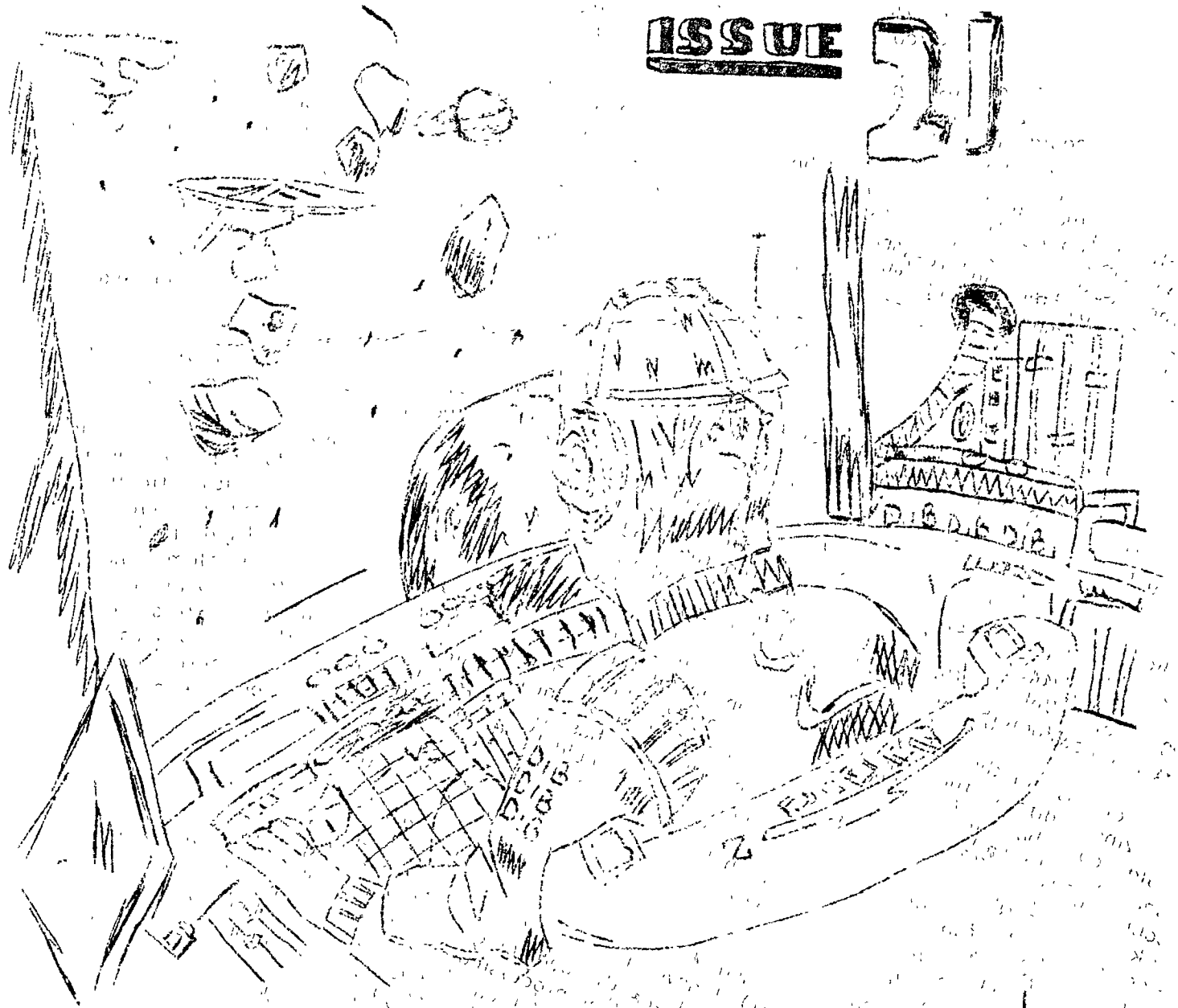


DIB DIB DIB

ISSUE 21



The zine that goes where no zine went before!

Welcome one and all (including new subscribers) to issue 21 of Dib Dib Dib (I can't underline zine names 'cós I'm now using the printer via the computer). This issue, as every other, costs just a mere 1p per sheet (and a bargain at the price!) + postage. Monies to subscribe (and re-subscribe) should be sent to Tom Tweedy, 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513. That's me.

EDITORIAL

I did hear from Clive Booth that a lot of complaints were sent his way because of my putting his name and address down in last issue as Dib's complaints department. Fine thing for an officer of the law to fib about things like that, eh, what?

'Ere, did you know that the Diplomacy box flyers have dried up? In a letter from Paul Simpkins (see lettercolumn) Paul says they need replacing and he can't afford it - is it possible for the hobby to pull together and collect the money to print 10,000 more. Well, is it? I certainly think it's important to contribute something to attract newcomers, but I can't speak for anyone else.

Most of us in the hobby will gain from continuing the flyers, but I suppose it's the zine editors that gain more than anyone else. It would be nice if everyone could contribute something - but who to give the money to? Who to organise it? My idea was to ask John Marsden, he's good at organising things, but I've yet to sound him out on the subject. Anyone else who has any ideas/comments and/or would like to contribute, please let me know. Also, I would be grateful if other editors could spread the word about this. The more people that know about it the better. Some might be only too glad to help - others almost certainly would like to know what's going on in hobby anyway. Some might even want to get their excuses together, to justify not paying!!

But now to my computer and the format of Dib (for those you who aren't too bored to read computer stuff). I haven't a clue how all this is going to turn out in the final printing. As I said at the beginning, I'm typing this up on the computer (using the Applewriter 1.1 wordprocessing package). In some ways it is easier. I can type in mistakes and remove them easily. If I don't know how to spell something I can stick in anything, and search and replace it automatically when I've finished. I can even insert and remove whole blocks of text without any trouble. The only failing is, I can't indent; underline within blocks of text; score out (i.e. using the '/'); all of which I need in the lettercolumn and adjudicating games. I have heard Pete Birks say something like: "Well, so much for the capabilities of computers then." Well, it's not quite like that. Computers can do a lot - but only what you tell them - in this case it's the wordprocessing package that counts. This one is cheap, hence it can't do much more than move blocks of text around. But, never fear, I shall eventually sort out the one I want. Still, to other things...

My nose is beginning to twitch with the smell of a possible hoax. TWICE in a matter of a couple of days I've come across the name of a zine that I've never heard of. Once in NMR!, and again in Fall of Eagles. The name of the zine is 'Chanticlear'. Anyone ever heard of it? According to Brian Creese this zine (which I've never even seen reviewed) is neck and neck with Greatest Hits, NMR!, Ode, Fall of Eagles, Acolyte, and Watch Your Back for the top spot in this year's Zine Poll. Strange innit? Especially when one considers a point that was put to Richard Walkerdine in his last issue of 'O Tempora! O Mores!' - that it would be easy for a party of hoaxers to push forward a fake zine. I quizzed Richard Hucknall about it of course, but apart from laughing (a dead giveaway) he said nothing. Anyway, the facts are before you. Are the devious minds of Creese and Hucknall at work again? Is the Poll, and the hobby as we know it, threatened with Chaos yet again? I say yes. There are no depths this despicable pair wouldn't stoop to!

Talking of hoaxers, it saddens me to say but that well known one, Clive Booth, has just published the fact that he's thinking of hanging up his bag of tricks and typewriter and folding 'Chimaera'. Another excellent zine disappearing. This is bad. More so because Clive doesn't want to fold it, but has no other choice as his police duties/exams etc are taking up more and more of his time. I wish Clive well in his exams of course, but I sure as hell wouldn't like to see Chim fold. I'd be content to trade with Chim even if it only appeared as a games-only issue - in the hope that sooner or later Clive would have the time to get back into full swing again. I might even eventually let him have his lettercolumn back! I've offered to help Clive with any printing and collating he may require - I even suggested it would be a good idea to run Chim as a Dib suppliment (he failed to appreciate the humour of this merry little quip). Who's zine is next to fold I wonder? I don't like my hobby changing!

REGULAR AND F(ROM) CGS LISTS

I've had enough applications for three more gamestarts (four actually, counting a F(Rom) game). The three Regular games went to Walamalasia Gazette, Ode and Dib - the F(Rom) went The Acolyte. Left on the list now are:-

REGULAR:

Bohemian Rhapsody, Stick the Knife in, Perspiring Dreams, and Panzerkreuser.

I've explained to Mike (editor of Panzerkreuser) that once he starts a game of his own he goes to the top of the list.

F(ROM):

Bohemian Rhapsody. (Actually, I'm thinking of dropping this list due to lack of interest.)

Simon Billenness has asked me to remove Shellshock from this list (he was going to GM the game), don't know why, does this mean Shellshock really is going to fold?

Talking of folding: I haven't seen Bohemian Rhapsody for a while either. If it doesn't arrive before the next CGS game fills BR will have to miss it's turn, with the possibility I might have to remove it from the lists altogether. Malc?

JOTTO

AND WE HAVE A WINNER! Spurred on to a valiant effort by the threat of 'everwinning' Keith Loveys, George North took a chance and sent in his six guesses - and got them all right! Actually I think his wife, Pat, helped him - so does it count I wonder? Anyway his six guesses were Trifle, Switch, Cringe, Mouldy, Jovial, and Probed (in that order). In actual fact MY first word was Filter - but anagrams are allowed. So, for his prize George gets two free issues of Dib..... issues 18 and 19! Well done, George, you deserve it. (Nobody can ever say Tom Tweedy is tight-fisted!)

But *******(Fanfare of trumpets)******* I'd like to take this opportunity to declare the opening of another Jotto game. There's still no game-fee, but, to the winner there is a prize of not 25p not 30p ... but 50p WHAT? ... £2!! that's a bit steep innit, Jan?! Okay, okay, £2 it is. The six words are quite common and should be found in a rare and almost unknown 15th Century Chinese Dictionary. Don't forget for the first attempt you can send in 3 words to get you started. Three words already on file from Peter Cowling.

Articles seem to be fairly thin on the ground this issue. I see I'll just have to get on to Dib's own War Correspondant, 'George North of G-Force' (short for George Force - he's the only member). You have been warned!

Apologies to all for the absence of the Angel cartoon, really it arrived too late for me to get the stencil cut. Anyway the 1982 Zine Poll results have just arrived today so these are a MUST to be included. I dunno, once again Dib turns out to be mainly a rating issue, but what can I do, ratings such as this are practically meaningless (perhaps just old news) when printed a month out of date. But to hell with the excuses, I'm printing it.

THE 1982 ZINE POLL RESULTS

by Richard Walkerdine

Explanations of the various columns as follows:- ((copied straight from Richard's zine.))

The Ratio Listing is the ratio of total preferences to non-preferences for each zine (equalities counting as half to each).

The Points Listing ignores the overall totals and considers each pair of zines individually. One point is awarded to a zine if it beats another (half a point for a draw) irrespective of the size of the win.

The Apportioned Points listing goes a stage further and instead of giving one whole point to a winning zine, shares that point between the two zines in the proportion of the preferred/non-preferred ratio for the pair.

The Overall Rank is simply the combination of the ranks from the above three methods. It is also the official result of the Zine Poll!

	RATIO LISTING					POINTS LISTING					APPORT'ND PTS		OVERALL
	P	EQ	NP	RATIO	RANK	W	D	L	PTS	RANK	POINTS	RANK	RANK
Ode	566	45	164	3.156	1	30	0	1	30	1	24.194	1	1
Greatest Hits	547	29	211	2.490	2	28	1	2	28½	3	23.037	3	2
Fall of Eagles	310	23	126	2.338	3	28	0	3	28	4	23.625	2	3
The Acolyte	450	53	185	2.253	4	26	1	4	26½	5	22.498	5	4
NMR!	524	37	227	2.210	6	29	0	2	29	2	22.006	7	5
Watch Yr Back	448	52	185	2.246	5	25	0	6	25	7	22.817	4	6
Dib Dib Dib	409	35	185	2.106	7	26	0	5	26	6	22.151	6	7
Home of the Brave	426	44	228	1.792	9	24	1	6	24½	8	21.192	8	8
Chantecler	401	17	47	1.973	8	20	5	6	22½	9	20.847	9	9
Chimaera	270	28	175	1.503	10	21	2	8	22	10	20.273	10	10
Denver Glont	306	35	236	1.276	12	20	1	10	20½	11=	18.785	11	11=
Persp Dreams	389	54	289	1.316	11	20	1	10	20½	11=	18.730	12	11=
Thing	286	26	312	0.920	16	16	1	14	16½	13	16.415	14	13
Outposts	114	31	118	0.970	13	13	2	16	14	18	16.429	13	14
Putty Riff	301	38	320	0.944	15	15	2	14	16	14	16.288	16	15
PTN	267	47	281	0.954	14	14	3	14	15½	15=	16.170	17	16
Ripping Yarns	302	34	332	0.914	17	15	1	15	15½	15=	16.312	15	17
Last Stand	253	60	324	0.799	18	13	3	15	14½	17	14.893	19	18
Oxymoron	50	18	70	0.747	19	11	4	16	13	19=	15.171	18	19
Snorewood Gaz	218	34	306	0.728	20	12	0	19	12	21	14.084	20	20
RGR	118	21	217	0.565	23	13	0	18	13	19=	13.739	21	21
Blackmail	194	40	317	0.635	21	11	0	20	11	22=	12.840	23	22=
Pyrrhic Vic	228	39	380	0.620	22	11	0	20	11	22=	13.277	22	22=
Bohemian Rhap	184	51	394	0.499	25	6	1	24	6½	26	11.578	24	24=
Match Aban	27	15	61	0.504	24	5	5	21	7½	25	10.904	26	24=
Zine to be Bel	154	38	354	0.464	26	9	0	22	9	24	11.511	25	24=
En Gardian	36	10	116	0.339	27	4	4	23	6	27	8.410	28	27
Walamalasia Gaz	130	33	431	0.327	28	4	2	25	5	28	8.701	27	28
Don't Shoot Me	54	7	274	0.207	29	1	1	29	1½	31=	5.720	29	29=
Shellshock	66	26	381	0.200	30	2	0	29	2	29=	5.331	30	29=
Stick Knife In	60	16	391	0.170	31	2	0	29	2	29=	4.797	31	31
Bats	17	4	168	0.112	32	1	1	29	1½	31=	3.286	32	32

Now, before going any further I must point out that this list was not released in 'O Temporal O Mores!', but Richard's old zine 'Mad Policy' (issue 74). Obviously at first I thought this to be another hoax, but if it is it's a damn good one (and worth printing anyway) - certainly I couldn't spot anything out of the ordinary. The typeface, with defects, is EXACTLY the same as Richard's, and a hell of a lot of work has been put into it. It MUST be the genuine article!

As you can see, Dib came 7th overall - a result that pleases me greatly (especially because Marsden is quoted as saying Dib wouldn't appear in the Top Ten). As Richard Walkerdine pointed out,

LETTERS

RICHARD WERNICK:

"Thank you for printing my contribution to 'Dib Dib Dib'. I tend to think that letters to Dib should not become mere polemics, but, on the other hand, should not be devoted solely to Diplomacy and Sopwith. It is difficult for me to say exactly what should be printed; that decision belongs to you as editor. My experience on a London newspaper with a circulation of 10,500 tends to confirm me in my view that most letter writers are would-be or failed politicians whose rantings are not worth an inch of column space. However I suppose a letter column has to exist in any paper (or zine), but it is a pity that most of the nation's wits display their talents in public conveniences to the detriment of English belles lettres."

((Who says GH has all the literary giants, Ernst Hemingway eat your heart out. Powerful stuff for the first letter in the column, eh? Ah what the hell, live dangerously that's what I always say. Yes Richard, a circulation of 10,500 is pretty impressive by any zine standard (even Greatest Hits and Thing on the Mat!) but I don't think you can hold a newspaper up as an example of what a zine should be like, the two types are aiming at totally different things. On the one hand the newspaper which is geared to getting the news to the public in general - very rare will you find a journalist that actually WANTS to make contact with their readership. On the other hand zines are aimed directly at a particular type of readership; gamers. Contact between editors and their readers, through letters and Cons, are actively encouraged! This is the only way our hobby could exist. What more can I say?))

ooOOOoo

And talking of contacting people. Just thought I'd include the next letter shown to me by my son which was sent to HIM - just to show you the despicable, underhand, lowlife characters we deal with in this hobby.

MIKE CLOSE:

"Dear Young Master Tweedy, ((crawler!))

I understand that you are a keen stamp collector, so here are a few of my spare stamps. I wonder if you would do something for me? Your Dad and I are playing against each other in one of those silly Diplomacy games, and he has started to attack me in it. Please tell him to stop attacking me and take his fleets back to Italy, and if he doesn't, then stop him reading your comics - that would really upset him! I'm playing France in the game (called Juno) you see, and I've never attacked him, so why should he attack me? Please tell him to stop!

Have fun with the stamps."

((Makes yuh sick dunnit? I wouldn't mind really, but my son DID stop me from reading his comics! I admit to being worried - I'm expecting a letter any day now for my wife, urging her to cut out cooking, cleaning etc etc. You have an awful lot to answer for, Close! I just hope some assassin can stop you in time.))

ooOOOoo

Now to get my own back...

RICHARD BASS:

"Jotto orders will follow when Charlotte solves it. She's a trifle slow at times. These women just cannot take the stresses and strains of games playing!"

((I agree, these women have no bottle. There, that should get him into enough trouble. Actually, I knew you had to be getting help with the Jotto from somewhere, Richard - some of your words were just too pat!))



Oh no, another dig at Yours Truly, and yet another dreaded tome from....

GEORGE NORTH:

"Another Dib Dib Dib arrived on the welcome mat this morning, and I looked forward to a marvellous morning browsing through the pages. Unfortunately it took me over an hour to get past the comic strip and you know the reason why, don't you. I spent a whole morning trying to make a suitable reply and finished up with a basket full of screwed up paper balls and not a single line worth sending in reply. There is just no answer to a comic strip like that, is there? All one can do is have a jolly good cry and a little giggle and hope to Christ it will go away. I dread to think what these guys have done to my lovely image.

"Eventually we moved along and finished the zine, but instead of leaving us with a head full of games and happy correspondence there was this dismal and rather ominous shadow like everybody was either a policeman or a hooligan, and somehow there was gloom and dispondency all over the place. I realise this is a popular subject and I am going to get mugged, my children mutilated, my wife raped and my house will be burgled, but do you think I could perhaps win my chess game, get my soccer team to avoid relegation, make Loopy Loo an ace pilot, and then worry about all the nasty stuff later on? ((Yes, but do hurry it up))

"Mind you a lot of violence could be avoided if only people would admit to their mistakes. Nobody ever says, "I am sorry, it was entirely my fault," any more. Had you noticed that. My own life is filled with incidents where these few words might have made all the difference but alas, I could cry, the number of lost opportunities.

"For instance, some navvies were digging up the road outside my house some years ago and it was before the days of pneumatic drills and stuff and we had these four men stood in a ring with sledge hammers, and the fifth poor mutt was kneeling and holding a large cold chisel in a pair of flimsy looking grips. The four men were taking turns to raise their sledge hammers and smite the cold chisel which was fast disappearing into the concrete. You get the picture.

"Now the law of averages says that sooner or later one of the men with a sledgehammer is going to miss the cold chisel, and the law of probability says he will definitely do so in due course. You know this. I know this, and the navvies know this. Perhaps that is why the one holding the grips is in the kneeling position.

"Well the ones outside my house were only ordinary and one did miss. When this happened the sledgehammer slid off the cold chisel and hit the grips and sent a sort of electric shot up the arm of the one holding the grips. This one threw down the grips like they were red hot and placing his hands between his thighs, proceeded to do a comic dance all over the pavement.

"Now here was a time when the words, "I am sorry, it was my fault entirely," might have come in very useful indeed. But the chance was missed because the one with the sledgehammer started yelling at the poor victim saying: "Why the bloody hell couldn't you hold the chisel up straight!" And matters could only get worse after that.

"Then there was the time when my brother arrived home after midnight and did a piddle ((oops, don't you mean a Jimmy Riddle? You'll have John Marsden after us)) in the airing cupboard by mistake. Dad thought we had burglars and arrived on the scene with a +1 poker. My brother, who had obviously had a few, thought discretion the better part of valour and hid under the bed and pretended he hadn't come home yet. Whether the words, "I am sorry it was my fault entirely," would have been enough on this occasion is not known, but to this day Dad tells the story of the burgler who peed in our airing cupboard!

"I suppose the nearest I ever came to an exception is a Diplomacy game where some dirty rat from Lavender Hill was supposed to be my ally but suddenly whipped three of my provinces all in one go and then had the cheek to tell me, "I am sorry, it was my fault entirely, ha, ha, ha. Will you support me into Moscow?" But I don't think that ought to count, do you?"

"Perhaps the day will come when I myself will have good cause to use those very words. I am working on a plan to send Chris Sandow and Mark Newman a couple of Angel Dolls, only instead of air they will be inflated with helium gas. It will be interesting to see what they will do. Will they let go right away or hang on like grim death and hope to finish the job on the ceiling? I would gladly admit it was all my fault if that happened!"

((I am sorry, the printing of the above letter is entirely my fault. I was thinking of taking it out of the letter column and printing it up as an article, but ... I dunno. Whatever, it's nice to see George ranting on about someone - shows DIB is getting to him! I don't know about your idea to send inflatable dolls to Mark and Chris though George - you might be had up for trying to corrupt innocent minds.))

ooOOOoo

DAVID HUSON:

"I promise not to burble about George North again especially not now I know that I will be named and even accused of being related to Mr North. Well now that I've totally discredited myself in the eyes of many hobby members, what can I say? I DENY EVERYTHING!"

((Good lad, you've learned your lesson it seems - let's just hope you stopped the rot in time. It won't be that easy though ... once these smears are started ...))

ooOOOoo

KARL PIPER:

"What's all this? "The Pipers playing adequately at Formula 1" and "These Pipers have no bottle!" Grrr. Do you REALLY want to suffer the same fate as Chris Sandow? Worse, we could force George Davies to pay you a visit..."

And...

GARY PIPER:

"I'll give you "with the Pipers playing adequately at Formula 1" and "these Pipers have no bottle". It looks as if Pete Mearns and I will have to sort you out AGAIN at Colditz! ((Never!!)) I warned you not to tackle with me in that Sopwith game - but what did you do? Straight for me with all guns blazing. The thing that narked me is that Jaap Jacobs won without even having a skirmish, if I remember right."

((Er, what did I say wrong?! What did I say? But yes, Gary, it was because you didn't trust me that Jaap won - no judge of character you Pipers! Actually you both may once again get a chance to prove yourselves (disprove?) as Pete is coming down again for a couple of days in August.))

ooOOOoo

JAAP JACOBS:

"I must thank you for the plug of 'Oxymoron' in the latest DIB. I do hope that gets me some subscribers. Your story about what happened the day Frank and I visited you was perhaps not quite correct, but very funny. Once I'm in England again, which might take some time, I'll beat some more English players, instead of you and the Pipers and Alan, who hardly resisted."

((Something has GOT to be done about these Dutchmen!))

ooOOOoo

Oh dear, the dreaded subject of chameleons is rearing its ugly head again - this is all Keith Loveys' fault!

MIKE CLOSE:

"I think I've just made an important breakthrough for science, because I've found that you can use chameleons as time delays when using LEDs (Light Emitting Diodes). On my radio/cassette recorder is a string of 10 red lights to indicate recording level, battery level etc. If you put a chameleon lengthwise along this, whenever a light starts to glow, the chameleon looks underneath himself and then half a second later, glows in the relevant spot on his back. ((I'm not writing any of this ... it's strictly your imagination ... I'm not even here)) I had a bit of a technical problem because my indicator is vertical and the chameleon kept slipping off, but four drops of Superglue soon sorted this out.

The experimental results so far have been most interesting. He handles classical music and Val Doonican type ballads quite easily (although he has a habit of spitting when Des O'Conner is on). ((What self-respecting chameleon wouldn't. What the hell am I SAYING?!)) Rock music unfortunately gives him a crick in the neck, as he is continually looking under himself to adjust to the rapid changes. The worst problem is ... ((No, that's it - even I can't ignore the last bit. This has got to be worse than even Karl Piper's famous 'Toadie' press - and believe me, that took some beating!))

Oh and by the way, he thought The Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy was BETTER than sliced bread, and I've promised to take him into Cardiff this week to see Rula Lenska in the New Theatre (Keith Loveys eat your heart out!).

Anyway, you'll be pleased to know that I've voted you bottom of the Zine Poll, and top of the Dame Edna Everage Award (for sheer niceness), my motives being pure spite. Ah! Revenge is sweet!!"

((One of these days, Close! One of these days...))

ooOOOoo

And....

MARTIN ALLEN:

"Having just emerged from the trauma of exams I have at last found time to examine the board with bloodshot eyes and severe neurosis. In my state of severe exhaustion, the old nervous system on tenterhooks, the throbbing between the eyeballs and the need for hourly rests in a dark room with sliced cucumbers over the eyes, isn't it surprising my Diplomacy playing is slightly below its usual brilliant standard?"

Of course, being ignorant of my mental state you'll give me the old thumbs down and order the inevitable

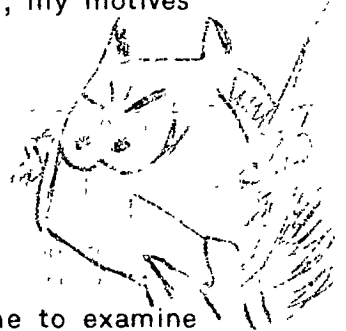
"Get off, you bubbling pillock."

But there must be some feasible reason for my below expert standard level of play. Could it be Dib Dib Dib is getting to me? I've broken out in blotches. It's sort of orange intermingled with pink, black, mauve, yellow, brown, green and blue. My friends (oops, friend) tells me I'm even looking like a Diplomacy board.

Oh, my God! Perhaps I'm turning into a chameleon! You see I've suddenly found this ability to climb walls and hang upside down from the ceiling, dart my tongue out at by-passing flies, hang on a minute (buzz, buzz flash gulp munch, munch). Sorry, now, where was I? ((Yup, that's Dib getting to you alright!))

Oh yes, your zine: the language, well, it's, ... it's so fruity. I daren't even repeat any of the material. ((that's funny, I hardly dare write it!)) I have to hide it in inconceivable (buzz buzz) places, and read it in dark, secluded areas (flash). I live in acute fear of the vice squad swooping at any time (munch, munch). Can't you wrap Dib in an inconspicuous paper bag or something? I mean, what would the neighbours say?"

((Er, yes Sunnydale Sanitarium, that's 0432 ... yes, got it. I shouldn't



worry about the neighbours if I were you, Alan. SO is the enevitable fate of all Dib subscribers ...))

ooOOOoo

JONN MILLER:

"Finished my studies at Durham and am just staying for the graduation ceremony on Wednesday, so I'll be back home to Euxton from July 10th (on the dole I'm afraid - I can't get on a teaching course anywhere although everybody agrees I am a SUPER potential teacher ...). Anyway, I was surprised and delighted to get Honours Division A in my finals, which is the top grade for my degree course. Aye, me and Billie-Jean King, we can show these youngsters a thing or two ..."

((Congratulations on your finals, John. It's a shame you can't get a job as a SUPER potential teacher though - there aren't that many around. So, yet another out-of-worker, eh? A potential hooligan in the making maybe (see later George North letter). Have you thought of the possibility that you might be too old to be accepted for anything, John - how about Wimbeldon '83?))

ooOOOoo

PAUL SIMPKINS:

"The Novice Package ... (This needs airing in the hobby press). The flyers in the boxes have dried up! They need replacing and I can't afford it! Can the hobby pull together and collect the money needed to print 10,000 more? I'm no longer 'in the swim' so I have to rely on you and Creese (my only 2 subs) to air this topic. To date I have sent out about 85 packages in the first 6 months of '82. This is okay but not enough. I have 215 in hand and want to get rid of them within 9 months if I can. Adverts in P.E. and The Gamer were disappointing... The main recruitment potential lies in the box flyer.

P.S. I notice in GH Bilious crowing about me and Compendium, quoting how he is publishing more regularly (pass the Fowlers Usage Alice!) and has more subbers than I ever had - wow! I had 3 for his information and that was 3 too many. The zine 20YO looks pretty good quand meme. Pity Simon can't just get on with it."

((I don't think it fair to compare one man's work against another when editors are supposed to be doing their own thing anyway - it really shouldn't be necessary. The fact of the matter is (from what I can see of issue 2 of 20YO) Simon IS doing an excellent job. That's good enough for me. Anything other than that (e.g. how many subscribers or other he has) I think is immaterial. Thanks for bringing the flyer problem to my attention, Paul. I just hope this letter and what I've put in the editorial will be sufficient to start things off.))

ooOOOoo

BRIAN CREESE:

"What a fine man this Dave Tant is! He must, obviously, have met me in some forgotton encounter and merely retained a visual impression of my youthful good looks. ((Ho ho ho)) No, I wouldn't describe myself as OLD, but at 30 it is some time since I was called young.

"I can remember 20 years ago - as a ten year old I recall being scared to walk down the main street of the small market town where I lived because of the gangs of youths who used to taunt you, prior to their getting down to the serious of fighting each other later in the evening. I don't believe these people respected the police at all. Youth violence (as opposed to gang-working-men violence) commenced with the teddy boys, rock 'n' roll and the creation of a seperate commercial market of teenagers; punks and skinheads are merely the successors to this tradition.

"The question really is, has society changed in the last 20 years to a more violent era because of a more liberal policing policy or in spite of it. If you,

Tom, or Dave Tant were able to affect the changes you desire overnight, would things really be better? I think not, you think it would. We may be able to agree that sentencing needs looking at; I feel there are one too many people in prison (you may disagree) and by and large they are THE WRONG ONES (you may agree!). Long prison sentences should be for crimes of violence: murders, assaults, robbing with violence, rape etc. Too many magistrates/judges think smoking a joint is more serious than hitting an old lady over the head with a brick. ((I certainly agree with you here - it's possible that by the time 'the pot smoker' has come out of prison he may have learned new ways of breaking the law.))

"You mentioned the latest appalling murder of a policeman - this man has since killed 2 other people. However, since the initial murder he has been hunted by vast numbers of police sporting an impressive armoury of firepower. Is that not equivalent to a threat of Capital Punishment? ((NO! - our British police shouldn't HAVE to carry guns out of necessity)) Unfortunately this has not prevented him killing again - presumably because he is insane. The formalised ritual of the rope or the immediate deterrent of a gun searching for him, neither will make any difference to this type of person.

"I was intrigued by your sentence "were they the worried out-of-work family men that had mouths to feed; or skinheads/coloureds?" I am not clear what you meant to imply by this.

((I was emphasising the point that the 30's riots (consisting of out-of-work men) were not quite the same as the recent riots (consisting of skinheads/coloureds). The 30's riots were aimed at the government, the recent riots were aimed at the police (though the establishment as a whole was the SUPPOSED target I believe). Am I wrong?))

BRIAN (cont.):

"I agree with Frank Dunn on the problem of statistics. Even 20 years ago I believe that our local country policemen dealt with many problems with the proverbial cuff-around the ear or the sharp word to a parent. To-day all such incidents are logged, recorded and turned into crime statistics. If any of your policemen readers feel able to enter this debate ((unlikely)) I suspect they may well verify this assertion.

"Finally I do feel it is difficult to compare memories of the past with perceptions of the present. When I was teaching it was a familiar experience to hear about how schools to-day were worse than 20 years ago. Yet EVERY OBJECTIVE RESEARCH produced in the last 5 years shows that straight forward academic standards have improved dramatically. You always need to be careful when considering the objectivity of your own memories."

((If academic standards have risen so much, how is it we have employers saying that kids are turning up for jobs/interviews etc with no knowledge of the basics? A friend of mine, an excellent teacher, commented just the other day, with some surprise, on a 5th former not being able to multiply! I don't even want to talk about my son's school - which is supposed to be one of the best of around here. The problems my son has had, are not the school, but the teachers. In my humble opinion today's new teachers are generally of a lower standard. Not all I'll admit, but enough for me to think that too many bad ones are being churned out of Teachers Training College. But, hell, I don't want to start a chamele-teacher letter col.

You say that you were scared to walk down your market town main street because they might have jeered at you. Fine, but you weren't beaten up, stabbed etc. You said yourself that their main business was fighting each other. The teddy boys got into fights and inter-gang battles to prove themselves 'men' (it was supposed). Even with Mods 'n' Rockers it was normally just set-to's at the biggest seaside resorts. What could they prove to their mates by beating up a 10 year old? Nowadays it seems it's just the violence that turns them on. Children, old ladies, what does it matter to them? But you could be right, it's possible it could all be due to Liberal police methods. What we need is Conservative Police standards.

The formalised ritual of the rope is not meant to deter the insane, but to make the 'professional' bank robber, cat burglar etc think twice about carrying firearms on a 'job'. It used to be a 'fair cop' in most cases - at the most, worth a couple of years. Why carry a gun when it can accidentally go off and mean your life? Idealistic? Maybe.))

ooOOOoo

GEORGE NORTH:

"In Dib's letter column I gave you a version of an imaginary world that might exist for a great many people. I did not say it existed for me and I thought your reply rather put a damper on things. You reply for instance that some people don't own their own house. I don't own mine. Does this mean I must now go and smash up a bus shelter? You say, some people do not own a car. I have no car. I must remember to go and mug the old woman down the road. You also say some people do not have jobs to go to. Well I have been out of work many times. It was me who robbed banks and did the train robbery. No, Tweedy, your attempt to exonerate hooligans on the grounds of what they haven't got, is no excuse at all. My own house was burgled some years ago by people from the higher income houses on Harold Hill Estate. Hooligans come from all over and they don't need a reason."

((Yes, you're quite correct George, hooligans don't need a reason for what they inflict on their victims - I was forgetting myself for a minute. You realise what this means of course ... contrary to popular belief, your point HAS made me change my opinions of the last issue. Has Richard Wernick been proved wrong? I shall probably be accused of being shamefully fickle with my opinions and beliefs. But no, adaptable, that's me.))

ooOOOoo

BRIAN MOORE:

"George North's letter and your reply has a point. There are 'angry people' out there, there are people without a job and family security, but out of a population of 53.5 million, surely these are a minority. For me, riots and hooligans do exist only on the telly and in newspapers and the police are just men and women in uniforms and cars that pass me by. My 'world' is sort of cocooned, but then so are most people's I should think. As humans aren't telepathic they can only be immediately aware of their immediate surroundings. At this moment I'm sat alone typing whilst my wife is out in the back doing something, but I'm only aware of her now, as she's just come into the living room again. At this moment the police, hooligans, etc just don't exist, even though they are there. As George concludes, the police will probably eventually come my way, as could war, hooligans and other unpleasanties. But also a pools win could come my way or another child, after all, these are all part of life's ups and downs, aren't they."

((Hmmm. So what you're saying then is that because hooligans don't exist for you there's no need to bother or protect yourself against them. You're correct when you say that life has its ups and downs, but if you recognise the possibilities of the 'ups', then surely you must equally accept and recognise the possibilities of the 'downs'??))

ooOOOoo

And now, just a couple of comments thanking me for including Alan Sharples MidCon results.

BRIAN CREESE:

"It is quite clear that Alan Sharples new STAR rating for MidCon is considerably inferior to the methods used by the organisers - it drops me from 14th to 22nd!"

IAIN SINGER:

"Thanks for the last issue of Dib - most amusing but you do have a lot to answer for - printing the MidCon results - meany - I'll get you for that!"

((Gee thanks fellas, anything I can do to oblige!))

Actually, I must apologise to Julian Sheply here. He wrote an excellent letter commenting on Alan's STAR system at length. Unfortunately, it arrived too late to be included in Dib 20, so I held it over. But I'm afraid I've mislaid it. Sorry, Julian - hope it won't deter you from writing again.

ooOOOoo

RICHARD MORRIS:

"When I sent my monies for 'Raven' I intended to comment on Alan Sharples' article, but I forgot, so I'd better do it now.

I've got no dispute with what he's done, and would agree that the results are probably more accurate if you rate each performance against the performance of the country on both days, however, I can't help feeling that the whole analysis is a waste of time that might have been better employed.

No-one could possibly believe that the tournament winner(s) were the 'best' players amongst those participating (to claim that I'm the 6th/4th best is ridiculous). About the most positive statement that you could make is that a few players did 'very well', the majority did 'average' and a few did 'pretty badly', on the day(s). So all we really need from a rating system is a rough guide of how well we did.

I'm more concerned though, about the Autumn '07 cut off, which unbalanced the game. In my first game I lost supply centres to my ally in the 1907 free-for-all; in a game being played to its conclusion, he wouldn't have dreamed of attacking me. In my second game by '05 Turkey and Germany had a nice position ruling all of the Eastern half of the board, without being in a position to do much damage to each other - a perfect position for a joint win. Under the '07 cut off Turkey had no option but to carry on attacking Germany, much to his annoyance.

The points I've made only really matter if you are taking the result too seriously - it didn't stop the event being very enjoyable, but hard work. I'll probably just offer to adjudicate one day and play other games on the other day."

((Yes, the Autumn '07 cut off has been complained about before. The end of game free-for-all makes it a far different game from the Diplomacy that we've all come to know and love. I must admit, I wouldn't like to play the game with an Autumn '07 finish. In fact, to find the REAL Diplomacy champion in this hobby, there is only one way. Take the winners from those games played in the various zines, and have a play-off. Unfortunately, this isn't very practical - unless the Championship was to be declared every 3 years or so. Are there any other championships that take this long between times?))

ooOOOoo

SANDY PETERS:

"Don't know why it is, but I always end up rushing my orders in to you in a last minute panic and I never get round to telling you what a grand job you're doing and how much I enjoyed the last Megadib. Anyroadup, just to lend a smile to your care-worn features, I might as well tell you that I awarded DDD 9.9 points in the Zine Poll. If you want 10 points next year, all you have to do is STOP BLOODY SHOOTING ME IN GOTHA!"

((Hah! a grudge vote, eh?! Ungrateful wretch. How am I to help it if I'm firing at other people and you suicidally throw yourself in front of my guns. It's as if you have a death wish or something!))

ooOOOoo

Talking of SOPWITH...

PAUL SIMPKINS:

"I'm not happy about someone just turning into an ace on the strength of what's

happening outside this game. Do Dip players suddenly develop extra power in Game A if they win Game B? Have games for flyers and games for Aces..."

((When I first started Sopwith, Paul, it was merely to see if the game would run by post - I was interested. Suddenly, if you'll excuse the pun, it just took off. Most of the main rules are run exactly as the ftf boardgame, but others had to be agreed on by the players at that time. Aces ARE included in the boardgame, but ideas were put forward for a little realism, and, because it was to have some sort of rating and be an inter-zine idea, the present state of aces was arrived at. If all the players in a game agree not to use aces that's fine by me, it's the players who decide what they want. See what the rest of the players in your game want to do.

As for comparing Sopwith with Diplomacy well, it's a different game, innit?))

ooOOOoo

RICHARD MORRIS:

"Just a few teeny weeny points about the Sopwith rules while I remember them.

(a) IF A PLANE CRASHES... Surely the number of hit points to be shared amongst the remaining players should be the number of hits the player had left + 5 (or 10 if an ace), thus replacing the number of hits that would have been scored if he had been shot down.

((You're quite correct, it IS the number of points the dead player has left.))

(b) REPAIRS... I think that it would be a good idea (or at least worth thinking about) to limit the number of times a plane can be repaired to 1 (or perhaps 2), otherwise a game could go on forever. As an example in 'Raven' Rob and I could come to an agreement to do 5 points of damage each, repair to 8, do 5 points each, repair to 8, do 5 points each ... etc. This would not only ensure our permanent acedom, but would be fairly tedious. Now, of course, I'm not devious enough to come up with such a plan, but if Rob were to suggest it...

You have probably noticed by now that Pete Doubleday has a Sopwith waiting list open in 'Thing'. I've put my name down quick!"

((Typical of you to put your name down for another game, scared of losing your ace status, eh?

I think it's a good idea about the number of times to repair. I think a player should be allowed to land at least twice (it's possible a repairing player might have to take off fast after only repairing a couple of points of damage, because of an impending attack. Clearly this would make it unfair). Anyone else any comments before things are made final?))

ooOOOoo

And in my answer to my comments that Alan Sharples' STAR ratings should have been brought out as a mini-zine...

PAUL SIMPKINS:

"I produced 100 copies of 'Angus' - a zine with MidCon ratings in - I sold only 14 and thus wasted a lot of time and effort and MY money! - Bah. I only charged 30p and most of that was for the stamp."

((Yes, I remember now. Please accept my apologies for making such a stupid suggestion. Funny, I would have thought something like that would have interested at least 90% of those that played in the tournament. What do you think went wrong?))

ooOOOoo

This seems to be it for the letters this issue - thanks to all those that wrote.