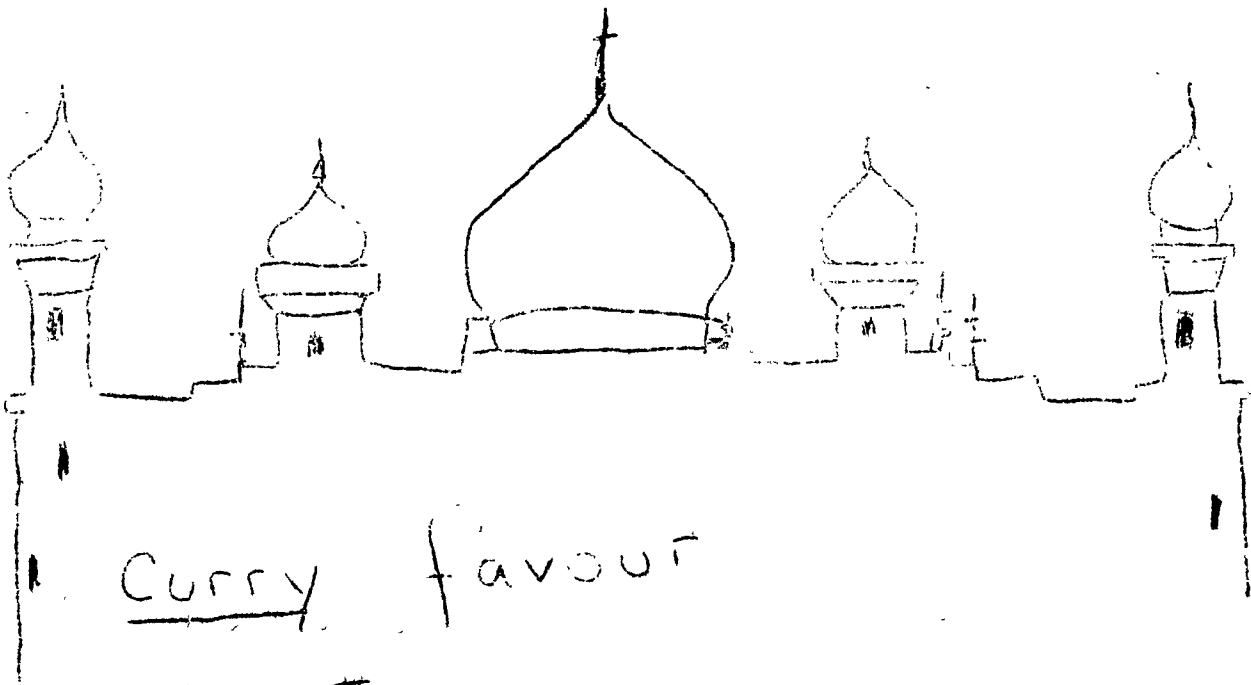


DIB DIB DIB

ISSUE

26



Curry favour

Take-away a

Dib Dib

Dib

Welcome to the 26th issue of Dib Dib Dib. A zine catering mainly for Diplomacy and all the other anti-social pastimes of our society. If interested in the unusual, then you can do no worse than subscribe to this mag (except perhaps subscribing to Chimaera), which will only cost you 34p an issue. Surprised at its cheapness eh? So are a lot of others. Just send the money (in £1 to £5 blocks) to Tom Tweedy, 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. (Tel. 02403 4513) and you will receive your issue of Dib by return post.

EDITORIAL

NOTICE: If you have made a request (i.e. for Sopwith maps, rules, CGS games, or whatever) and it appears as though I have forgotten please remind me, 'cos I probably have. I've a terrible memory and have had a lot of harrassment of late. Consequently I may have forgotten one or two things. Now where was I? Oh yes....

Before starting on anything else I'd like to thank all those that sent Christmas cards and good wishes for the New Year. Much appreciated I assure you. Actually my Christmas wasn't too good this year. It serves me right for saying something about it last issue. Everything started off okay. Then the car broke down. "New rocker arm and front discs," the man said. "Only cost you £550..." (Well, it WAS a BMW). Sod it - get rid of the car I thought and buy a new one. I'm still looking.

Then, it was Christmas Eve. "I'm not having the same problems with the little sod getting up at 4 in the morning like last year," I insisted. Jan agreed. We exercised Stuart the whole day, gave him a late bath and tucked him in at 10. One hour later he suddenly developes earache and keeps us both up with his crying until 7 in the morning - whereupon he suddenly falls asleep.

So there we were, Jan and I, bleary-eyed with nothing to do when all good children should be opening their presents. Where was the Christmas morning excitement? We stayed like that until about 4 in the afternoon watching TV until Stuart got up and friends and relatives started popping in.

New Year's Eve was much better. A couple of friends around - Ian and Elaine Tillson to name but two - with plenty to eat and drink. It was very enjoyable.

So 1983 it is, and things go ever on. Plenty to talk about hobbywise, so here goes...

I was surprised to read in Ode 40 that the glossy games magazine, The Gamer, is in trouble. As AHC Publications (its publishers) has "ceased trading". John's main worry seems to be that we are losing our only link with seperate groups advertised in there. And that the mag is, what he calls, our shop window. Possibly he's right. From what I can see, apart from the CGS flyers in the Diplomacy boxes, The Gamer is our only link with the general public anyway - it must attract a fair number of gamers to the hobby. Certainly I came into this hobby through the old Games & Puzzles. And through the CGS I know quite a few who were attracted by Geoff Challenger's article, 'State of the Art of Diplomacy'.

So what can the hobby do to rescue this magazine? In fact, should the hobby do anything? Well, that has yet to be decided. The points are obvious. It may well be that Nicky Palmer is still interested in editing such a magazine. If so why shouldn't he want to carry on. So much for that. Certainly the hobby could afford to back such a venture; moneywise and with articles, reviews, news and suchlike. The only question is does the hobby NEED such a magazine fronting for it? Oh I know it could survive, but would such a publication add an extra something to the hobby - I mean having a glossy for the combined hobby. Personally I think it would. And I for one would be willing to back it - with money and whatever else it would take. But who to organise such a thing? The same old stumbling block. (Oh don't worry, this very problem crops up later). Anyone any ideas? John?

[[The last paragraph is now out of date as I've since received Home of the Brave with details of the Gamer's fold and Nicky Palmer's letter. Nicky says that the magazine folded under the weight of debts up to £30,000. That's a hell of a lot of money by anyone's standards. It's definite the hobby has no hope of subsidising something like this. So it looks as though The Gamer has had it. A sad loss.]]

Of course there's other things for the hobby to spend its money on. In the latest Mad Policy RJW backs up Alan Parr's idea - in some length - of a Novice Editors Package. When I say the hobby's money, I mean of course the money I collect through the CGS (a full £5 now!) and other similar sources. I don't know about the Novice Editors Package, but Richard certainly had a point when he said:-

"....there's certainly no need for any sort of a leader! On the one hand we've got several hobby services either being financed by individuals or waiting for money to be found for them, and on the other we've got a steady source of income already in existence. In fact we've got two. There's the £1 that arrives every time a Novice Package is bought and there's the other £1 that Tom Tweedy gets each time he issues a CGS gamestart (and for all I know John Wilman is doing the same with 1829 gamestarts). All we need is sufficient organisation to bring these different activities more closely together. Not in a way that means any of the people involved are in any way restricted in what they are already doing, but simply in order to pool the available resources and ensure that such money as is already there is fully used to the advantage of the whole hobby. The present chaotic state of things just doesn't make any kind of sense to me at all. I certainly don't think the hobby needs any sort of individual - or group - up on a pedestal dictating how things should be done, but I certainly do think it needs to pool together what it's already got and stop the ridiculous waste of resources we have at present."

Too true. I've always felt this hobby had the resources to do more than just passively sit by and play games. More than any other hobby it attracts people from all walks of life - but people with a higher I.Q. than most. Teachers, doctors, policemen, University students, civil servants, solicitors, servicemen, computer specialists you name it and we've got it. Seems to me if ever a problem crops up in the hobby, we should have someone capable of solving it. All we really need is someone with the know-how (charisma?) to put it all together. Will Superman (or John Piggott) please step forward. (See I told you the problem would crop up again - as it will in the future.) But, to other things...

I see in the latest Last Stand that I came 7th in 'The 1982 Diplomacy Player Poll'. Great eh? Unfortunately Mike Close came first. Which just goes to show you how wrong a Poll can get. Still Pete (Northcott) says the results were fairly conclusive, even though there was only 22 voters.

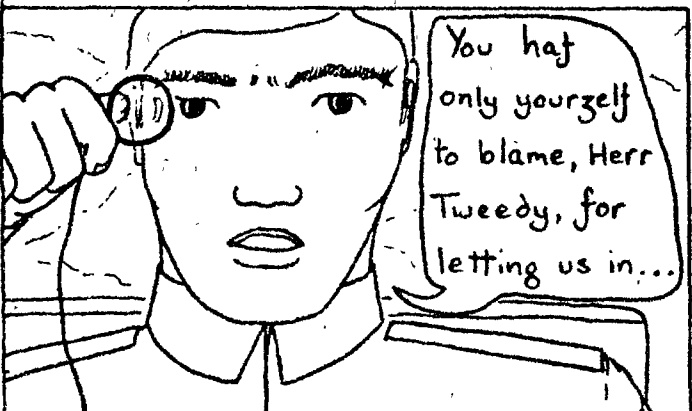
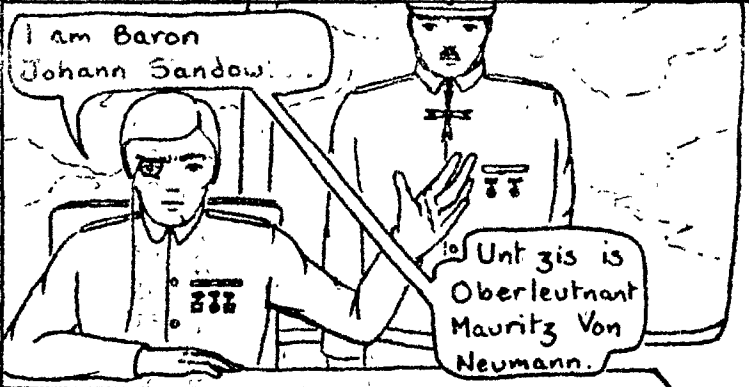
To tell you the truth, I didn't vote. It's terrible really. I wanted to - but my laziness/Dib/Christmas etc got the better of me. Every time I tried to vote the long list of names in the games I've played in seemed to roll ever on. At one point I couldn't figure out who I should leave in, and who should be left out (my memory for dates isn't too good). Then there was the problem of trying to figure out who was better than who; what criteria was I to judge them by. Players who lost by having others gang up on them were not necessarily bad players. It was all too much for my poor overworked brain, and eventually I gave up - I felt I couldn't make a fair choice on anyone. Sorry Peter - I tried. If you want me to participate in the next one - PLEASE make things simpler.

Just a couple of lines here for a quick spacefiller. So ... Jan passed her Open University exams. I have to push it in here so as not to make too big a thing of it - wouldn't do to give her ideas above her station. Don't worry though, I did remember to congratulate her.

ANGEL

by
Chris Sandow & Mark Newman

Episode 9:
Aboard The
Zeppelin.



The end is in sight, folks!
Don't miss the final amazing episode of

ANGEL

in
the next issue of
Dib Dib Dib
(We hope...)

HOBBY STATS

It seems the editorial in issue 25 of Dib caught the attention of the hobby statistician, Pete Calcraft. I was hoping it would. Anyway it sparked Peter off enough for him to write a letter in reply. Which I think it fair to reprint in its entirety. Pete began with: "RYODA one month, me the next." And followed on with: "Trying to establish a reputation as hobby busybody?"

Great eh? I send Dib for a whole year without getting any stats in return, and with one gripe I get branded a busybody. Anyway Pete continues...

"It will win neither zine polls nor popularity contests for you. It won't even earn you any sort of respect: hobby people largely don't want to know. We've been in the hobby almost exactly the same length of time, you and I (adjacent NGC membership numbers, wasn't it), and I did all my delving in hobby politics years ago. It ain't worth it, I tell you.

Details: you would be rather better informed of the actual situation if you attended conventions. It's hardly your fault that you don't, but it isn't mine either. ((?)) There was a time when I thought that Tom Tweedy was someone who, if he had a complaint, would ring me up and ask me about it. Times seem to have changed; perhaps zine editing is getting to you? If you really want to feature news of the stats service in your editorial, an effective approach might be to reach for the telephone, since you have my home phone number and possess the initiative required to obtain my Birmingham number if necessary from any of those who are kept informed of it (like Richard Gooch, or Mike Benyon, or my parents...). Indeed, such an effort would probably be appreciated by all concerned (other editors, your readers and myself included).

Your memory of the period when Mick was in charge of the stats is less than entirely accurate, as is your idea of the extent of the service. Take a good look at the stats service as it exists on the other side of the Atlantic, and how it's set up: then take a look at the service you're trying to demand from me. At my own expense! "...a whole lot of something for nothing"? I'm not impressed.

The last set of published stats was sent out in January/February (('82)), having been compiled and printed for release at Stabcon. There would have been issues released at Easter had I not had to put a great deal more time than anticipated into Toucon in addition to coping with second-year exams. There might have been issues during the summer had I any money to pay the printing bills with (subscriptions extend to eleven paid copies at present) and no project to work on (one out of seven final year courses). As it was I usually wasn't even able to pay for my own drinks until the DHSS eventually came up with my benefit. There would certainly have been issues available at Midcon, had I the opportunity to write them or at least work on them, but until I changed lodgings a fortnight ago I hadn't.

All this, however, is irrelevant. I'm not running the stats for me, for the people who help me or "for the hobby" (which I take to be a euphemism for 'editors'). I am merely trying to keep the best set of stats possible in the circumstances, and I'm not going to let the task of publishing dominate this objective. ((Nor the hobby either it seems. But then, what's the point...?)) Once we put the Who's Where records out of commission - necessary in view of the extremely untidy way in which they were kept - any publication would simply lengthen the task of putting the new ones back into service. Without being able to complete the job of entering a new gamestart in the records we have a bottleneck in the system preventing any 1981 and subsequent games reaching TFT ((Pete's 'publication' The Finishing Touch)). Hence we've been working almost entirely on the WW records (Mark and I have been keeping the starts/1901 info up

to date as far as possible, while Peter Northcott put through as many pre1981 ends as he could find).

I think it's pretty evident that I've no hope of getting any sort of money in by way of subscriptions until Who's Where can be or is published, since this is the actually interesting (or even useful) part of the stats as far as most hobby members are concerned. I've spent £100 on this lot already, and I'm in no hurry to spend more until I've some chance of getting at least some of it back again. I'll do the job properly or not at all, and I don't think that means running around at the whims of editors. Hell, I don't have time to answer letters as it is."

Whims of editors? If it wasn't for us editors sending in our zines, Pete, how would you collect the information for your stats? But nomatter, let's take your points in order.....

I didn't enter this debate, or write the editorial last issue, to enter and win any popularity contest. To tell you the truth, I don't give a damn if it makes me unpopular or not. My idea is merely to gets things moving. It's not hobby politics I'm worried about, just a fair deal for all. Let's get one thing straight from the start, I'm not attacking you and saying that you haven't tried to do a stats service. I know for a fact that you are overworked, what with exams and whatnot. But I question the situation where you allow yourself to keep the position of "Hobby Statistician" while going through the problems of college life. You admit yourself that you find it hard to cope. Surely it would be better for the moment for you to suggest a replacement - just so that the hobby could make use of its own stats? It's just a suggestion mind - but is it so unreasonable?

I didn't bother ringing you up because I already knew the problem. I apologise if you expected me to react any differently, but you could only tell me over the phone exactly what you've put in your letter - and that doesn't solve the problem it merely gives reasons for it.

My memory of Mick Bullock's service is accurate enough. I do not need to bother with how the Americans do their stats. All I need to remember is how I used to get a regular stats zine - one that I was willing to pay for. Yes I subscribed to New Statesman before I traded. Might I suggest that if you published something at regular intervals, that you might attract more subscribers. To bring home the point: no-one wants to subscribe to a magazine they'll never receive. I say, if you want my magazine for a trade (which you yourself asked for) then why not trade something back.

It's of no use that you come out with excuses that there's too much expense (although I believe you when you say you've spent a lot), there are cheaper methods than litho for printing. And if nothing else you accepted the job as hobby statistician knowing just what it entailed. Other people wanted that job and were passed over.

But as you say, all this is probably irrelevant. I'd be greatly surprised to hear that other editors send their mags merely to supply you with your own, perfect, supply of stats. Personally, all I ask is that you give the hobby something back that it can use (e.g. info to Wink Thompson for his NGC Ratings and suchlike). Or, if you are overworked, recognise the fact that someone else could find more time (and thus be more suited) to do the job.

I apologise if I sound at all harsh, but to be fair, if I couldn't do the CGS job (hardly in the same category as stats I know) I'd hand it over to someone who could.

After typing up the above I've since heard from Richard Walkerdine that Pete has promised us some stats by the end of January. Richard says:

"As Pete Calcraft has now actually promised something by about the end of January, I think it's a bit unfair to get too irate with him before then. Of course, if he still fails to deliver the goods after that, it's a different story....."

That's good enough for me But continuing on the stats theme, I might as well include here a short piece from Wink Thompson. These are the games he has no details for - can anyone help? Pete?:-

1976: IW (NGC 195)

1977: BQ (NGC 205) GH, GN, GV, JB, JD, JR

1978: BE, BN, BR, BV /// DB, DI, DL, DS /// EJ, EV, EX to EZ /// GA, GF, GI, GK, GO to GR, GV, GX /// JH, JQ, JV, JW, JX, JT

1979: BD, BF, BJ, BK to BP, BS, BV, BW, BY /// DB, DC, DE, DG, DK, DO, DP, DS, DX, DY /// GB, GC, GF, GG, GK, GM to GS, GW to GZ /// JB, JD, JE

1980: All games except - BC, BF, BI, BP, BR, BT, BU, BY /// DE, DI, DN i.e. 93 games.

1981: All games (some at least should have finished)

1982: All games (still in progress I would think)

If anyone can help, Wink can be contacted at: 6 Waterbeach Road, Slough, Berks, SL1 3LB. Or phone Slough 34471.

ZINE REVIEWS

There's been quite a few new zines coming onto the market of late, making it a hard task indeed keeping up with them all. It's been pointed out that there may not be enough subscribers to go round them all. Well I dunno about that - certainly there may not be enough to fill many games - we shall see. Still, now that I finally have time to review some I better get them out of the way. This is not exactly the most favourite section amongst editors.)

The Drooling God: issue 6 edited by Paul Segal. A very neat looking A4 litho produced zine (I much prefer A4 than the litho reduced). Still although it looks good there's nothing much I can say about it yet as I've only seen the one copy - and I've had no contact with Paul before. Only 8 pages, but interesting enough (especially if you like a manic style of writing). Has openings for: Intimate Diplomacy (£1); Regular Diplomacy (£1); Kingmaker (50p); and Minieconomic Diplomacy (50p). Well worth seeing. Costs 30p (which could rise as the zine expands being litho). Just write to Paul Segal, 29 Heath Hurst Road, London, NW3.

War and Peace: issue 1 and edited by one of Dib's subscribers, Derek Caws. A4 mimeo produced - which is a big plus in W&P's favour, I think. Will probably run Diplomacy (£1.50), some sort of Diplomacy variant, Sopwith, United and Railway Rivals - it's up to you to ask. Simon Billinness will be guest GMing and contributing articles so Derek has help if it's needed. Could be a goodie this. Recommended that you see it. Costs 25p.

Derek R. Caws, Telford Hall, Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3UA.

Lokasenna: Edited by Brian Dolton. Damn, I've mislaid this zine for the present