment of Austrian intentions and his relationship with the Austrian player. Any threats which Germany makes on behalf of Austria are only likely to sour that relationship.

I would also argue against the whole concept of a ~~thriving~~ Austria ((thriving Austria -Ed) being to Germany's advantage. I think that the ideal situation for Germany is an inconclusive and prolonged struggle between Austria and Russia. A powerful Austria is as much of a threat to the German home centres as is a powerful Russia: Possibly more of a threat as the potential for an effective surprise attack is greater due to the proximity of the Austrian builds.

My store of empirical evidence is limited to two experiences of the "protect Austria" strategy in face-to-face play. As Austria I benefitted greatly from it and won quite easily. Germany, as it happened, was second but this was due to extremely good play (against Russia, France and England) on his behalf and at several points in the game I could have decimated him and won even more quickly (but I am such a nice chap that I resisted the temptation, besides which I used to play against him regularly and I was hoping that he would follow the same, ~~losing~~ losing strategy in future). The point is that, while Austria's chances were much improved, Germany's chance of actually winning

(cont'd over....)

GERMANY SHOULD PROTECT AUSTRIA (cont.)

the game by following this strategy was effectively nil. As the Kaiser I once experimented with this strategy but the results only confirmed my opinion. Germany survived but always in the shadow of Austria who went on to win.

Diplomacy is a selfish game. Each player must look out for himself. If any player ~~xxxx~~ acts for the benefit of another player he obviously improves that player's chance of victory but to his own detriment. In my opinion, Germany is wrong to protect Austria because by doing so he will not only antagonise Russia but by creating a powerful Austria he will also be creating a rod for his own back.

There, that should provide something for you "thinking" Diplomacy players to get your teeth into (and pull apart, no doubt!).

Thinking Diplomacy players...in Dib? Ho ho ho.... Anyway Alan, thanks very much for the article it's much appreciated. (I hope it will inspire others to do the same)

There's a couple of little points that I personally don't agree with, but I'll save my views until we hear from the rest (they might cover what I wanted to say in a better way).

And now on to, what is supposed to be, a "Thatchmeet" review, but tends to read rather like a regular Dib letter. I'm not sure its place is in the lettercol though, so I'll put it in here.

THATCHMEET REVIEW by C.P. Davies, m.a.

The first Thatchmeet was a confused affair. It appeared to be Richard Scott's submersive activity to promote SE. This, as many of you may be aware, is in south-east London adjacent to Brixton. It was promulgated behind the facade of O Tempora! O Mores! (OTOM), a cover-up acronym in reverse (MOTO) for a well-known sports car VIZ Spitfire. This incidentally happens to be the name of the medium heavy group of another attendant visitor from Birmingham who plays bass guitar in between attending parties, orgies and taking finals at Brum university. He is more easily recognised by the manner in which he corners a custard Granada on two wheels and has a perpetual hang-dog expression. You can tell he is high on grass by the way he indiscriminately mixes brandy, beer and scrumpy and the way he keeps dragging on his cigarette and saying "Man" at the end of every sentence. His shoes finally got on Grog's nerves so he suggested he should give up the guitar in favour of the drums. At least in that way his feet would be hidden from sight.

Messrs. Scott and Miller were awaiting an imminent departure to the red-light district of Amsterdam where it was their intention to stock up on hash and contraband computer programs imported from California.

Ray Miller has inside information on the contents of all the banks in the SW of England and mark you, duplicate keys to all the vital locks. He is working on a system for cracking all the computer/^{safety}codes. In the context it is not without significance that he is cohorting with that programmer 'bien comu' George Foot.

It was at this meeting that Pete and Grog outlined their plan to run a real life Diplomacy variant called 'Street Riot'. For lack of takers actually at the meeting, gamestart notices were sent to and subsequently accepted by Ian Paisley, William Whitelaw, Mary Whitehouse, Roy Jenkins, Alec Bedser, Carl Sagan, Lord Scargan (aka Scarface), Chief Inspector Anderton (Devon & Cornwall police), Clive Booth and Tom Tweedy.

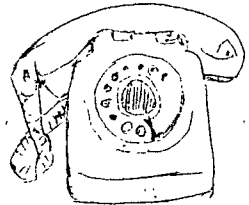
The results of the opening moves have been widely disseminated on national and international television networks. We are pleased with the response to our variant and I think it will supercede all others.

The choice of pub for these meetings only thinly disguises the true submersive nature of Scotty's intents. We are all known as the Thatcherites, to whom we bow and touch the forelock in gratitude for being spared the onerous task of having to get up in the mornings and go to work. Redundancy is a fine ideological policy to ~~xxx~~ find ~~ix~~ favour in one so highly placed as our esteemed Prime Minister.

Well, that certainly did seem like a confused hobby meet, judging by Peter's...er.. review. It certainly wasn't what I expected, but I suppose it is one man's interpretation of what went on. Thanks Peter (Grog?). Now, if Peter had been a subscriber and didn't borrow his son's copy, I'd have given him a free issue!

Of course, there's a free issue to all article writers if I publish their work in Dib Dib Dib.....on the other hand, don't let that deter you.

mail



O quelle surprise, a letter from George North (who's currently on holiday yet writes a letter telling me he hasn't time to write a letter), is there no way of getting away from this man....(he even sent me a dirty seaside postcard!). He started off his letter with some good and some bad news; the good news was that he was "all packed and ready to go on his annual flounder in the North Sea", and that I was unlikely to hear a peep out of him until the end of the month. On to George's letter....

GEORGE NORTH: ".....The bad news is that you really left me in the mire in Sopwith, didn't you? No, I know you moved the clouds the wrong way but I am not on about that.

'I can't let you have ^{two} moves', you said, 'It wouldn't be fair to the other players', you said. And now look. Keith Loveys is up my tail and threatening all kinds of nasties. Give him half a chance and he will be dropping on me like a ton of best kitchen nuts. Now is that nice, Tweedie, old friend? ((Well...))

But not to worry, I forgive you. I am the epitome of love and forgetfulness. It is better to have played and won than never to have lost at all."

((Famous last words that perhaps I would have spoken had I ever had to resort to cliché-ridden sentences while waiting for a ton of best kitchen nuts to fall on me.))

ALAN PARR: "Many thanks for the latest Dib etc: I must say that the lettercolumn is developing nicely along Chimaera lines, though anyone with both Sandy ((Peters)) and George North on their books can't fail to generate good letters.

You will be appalled to learn that the famous chatzine Hopscotch is contemplating a (strictly games-based) lettercolumn in future - what is this hobby coming to!"

((What indeed. Ah but that's how the rot starts: first you start with a letter column you think you have in control, then the likes of Peters and North write to you. After that things go steadily down hill, and you end up as a fully-fledged chatzine.))

RICHARD BASS: "I enjoyed your Diplomacy article and it amused me trying to categorise some of my opponents. Hucknall has been described in a recent Ode game-end statement as 'intimidating', he's obviously a 'gunslinger'. Who was the editor you could not categorise? I thought at first that it was Alan Parr but then I remembered that Snorewood Gazette was said to be strictly games, so is it Keith Loveys? Alan Parr? Which category do you think you fall in? I think you ought to have told your readership the sort of Diplomacy player you are!"

((You're quite right of course, I should have told my readership what category I come into. The fact is, I class myself as being in the 'Friendly Cowpoke' category. I'm totally reliable, and completely trustworthy. You can bet, that if I form an alliance with you, it will be game-long.

I don't think it would be fair for me to mention the editor I couldn't categorise, I merely pointed it out to prove a point. I think you're quite right about Richard Hucknall though - he sounds like a nasty & sort of person to me!))

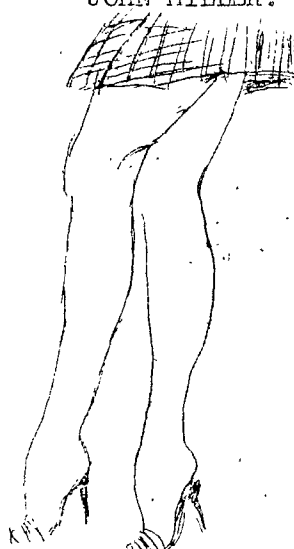
LETTERS (cont.)

'GROG' DAVIES: "Why doesn't someone play a game of postal diplomacy across Europe with other foreign diplomacy players so you have a real Frenchman as France, a real Turk as Turkey, a real German as Germany, etc. The only problem would be the language barrier as far as I could see, and there is a way round that. Assuming that wherever in the world you play Diplomacy, the orders are written the same way...."

((Well George, I'm afraid the idea isn't very practical. The Diplomacy hobby is international; quite a few zines have Americans in their list of subscribers and trades. I know of at least one Swede, and a couple of Australians that play in British zines. On the other hand, following your suggestion, who could we get to play Russia and Austria? I'm pretty sure the Soviet Bloc wouldn't allow such subversive stuff as Dib and many other zines into the country.))

And now, from the man that invented and brought to us the Gladys Awards, that source of many a controversial debate, I bring you, the one and only.....

JOHN HILLER: "Now you know of course that I don't have any controversial views (!) so any printable letters from me are likely only to strengthen Dib's bid to become the new Chimaera as far as letter-columns go, rather than elevate the actual content (insulting 2 birds with one stone there, hote).



Following your discussion about C.N.D. etc. you may be interested that this old trouper is to return to the boards at the beginning of next term in Then...., one of a programme of three one-act plays described by the author David Campton as 'comedies of menace', based around the theme of the danger of nuclear holocaust and the necessity for people to make themselves aware of what's going on in the world. 'My' play is the third, and is set after the holocaust. I've managed to survive, by dint of following the government advice to wear a Brown Paper Bag over your Head (well, it is fantasy...). ((Hey, I'm not knocking it, it might work better than the official advice!)) Then I meet the other survivor, Miss Europe (a very nice sort of girl, despite being a beauty queen - she was going to be Miss World next year, 'only now there doesn't seem to be a world to be Miss of', as she observes mournfully). She too is wearing a Brown Paper Bag (she of course chose the best in the shop and paid good money for hers). Indeed we both wear said bags from start to finish of the play ('Is this an improvement?'). As we share our sandwiches we two foolish people fall in love. We want to take our bags off, to see each others faces and exchange a kiss. But, fearful of the radioactivity, dare we? Will love conquer our fearfulness and instincts for self-preservation?

Yes, well, a bit of a far cry from T.S. Eliot, but a change is as good as a rest....."

((I can't say really if it's an improvement to wear bags through the whole play, she might be quite attractive. But if you want my advice, I wouldn't take your bag off if I were you - give x yourself some sort of chance with the girl! Sort of, "bags you go first!?" Ho ho ho...))

Look what you've done now Hiller! Your letter sparked off some witticisms from Jan - whose humour tends to stretch my levels of tolerance. All week she's been making little quips like: "Bags of time", "Bags of room", "Male bags and female bags" and "Bags over yer eyes", etc, etc. I tell yer, I ~~XXXX~~ CAN'T STAND ANYMORE!

JOHN FIELD: "There are a couple of things in your letter column which I think require clarification. The first is to do with evolution of man which I am sure is continuing. For example, a lot of my friends (yes I have got some) are magicians and they continually walk around with their hands curved ~~xxx~~ inwards and pointing towards their bodies because they are in the constant habit of palming (i.e. concealing in their hands) cards, coins, dice, cigarettes and anything else which will fit. However I think the best example to use is if some brave soul could take a photograph of you in ten years time. I'm sure we will all find a pronounced curve in your left ear to such an extent that it is able to grasp a telephone receiver

LETTERS (cont.)

without any other support. Furthermore your right hand will be permanently clenched in a fist shape caused by holding a dagger for too long and using it too frequently."

((Those last few words hurt: It's quite untrue about my right hand.....I'm left-handed. I shall not bother commenting on your theory for evolution (except to say that you must have some strange looking friends), I'll just leave it for my learned subscribers to tear it to pieces.))

JOHN F. (cont.): "The other point is that Martin Allen has got it all wrong about chameleons. ((Oh yes)) When I was in Huntwagna ((Oh no...)) the local tribesmen known as the Zubnksu used to eat reptiles. They found that if the lizard was placed on a willow pattern plate (which was introduced to them) it immediately changed its skin to a mottled blue and white colour. The affect of this was that the poor E Zubnksu didn't know if they were eating plate or chameleon. Consequently there were lots of broken teeth and my friend Nigel (a dentist) made an absolute killing in rhinos' teeth (the local currency) making crowns. Only trouble is that he can't find a bank that will give him a good exchange rate. We found that one of the most tasty ways of eating chameleons is to hang them up to dry in the hot sun. After three months they are crisp and brittle. They have a slightly salty taste and are somewhat like Bombay Ducks. It's not really practical in this country. If Martin must eat chameleons (a very expensive dish in this country) then I can recommend cooking it in a pressure cooker (pressure II) for 20 minutes with courgettes and onions. The skin comes off easily and the meat is tender and just falls off the bone. Oh by the way, it's an idea to bop them on the head before popping them into the pan, just to stop them escaping."

((I could quite believe all this, if it wasn't for the fact that I knew John Field had written it; also I don't ^{really} believe that you have to introduce the lizard to the native before it gets eaten. As for your dentist friend, John, tell him it might be a good idea to put his rhinos' teeth under his pillow.....for the Tooth Fairy!))

ALAN SHARPLES: "I hope that the readers of 'Dib' can look forward to some more of your interesting articles on Diplomacy. I found the last one most educational (especially about your thought processes). ((Hmmm)) As a point of interest which category do I fall into?"

((Yes well, I've said before I'm no good at writing articles and reviews, but if I can find anything new and interesting to say about the game (which seems unlikely) I'll give it a go.

It's too early in the game for me to place you in your true category, and even if I knew, I certainly wouldn't tell you. Nevertheless, in the early stages of the game I have to place you in some category, and for this I have a procedure (which again I won't tell you.))

Keep 'em guessing....Ah, what have we here.....Oh no...

JOHN HILLER: "I am very glad to see that the Dib letter-column is not entirely devoted to chameleons etc. yet, and that a civilised, gentlemanly subject like Greek Art has been introduced, by none other than Mr George North. ((Are you sure we're talking about the same George North?)) Oh yes he has, be quiet Tweedy, you're not going to shift me from this favourite subject of mine for a page or so, so you'd better lump it. What was that? If you'd like to step outside those double brackets and repeat it...aha, I thought not.

Right then. Yes, here we are, page 15 of last issue, and George was writing about Peg shifting tall boys. Now unless I'm very much mistaken (and how would you know if I was, Tweedy?) ((This man will have to be dealt with!)) this is a reference to a collection of the remarkable limestone or marble statues of colossal size depicting standing male nudes, known as 'Kouroi'. I believe that this collection at present cluttering up the front bedroom of George and Peg's home may be totally

(cont. over....)



LETTERS (cont.)

unknown to the art historians, and hence potentially the hottest news since the Piraeus excavations back in whatever. Yes, Peg has been daily dusting and periodically re-locating a potential goldmine of information about Greek sculpture of the middle to late Archaic period. Notice the geometricised stomach muscles, the unnatural posture, the vaguely Oriental eyes, the characteristic long curly hair (no, not on George, dummy; on the Kouroi!), and, furthermore.....(cont. Page 94)"

((Ah hell, you forgot to include page 94, John! And just when I was getting interested...))

JOHN ROGERS: "It's interesting to see once more the fear that C.N.D. and the peace movement are no more than a Socialist 'front' organisation trying to seduce the young people of Britain into godless Communism.

Certainly many people involved in C.N.D. are Socialists, others are Liberals, Christians, environmentalists, anarchists and Social Democrats. There are also many small groups on the left (eg. International Marxists Group, Socialist Workers Party) who do try to use C.N.D. as a recruiting ground for their own, allegedly, revolutionary, organisations.

You are right to point out that these groups exist, and that there are also many Labour politicians who would like to use C.N.D. supporters as no more than extra canvassers at the next General Election, it is also true that C.N.D. may appear, through excessive criticism of the present government, to support the Labour Party with little short of blind faith.

To suggest this would be nonsense. ((Eh!? I thought you were agreeing with me!)) Labour governments have an awful record on defence and C.N.D. (including many individual Labour party members) have always been critical of the Labour Party as well as everyone else." ((Ha! An escapee from a GH letter column....))

((I'm afraid I can't give an intelligent answer to this subject, I leave all that sort of thing to worthier men, of the Birks/Fringham ilk. My talents lie elsewhere! And so talking of which, we come onto Martin Allen's letter.....))

MARTIN ALLEN: "Was your comment about us lowly subscribers being mad under my work or art referring to Moi? ((Entirely possible...)) What was wrong with my perfectly intelligible theory? Don't you watch 'Open University' ((No, but Jan does, at a most unearthly hour of the morning!)) 'Play School' and suchlike? When I'm rich and/or famous don't think you can write humble begging letters to me in the vain hope I'll subscribe to Dobbin X 3 for the next twenty years.

And what do you mean by people like me giving your zine a bad name? ((I said that!)) I thought the reverse would be true. And unleashing such strong words as 'slur' under my parchment. When I'm shrouded in glory you'll definitely be ostracized! (Of course if I don't become world renowned I'll bury my head in a bucket of ~~pancake~~ sand.) ((I've got a bucket!))

I don't wish to be vindictive (well, I might be) but you've no idea how to run a game's' zine (please be courteous in your reply, you're talking to a potential Lord/hero y'know).

"Well I'll go to the foot of our stairs!" I exclaimed in an over-the-top-ham-acting-cum-Shakespearean manner, clutching Dob 3 in my left hand and holding the back of my right hand to my brow.

"He doesn't do snap by post!"

Should you remain foolish enough not to include this part of our heritage, then I shall start my own zine dealing only with snap. Owszat!

Unfortunately I don't possess all the modcoms you have at your disposal. But I shall persevere and write mine in a nice shade of orange wax crayon (they don't let me use pencils or pens in this establishment, too sharp you see) and you (the subbers) can write to me to borrow it, at an all in price of £3 (problem: only one at a time).

(cont'd over....)