

# DIB DIB DIB

ISSUE 23



Which ever way you look at it, Dib is great!

"Wot, another?" I hear you ask. Yes, I realise you probably haven't yet got over the effects of last issue yet (some of you probably still re-reading it in wonder), but this is Dib Dib Dib 23, which, once started, couldn't be stopped from exploding onto the streets. Let it be (generally) known, that this thing you have in your grubby mits will now cost you 34 pence including postage (reason for the new price given below) and comes to you from: Tom Tweedy, 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513

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EDITORIAL



Well this is it, the time has come to change the price of Dib. No no, don't go away, it's not as bad as it seems; you see I'm only changing the price to 34p per issue including postage. This can't really be seen as putting the price up, as last issue, being 28 pages and a little too heavy, cost 14p (28 pages @ 1p a sheet) plus 23p postage (= 37p overall for people like John Field, Clive Booth and Nicholas Clifton). I'll absorb last month's £7 postage, but I can't do that too many times - I mean, I'll subsidise my hobby to a certain extent, but there has to be a limit, as I'm sure you'll all agree. So, as from this issue, Dib cost 34p an issue. (There, I think I've said it enough times now.)

Apologies for not putting "continued on page 25" at the bottom of page 3 in the last issue - from the replies received it seems as though it confused most of you! This hardly surprises me; Dib didn't get where it is today by having subscribers who could remember what they had read 5 minutes before. Consequently, replies ranged from:-

"You ended a paragraph on page three with 'How!!' to ...

"How is someone as simple-minded as myself supposed to hold the meaning across a cartoon, an article from George North and pages of letters about anything from word processors to telepathic chameleons? I am only human."

Quite, but is it enough to be human nowadays? And what has that to do with my subscribers? Nothing. But I digress....

Last issue ended up being a real pain to put out. After fighting with some determination to reduce the one week turnaround (by a couple of days at least), I suddenly found when came the time to print up the stencils that I didn't have enough extra-sensitive stencils to finish the job. Great, I thought - and proceeded to hunt round for more. Unfortunately no-one had any, so I took a chance and used my old stencils (I must admit to being surprised how well the daisywheel printer cut them). It was because of this, the rush, that I forgot to put 'continued' at the bottom of page three.

BUT, my misery didn't just stop there. Oh no, when the Ghods have got it in for me, they've really got it in for me. My next problem came when I had to duplicate everything. I normally use 'Croxley Script' duplicating paper, but unfortunately my supplier didn't have any in stock. Would I like 'Roneo', it's just as good, he said. Pah! I fed a few reams through my duplicator (an automatic Gestetner 360), walked away, and when I returned there was paper all over the place. The bloody machine was picking it up, chewing it up, and spitting the bloody stuff back out at a fair rate of knots (as only a sodding automatic can). Oh yes, you may laugh, but it put your issue of Dib back two days - so there. It took a lot of soothing from Jan to ease my troubled brow. Thankfully everything seems to be going great guns this issue ..... touch wood, touch wood - have I spoken too soon? Doesn't do to get too complacent you know - the powers up above don't like it!

I'll have to tack the CGS lists on in a minute, but before I do I'd just like to comment on a suggestion Richard Walkerdine brought up in the latest Mad Poicy. In a reply to a Mike Benyon letter about contributions to Novice Package flyers, Richard said, and I quote:-

"The flyers direct newcomers, mainly, via the Novice Package to the CGS. So why shouldn't the CGS help to pay for the flyers? If Tom Tweedy SOLD CGS games to GMs for, say, £1 each that would generate quite a reasonable sum. And there'd be no problem about collecting the money as a GM wouldn't get his game until he'd paid his £1."

This is an excellent idea, and unless someone can come up with a good reason for why I shouldn't, the idea will be put into effect as of now. Actually I wanted to charge some sort of fee before (to deter editors who have a mind to fold) but could find no good reason for needing the money. The Novice Package, or perhaps Diplomacy box flyers will do fine.

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CGS LISTS FOR REGULAR AND F(ROM) DIPLOMACY

That's better. Last month's plea for more zines to come forward for CGS games met with a good reponse. Remember now though that the price of a CGS game is £1 (payable before getting the game). Anyone not wishing to stay on the list please let me know. The Lists now stand as:-

REGULAR:

Thing on the Mat (for issue 11), Perspiring Dreams, Last Stand, The Church Mouse (Regular or F Rom), Watch Your Back, Panzerkreuser, Foiled Again, DSM, The Question Mark ((?))

F(ROM):

Denver Glont, Shellshock, Bohemian Rhapsody, Watch Your Back, Panzerkreuser

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JOTTO Turn 4



Damn! Got this explanation wrong last time (trust Walkerdine to ring up and point it out, throwing the Tweedy household into a turmoil), matching Detour against Mortar gives you THREE points, not four. So, I'll try again.

I choose six words from the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, each six letters long. Each month you send in one word and I then score each letter against each of my six words. For instance, if you submitted DETOUR and the six secret words were: RESORT, BASKET, GENTLE, PRIEST, MORTAR, FLOWER the scores would be: 4, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3 respectively. Obvious aim is to find all six words.

When you think you know all six words you may take a guess at them (you must guess at all six) - but you must get ALL six right! Get one wrong and you're out.

New players wanting to start this game need only send in 5 words/guesses next issue to catch up. There is no game-fee and the prize is £2.

((Will players please note a couple of re-adjudications. I'm now using the computer to work out the Jotto (instead of Jan), so now there won't be any more mistakes ..... I hope!))

- |                                  |                                       |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| IAIN SINGER: 4th (2,1,2,2,3,2)   | ALAN PARR: 4th (2,2,2,2,2,1)          |
| KEITH LOVEYS: 4th (2,1,4,1,1,1)  | PETER COWLING: 4th (1,1,2,3,3,1)      |
| RICHARD BASS: 4th (3,2,1,3,3,2)  | ROBERT LOZYSKYJ: 1st (2,3,1,2,3,3)    |
| SANDY PETERS: 4th (2,4,1,2,1,2)  | 4th (1,2,2,0,1,2)                     |
| WILLIAM FISK: 1st (3,0,2,3,3,2)  | RICHARD MORRIS: 4th (1,3,1,0,3,1)     |
| 4th (2,1,2,2,3,2)                | GEORGE NORTH: 2nd (1,2,2,4,1,1)       |
| NICK MARSHALL: 1st (2,3,1,1,0,2) | 4th (2,3,2,1,1,2)                     |
| 2nd (1,2,1,1,0,2)                | NICHOLAS CLIFTON: 1st (2,2,3,1,0,1)   |
| 3rd (1,1,3,0,3,2)                | 2nd (1,2,0,2,3,2)                     |
| 4th (1,2,1,0,2,2)                | 3rd (2,3,1,1,1,2)                     |
| TIM BALL: 1st (3,3,0,0,3,2)      | 4th (2,3,0,1,1,2)                     |
| 2nd (3,3,1,1,2,2)                | RICHARD WALKERDINE: 1st (2,0,2,3,3,2) |
| 3rd (3,3,1,1,2,3)                | 2nd (1,1,2,2,1,3)                     |
| 4th (2,4,0,0,3,3)                | 3rd (2,2,1,1,2,1)                     |
| MARK LIPTON: 1st (not allowed)   | 4th (1,3,1,1,2,3)                     |
| 2nd (2,2,1,1,4,2)                |                                       |
| 3rd (2,3,1,3,1,2)                |                                       |
| 4th (2,0,6,2,0,1) !!             |                                       |

### SOPWITH (Review)

This is a game I always enjoy playing - a welcome addition to ANY gamester's collection I would think. An aerial game for six players set in World War I. It's a game requiring strategy, tactics and skill. There's enough skill to satisfy even the most fickle of gamesplayers, yet fun-type and simple enough to get out and play at any time (well, I wouldn't try it in the bath of course). In fact the only time dice is used is to move clouds of standard shapes across the board, thereby introducing the only random effect in the game - the dice have absolutely no effect on the skilled player.

The board itself is one large hex made up of smaller hexes (for postal play the board is numbered A1-S19). In each of the six corners of the hex sit the six airfields; each airfield has three airstrips.

As in Diplomacy all movement is simultaneous, though each season or "Turn" the players can move three times. Each player has a board on which he records his moves and firing. He has his airfield (comprising of three airstrips) from which he takes off, and a credit of 16 ammo, 12 damage. Realistically, the firing has declining affect, depending on the distance between each plane, 4 points being the maximum damage inflicted, falling to 1 point when planes are 4 hexes apart. See?

Planes also take damage from the clouds. And because planes are considered 'dead' when damage points reach zero, you can be in a position to 'kill' your opponents ..... great fun, especially when the plane being killed has already landed to reload or repair.

In all a game I would thoroughly recommend playing. Unfortunately, the boxed set of this game is very hard to come by, as its production has been discontinued. Originally produced by a firm called 'Gametime Games'. Since then all rights have been handed over to Avalon Hill, who, I am informed, have no immediate plans for its re-release. A great pity.

The reason for its demise, so I'm told, was because the game was originally aimed at the serious hex wargamer - who found it far too simple for their taste and therefore useless. Consequently, it was sniffed at by wargaming fans and faded into virtual obscurity. Now that it has started up again, I think people are beginning to see possibilities in the game - Diplomacy fans are sure to enjoy the appeal of 'stabbing' ones opponent in the fuselage - and what better motive for playing a game is there?

Still, not to fear, although the boxed set is not made any more, the game now has a strong postal following (growing stronger by the month). The game slips excellently into the postal mode of play: players are issued with maps of the board and rules (supplied by the gamesmaster) at the start of their game. A player does NOT need the boxed set to play by post.

ooOOoo

SOPWITH STOCKIST: Thanks to Richard Bass for spotting boxed Sopwith sets at Gamesday. Anyone wishing to own, what must be getting on to be a rarity, one of these sets can write to:-  
'Esdevium Games', 185 Victoria Road, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 1JU. Tel. Aldershot 311443 (or evenings Farnham 722269). Shop open: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9.30-1.30am, 2.30-5.15pm. Saturday 9.15-5.15.

GAMES DAY 1982 by Richard Bass.

(Last year I wrote an account of Games Day for Lemming Express (now Walamalasia Gazette). In a note to Dave Thorby which accompanied the article, I mentioned that if he did not want the article, I would pass it on to Tom Tweedy or Clive Booth for their consideration. Dave leapt upon this, printed the article and suggested in LE that Chimacra and Dib Dib Dib were only good enough for his cast offs. (I think he only printed the article so he could get a good insult in on Booth!). Tom Tweedy eventually got hold of the offending remark (and article), which led to his twisting my arm about a possible article for this year. I tentatively agreed as I am in Dip game with Tom and I need all the goodwill I can muster. Unfortunately, Tom remembered when Games Day came around again, the arm was twisted once more and this is another offending article.

The alarm went off at 3.00am. I eventually emerged from Dreamworld and slowly realised it was Saturday. I blissfully dropped my head back onto the pillow. At 3.30 I remember I am going to Games Day and leap out of bed with all the speed of a Centurian Tank. I have to be at Haslemere station in 30 minutes. 15 minutes later I am putting the kitten back inside the front door for the second time. Charlotte is taking me to the station and is suitably pleased to be up and out and about at this time on a Saturday morning. Oh dear! What a shame! Never mind! She will be doing the weekly shopping in Haslemere so she will not be frittering her time away. Still if she gets bored she could always do the washing, decorate the bedroom, re-roof the shed, mend the garage door or cut the grass (thinking about it now, there's an awful lot of gardening that needs doing). No, she'll not be bored while I'm at Games Day!

Anyway. I fork out £4.30 return and catch the 0.03 at 9.06. This being one of, if not the train of the day - there are only 4 carriages. I make a beeline for the rear one. Half of it is First Class (unlike me) and the other half is reserved. Reserved?! A porter yells at the group of us who have gone to get into the fourth carriage. I slip into the next carriage and manage to get a half share of a three-seater seat. There are harder things in life than sharing a seat with a pretty blonde. Have I stirred your imaginations? (I hope so - I just made that bit up!). Godalming, Farncombe, Guildford, Woking, Waterloo. I vaguely read a copy of The Gamer (which is now 2 months old), and I drift back to sleep a couple of times. People come and people go as the stations pass but I rarely notice.

Waterloo and I meet up with Bill Dove the other side of the ticket collector. (I used to work with Bill and it is he who is responsible for my being in the hobby today). We had arranged to meet by W.H. Smiths but he got on the same train as me at Woking and had spotted me in the crush on the platform. After a brief discussion we come to the conclusion it's St. James Square we want tickets for. In next to no time we are there and actually recognise this place and so we are assured we got it right! It's raining. Terrific. Donning Anoraks we go out and past Scotland Yard. The little triangle that used to go round and round is still not there. Gone for good I reckon. Nicked.

Around a few corners and we are here, Greycoat Street. It's easy to find, just follow the kids. We have learnt our lesson from previous years and have bought tickets in advance. Smart thinking eh? No queueing in the rain for us! The doors are not actually open yet. It's 10.30 +. Having walked past the queue we stand across the road opposite the door and it's drizzling. We have a brief chat with some others who also have tickets. The doors open and the crowd surges in. These kids treat it like a football match. We cross the road and go through the centre of the two queues to the ticket entrance. I am restrained and only use my elbows a few times.

Inside we are duly presented with the ubiquitous (look it up) Games Centre bag. The Information stand is crowded. We wander over to see why. The kids are booking up for D&D, AD&D and Runequest games. How very nice for them. We exit left and go for a quick tour of the hall. Spears, Games Centre, Flying Buffalo, Games People Play, Wonderworld, Avalon Hill, H.P. Gibson, Hartland Irfoil, TSR Hobbies and more, much more yes, they are all here for Games Day. David Watts is here with his Railway Rivals. This year he is running some games too. One game has already started with the two lads we were chatting to outside the Hall. David seems to have a better placed stand this year. I think he was a bit hemmed in last year. We move on to The Gamer stand. We get talking to John Lamshead, co-editor - co-editor that is with Nicky Palmer, a familiar name to many of us. John Lamshead is interested in what we think of The Gamer. Bill immediately tells him. Well he did ask. He seems pretty keen on this new Computer Gamer subzine. but we do not respond to his enthusiasm as we work with the infernal machines all week. We tell him it's nice to have Richard Sharp back as he writes so well. It was nice to have that Civilisation article too. We diplomatically say nothing about their 'postponement' of the last few paragraphs to the next issues (where I think they were

garbled even then). The Gamer seems to suffer from that sort of thing. The first half of Richard Sharp's (Tales of Bedbug Island) Quirks article did not say that it continued or even where!

Having had a quick look round we retire to the Cafeteria for a cup of coffee, or two. We have a look at the latest copy of The Gamer that we have each bought. It is improving. Geoff Challenger has been commissioned to review 'The State of the Art of ..... Diplomacy'. Geoff has written it well. That 'War in the Falkland' game is reviewed too. There is an article on 'Continuo', a game that I saw on The Gamer stand. It looks a fairly simple abstract game so (for £2) I decide to buy it later on.

Games Day is actually two days, though for me and many others, Saturday is the day. This is my fourth Games Day and Bill's seventh. The Horticultural Hall is fairly full, the spread over two days has not reduced the attendance at all. Who knows, a couple more years and maybe they'll be looking for a bigger venue again.

Refreshed, we set off for a second look in the hall. By now we have had a look at the programme and know what we are interested in (and what to avoid). A whole row of tables down one side of the hall is taken up with various D&D, AD&D, Runequest etc games. A lot of the central arena is taken up with competition and demonstration games. Spears are there too. I pause over one of their games. Stranded. It looks pretty simple and an ageing guy in a T shirt wants to show me how to play it. O.K. and I win in about 3 minutes. It must be simple! I only view the Esderium Games stand from a distance but there looks to be a copy of Sopwith there. Nearby a new game 'Seahawks' is being demonstrated. It's a board game set in the 18th Century Carribean. 'Armchair Cricket' is being played not far away. Bill is naturally interested. Cricket is a major interest for him. (It was he who launched Cricketboss on an unsuspecting hobby). The game is played with a pack of cards. It follows the format of the real game, with a bowler presenting a card which the batsman has to deal with. Whale Toys are selling 'Kensington' and a few other games. 'Unhappy Families'? Err, I don't think so.

I come across Simon Billenness on the Zine Stand and introduce myself. Howard Wilcox is also there at that time and he introduces himself too. I buy a copy of 20 Years On which I wouldn't have done normally. I also buy copies of Zine to be Believed, Last Stand, Panzerkreuser and Denver Glont at 10p each. Oh the expense! Like the Zine Bank it's a good opportunity to see a few zines. (You are doing a sterling job there Simon). I move on and re-introduce Bill Dove to Howard Wilcox as they have not met for a few Games Days. We talk of Cricketboss, United! and sports games in general.

It is now 12.30 so Bill and I decide to adjourn for a Burger and a pint. There is a long queue for the Burgers so we go straight into the bar. I see Ray Miller through the crowd and offer him a drink. He's at the bar before I have hardly moved. Ray is an old acquaintance from previous Games Days. We coerce Ray into joining our Darts and Quiz team for MidCon. We then chat to Brian Creese and others for a while. Kim Dent, Brian Dolton, Mike Woodhouse, Len George, Mike Allaway and Marie are all there. The postal hobby dominates the bar. I introduce myself to Mike Allaway and have a long conversation with him. I even tell him why I no longer subscribe to Pyrrhic Victory. This is Mike's deadline weekend for issue 50. He is spending Saturday at Games Day, the evening in the Buckingham Arms, Sunday morning playing football and the rest of Sunday at Games Day again. It's a great life if you don't weaken ..... Rip Gooch is there too, as is Peter Northcott, to whom I speak but briefly. There are many others who I do not get to meet. Pete Birks is wearing a T-shirt bearing the slogan:-

"O' NELL'S

I survived."

On the back it simply says "Birks". I have a chat with Pete and Nick Kinzett who's lapel badge states that he has to be 'Zine to be Believed'. Nick is an enthusiastic conversationalist and talks about 20 to the dozen. I had encountered Nick the previous Games Day GMing a game of Civilisation. Pete has recently played a game where he and others lost to Steve Doubleday. Several editors are handing out copies of their zines. Steve Doubleday issues copies of Gallimaufry to all and sundry. They are dated June 1981. he is clearing out his stocks. I also manage to have a word with John Dodds in whose zine, Perspiring Dreams, I am playing one of my Diplomacy games.

When the lunchtime session finishes I realise that I never did get that burger. Still, I can eat later. it's time to look at some games again. At the Avalon Hill stand Bill and I have a look at their version of Civilisation. It's cheaper than Hartland Trefoil, is it as good? (Are the rules the same too?). We also take a look at 1829 on the Harland Trefoil stand. it's very tempting. I try to find Alan Parr at the Rosthorne Games stand but David Watts tells me he has just left. We stop off at the Zines stand again. RIP Gooch is collating copies of Ripping Yarns for Biggles to



LETTERS

Soon to be called the George North Column ...

ANDRÉAS SARKER:

"You will, I hope, pardon me if I start gibbering or become incoherent, but I'm still recovering from yesterday. Can you picture the scene: there I was, engrossed in a game of Railway Rivals deep in the bowels of the Royal Horticultural Halls, watching as I was being hammered into the ground after a shaky start. Then I looked up. What did I see? Well, it was pretty indescribable really. David Watts' knees turned to jelly upon the sight of it .... I knew I hadn't seen it before, because until then I could sleep at night, and this just made the shock even worse. As I wrenched my eyes away from the abomination in front of me, I caught sight of a piece of cardboard attached to it. Inscribed on this was the legend 'GEORGE NORTH'."

((Ughh! You have my sympathy. Tell me though, was he still wearing his tatty slippers? You never know, it might have been David Huson fooling you:))

ooOOOoo

MARTYN IVES:

"Many thanks for issue 22, the story by George North had me in stitches (although my wife didn't even grin), does Britain's answer to Tolstoy have a fan club? I was thinking of buying him a pair of those plastic sandals so that he would never have to take his shoes off on the beach again, but I do not know the size to buy, would the George North Fan Club (if there is such a thing) give out personal details of this nature?"

((Are you kidding? If I ever gave a personal description of George Dib would be siezed by the vice squad for printing material liable to be damaging to the public health! Anyway, the only ones I know that have George's measurements are an 'Anti-North Fan Club' (6000 members) that have measured him up for a pine box. As chairman for this club I can assure you we don't have his foot measurements - although I have heard one is twice the size of the other.))

ooOOOoo

GEORGE NORTH:

"Most amusing letter last month was from Simon Ratcliffe. I don't know where Martin Allen found him, but welcome to another nut in the Sandy Peters and Mike Close mould."

((Which just goes to show how much taste our George has in regards to literary talent. The man has absolutely no shame .... who are Martin Allen and Simon Ratcliff anyway ...))

ooOOOoo

GRAHAME MACLENNAN:

"Why does George North get such stick in your zine? He seems like a perfectly decent bloke to me. And yet ...."

((And yet, indeed. You do well to pause before diving in. George gets stick for the subjects he brings up in the zine (for example, the now famous blow up rubber dolls), consequently he always puts himself in the firing line. And it's probably the best place to keep him!))

ooOOOoo

And now from one of the 'old men' of the hobby ...

JOHN PIGGOTT: (er continues on next page) → → →



"I clearly cannot let my Dib subscription expire, as I should then be unable to see what further dreadful travesties may spring from your electrified technology. I've been somewhat silent of late, due mainly to pressure at work and exhaustion in the evenings, but this may eventually change; meanwhile I do read each issue on the train and like your general approach. Of course, we all know who's REALLY responsible for the good bits, don't we, Jan ...?"

((Oh so that's how it is, is it? (For those who don't know, John used to edit the exceptional zine, Ethil the Frog, when men were men and everyone used ink and quill pens.) Can't take the strain of a fair day's work and married life, eh John? Soon be pipe and slippers time. Nice hearing from you again though.))

ooOOOoo

NICK MARSHALL:

"Thanks for the A4 Diplomacy maps with Dib 22; no longer will I have to hide the board on my knees under the desk at work. It is most annoying when the Russian armies all roll off into Siberia ...

My punchgirls (I say 'my', but that's purely wishful thinking; little crackers, every one of them, except Linda Grimmer - "Grimmer than what?", do I hear you ask?) have precious little to do at the moment, what with this Health Service hoo-hah, and the poor darlings are bored silly. So they have taken up Cluedo. A game can last a whole day - they don't seem to have any notion of the sort of deductive reasoning required. I keep telling them that the Reverend Plum did it to Miss Scarlet in the Kitchen with a candlestick, but they won't believe me ... ((Probably it's as well that they don't))

Went to see 'Blade Runner' last night. Who dreamt up that little title? The whole thing is a travesty of the book. All right, I don't suppose it IS meant to be particularly closely modelled on Philip K. Dick, but 'Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep' is marvellous, and the film is not. The city in Blade Runner is too populous, too high-tech, too sleazy. In the book it is simply bleak: empty of people, full of junk. In the film one is always sure that the humans are human, and the androids aren't. After Ridley Scott's 'Alien', this effort is a big disappointment. (By the way, does anybody have the soundtrack album of 'Alien'?)"

((That does it: I'll just HAVE to read, or perhaps re-read 'Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep' - everyone that talks about it seems to rave about it. I went through a patch not long ago when I bought stack after stack of books and read one after another. Consequently, apart from a few memorable ones like the Deathworld series by Harry Harrison and Asimov's Foundation Trilogy, book titles never seemed to register. It's damned irritating to think I might've let a good one slip through.

I want to see Blade Runner. So, once again a film doesn't measure up to the book (though, does it ever?). It's interesting to note the two comparisons you made of the city. In the film: "too populous, too high-tech, too sleazy"; and in the book: "simply bleak, empty of people, full of junk". Surely if you were to describe a city to someone as bleak and full of junk, the idea could come across that the city is sleazy? Put yourself in the film director's shoes - how would you portray visually the futuristic city you describe? It isn't easy when you have to remember that people are bored easily with visually uninspired effects. No action, or bad effects, are ziltch for lovers of Science Fiction. In a book a reader's interest is kept alive by their own imagination. Perhaps films get it wrong because one person's idea of the book is just different to another's.))

ooOOOoo

DAVE TOTTEY:

"I've always had a yearning to be a psychologist but recently I decided to try for a degree in zoology instead, as I now find chameleons much more interesting than people. (Could this have something to do with the articles on chameleons in Dib I hear you ask.) ((It wouldn't surprise me))

However, before seeing the true light, I was fascinated by the large number of adults who derive pleasure from participating in such games as Sopwith and

Diplomacy which serve only to boost delusions of grandeur and thereby increasing the quantity of deranged megalomaniacs in this country. Even you personally seem to have joined the throng of these dangerous elements of society. ((Have a care, sir, you can't lump me in with the likes of North, Allen and Close and lightly walk away! Explain yourself!))

What should be done I hear you ask. Well, the only hope for society seems to be to outlaw all such games and those responsible for the promotion of these abominations should be transported to the island of Kimode and fed to the dragons. (And they can't take any spell books or magic swords with them.) In this matter, my Teddy is in total agreement with me."

((Admit it, Martin Allen put you up to this didn't he? Why oh why must that man plague me with his 'friends' - HE'S bad enough!))

ooOOOoo

I. WINSTANLEY:

"Thanks for sending the copy of Dib Dib Dib here in return is oodles of wealth, large quantities of finance, untold millions (£3 actually) to start my subscription with.

((Three quid!! Where's the gold ingots I asked for? I searched all through the bottom of your envelope but found nothing but crude green paper stuff .... this will not do ....))

I. (CONT.):

"As yours is such a high quality intellectual zine perhaps you can help me answer this problem. If a chameleon is placed in a white room, with no windows or other light source, does it turn white to match its surroundings or black because there is no light?"

((Hmmm. A little difficult for the likes of me this (not being totally conversant on the subject of chameleons like wot Mike Close is). I would imagine as there is no light source, light cannot be reflected back from the white surface of the room - hence no colour (white being made up of all 'colours'). Consequently, because the chameleon changes colour in regards to any reflected light, it MUST remain neutral. I can't hazard a guess at what this colour might be of course, as there is no light. You can't catch your friendly neighbourhood editor out THAT easily.

Er ... I just thought of something. If colours are only there when a light source is supplied, does that mean colours cease to exist in darkness? That would mean there WAS no white surface in the room and .... Aaaarrggghhh! Trapped in my own letter column ...))

ooOOOoo

WILL SHAND:

"I did not get round to writing my stunning article on the Crusades as I have not yet thought of a way to make it interesting to people who have never heard of the game, and still manage to let them know what it's like to play. ((My problem with reviews exactly)) However, on the subject of chameleons I have unearthed some surprising news.

'Soviet Scientist', Sept. 1982 ....

"It has come to the notice of the honoured central committee and workers soviet responsible for the production of 'Soviet Scientist, and derivative of same, responsible for the maintenance of the prestige of workers revolutionary, socially orientated, Marxist-Leninist (compulsary-voluntry of course), science throughout the western world, that in the bourgeois, capitalist, neo-fascist, warmongering, pseudo-moronic, journal (the term 'journal' applied to such Americanized bilge is not we stress an attempt to denigrate such sociably-motivated organs of truth as pravda) 'Dib Dib Dib' one 'Mike Close' attributes to himself the credit for the highly laudable innovation of using the chameleon as a form of postal communication. We feel, as representatives of true

Marxist-Leninist science we should congratulate and comiserate with the aforementioned 'Mike Close'. As although his scientific researches have borne fruit in this somewhat startling idea, we regret to inform him that in the ninth two year programme of postal studies in an egalitarian society with specific subfields in Lizardology and counter-espionage the famed Soviet scientist, lecturer in chameleons plus counter-espionage at the Institute of Maxim Gorki's lower jaw Kiev, Ivan Ivanovitch Ivanov did, in fact, discover this use of the chameleon while researching for his book 'The Chameleon As A More Efficient Form Of Western Society'.

There is now a chameleonic postal service throughout the USSR and we convey our most noble proletariat thoughts to the 2nd inventor."

((So, what you're saying is, Mike Close has failed yet again. Typical ... I might've known he'd borrow someone else's ideas - it's clear we are dealing with a fraud here. But, why isn't the western world coming up with the brilliant ideas any more? Why is it they no longer ponder on, and solve, earth-shattering, gut-wrenching ideas like: Why does our hair grow long on our heads, but is a pre-determined length for eyelashes, eyebrows, under our arms, on our chest, up our nose, in our ears and .... other places. Why, for instance, don't we have 2' hair growing out of our noses, platted chest hair, etc? It makes you think dunnit?))

ooOOOoo

DAVE BIRD:

"Is there anyone else into Diplomacy in Suffolk, Norfolk, or Essex? I'd like to meet someone from the hobby."

((Well the only subscribers I have in your area, Dave, are David Fish, John Harrington, Sandy Peters and George North. Sandy and George are not that keen on Diplomacy but like games in general. Perhaps there's enough there to start up an Essex meet?))

ooOOOoo

And now a couple snippets from two of the most paranoid people I know, who think I keep getting at 'em....

As if I would ...

CLIVE BOOTH:

"Enjoying it here in Scarborough, plenty of sun and good food. Best thing though is that YOU don't know where I am so there's no chance of there being a Dib on the mat in the morning. I've not been able to sleep so well and without worry since you started publishing."

((Pah! Some people just play hard to get; they know I'll follow 'em around stuffing Dibs through holiday letter boxes to brighten their day - admit it Booth, it's just your guilty conscience keeping you awake.))

And ...

NICHOLAS CLIFTON:

"Dear, no ... hated Tweedy,

May all your chameleons be colour blind! How dare you not send me an issue of Dib 21 then claim that I NMRed! After I finish this letter I shall ring you up and insult you.

However, your despicable action has left me with only one option, I am now forced to subscribe to your pathetic rag! Scoff not; when I first sent money to Chimaera it was a flourishing and healthy magazine, now look at it: Yet, a fate worse even than this, is now in store for you; yes I am taking correspondence lessons from George North. Beware Tweedy, for I am your Nemesis!!!

Yours from the pits of hell ..."

((I can see how your subscribing to Chim might make Clive's zine fail, Nicholas



- but Dib and I are made of sterner stuff. Not in us will you find any namby-pamby ways ..... we'll take your money gladly. Now, be off with you, we'll have no more of your libellous rantings.))

ooOOOoo

ALAN FROST:

"thank you for your letter confirming my inclusion in the CGS. Thanks also for the complimentary copy of Dib Dib Dib. I was so impressed by your generosity that I have decided to subscribe. Mind you, I think anyone who owns as much computer hardware as you claim ((claim?)) to can probably afford to give the zine away.

Now we come to the difficult bit: calculating the price. Is this some kind of intelligence test to make sure only geniuses subscribe?

Issue 22 14 sheets @ 1p per sheet = 14p

Postage = 20p

Cost for this issue = 34p

BUT issue 17 free from the zine bank has only 24 pages and 20 Years On 'free' from the Novice Package says 26p. Does this mean that the price fluctuates? If so, the curriculum vitae that I was going to supply for your Gallery spot will increase the price of the next copy and ... Oh, well, suppose I send you a cheque for £3 and see how long that lasts?

((This is becoming a problem. Originally my idea was to charge 1p per sheet of paper plus the postage - I didn't want subscribers paying more than they had to. But this seems to confuse most people (I should've known with MY subscribers!), so as from this issue I'll be charging a straight 34p per issue like most other zines, nothing else. I must remember to make this official in the editorial .....))

ALAN (CONT):

"It seems to me that the hobby has thrown together a lot of almost identical people who are university educated, interested in science fiction, wargames, bridge booze and whose politics are either left of Mao or right of Genghiz Khan. Is this really so? If so, I've found a home at last. You can put that in your Gallery if you like. You only need add that I'm superbly intelligent, devilishly handsome and supremely modest and you've got me."

((Well although I'M superbly intellegent, devilishly handsome (not to mention tall and muscular, with dark brown eyes) and supremely modest, I feel I must point out that I'm Borstal educated (nearly got to university - only had to bribe one more screw), hate wargames, like science fiction, fantasy, animal stories, girlie mags ... oops, er, only drink wine, gin, and orange squash (not always at the same time) and have moderate political leanings. You sure we're living in the same world?))

ooOOOoo

IAIN SINGER:

"Your point about a postal Diplomacy championship is quite correct - it would probably be best run in one zine and it would have to be a well known figure; there are several obvious candidates but it is not for me to volunteer them.

PRIVATELY: the most obvious one is Richard Sharp; he would have instant emotional appeal and while he may not be the perfect choice; given that if he took an active role in the hobby again he'd probably take part and win the championship rather than run it. Other possibles are Tringham, Walkerdine, Piggott and Hucknall; but each presents their own peculiar ((!)) problems - it's a nice idea but would require organisation. I suppose that if a ftf championship can occur then so could a postal."

((Don't get me wrong, when I suggested a championship magazine what I meant was, for all winners of Diplomacy games to put their names forward if they wanted to

take part in the Championship. The games could then be played off in the zine with the final games (perhaps the last 5 or 10) being played face to face at MidCon. (The MidCon idea is imperative.)

You would probably be right in saying Richard Sharp is the ideal choice because of instant emotional appeal, but after his messy fold of Dolchstoss (he still owes me a fiver) I think it unlikely he'll make a comeback. Chris Tringham is OUT - the man couldn't GM a game of tiddly winks. John Piggott and Richard Hucknall, although good, are trying to keep a low profile, so they're out. Which leaves Richard Walkerdine. The problem is, would Richard want to take on just Winners games? And even then, would the winners themselves want to take part? I know I would but ...))

 MICK ANTROBUS:  ooOOOoo  

"Thanks for issue 22, as ever full of interest. The letter column is up to the usual high standards, and the adjudication was faultless as usual. It's a pity other zines are not as conscientious as Dib. I have in the last 5/6 weeks written off to three zine editors requesting a sample copy of their zine, with the view to taking out a zine subscription, I enclosed a first class stamp on each occasion. So far not a reply from any one of them, a complete waste of 93p postage. (1.5 pints of bitter!) It's not the money wasted that annoys me, but the morality of the zines is in dispute. Whenever I receive a letter requiring an answer, then out of politeness and good manners I endeavor to reply. I know zine editors are exceptionally busy and correspondance is often mislaid, but not on 3 occasions surely."

((I think you're quite right to get angry at the treatment you have received, Mick, I'm only glad you haven't tarred all zines with the same brush - some might (novices for instance). I would hate to think anyone was put off subscribing to Dib because of the failings of others. If you (and anyone else that's been treated in this way) let me have the names of the zines concerned I may be able to do something about it (even to the extent of publishing the name of the culprits to deter others if nothing is put right). I can't see any other way of stopping it.))

ooOOOoo

DAVE TANT:

"One of my gaming group is raving (pleasurably) about his new 'Dragon' personal mini computer. With 32K RAM ((Random Access Memory or memory/space that can be used by the user)) for £199.50 it certainly seems to knock the competitors at the lower end of the price range for size, and apparently printers, disk drives and expansion packs are promised shortly. (It plugs into a TV and uses a cassette player at the moment.) Assuming the extras are forthcoming it seems a worthy competitor even for the Apple, though presumably without the latter's enormous software range at least for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless the graphics, sound and colour are supposed to be quite exceptional.

Tempted though I am, the market seems to have reached the stage now where every six months waited brings something even better into one's price range.

Did you use your word processor for issue 22? I only ask because I thought they were supposed to make the correction of spelling mistakes much easier?"

((I did use the word processor last time (though not yet for the games), and yes, it is easier to correct spelling mistakes. However I cannot correct, what are really only typing errors if I don't see them. When one has five or six pages of text scrolling up the screen it's not easy to see errors. There is a special package that I can add to my machine that will correct these errors, but I need my money for other things first.

The new 'Dragon 32' certainly sounds good value for money but I think you might be a bit hasty in saying it's a worthy competitor for the Apple. The range of software for the Apple already exists - it remains to be seen if the Dragon catches on. If it doesn't, you won't get the software for it. (You might be

interested to know that the Tandy Colour Computer software is compatible with this machine.) Anyway, Apple machines are now coming down in price - the lowest price I've seen so far is £499 (not bad for a machine with 16 colours, high res graphics, sound, and memory which can be expanded up to 320K).

As for waiting for something better to come along: well, yes people do seem to be waiting for the new 16 byte machines. But as I've said before, whatever you buy now, will STILL do the job in one year, two years time. Something new coming on the market certainly won't make all previous machines useless. Anyway, you could wait forever.))

ooOOOoo

MARK LIPTON:

"I wish people would stop bragging about their super tea-making, back scratching computers. I've been waiting two months for a meagre Sinclair Spectrum. Oh stop laughing, so it's cheap and nasty, but at least its got colour.

Anyway it's just the beginning whenever it begins."

((I wouldn't laugh. I've heard some good things about the Spectrum - and certainly the specifications look good. If I couldn't afford the Apple I'd buy it myself. If the ZX81 was anything to go by, it won't be long before clubs and software are set up for it. And that's a big plus as far as I'm concerned.))

ooOOOoo

GRAHAME MACLENNAN:

"I was extremely interested to read of Mr Harry Phibbs distributing 'Mobilize for Peace' leaflets on Moscow's metro. Have I got the Conservative Party wrong? Are they not the ones introducing 'cruise missile' and 'Trident'? And yet I must have been deluded for all these years as here is a Young Conservative chairman no less, shouting for world peace and an end to the 'race to world destruction'?

While I fully agree with his sentiments my new found faith in the Conservative Party's determination for world peace was rather blunted by the fact that Mr Phibbs claimed that he was deprived of food and water for 24 hours by the infamous KGB.

But no, I'm being unfair. I'm certain that the 'stab' at Russia was completely unintended and that he did not mean to imply that Russia was for the 'arms race' by they not allowing him to distribute his 'illegal' leaflets."

((Instead of trying to see things into situations like this (as I think most left-wingers are inclined to do), why don't you just see it as it 'supposedly' was: DID Phibbs pass out ban the bomb leaflets, and did the KGB hold him for 24 hours without food and water? If so, how do you come to the conclusion it was the Russians that were being 'got at'??))

ooOOOoo

PETER NORTHCOTT:

"Well if you're short of zines for a CGS, add 'Last Stand' to the list for Regular Diplomacy (I think F(Rom) is very much inferior to the regular version, as it completely rules out any sort of effective attack on Austria, while adding very little to Italy's offensive capabilities in other directions)."

((I quite agree. What does everyone expect the F(Rom) unit to do in the first game year anyway? It can't make any realistic attacks on France, as this variant is supposedly set up to do, because it gets no support - the fleet in Naples normally has to take Tunis. Leaving Tunis to later is dodgy at the best of times.

I suppose the moves F(Nap)-Apu, F(Rom)-TYS in the Spring, and F(Apu)-ADS, F(TYS)-Tun in the Autumn might meet with some success as an attack on Austria - but only if Austria has been denied a fleet build. Though it's certain that any move to TYS will have angered the French - thus making this sort of attack