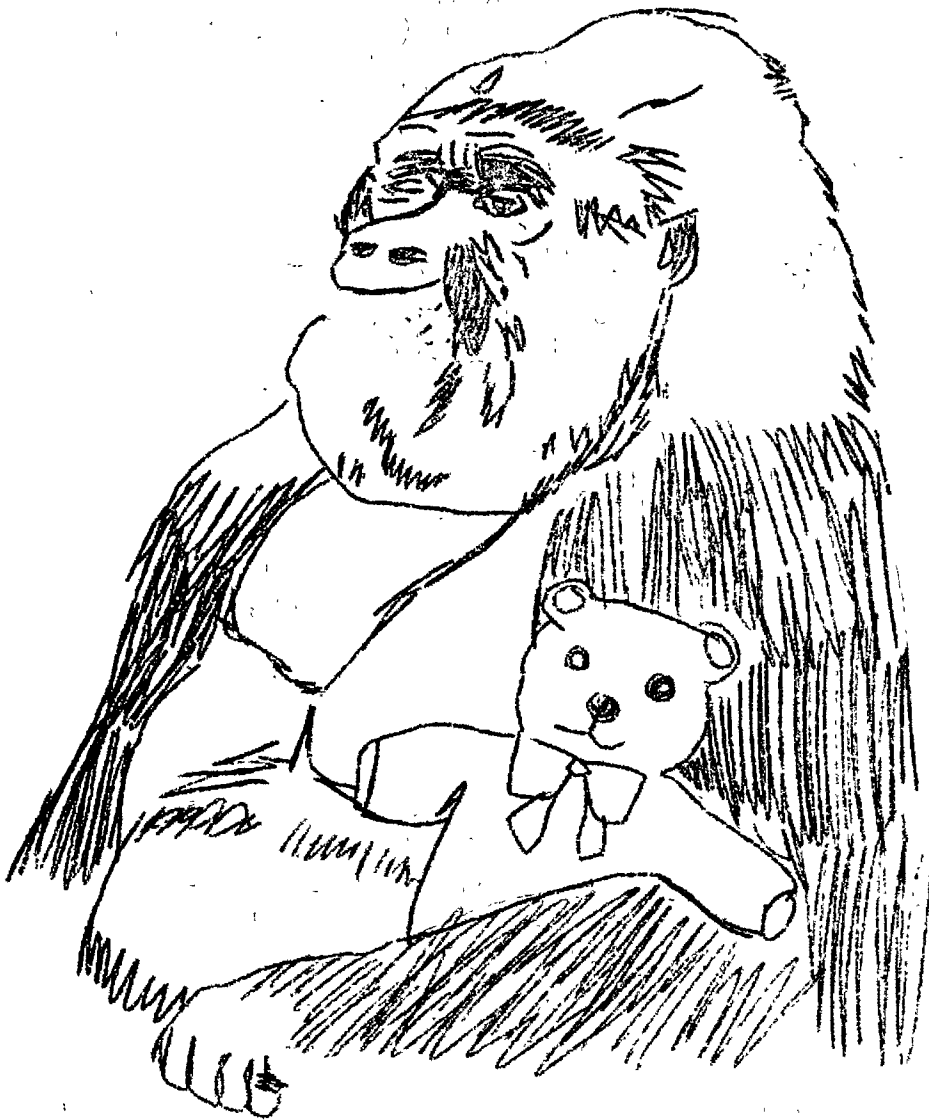


DIB DIB DIB

ISSUE

18



THE STRONG BUT SOFT-HEARTED ZINE

Ah, another editorial, another zine - welcome one and all to issue 18 of Dib Dib Dib. There's not much I can say in this section (this month) that hasn't been said all before. So I'll keep quiet and cut it short. The price for this fullscap (take note, one Simon Billeness) rag costs a mere 1p per sheet + postage (making this issue about about 28p - not as advertised 35p for 20 pages). Anyone wishing to contact me for any reason (to send me money, or perhaps ring to have a chat) I can be found at:- 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513.

EDITORIAL

It's now 7.30 on Friday, by which time I had hoped I could send this zine to you. All seemed to be going well about the middle of the week, I had the lettercolumn finished and was halfway through the games. Somehow however, the time just slipped away. Instead, I finished all the games today - now I've this editorial, the Jotto, a couple of zine reviews (if I get the space) and the back page still to do. Looks like I'll be typing away into the night to get finished. Could do a bit more tomorrow perhaps, but it's Stuart's birthday tomorrow + I've got Ian Tillson and entourage coming over - things could get a bit hectic (specially since he's coming to take my front lawn).

But anyway, what of the hobby scene. There's mutterings and murmurings going round in the various zines concerning the impending 1982 Zine Poll - yes, once again the so-called silly season is almost upon us. (For those that don't know what the Poll is, it's a poll done every year to find out what you, the general subscriber, thinks is the best British Diplomacy zine - but there'll be a fuller description of this later in the year, I don't want to go into it now.) Once again the question is being asked, can Greatest Hits the zine that's won three years in a row, do it again? Personally, I don't think GH is as good as it used to be (although it's admitted that Pete puts an enormous amount of work into it), but offhand I can't think of any other zine that might top it. Last year I would have backed NMR! for winner - but this year.... there's just too many good new zines on the market. If nothing else the Poll should produce some surprises, and just for that, should prove extremely interesting. So, who do you think will win?

With a bit of luck we should ~~soon~~ get some inkling soon because, from what I hear, Mike Allaway will soon be bringing out the 'Gladys Awards'. Mike took a bit of flak with it last year because (a) it was too serious (it's supposed to be a light-hearted run-up to the main Poll); (b) Mike brought it out far too late; and (c) some people protested at the way a serious award like the Les Pimley Award was lumped in with the other fun-type stuff. The general opinion was that this award should be handed over to Richard Walkerdine. But will Richard take it? Anyway, Mike, bowing to popular demand~~s~~ has decided to get back to the fun-type Gladys Awards, and will almost certainly be asking for ideas on the categories the Awards should include.

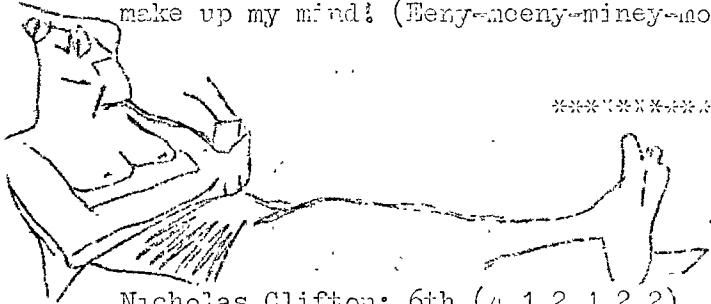
** When John Miller (the originator of the awards) ran the awards I was disgusted to find Jan had won the 'Grass Widow of the Year' award. That's a laugh for a start - I can't keep her nose out of the zine! It was a put-up job I'm sure, instigated by that rat, Miller... **

Hurry up, Mike - I'm dying to see what awards you'll come up with!

Much as I hate to hurt the feelings of one or two of you by mentioning computers, I've no choice, my computer may well be very much involved in producing Dib in the near future. I'm not too sure how it'll affect it yet; it should make for a far faster turnaround as I can type things up as they come in, and re-arrange it all at a later date. One thing I can be sure of though, the layout will be different. But how different I won't know until I can assess the word processing capabilities. I've got the word processing package (the Applewriter 1.1), all that remains for me to do is choose a daisywheel typewriter that can be interfaced with my machine. I thought about the new Olivetti 122, but on demonstration I found it to be enormous - it took up the whole desk! Didn't leave any room for the computer to sit beside it. So, at the moment it's a toss up between the Scripta daisywheel, or the smaller Olivetti that a firm called Datarite have just brought out for £600 (including interface). It's a fair bit of money to lay out I know, but I don't want it just for the zine - I've

other plans for it. Well that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

When is all this automation to start? ... I dunno, it takes me so long for me to make up my mind! (Beny-meeny-miney-mo....)



JOTTO Turn 7:

Nicholas Clifton: 6th (0,1,2,1,2,2)	William Fisk: 6th (0,2,1,2,1,2)
7th (3,2,4,1,1,3)	7th (3,2,4,1,2,1)
Martin Allen: 7th (- missed -)	Richard Bass: 7th (1,1,2,0,1,0)
John Miller: 7th (3,2,1,2,4,1)	John Lee: 7th (1,2,2,1,1,3)
David Huson: 7th (2,6,2,0,1,0) !!	Keith Loveys: 7th (3,2,2,0,1,3)
George Davies: 6th (2,2,3,2,2,4)	Sandy Peters: 7th (- missed -)
7th (2,1,2,1,1,2)	
John Field: 7th (2,1,2,1,0,2)	George North: 7th (1,1,1,1,3,0)

That's it for another month - no-one has guessed them yet. Oh, and talking of guessing, you must have a guess at all six together, not just one - then, if you guess right you win, if you get just one wrong, you lose. That should clear up any misunderstandings...

Stick The Knife In edited by Nigel McCabe is the latest new zine to the hobby. Nigel, at 15 years old certainly is the youngest zine editor in the hobby, but he seems enthusiastic enough. I don't think age matters much anyway, it's really all down to whether you can deliver the goods (so to speak) in this game. Stick is at the moment produced by Nigel using the local youth club's typewriter and printed up by Rip Gooch's RYODA system. From what I've heard this alone will make for rather erratic deadlines. It's early days yet, still, if Nigel can prove he can do the job he'll do okay. I've decided to trade with him so why not give him a chance. At the moment he has a waiting list open for Diplomacy, no game-fee. Nigel McCabe, 314 Rashcliffe Hill, Lockwood, Huddersfield, HD1 3ND.

Ode at the moment at issue 31, edited by John Marsden. An excellent zine to subscribe to if you're new to the hobby. Has always the very latest news about what's happening in the hobby (something that's always irritated me - damn the man....how does he do it?!). A very reliable zine to play Diplomacy in. John Marsden, Flat 3, Bishop's Farm House, Oakley Green, Windsor, Berks, SL4 5UN.

Another zine I've been impressed with lately, is Home of the Brave. Can't remember what issue it's on at the moment because I don't have the zine in front of me. Edited by Geoff Challenger, printed on pretty blue paper which is easy on the eyes, and very interesting to read. After keeping a low profile because of an instance (perhaps accident would be a better word) in his hobby past, Geoff seems to be coming out of himself now, and is going from strength to strength. Actually, I don't think there's any need for me to plug this zine, as Geoff has been enterprising enough, so I hear, to be sending his zine to every subscriber who's address I print (i.e. Diplomacy gamestarts. No doubt he'll get results as well). Geoff Challenger, 100 High Street, Swancombe, Dartford, Kent, DA10 0AH.

Ahh, running out of room and I've still got so much I wanted to say (wanted to plug Shellshock and Last Stand, etc). Just room to say that I've received the flyer (the flyer?) for MIDCON '82. It'll be held again at The Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham on FRIDAY 12th/SATURDAY 13th/SUNDAY 14th NOVEMBER 1982. For further details of this great event write to: Brian Williams, 20 Rydding Lane, Millfields Estate, West Bromwich, West Midlands.

NGC DIPLOMACY WAITI
NGC DIPLOMACY RATINGS LIST

This is my second attempt at doing this rating list, my first attempt I did well before the deadline which meant Dib stood a fair chance of coming out on time. But (I can't say unfortunately because I like getting the NGC list) as things would have it, Wink has just sent me this recently updated list. I did think of sending out the original list, but in the light of recent changes it made the list totally worthless (anyway, I'll get this out before bloody John Marsden does!). Anyway to the list. The list is compiled by Wink Thompson (thanks for sending it Wink). And, as I've said before, as with all ratings lists these must be taken with a pinch of salt. By the time the Diplomacy games finish, the games endings sent to Pete Calcraft and the rating information sent on to Wink, who then has to compile all the names... a fair amount of time has passed. To give you some idea, it's my first time on the list (players have to complete four games to be included on the list) - I've finished 7 ~~xxx~~ games and won five. Not as up to date as the 'Wilman Rating List' maybe, but it certainly puts the good players where they should be...at the top. (I have my doubts about that Chapman though - keeps chickening out every time I challenge him to a game of something or other.) But again I digress. The list is a long one and seeing as the 'Angel' cartoon hasn't turned up I'll use the extra space to get as many names on as I can. Don't pay any attention to the top of page seven, that was from the old list. Rating = R; Number of Games = G.

	<u>R</u>	<u>G</u>		<u>R</u>	<u>G</u>
David Phillips	286	5	Mike Ingham	171	11
Martin Feather	260	17	Peter Croft	170	5
Rob Chapman	259	8	Doug Wakefield	168	10
James O'Fee	258	10	Peter Robertson	169	8
Andrew Holborn	239	8	Phil Simpson	169	6
John Norris	226	4	John Lee	167	4
Bob Tucker	224	7	Ron Fisher	166	10
John Sandell	223	5	Jonathan Palfrey	166	9
Mike Close	222	6	Tony Mitchell	163	8
Tony Ball	221	11	John Marsden	162	4
Richard Walkerdine	221	14	Mike Lay	161	6
Gary Silk	221	6	Phil Bass	161	4
Bruce Foster	216	4	Bruce Little	161	8
Alan Watson	212	12	Alan Bustany	160	9
Norman Nathan	212	9	Brian Williams	159	5
Richard Hucknall	211	15	Micky Palmer	159	8
Ray Evans	210	12	Graham Buckell	159	5
Steve Pratt	208	9	Derek Wilson	159	
Tom Tweedy	208	5	Pete Swanson	157	14
Roland Prevot	206	6	Karl Piper	156	4
David Barnes	205	14	Frank Dashwood	156	11
Timothy Sharrock	205	5	Bob Brown	154	14
Tim Roberts	201	9	Pete Mearns	154	6
Neil McDonald	200	8	Peter Hawkins	154	7
Alan Sedgewick	199	7	Graham Jeffrey	154	5
Roger Collins	195	6	Kim Bailey	153	13
Chris Farmer	195	5	Laurance Parrot	152	8
Nick Bullock	191	17	Pete Sealy	151	6
Tadek Jarski	189	8	Greg Hawes	151	9
Paul McGivern	187	8	Steve Jones	149	4
Chris Day	184	4	Les Tassell	149	4
Harry Turner	183	9	Michael Sharkey	149	4
Simon Dally	183	13	David Johnson	149	6
Allan Ovens	180	22	Dave Tucker	149	10
Mike Nicholas	180	10	Kelvin Blackburn	148	11
Stuart Dagger	176	6	Iain Forsyth	147	8
John Balson	176	9	Paul Ward	147	19
Richard I. Scott	175	16	Chris Rick Paul Ward	147	19
Chris Rick	174	5	Willy Haughan	146	19
Stephen Brophy	172	4	John Effemey	145	4

NGC RATINGS CONT.

	<u>R</u>	<u>G</u>		<u>R</u>	<u>G</u>
Stewart Wright	144	6	Doug Mills	102	6
Mike Lean	144	13	John Lovibond	102	8
Clive Booth	142	5	Stephan Agar	101	15
Ian McDonald	141	6	Martin Hammon	101	10
Lionel Bidwell	140	4	John Rayns	101	9
Vic Smith	138	10	Jim Botten	100	6
John Miller	138	8	Gary Murkin	100	15
Richard Sharp	136	29	John Gough	100	4
Graeme Levin	135	4	David Wood	100	7
Ken Williams	134	19	Richard Nash	100	31
Nick Clennet	134	7	Anthony Massey	100	4
Ian Doherty	133	5	David March	100	5
Paul Simpkins	133	13	Keith Loveys	98	26
Colin Harden	132	6	Andy I. Evans	97	10
Dave Tant	131	15	Paul Humphreys	97	5
Bob Lloyd	129	9	Bob Howes	97	16
Paul Cook	128	10	Andrew Parsons	97	7
John Andrew Evans	127	7	Tony Bartle	97	8
Martin Styler	127	6	Peter II Smith	95	4
Roy Taylor	126	26	Paul Hartley	93	4
Edwin Godfrey	126	7	Peter Sydenham	93	11
Ian McIntyre	126	5	Mike Allaway	92	20
Norman Williams	126	7	Pete Calcraft	91	4
Eric Willis	126	27	Steve Plater	90	25
John Herlihy	121	7	Steve Doubleday	90	10
Michael Groom	120	10	Ron Keitz	90	7
Clive Waterhouse	119	9	Graham Box	89	10
Victor Logan	118	5	Steve Howe	89	4
John Horst	118	4	Scott Morris	87	4
Chris Tringham	117	11	Mike MacLeod	87	4
Bill Orr	117	7	John Walsh	86	4
John Piggott	116	35	Martin Leath er wood	86	4
Denis Love	115	5	Nick Shears	84	7
Andy Davidson	115	64	Jeffrey Garret	84	7
Paul Willey	115	10	Phillip Landau	84	4
Jim Roberts	115	8	Bob Johnsey	83	4
Stephen Dowcra	114	27	David Parry	83	4
Adrian Baird	113	4	Martin Rundle	83	17
Mike Johnson	112	6	Richard I Sykes	82	5
Ian Watters	112	5	Chris Side	82	18
Wink Thompson	112	6			
Pete Birks	112	18			
Peter Charlton	110	21			
Alan Humphreys	110	5			
Peter Berlin	108	6			
Gcoff Challenger	108	12			
Arthur Nunn	108	8			
Chris Bishop	108	19			
Peter Tyrell	107	9			
Anthony Taylor	107	4			
Ian Ossaway	106	4			
Norman Melvin	106	4			
Andy Allers	105	5			
Duncan Morris	105	9			
Peter McDonald	104	10			
Andy Norman	104	11			
Shaun Derrick	104	9			
Jeremy Tullet	103	5			
Andy Tringham	102	8			
Malcolm Brown	102	13			

That's all the names I have space for. For those that want to see the complete list, write to: Wink Thompson, 7 Peat Rd, Bridge of Weir, PA11 3LU, Scotland. You'll have to be quick though, as I believe Wink will be moving down this way in May because of his job.

I had to be careful this issue didn't turn into something like a stats zine. Apart from Wink's list, Alan Sharples has sent me a Ratings List + System he's worked out for the 1981 National Diplomacy Chamionship (MidCon). He must have put hours of work into it. Hopefully I can publish it next issue - it was too big to include in this issue with what I had typed up already.

NGC Ratings (cont.)

And the list goes on. Wink hasn't bothered to give the positions this time, consequently a couple of the names might be mixed up. As for the rest of Dib's subscribers:-

Dave Tant	131	15	Mike Allaway	92	19
Paul Simpkins	127	12	Peter Calcraft	91	4
John Piggott	119	34	George North	68	5
Wink Thompson	112	6			
Keith Loveys	100	26			

X The contribution that follows is a 'personal view' from one of our British bobbies (Fuzz, Pigs, 'The Man', Scuffers, etc, for those that recognise no other names). I found it interesting....but judge for yourselves.

JUST IMAGINE...

There was once a country that was reasonably sane, stable and appeared to travel along commonsense lines.

In thruth it had some serious problems, including poverty, crime and unemployment, but crime wasn't a growth industry, only a relatively small proportion of the people were criminals and those who were caught, tried and convicted tended to obtain the benefit of quite lengthy prison sentences.

The trouble was that there were people who did not profit from this relative tranquility, either financially, intellectually or politically. Members of the legal fraternity began to see the possibility of huge profits from defending people who could be persuaded to plead not guilty to charges that they were quite often ready to plead to on the simple premise that they had in fact committed the offence(s) alleged.

Intellectuals saw a possibility of gaining fame or infamy from stirring up minorities of any colour, creed or political persuasion, and of attacking authority often for no better reason than authority was an easy sitting target which more often than not was slow to reply and tended to be staid rather than flamboyant in any counter attack.

Political extremists rode their particular bandwagon and began the process of turning those lines of common sense towards the final terminus of anarchy.

This sad melting pot was stirred slowly at first, beginning after the Second World War with the introduction of more liberal criminal justice acts, the easing of supposedly hard prison conditions and patently silly so-called rules that instructed investigators to tell the investigated to in effect, 'shut up' and so help thwart their investigations. Even Lewis Carroll would have baulked at that one.

The ^{deficient} ~~xxxxxx~~ effect of being arrested or of becoming a guest of the Crown was to that degree diminished. The country became so civilised that capital punishment was abolished in order that convicted killers including cold-blooded terrorists could be kept alive, maybe to kill again.

Not guilty pleas became more common as legal aid was generously provided, paid for by all the citizens including ironically enough by the relatives and friends of those innocents done to death.

Bit by bit the pot was stirred faster and faster. Change and 'reforms' followed quickly upon each other until the country became quite unrecognisable, discipline became a dirty word associated with hitting and shouting at people rather than what it really meant which was about thinking.

Even teachers were not permitted to effectively discipline children, and therefore naughty kids quickly progressed into the sort of thugs, skinheads or mods that were seen on the streets, public transport and sports stadiums, behaving in all manner of criminal and grossly anti-social ways.

Yest when such louts appeared in the dock before the courts, they became a figment of somebody's imagination. Because, according to their legal aid 'briefs', these young men and women were often seen with their hands on their hips, what police

harassment or a conspiracy of elderly ladies hell bent on destroying the young gentleman's (and ladies') delicate characters. The legal beagles often didn't bother to really argue the facts of any given case, but resorted instead to discussing technicalities such as the time that a caution was administered, or whether an evil over-zealous investigator raised his voice to our 'hero' in the dock.

As the country's decline continued and many people didn't work quite so hard as hitherto - and unemployment increased for a variety of very complicated national and international economic reasons that extremists tried to simplify to suit their own ends - violence broke out on the streets.

Stones and petrol bombs flew around, aimed of course primarily at the police who, according to the misguided organisers of street mayhem, were to blame because they - yes you've guessed it - harassed people by stopping and speaking with them, sometimes in the middle of the night no less! They even went so far as to employ young men and women to wander around the streets in uniform as conspicuous targets for the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune (literally in one case).....

Silly, silly police. Perhaps they should have reversed their provocative recruiting policies and started police officers not at 18 and a half but at 81 and a half years old! Oh, and of course every entrant should be black, brown, yellow or even red instead of the more traditional white variety, albeit that at this time of the year this latter species of 'bobby' is more often blue!

Of course this country is a fragment of my imagination, sit back and relax in gentle apathy, it couldn't really be allowed to occur or could it?

Just IMAGINE!

Yes, just imagine. But unfortunately there doesn't seem to be enough people 'out there' capable of imagining. I included the above article because I feel very strongly about the way our police have been misused (as by now you all no doubt know). It's certainly not a subject I can let just drain away in total apathy. What with the amount of young policemen being slaughtered (there's no other word for it - they don't really stand a chance) on our streets; it's about time they received the backing that they're due. Bring back the old style of policing - the bobby in the street ready to reprimand an erring child (BEFORE he's allowed to turn into a thug), the 'suss' law, etc. Bring back hanging. We're not so civilised that we can just turn our heads and allow the killers to live and the 'innocents' to die - if we are then I think we've got the word civilised all wrong.

I mean, nomatter what you feel about hanging, one can't argue with the statistics. Before they abolished hanging, most villains just didn't carry guns. And I can remember when all hell used to break loose in the news when a policeman was killed! What happens now - most robberies one hears about now are armed robberies. Well it makes sense doesn't it? If you carry a gun now there's less of a chance you getting caught - you can shoot your way out of trouble. It doesn't matter who you hit, as long as you get away. Look what happened to the couple who dragged a young bobby down the road while he was reaching in to switch off their car - they get eight years for manslaughter. Eight bloody years! Is that all a policeman's life is worth?

Something is definitely wrong somewhere...

Normal service will now be resumed. It's not often that the contents of Dib get that serious, but some things really do get up my nose sometimes - and I warned you that things like this could crop up from time to time. Unfortunately for you lot, Jan, who normally edits this sort of stuff and keeps some sort of control over me, is out at this moment digging in the garden. Well, it is a glorious day outside. I may even go out myself in a minute and supervise her - she'll like that. Anyway, come to think of it she hasn't dug the potatoes up yet. This readily will not do...

And now, to put things on an even keel we have a short...er, extract from Dib's own front-line war correspondent, George North. Damn the man - nomatter how many tough assignments I send him on he still keeps coming back!

THE BATTLE OF JERICHO

The action takes place in an army camp just outside the city where the troops are milling about and impatient to fight their way into Jericho. Joshua has just called his generals together and outlined his plan of attack. Now the armourer has to be informed and we bring the story up to date a little by installing a field telephone. We are on the phone to the armourer....

"Benjamin? Hello, is that you Ben? Yes, I'm fine and we are all ready and... look Ben, about those ladders we ordered. That's right, the extra long ladders with the hooks for scaling. Them ladders. Cancel the order. Yes I know you already got some made up and ready, but this Josh' has come up with a brand new plan of attack. No, there is nothing wrong with your ladders. They are long enough and they are strong enough. Yes, I like them. Josh' likes them. Everybody likes them, but we just don't need them no more. Yes, I know we especially asked....

Er4..no, Ben. We don't need the giant catapult and the huge boulders for busting the walls either Ben. The catapult is out. And the battering rams are out too, Ben. We don't need none of these giant catapults, nor the battering rams, nor your fine scaling ladders. We don't...

What are we going to use, you are asking me Ben? We are going to use Priests!

Yeah, priests Ben. How many priests? Don't hang up on me Ben. We are using seven priests! That's right, seven. No, no, not seven thousand. Seven. Six and one makes seven. That sort of seven. You still there Ben? Ben?

What will the seven priests be using? They are going to use horns. Horns, Ben. H O R N S spells horns. You got it Ben - horns.

What are they going to do with these horns you are asking? Ha, ha. They are fixing them to their heads and charging the gates Ben. You still there Ben? Ben? No, they are not doing that. They are wanting a special kind of horn from the head of a ram. I was only kidding about the gates. Ben? Ah, Ben, you went a bit quiet there for a minute and....

You don't stock horns, Ben? You sure will have to kill yourself some rams and get some in. We need horns Ben. We sure do need horns. Look, you can remember what a ram looks like, I hope. There is that old farm...

What will we be doing with the horns? You may well ask. We will be making us some trumpets for the priests to blow. You with me Ben? We don't do very much at first. For six days we march silently around Jericho without blowing a single note or making a sound or lifting a finger. It is a good plan, eh, Ben?

No wait! For six days we go marching and silent and all sort of sneaky like. You with me Ben. Then on the seventh day we blow our horns, make with the trumpets and holler and shout and make as much noise as we can, but mostly we blow our horns. We sure do need horns, Ben. We must have our horns...

What happens then, Ben? Ha ha. Why the walls all fall down, Ben. Ha, ha. No I am not messing about Ben. The walls all fall down. I was only kidding about the gates. Now it is the truth I am telling... Ben, you still there? Ben? Ben? You're not still there are you Ben? I don't know what Josh' is going to say... he hung up.

Thanks George - er, I've got another job for you, only you can do it. The Greeks need someone to drag around the walls of Troy as a show of force.....?

DEVIATIONS & DIVERSITIES Part II

By John Keight

Anyone can read the books available, and so, a personal flavour is essential to bring in uncertainty for the players. Magic swords are frequent but, of course, they are the handiest weapons. I like 'one-off' weapons which are effective but self-destructive, as survivors may use treasure to obtain articles in a future adventure. A javelin may have plusses for hits and damage, but ignite on contact. A flaming sword won't go out, but eventually burn away. A magic dart may be poisoned ice and melt in the body of the victim. Fighters tend to do most of the work and therefore deserve an occasional bonus.

I'm all for extending the capability of spell users by having higher level spell scrolls, but with limited effect. This gives variety in the dungeon, and I do not bother overmuch with the chance of a spell working. They should always work, but with lesser effect if a user is not yet of that level: this may be by shorter time or less range or reduced impact. Making up my own scrolls also causes thought among explorers. What can you do with a "Crystal Coffin" scroll? In actual fact it can be used to envelop an attacker in a translucent box and causes death by lack of air if he cannot get out. Or a body may be put in it and preserved for revival later.

A series of rooms may have a theme; the planets are an easy basis. Mercury would be a small antechamber with an informative statue. Mars will be a tough fighter with berserkers. Saturn has large rings which settle around and constrict trespassers. Anything reasonable can be tried, but explorers like something logical in an otherwise impossible situation. A deepening mausoleum provided for plenty of undead, and a 'young' vampire may feature (that is, a new person who has not yet acquired all the powers of a vampire). Egyptian Gods are worth using, as their clerics will have unusual powers (and there could be iron, silver and gold burial chambers). Zombie type guards and Hunicas abound with excellent treasure.

Odd organisations may come in: A 1000 gp buys a limited membership to the A.A. or R.A.C. - "Alive Again" or "Revive-A-Corpse". Once slain a member may have the organisation summoned by a friend and he'll get a transported cleric to apply revival spells. This helps to keep players in a game and gets more money spent. Regrettably the revived character becomes only a zombie-like person - he has no hit points and may carry things but not fight. Hit points must be obtained by spells or potion, or some facility provided by the Dungeon Master - usually expensive.

'Horror Hotel' is a nice place, as there is a descriptive name-plate on each door. 'The Quick And The Dead' may be a fast vampire or magic automation armed with an axe. 'Cold Bone's Fast Foot Club' may be a skeleton disco or ice-rink, with monsters on skates. 'Passage Passage' crushes randomly. Do not go into the kitchen!

Doors are always closed and often bolted or barred - but locks should be treated carefully. The more elaborate the lock, the better the treasure behind it. Certain doors should be extremely tough or magicked. One alabaster door protected a visiting Eastern magician's suite of rooms - it required tremendous force to break down, and had a horrible pool of Charm with an acid fountain, plus scimitar-using guards and a harem of schizophrenic 'ladies' (lightly clad seducers one minute, and blood-thirsty amazons the next). One treasure was a special ruby which added 1 to any 'Cure Wounds' spell die roll for recovered hit points, and aided generally against poisons and suchlike.

Some doors should be openable with a riddle or a gem in a slot. Semi-secret doors are particularly useful in getting a party to move horizontally, but in effect down a level - after all, they are magic. A semi-secret door is one which is marked ~~xxx~~ out on a wall, but is not separate and so quite unopenable. Magic must be used or a special key. A motif can suggest the dangers apparently lurking further on - some figures, or a dragon's head perhaps.

Thanks John - once again please accept this issue from me. Well....that lot should keep Dib's Role Playing subscribers quiet for a bit. I have to admit to finding some of John's suggestions and advice useful myself. I've just realised why I keep getting thrown out of a particular room in my 'Wizardry' game. Think I'll potter off now and find out.....

W. Fisk

And now for a rather more serious letter column. I would have preferred of course to print loads of questions on how to live cheaply, or why one foot is always bigger than another, or even, is William Fisk right!

WILLIAM FISK: "The letter section was extremely boring last time (NO condemnation on yourself, since the rest of the mag is great!). Couldn't you make long letters articles? Plus the letters used to be interesting - what happened?"

((Ah well, gone are the days when people talked about chameleons and suchlike - it would appear I've finally defeated the loonies by giving them their say, leaving them nothing left to talk about. As for the state of things now - I can only print what I receive. Why not write a letter on a subject you find interesting....such as the cause of lungrot....or, is there any life after death.))

MARTIN ALLEN: "What's this? Ignoring my letters! You don't say you're getting particular over what you print.

But being a kind and forgiving person, forever modest and never rising above his station, I'll forgive you (you may get off your knees now). I thought I'd better inject a certain degree of morality into the zine or 'porno rag' as it is becoming known in our presbytery circles.

Reluctantly I put Bic to paper in a half hearted attempt to infiltrate the 'Dib' letter column, rapidly becoming known as something of a 'Tour de force' in the Diplomacy World (well, so says a certain T. Tweedy). Ignoring your resident loony is a very callous and cruel act (not very nice either). ((But life preserving!))

Seeing as I'm also in the 'Ipona' Dip game I was ~~xxxxxx~~, er, fascinated to read that she was a gallic goddess. Fantastic. Well, that reminded me that I was in London the other week. And in the same vein of paganism, I visited the London Dungeon. Upon entering the dark, dingy dungeon I was immediately confronted with a horrific waxwork display of sex starved druids sacrificing a naked vestal virgin. Peering closer (at the chief druid, of course), it suddenly struck me:

"My God, that druid looks ~~xxxx~~ just like how Tom Tweedy sounds!"
What do you really get up to in your spare time?"

((Well, apart from doing modelling jobs as a vestal virgin for a sex starved druids sacrifice I spend a lot of my time doing this rag, reading, working on my computer, supervising K Jan and occasionally getting dragged off to a dog show (Jan shows our Dalmatian). Other than that I fill in the gaps (and believe me there aren't that many) with having friends over for a few games/drink/chat etc, visiting restaurants (I do like good food - especially Indian) and sampling any bottle of wine that happens to fall into my grubby mitts. I wanted to take up winemaking but Jan wouldn't let me - she drew the line at sitting on a cider press. What strange and wonderful things do my subscribers do to fill in their spare time I wonder.....?))

PETE TAMLYN: "John Keight's D&D article was interesting, if a little disjointed. I look forward to the subsequent installment(s).

Can you tell George North that the Rusty Bolts are over now so there's no need to carry on trying to catch votes with his letters.

Joe Gibbons on Ancient Religions. Both Celtic religion and Mithraism are problematical due to lack of archaeological evidence. The Celts never wrote things down and you only have to read Stuart Piggott's 'The Druids' to see what a mess a competent academic can make of the more populist theories on the subject. I'd also recommend Joe to look at 'The Celts' and 'Women of the Celts' by Jean Markale and 'Celtic Heritage' by Alwyn and Brynly Rees. Mithraism was a mystery religion which basically meant that only the priests ever knew very much about it. It then got stomped on heavily by Christianity so we don't know much about it either. The best places to look for information

LETTERS (cont)

are 'The Pentacle' bookshop in Bristol (I forget the address) and 'The Atlantis bookshop' in Musiem Street near The British Museum in London. If Joe would like to write to me I'll try to help him out with his research."

((Thanks Pete. There you are Joe - see it pays to write these little snippets in Dib's letter column. The column is not quite as useless as / people make out. In case you haven't heard of him, Pete edits a very good (even though it's very much slanted towards Role Playing Games) zine called The Acolyte (worth a look 'cos he's now started Sopwith!), and his address is: 17 Pelham Court, Kingston Road, Staines, Middlesex, TW18 1AL.))

TONY MARCHESE: "Just a quick note to say thanx for Dib 47 and for your support over my decision to change to the name of Shellshock§ I don't know about 'going over the top' in the editorial (it was one of these 'stream of consciousness' things you know), but I did feel that I should justify why I did it, trying to avoid the accusations of a Thorby type 'cop-out' (with apologies to J. Wilman). ((Who?))

Have read back through Dib. I've just noticed that you have Shellshock down for a F(Rom) CGS gamestart thingy (?). I am of course grateful but who arranged this? Was it me? (I can't remember) or was it Biggles sticking his little oar in again? I do wish that he would act more like a contributor rather than a sub-editor sometimes (better get the baby reins out!)."

((There really is no need for an explanation, Tony. I merely mentioned that you went over the top a little because I didn't agree with everything you said - although I agreed with your reason for doing it.

Help....I can't remember who put Shellshock down for the F(Rom) CGS, I'm sure it was your sub ego...er, I mean editor, but I assumed he had your agreement.))

IAIN SINGER: "Sorry about the delay in writing - it was due to an Anatomy Degree Exam which is thankfully over - tho' the results are still to come out - I'm kinda shellshocked!

Now you offered me the 'post of central statistician' for Sopwith - not exactly what I was expecting - I would be willing to act in such a position provided there is no-one more suitable and given the followingZ:-

- (a) I had the backing of all the 'zine editors running the game - yours probably being the most important.
- (b) I could come to a reciprocal arrangement with the zine editors - viz trades etc.

IMPORTANT!
SOPWITH
RATINGS.

I suppose I could fulfill the role assuming the number of players did not exceed 60-70 overall. Which zines play Sopwith Anyway? Should I be acceptable I suppose I could inform the zine editors every month after publication of the new aces + those that lose that status + every couple of months a full list of players + their points to each editor. I have no printing facility and so this is all likely to be litho typed and photocopied, or hand written - probably the former... I could not see any need to produce a zine nor any desire for one - should any Sopwith players desire a list I would be able to send one along once all is organised if given an SAE + a 5p stamp to cover photocopying, there should be no need for this though. Is this all fair enough?

Another point about aces etc. Would players have more than one character (with different names, of course) or would all the 'characters' of one player be lumped together. I suppose it's up to the player to decide."



((I'll certainly go along with you on the rules you outlined, Iain - I can't speak for the other editors though, I'll have to have a word with them. (Or perhaps they'll write in and tell us.) I think the 60-70 player number could be reached fairly soon

LETTERS (cont)

at the rate the Sopwith games are filling up. The zines running the game so far (apart from Dib) are The Acolyte, Putty Rippo and Hopscotch. Someone told me the other day that another zine was thinking of starting it up, but I can't remember which one it was now (I think it was Blackmail). From what I hear The Acolyte filled three Sopwith games in one go, and I know from my own Sopwith waiting list, published this issue, that the game is nearly full before even bringing it out!

I don't think it matters about character names, I clump all the points of one player together. Can't be much fairer than that - as in real life the people who get stuck in the most (more games etc), get the most points.)

PLATE TAMLYN: "Could you please include information on games in progress and games finished next time you do a Sopwith ratings list."

((Yes, I think it's a good idea.))

JOHN FIELD: "Can I join the Sopwith debate following my disastrous showing in 'Gotha'. X Imagine that I am flying my Sopwith Camel over France and the nasty Hun has inflicted much damage to my plane that all I can do is crash. Because of the flimsy structure of the plane the bullets have injured me to such an extent that I am unable to ejaculate myself (let alone bail out!). Thus faced with certain death in a few seconds I think that I and anyone else would do anything in my power to bring down my opponent. Hence I propose the following additional rule:

'KAMI KHARST (!) PILOTS'

Where a pilot has 2 or less damage points left he can become a KK pilot. If he lands on a hex occupied by any other player, because of his downward motion, he crashes into that pilot and both planes explode killing their pilots instantly. Furthermore the explosion is such that any other plane within a radius of 3 hexes is damaged by 3, 2 or 1 depending on their nearness to the explosion.

The fact that it would be very difficult to achieve this position (as in real life) but it would give the player in this desperate straight something to aim for and would certainly give him a nuisance value."

((It's not something I'd like to start in my games. If you're trying for reality then you must remember that the Sopwith pilots had orders to bring their planes back at all cost - why do you think they were never issued with parachutes?... because the top brass didn't want pilots that didn't really cost much jumping out of and leaving behind expensive planes! But, as I've said before, it certainly could be included in a variant game (in some other zine) with hit points still being valid for the Rating List. Comments anyone?))

RICHARD MORRIS: "In general I would agree with your assessment of my Rating, if it were not for the following. As I see it I become an ace after Move 1 last month, so in Move 3 of RAVEN I did 5 points of damage each to Snoopy and Amy. Of more importance I did 5 points to Plastered Duck in Move 2 of KITTNAKE which is enough to send him crashing to earth, and allowing me my share of a kill.

I think that a number of games completed/current would be useful addition to the Rating table - it is not apparent at first sight who is really doing well - Bob Chapman for instance is only playing in one game against my 2 but has got more than half my total, so perhaps should be rated higher than me.

Please point out to Dave Tart that including this round I will have gained 40 points in 3 rounds (as long as you give me my extra 2 points above) of RAVEN. You can't call that 'very hard'."

((Some good points there, Richard. It's true, you did make the points/hits you said, but how am I to adjudicate it? How do I notify an editor of another zine you're playing in that halfway through your turn you became an ace? It would take me ages to work it out, and then I'd probably make mistakes. What happens when a

LETTERS (cont)

Central Statistician takes over? I've already adjudicated the game by the time he receives the results. Am I overlooking something?))

SANDY PETERS: "Do you think it might speed up these chicken-hearted characters if you introduced the concept of String Fatigue? i.e. Gradual disintegration at 2 pts per session for all machines aloft after 12 turns."

((Oh so the games aren't short enough for you, eh? Don't talk to Alan Parr about it, he's just been knocked out of a game that's just started! Ho ho ho. Running from Brian Moore he took 4 pts of damage thrice in just the one turn! Well I thought it was funny....

As for your string fatigue idea, it may solve a problem but I don't think many would agree.))

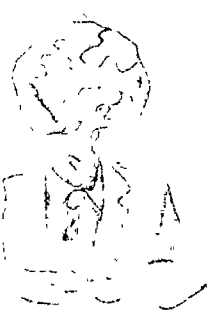
Oh, he hadn't finished...

SANDY PETERS: "I'm serious about the Vain Rats suggestion in the 'Clota' press."

((Do you actually think I read Clota press, good God man, I am married! Oh he still hasn't finished...))

"Don't you think it's about time you offered a (hopefully silly) variant."

((And what about Clota?...sorry, won't interrupt again, oh, you've finished. Well, to be honest Sandy, I don't like the complicated variants, by the time I've understood the rules - I've lost! Takes me all mt time to work out the Regular game.))

JOHN MILLER: "I recognise all those games George North mentioned - they're in a book of old board games, giving you each board and pieces for them too. Most of the games are dreadful but I quite liked 'Round the World with Nellie Bly' (Goof title!)." 

((Ah, I've got a book like that. I think it's the same game all the way through, using dice, but presented with different pictures!))

FRANK DUNN: "Surprised the rantings of Pete Doubleday in Triple D 16 went unanswered. I find his remark about masturbation devices personally distasteful coming from such an ill-dressed, unkempt wanker as himself. Yes it's very easy to be clever about computers and be awfully shocking in print. But what he excludes as computer games many people consider true games. The adventure style games aren't simple and boring algorithms and they have no direct analogue in non-computer games. Plus they have imagination and invention to a degree. As for the throwaway line concerning word processing and 'zines; Ripping Yarns is a superb example of a zine not relying on £1000 + of hardware to achieve a distinctive appearance. Anyhow enough of this, what's all this about distressed Beagles Tom?"

((Er, 'fraid you got me there - could it be the French way of saying Biggles?

Take your point about Pete Doubleday's letter - at that time I couldn't answer him because I believe a man's point of view, is a man's point of view (so to speak). He actually might find computer games boring. Since then I have aquired the Apple 'Wizardry' game, and I have to tell you, I do think Pete was wrong! He obviously hasn't seen the better games. I'm not really one for Role Playing Games, but I have to admit I've had the game for three months now and I haven't been able to put it down - it really is a sod of a game....but the best I've seen.

I agree Ripping Yarns does look good, but surely the litho machine Richard uses costs a packet?))

That's the letters over with for this month - thanks to all those that wrote. Just getting to the bottom of the page now thank goodness, so no room for any more chat. Is the column shrinking? Must be because I've managed to keep those notorious troublemakers, North, Peters and Close out of the column....