

DIB DIB DIB

ISSUE

31



This is Dib Dib Dib 31. A rather rushed games magazine for which reasons I'll give below. If you wish to subscribe each issue will cost you 35p (UK rate) and 15p + postage (overseas rate). All money, cheques, etc should be sent to me, Tom Tweedy, 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4613. Overseas Postage rates (printed paper 60 grams): America 55½; Europe 23p.

EDITORIAL

This is a bit of a rushed issue this time, so, sorry if it appears a trifle late (I wanted to get it out for Manorcon). The problem's been that I had to get the Dalmatian hobby magazine, Spots of News out at the same time as Dib. Actually Spots had to go out first mainly because it goes to a wider audience (a 1000 and something copies, with 200 as overseas members). This means there could be more people complaining. Hell, who am I to take a chance!

? Saddest news of the month is that Chimaera has finally folded after all these years. Another good zine gone - and what to replace it? Certainly no new zines that are now on the market. Clive kept Chim going through thick and thin, and took an incredible amount of flak being a games-zine in a time, and hobby, that could think past nothing but Diplomacy games. Sometimes I think Clive only ran such games to buck the system and cause yet more of his delightful feuds. Sadly, at 102 issues (103 will be the last), there will be no more.

Good news however, for out of the ashes of Chim will rise a wonderous new zine - BOOJUM! Yeah great name, eh. This will be run by THE Richard Morris. At last he's given in to the pressure of editing (he must have forgotten to lie down till it wore off this time) and will be taking over the Chim games lock, stock and barrel. I have absolutely no hesitation in recommending this new zine to you. Richard has lots of experience GMing various games successfully. Has tested himself bit by bit, not taken on too much - so has got some idea how much work needs to be done in regards running a zine. And the clincher, I think, is the fact that he has his own duplicator. So far Richard has promised that Boojum will be: out in August; will be a games zine rather than a chat zine (rather like Zeeby I think); running games like Sopwith, Railway Rivals, Diplomacy, Bourse, and one or two others.

Whilst I'm on the bloody subject of Morris. I see in the latest Sopwith stats that he has actually had the nerve to use my good name and allocate "Tweedy Numbers" to Sopwith games. Yeuk! Let it be known that I disassociate myself entirely from what Richard knows to be an embarrassing choice of words. May you rot in hell, Morris! Better still, choreograph a ballet and we can call it Morris Dancers.

I keep getting these blasted 'Warboid World' flyers through my letter box, and, I've even had a letter from Roger Trethewey himself (calling himself 'The Balrog') asking for advice and a plug. Well I don't know why I should be the only one to suffer these ghastly looking flyers (they're an eye-ball-searing yellow - you can't miss them), so I've seen to it that you lot will be getting a flyer yourselves. There - that'll mean you should get the flyer with the next issue of Dib.

I don't know about Warboid World itself - I'll not go into it here because you'll get to read about it in the flyer - but Roger's approach to our hobby leaves a lot to be desired. Most of us take a pride in how friendly our hobby is: how many letters we need/can/have to write in regards Diplomacy and general chat. Roger puts this down. To quote an extract from his flyer:-

"Warboid World is the first multi-player, computer moderated, PBM game designed from scratch as a non-diplomatic game. No diplomacy means that you save money by avoiding the long distance phone bills and postage costs necessary in other PBM games."

Costs for WW are £10 for the starter package + £1.75 per game turn (£1 for rules only). Certainly not cheap. Comparing it to Diplomacy in Dib an average game lasting until Autumn 1910 will cost you £7 + £1 gamefee + £1 refundable deposit - but, if nothing else, you still get the zine. The flyer continues...

"As professional PBM game designers we can let you in on a secret. While diplomacy has a place in most PBM games, many use it as a 'crutch'." ((no comments needed from Booth))

This implies we are too stupid to recognise a crutch when we see one. Who cares - most of us play the games we want, for any reasons we want. I do hate being patronised. Other than the price being too high, and the rather supercilious attitude, WW doesn't sound to bad.

I thought the stats issue/debate was over now that Pete had released some stats. Apparently Pete doesn't seem to think so, and wrote in reply to one of my digs in Dib 30. Pete says:-

"Production costs not the issue? They're precisely the issue: you get no stats because I'm not going to keep them, publish them and pay for the privilege. ((Why not?)) If you're not convinced, how about putting your money where your mouth is and sending me some money to produce the next set with? For every £1 you donate I'll write £2 off the outstanding debt and I'll even change the format to suit you. If, as I say, the costs are the main problem you can then reasonably expect some stats back pretty quick: try it and see what happens.

"Price difference between RYODA and mimeo is not great: RYODA charge £2.50 for 100x2x1, equivalent mimeo cost would be 4x40 (stencils) + 2x100x350/500 (paper) is actually £3.00 (it's actually more!) since you can only get half as much per page, unless equipped with the Booth/Bain typeface.

"Well?"

Oh dear, I can see I really will have to explain the difference, and therefore my grudge in the way Pete produces a stats service.

I see the stats (sheets? booklet?) as a sort of zine - they have to be produced, written and sold, like a zine. Mick Bullock put them out as a ZINE, others that wanted to take over from Mick Bullock (Mike Allaway, Pete Northcott to name but two) would have produced them as a zine. Now I wouldn't back, or try to carry, a failing zine with money (ESPECIALLY hobby money, if that's what Pete was thinking of) so why should the hobby carry a stats zine? If a zine fails, it folds. So for Christ's sake, if Pete can't produce it, why doesn't he fold! Turn the lot over to someone who CAN do the job. If no-one wants to take it, THEN I'll put my money where my mouth is. The main trouble with Pete has always been that he is reluctant to commit any money to his hobby in the same way most of us have. Pete says he has an £80 debt?well I say I have a £200 debt! That was the amount I invested in a duplicator when I first started doing my zine (of course, not to mention the stencils, paper, ink, staples, heavy-duty stapler, contact sheets, envelopes, labels, correcting fluid, etc). But £200 is not as stupid as it sounds. At least I can sell the thing afterwards if I ever have reason to fold. What I'm saying is it's the commitment that counts.

Fair enough, I have to say that the stats might be a special case - but I STILL don't see why Pete should dictate to us how we should have our stats other than the ways we are used to. Why model them on the American hobby (having hobby money funding everything) if some people are willing to do it for the FUN they might get out of doing it (not just doing it for themselves). The stats I am sure were started as a bit of fun, much the same way as the Sopwith stats were started. This might have developed into a hobby service as various editors backed it by sending in their zine. Pete doesn't want to produce a 'HOBBY SERVICE' - he's already put it in black and white that he wants only to produce

(Cont'd over...)

Tweedy Productions

PRESENT

A DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS POSTAL GAME

The Catacombs

of

COPERNICA



Produced
and
Directed
by
Chris
Sandow

Based on the
books by
E. Gary Gygax

COMING
SOON TO
DIB DIB DIB

BOOK NOW TO AVOID
DISAPPOINTMENT

them for himself. THAT is why I think Pete is doing a bad job.

But onto lighter matters...

My 'playlist' at the moment is unfortunately "Marriage of Figaro". [Yawn yawn] Mainly 'cos it's Jan's essay this month, and apart from reading three brilliant books - "Children of the Bear Clan", "Vally of Horses" (2 of an intended series of 6) and "Firestarter" - my life is the usual ,intellectual desert. Still we have not been idle if anyone out there is interested, the greenhouse has been revarnished, my son's room redecorated and the lawn scarified. Not ones to let the grass grow under our feet!

Don't know about you, but the heat is not brightening up my day - over 78° and it's too hot even to consider roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. What's more it can do nasty things to the ink and stencil wax. (The zine's, not mine.)

Congratulations to Elaine and Ian Tillson on their second son, Oliver - whose birth unfortunately, my wife predicted to the day. (I'm just looking for a suitable broom for her to fly on.) Also congratulations and good luck to Pete and Kathryn Tamlyn on their forthcoming marriage.

And finally, congratulations to all those who are now possessors of certificates/diplomas/honours/degrees. I've now got a colour monitor, equivalent to a good 2nd class honours in my book anyhow.

~~~~~  
JOTTO Turn 12

A

JOTTO Turn 12

Another FOUR people panic and decide to chance their arm this time. Alan Parr, Alan Sharples, Robert Lozynskyj and Richard Walkerdine took their guesses ..... and got them WRONG (Alan Parr and Richard got the 1st word wrong, Alan Sharples got his 2nd word wrong, and Robert the last word). I dunno, some people just can't cut it. It's a hard battle to get this game done seems like - not many players left. In actual fact Richard had a 50/50 chance when detailing the correct, and incorrect word for his 1st guess - and chose the wrong one! Heh heh. I think that's very funny, don't you? Right roll up, who next for the chop? At this rate I'll be saving the £2 prize money. Only four left, and two of those have NMR'd.

Robert Lozynskyj: 12th ( - NMR! - )  
Richard Bass: 12th (1,6,0,1,1,2)  
Tim Ball: 12th ( - NMR! - )  
R.J. Lampard: 12th (2,1,1,2,2,3)

---

It's been decided then, Chris Sandow will be running the D&D game in Dib (you may have gathered this by now from the advert opposite). Chris certainly seems eager to start, and has been on the ball each after each issue ringing me up to chat about it. I've tried to warn him off, but he seems adamant. I'd like to thank the others that asked to DM this game, it was much appreciated.

The game should start next time, the players on the waiting list (printed in Dibs and Drabs at the back) are ready, and Chris is ready. Presumably Chris or I will contact all players before the next issue. Chris?

Actually I was getting a bit worried about the number of players for this. Pete Tamlyn gave the game a damn good plug in his 'Tavern Talk' column in Imagine - thanks Pete. Should be enough players to be going on with, eh Chris?

READING BETWEEN THE ZINES

Well, this is it then - Jan has finally talked me into doing some zine reviews. Not that she got ALL her own way mind - I've agreed to do three or four at a time, and work my way down the list of all the zines that I trade with. That is all. It's a relief in a way because my main reluctance to do reviews of this kind was because (a) I'd only repeatedly get to do the best ones (which gets me nowhere) and (b) I just didn't have the time to review all my trades in one go.

Why bother doing them at all, I hear you ask. Well the fact of the matter is - newcomers. This might be the only way they get to hear of other zines. Now is as good a time as any... Remember though, nomatter what I say, editors generally put a tremendous amount of work (in their spare time) towards doing their zines - if nothing else they should be praised for even tackling such a hair-brained job. To newcomers, all zines are worth a look, as tastes differ (naturally) and the following opinions are prely my own.

War and Peace: Issue 7 (18 pages) edited by Derek Caws. For some reason this zine has never really appealed to me. It's not a bad zine, it's well printed and has the odd Diplomacy article which is more than DIB. But it never seems to impinge itself onto my memory - well, not for long. Even though I've read through the zine a couple of times it's hard to write about it, because the zine seems to lack any character of its own. Tries to be a purist zine but somehow lacks the 'concentration' and shipshape feel of zines like Fall of Eagles, Watch Your Back, and Last Stand. It's still quite small, as you might expect being a young zine, and though Derek spouts off a lot about his far right political views (anyone that likes Maggie can't be all bad) and suchlike, he comes across as immature. As I say, W&P has Diplomacy articles and a small but strong letter column (where most of the politics rear their ugly head). W&P has quite a ways to go yet so there's plenty of time for Derek to settle down and find his 'niche' in the hobby. (I don't think DIB gained much character until after issue 10.) W&P runs only two games, Diplomacy (£1.50) and Bourse (50p). And costs 25p per issue. Not a magazine I'd recommend if you want a zine with a personality of its own.

Derek Caws, 94 Mill Hill Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight.

Foiled Again: issue 7 (12 pages) edited by Alec Winton. Like War and Peace Foiled Again is a small zine, but this one has plenty of character. Can be badly printed but somehow reminds me of an early Mr Gladgrind - I like this zine. Always chatty and runs plenty of games, though I think this could be classed as a games zine rather than a chat zine. Even so surprisingly it has no letter column. FA comes across as friendly bot not silly. Runs: Diplomacy (£1 gamefee + £1 deposit); Sopwith (50p gamefee + 50p deposit); Cricketboss; Railway Rivals (50p); Kingmaker (50p + 50p) and Lap. Well worth a look for newcomers. Costs 35p an issue.

Alec Winton, 42 Lansdowne Avenue, Orpington, Kent, BR6 8JU.

Perspiring Dreams: Issue 36 (42 pages) edited by John Dodds. Normally this zine is very good - this issue of PD was superb. I've always liked this zine; reading it (it's definitely a chat zine) and certainly playing in it. It's always clearly printed and well produced and very reliable - though there was a time when John was doing his exams he turned PD over to a litho format. It didn't improve it, but then I don't think litho improves anything but print. Using litho turnaound times lengthend and quality actually seemed to drop. It was to be expected, exams take first place of course. Thankfully John is again back at the helm - and back with a vengeance - PD is again controversial (John has just started up the Hobby Organisation and Central Hobby Zine debate) and A4 mimeo. Long editorials, long letter columns that are hobby related and interesting (John has a flair for writing), and many well-run Diplomacy games, Railway Rivals, and a rather large United game make up this excellent zine. Recommended. John Dodds, Moberly Towers, Burlington Street, Manchester 15.

\*\* DIB'S GALLERY \*\*

NAME: Paul Donley

"The first major event in my life was being born which has left me incurably alive for the past nineteen years. Since then many great happenings have occurred such as acquiring a taste for heavy music, solving the Rubik's cube and becoming a Cardiff City's supporter. Until last October an alien craft picked me up from my ancestral home and stranded me at ... Loughborough University. ((Yes, a British Rail train might seem a bit alien to some I suppose))

Here I was subjected to numerous horrors such as Simon Billenness and Derek Caws (members of a strange breed called editors) who produced weird utterances such as zine, f+f, NMR. After reading their produce I soon found I had caught their disease and became a postal Diplomacy player.

Is there any hope for me."

((No, none I'm afraid. Welcome to the hobby, Paul, and please accept this issue free. My God though, it does seem like Loughborough University is riddled through to the core with the corruption of our Diplomacy hobby. Why does it seem as though Billenness is in the centre of the outward spread - does the man know this, and if so, has he no feelings of guilt?))

oo000oo

NAME: Brian Moore

"Born: 1956. Age: 27 Spent first 9 years of my life living in Ramsbottom, or 'Tups Arse' as the locals call it (yes, it does exist). By this time my dad had got bored with Lancs, so him, mum, me and brother (who's 5 years younger) all shifted to Sheffield, but at the first opportunity after I'd left school I went back to Ramsbottom and left the family in Sheffield, where they still are. In 1974 I picked up the 'Big C' (i.e. Cancer) and now I've a leg short - although I get about pretty well on this artificial thing. Hobbies besides games are pretty non-existent apart from my Video Genie computer, reading SF/F fiction, collecting postcards and tickets, photography (well, holiday snaps). Political interest is zilch, and musical interest hovers around classical & synthesiser music. Oh yes, I got married back in 1976, and now have a 3 year old boy, Thomas, and a 4 month old daughter, Louise, as a consequence."

((Thanks Brian, you also get this issue free. I'm surprised anyone collects tickets anymore. It used to be quite good when I were a lad (says Tweedy sagely), when bus and train tickets were made to last in stiff card - but everything is this boring disposable paper stuff now. Very trashy. Unless you mean tickets to shows, football matches etc...))

oo000oo

Oh dear - well it was bound to happen sooner or later I suppose.

NAME: George North

"My name is George North and I am married with five grown children, all now left the fold. I have one wife and seven grandchildren. My work takes me to the Ind Coope Romford Brewery where we play football in the ale stores, cricket in the malt loft, sunbath on the roof of the fermenting block, and play poker in the rest room every Saturday morning. We also brew beer.

Since brewing has taken up 27 years of my life, let me tell you a little about the work. In the old days every brewery worker was basically a cellerman and since the ceilings were very low, the average height of any brewery was four foot six, or taller with a humped back. Nor was your average brewery very bright and the only way he could tell the different strengths of the beers was by counting the number of crosses chalked on the barrels. What do you mean - things haven't changed much?

Nowadays the whole process of milling, mashing, boiling, fridging and fermenting the beers is done on a giant panel of knobs and switches which requires several

'O' levels and a good memory, or a relative in high places. That I have none of these just shows what a clever old cock I am.

Enough about work. I fell in Bruce Castle Park pond when we lived at Tottenham and I was four years old. At five I set fire to the drapes around the fireplace and nearly burned the house down. I lost my younger sister at seven, nine and ten, and my matchbox collection when I was eleven.

My favourite games are draughts and chess, Dungeons & Dragons, Soccer League and Sorcerer's Cave. ((Pah! TSR's 'Dungeon' boardgame is much better!)) I also enjoy Hoppy War and Jimmy-Jimmy-Knacker. ((...I daren't even ask...))

Favourite viewing: Happy Days, Best of the West, Only Fools and Horses, ((Hmmm, not bad)) Minder, International It's a Knockout, Magic Roundabout and any quiz or panel game.

I don't go to the pictures, thank heaven and my only read in recent years has been Catch 22, Games & Puzzles, Dib Dib, and the Daily Mirror.

Achievements: a medal and a certificate for draughts and I won the Harold Hill Chess Club championship two years in a row by sheer luck and cunning. My only ambition is to get a printing machine one day and run my own zine. ((God help us all!))

I have no interest in politics but since you keep bringing the subject up I am working on an idea to produce a life-sized blow-up Angel Doll that will be a replica of Maggie Thatcher and will sell like hot cakes in the sex shop.

Is that enough?"

((It certainly is - Maggie Thatcher blow up dolls are not on I'm afraid, and Messrs Grunch, Graunch and Grind will not give their backing to this, your new enterprise, in any way whatsoever; saying this is below anything even Pete 'Ceribus' Doubleday would do.

I must say I feel uncomfortable with the thought that one day you might get your hands on a duplicator, George. Such a machine in said hands is akin to giving a nuclear weapon to a terrorist, I think. Can there be such a thing as paper fall-out over most of England? Intercontinental North Missives?

Interesting intro though - yes I suppose you earn yourself another free issue of Dib. Tell me though, as a brewery worker, what are you: the 4' 6" midget, or the hunchback?))

((More than enough for this issue I think. I have an excellent spoof introduction from Mike Close still left to do, which I shall hold over till next issue.))

THINGS WOT I'VE SEEN

I've watched quite a few decent video films just lately. The latest one being The Archer and the Sorceress - excellent. The sort of Fantasy/Adventure film that should appeal to most D&D fans. Opening scenes had figures rising out of camouflage and hooking two riders ('baddies' I may tentively add) from there horses. "Cor, look Dad - ORCS!" my son exclaimed. An observation to which I was in total agreement - having seen more than my fair share of Orcs (well, I DID watch 'Lord of the Rings', didn't I!). Certainly the make-up department had done themselves proud this time. Unfortunately, as it turned out, I was wrong - they were called Snakemen. Well anyone can make a mistake. My son was adamant though, there was no mistake, he can recognise an orc when he sees one. Just then I made a mental note to check the level of my whiskey bottle. Well you hear so much about tipling kids nowadays, don't you. There wasn't much of a story to the film, but what the hell, the special affects and general feel of a D&D adventure made it very entertaining indeed. The hero (the archer) was a little too 'pretty' for my liking, but still, the film had nice little touches like the hero coming into possession of a 'Heartbow' (a mystical bow with a giant ruby set into the grip); a boatman looking like a young, though very gross, minataur (making wagers to travellers he has to ferry across a burning river); and some



```
*****
* BBC SOFTWARE *
*****
```

## BBC GAMES

| Cosma:                 | Price + VAT    | (Micro Power games cont.) |                  |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| --- Beebtrek           | cass 6.95 7.99 | --- Timetrek              | cass 6.95 7.99   |
| --- Invaders           | cass 6.50 7.47 | --- Zombies               | cass 3.95 4.54   |
| --- JR                 | cass 6.50 7.47 | --- Where                 | cass 5.95 6.84   |
| --- Moonlanders        | cass 5.75 6.61 | --- World Geography       | cass 5.95 6.84   |
| --- Row of 4           | cass 5.75 6.61 |                           |                  |
| --- Space Kingdom      | cass 6.95 7.99 | S.W. Hessel Software:     |                  |
| --- Time Traveller     | cass 6.50 7.47 | --- Great Britian Ltd     | cass 5.95 6.84   |
| --- World Cup Manager  | cass 5.75 6.61 | --- Inheritance           | cass 5.95 6.84   |
|                        |                | --- World Travel Game     | cass 6.95 7.99   |
| <b>Micro Power:</b>    |                |                           |                  |
| --- Adventure          | cass 6.95 7.99 | Woodland & GB Software:   |                  |
| --- Alien Destroyers   | cass 6.95 7.99 | NEW Freetrader            | cass 9.95 11.44  |
| --- Astro Navigator    | cass 4.95 5.69 | NEW Joust                 | cass 9.95 11.44  |
| --- Cat & Mouse        | cass 4.95 5.69 |                           |                  |
| --- Chess              | cass 6.95 7.99 | BBC BUSINESS/UTILITIES.   |                  |
| --- Cowboy Shootout    | cass 5.95 6.84 | Cosma:                    |                  |
| --- Croaker            | cass 6.95 7.99 | Character Generator       | cass 17.35 19.95 |
| --- Eldorado Gold      | cass 5.95 6.84 | Commercial Accounts       | cass 17.35 19.95 |
| --- Footer             | cass 6.95 7.99 | Database                  | cass 17.35 19.95 |
| --- Galactic Commander | cass 6.95 7.99 | Home Accounts             | cass 17.35 19.95 |
| --- Gomoku             | cass 3.95 4.54 | Invoices & Statements     | cass 17.35 19.95 |
| --- Laser Command      | cass 6.95 7.99 | Mailing List              | cass 17.35 19.95 |
| --- Martins            | cass 5.95 6.84 | Stock Control             | cass 17.35 19.95 |
| --- Mastermind         | cass 3.95 4.54 |                           |                  |
| --- Maze Invaders      | cass 4.95 5.69 | Micro Power:              |                  |
| --- Munchyman          | cass 5.95 6.84 | Constellation             | cass 5.95 6.84   |
| --- Reversi 1          | cass 4.95 5.69 | Disassembler              | cass 5.95 6.84   |
| --- Reversi 2          | cass 4.95 5.69 | Filer                     | cass 8.95 10.29  |
| --- Roulette           | cass 4.95 5.69 | Micro Budget              | cass 6.95 7.99   |
| --- Seek               | cass 5.95 6.84 |                           |                  |
| --- Startrek           | cass 4.95 5.69 |                           |                  |
| --- Swoop              | cass 6.95 7.99 |                           |                  |

All can be had (as well as software for the Apple, Atari, and IBM) from: Woodland Software, Robin Hood, 103 Oxford Gardens, London, W10 6NF. Tel. 01 960 4877. Robin will be only too pleased to give help and assistance to any enquiries. And I can personally guarantee his reliability. If you ask him straight what a particular program is like, whether it's worth buying etc, he'll give you an honest answer (mind you, that's if he's seen the program - he owns an Apple IIe). He's actually talked me out of buying quite a few packages purely on the grounds that he thought they were rubbish. No way to run a business I know, but it makes it far easier on supplier/consumer trust (which anyone that's been burned by a lousy supplier, like I have, will understand the importance of). Robin seems to have the idea that if you like the games he sells you, you'll come back for more. Makes sense I think.

~~~~~

misty land our hero, the obligitary friendly thief, and the delectable sorceress find themselves in whilst on their quest (peopled by attacking zombies, and the man/thing our group are looking for). Unfortunately, there is no conclusion to the story (other than winning any fights they get into) and I was left wanting for more. There MUST be a sequel - but will it be as good?

Another video of the same ilk was Conan the Barbarian - which I also enjoyed. I thought the film kept faithfully to the book - which is a point in its favour I think. The actor playing Conan, Arnold Schwarzenweiger (is that correct?), Mr Universe for 8 years running, was definitely superbly cast in this role. Exactly

(Cont'd over...)

(cont. from bottom of Page 9)

as I'd imagined the Conan figure - I can't think of anyone else that might've fitted the role. Nice little touches here were Conan being trained by a Swordmaster in the Samurai ways, and the warrior-woman who helped Conan (once coming back from the dead - Valhalla? - to help him in a time of need). Choreography for the fight/sword scenes were done well enough for one to really believe Conan and his warrior woman actually knew how to handle their swords and various other weapons. Another Conan film is promised soon ... and I can hardly wait. Hell, who needs stories with action scenes like you'll find in these two films. Pure entertainment D&D style.

Other videos I can recommend are Steven Spielberg's Poltergeist (with the special effects all that you might expect from a Spielberg production); and Excalibur. But I don't have the time to natter about them.

~~~~~  
LETTERS

We start with another new subscriber... mainly because I do need the odd morale booster now and again...

JAMES COWIE:

"My compliments on such an excellent zine, to my mind it was clear, witty and moderately priced i.e. cheap. I hope the zine continues to prosper and that your standards remain as high as they are now."

((Thank you James, you're obviously a man with an excellent taste in literature - welcome to Dib.))

oo000oo

And now, the man that came closest to winning the Jotto this time and then bungled it...

RICHARD J. WALKERDINE:

"Can you please explain to me what all this talk of ferrets is about? Is someone pulling your leg? ((Not mine - maybe yours)) I've never heard of BIFRA, FAB, FAFAB and the rest - surely it's a hoax? After all, the only official ferret association in this country is surely the Ferret Lovers Official Racing Association (FLORA)? Or have I been sending my annual subs to the wrong association all these years? I don't think I have, and I do have some slight knowledge of the subject - after all I've probably had more ferrets down my trousers than you've had flights to the moon! ((Pah! I'm not going to believe that: what is there to possibly interest a ferret down your trousers, Richard?))

Please explain,

Confused of Guildford."

((Dear confused of Guildford, it would appear to me as though you have been suckered in as have most of the rest of my subscribers. I am, so far (it seems) the only hobby member that's managed to keep myself safe (sane?) and immune from all these talks about ferrets and \*Ugh\* suchlike. It shocks me to see how such hobby stalwarts as yourself, supposed to be the backbone of our hobby, can sink so low as to even mention the wretched brutes. I guess you've just been worn down by too many Finchly Central games - it serves you right. But to answer your question, I wouldn't believe a Lynda Loise story if she gasped it out under torture. And no, that doesn't mean after reading too many Dib's either.))

oo000oo

MATT QUARTERMAIN: ((who says he's feeling sorry for himself over the 20YO

debate. Serves you right for getting yourself noticed in the Dib lettcolumn. Don't take it too much to heart though, Matt))

"The strangest pet of the lot must definitely be my mad sister Maxine (yeah, Mad Max, that's right...) ((Your parents let TWO of you live!?!)) who is soon to be taking over The Storm Lord, apparently changing the name to The Storm Ruler. She pops in and out of home, and has just over a week to prepare a flyer for Dragonmeet. Will she do it, we all wonder? Will she heck!

Had a letter recently from Dave Tottey hoping I didn't take Lynda Foster to a party I went to last weekend (2nd July). Apparently this was because he was fed up with ferrets. Now this puzzled me; does he achieve a certain rapport with ferret-lovers at parties over 200, nearly 300 miles away? A case for the analysts of psychic phenomena here, methinks.

George North supports the wrong football team. Mind you, if Lynda Louise is half as hunky as her part-namesake in Brighton, then she'll be worth a photo at least. But Sandy, in a buff-coloured envelope? Where's your sense of adventure, man? I mean, why not ask her to address the back, stick a stamp on it and post it like a postcard? That'd give the postman a fright."

((My God, what a poor girl! has to do to send a photo - you lot would probably take a girl out to a restaurant, wine and dine her, and make her wash the dishes afterwards, wouldn't you?))

oo000oo

And now, as if in retaliation, the girl herself...

LYNDA LOUISE FOSTER:

"I take great offence at being compared with Martin Allen, ((that doesn't surprise me, so would I)) who obviously has very little taste. Who in their right mind would support such a hideous creature as a chameleon - but then is Allen in his right mind? ((Need you ask?)) He hasn't got much in his favour: he subs to Dib and has the support of such bodies as, dare I mention it, ((Yes, why not)) Quarterbrain.

((\*Ughh\* yes, all true I'm afraid..... er, hey, steady Foster, there's nothing wrong with my Dibs!))

THE BANE (CONT.):

"And who is George North? His insult to my cousin, Steve, was quite unforgivable. The head band is in fact a symbol of mourning. You see, Stevie had a ferret called Dick and last year the poor animal fell off Stevie's Rolls, breaking his neck. So the bandage is a sign that Steve's Dick has fallen off... ((No wonder he hasn't been playing well))

To continue my slagging off all your subbers, I would like to know why you let Randy Sandy sub to your illustrious publication. I've come across some very funny men in my time (perhaps I shouldn't have put it like that), but not one who wants me in a buff envelope. A white one, yes... ((I quite agree - Sandy certainly has shown his true colour this time! The man is obviously sick.))

Now, in my few enjoyable weeks in this hobby I have found that hobby members (with the emphasis on the latter) do not enjoy surprises. It has also arrived at my notice that the hobby is predominately male. This is not a bad thing, but when we females have to resort to using pseudos then it has gone a bit far. I guess that there are many females out there, who resort to hiding behind a name, a male name, to get into the hobby. They'll probably take the more radical posture in the hobby, such as the extreme right wing... Tories! Now, Tom, if that is your real name, what have you got to say for yourself. Is it all a lie? The fascist family man running the zine, can you really expect newcomers to believe?

I'm not saying you're the only one. Some other names are suspect...."

((My wife will be interested to know that she's married to a female pseudonym. If this is the best of your arguments, Lynda, then we must assume the rest of your reasoning to be suspect as well - hidden female members? ...fascist?

...Tories, extreme right-wing? Hah! Who'll believe that. Let's face it, your credibility is shot.))

oo000oo

But talking of credibility, what about this from...

RICHARD L. GEE:

"I am writing to you in connection with the Central Gamestart Service. I would really like to act as an adjudicator in one or two games - mainly to see if running a zine would be possible.

At present I do not have a zine and can only provide an efficient [adjudication sheet] turn around of a weekend. I would be prepared to run up to two games of regular Diplomacy and will provide stamped stationary for the inclusive cost of 20p per player per season.

I have thought about this for sometime and am prepared to accept the commitment a GM requires.

Would you please be kind enough to consider me as a potential Gamesmaster and provide me with names and addresses of would-be players."

((Thought I'd include this to show you what kind of letters I can get through the CGS. Though I have replied kindly to the letter explaining why he couldn't have one, what was I supposed to say? It's quite often (and surprising) that people seem to get the wrong idea of what the CGS is all about. It wasn't created to fill up new zines with games and subscribers, and I don't know how such an idea came about. Is it a logical conclusion? It's difficult refusing people with so much enthusiasm, but refuse I must.))

oo000oo

NICHOLAS 'KENTUCKY FRIED' CLIFTON:

"Is that really Mr Nice-guy Booth on Page 4? I only ask because I notice he is wearing thick black gloves. What has our lovable man-of-peace been up to we wonder. Could it be he who runs the Heanor vice-ring?"

((Yes, you're second person who's noticed that Clive was wearing gloves. It didn't occur to me, I just thought it was normal. After all, everyone knows that our police have to protect their tender knuckles from thugs throwing themselves (i.e. faces etc) on them... don't we? And damn you, Clifton, will you stop addressing my mail to 'KITTEEN' - the postman has started giving me funny looks ...when the letter eventually arrives that is.))

oo000oo

But talking of Booth, here's the old man of the hobby himself...

CLIVE F. BOOTH:

"That's it then Tweedy, what option do you give me but to fold after plastering my picture all over DIB like that. People might think I actually approve of the zine or something and I could never live with that, knowing that people are pointing me out in the street and giggling behind cupped hands. The only way out is to retire into obscurity..."

((I shall be replying to most of this in the editorial - just thought I'd print this here 'cos I like hearing Booth complain. Oh by the way, thanks for the sub Clive. Heh heh, thought others should know how you weakened.))

oo000oo

GRAHAME MACLENNAN:

"I think you're right to do what you want to do, regardless of what other zines are up to. I've recently read in a couple of zines that they plan to do zine reviews, this is okay if the main reason is that they want to 'spread the word' for a good zine (in their view!) or to encourage people to subscribe to

more zines, but they seem to want to do it because '...other zines do it'."

((Editors generally publish zine reviews for three reasons: two you've already said, because other zines do it and because it gives some sort of service to their subscribers, the third is to pad out their zine. None of these are necessarily bad things though; whatever an editor's reason for doing the reviews, the job still gets done. Those new to the hobby still get to hear about other zines (good OR bad) and therefore get to know more about our hobby.

All in all though you'll find most editors HATE doing zine reviews - yet enjoy reading them. I know I do. In fact Jan has been pestering me to do some myself, because of all the new subscribers I've picked up. So far I've resisted, but once she sets her mind on something...))

oo000oo

MILES COWLING: ((editor of the single-sided photocopied zine, The Question Mark - deciding to take the plunge into our hobby))

"I have done some more investigating into purchasing a duplicator. For the time being however, I have secured the use of someone else's. As a guide, how much do you think a second-hand duplicator would cost?

Also can you advise me of a couple of names and addresses of other new zines as I would like to trade with another new zine."

((Names and addresses I've already sent. As for prices of duplicators: Mine was expensive - I paid £200 out on a fairly new/unused Gestetner 360 Automatic. This is not normal though, most people I've spoken to get second-hand electric to hand-cranked ones anything from £45 up to £100 (one person even got theirs for £20), it's up to the individual to choose. I got mine through my local paper - but otherwise I'd try 'Exchange and Mart'. That's all I can suggest.))

oo000oo

KONRAD DOLATA:

"Now that I'm somewhat more involved into the pbm-hobby and that my finals are successfully passed I started to get a closer look on the British hobby. I'm German, 27 years old and I've been enjoying pbm-ing for over a year now.

It all started with Dippy:

In February '82 we started a f-t-f game only to get into severe troubles with the sketchy rule-booklet that is delivered with the (German) game. I remembered an article on the game and soon I got extensive house-rules and only a month later I found myself playing Dippy pbm in Walter Luc Haas' zine BUMM in Switzerland. I wrote press and articles and soon got more contacts.

German zines followed and now I'm trying to cope with such games as Kingmaker, En Garde and United Imperial Governor and many more. I even ordered a lot of games via Walter's service 'Eoropa-Hobbies' which stocks games that can't be sold in German shops (Avalon Hill, SPI) My favourites are boardgames which are generally based on conflicts/historical data and it's just that kind of game that is completely neglected/looked down upon by the German public because of our history. But they don't realise that war-gamers don't have to be little Hitlers. Chess, for example, can also be considered as an abstract war-game. But you can't convince them.

I'm writing articles on the British hoby at the moment and together with my Diplomacy games and a United League of 30 teams, my time is somewhat limited. Nevertheless I would like to start in Sopwith if possible."

((Welcome to Dib, Konrad, and also, thanks for the very thought-provoking letter. I had heard that war films and suchlike were frowned upon in Germany, if not actively discouraged, but it hadn't occurred to me that this paranoia had stretched into the realms of gaming. I thought war-related items were discouraged just by way of an overflow of Allied agreements/consent right after the war. It surprises me to hear that it's the German public at large that want to disassociate themselves from a part of their history (by, seemingly, turning their backs on it) and ALL war-linked items. Does that mean that German children are not allowed to play with toy tanks, 'planes and II World War figures? Aren't

they allowed to learn of German War heroes, like Rommel, or any of the German air-aces? British children are brought up on heroic deeds, in books, comics and films. I wonder, does that make US wrong? Hmm.

Anyway, I've put your name down on my Sopwith waiting list - it shouldn't be too long before another game starts (if I can find another outside GM). Don't know if you'll do very well against some of our British Aces though, Konrad - some of them are very good! There, if that's not a challenge, what the hell is?))

oo000oo

FRANK DUNN:

"I got my degree: BA (Hons), upper second so I'm quite pleased with myself. ((Congratulations, Frank))

Bought a Spectrum 48K last week. Having fun learning its 'extended' BASIC. All this colour and hi-res is too much after my now 2½ year old ZX81!

'Starlord' also known as 'Starfleet' on Miconet 800 (a section of Prestel for computerniks) is up and running. I've heard good things of it. Hope to let you know more when my Spectrum modem arrives from Miconet 800. ((You're getting it already? - 'Greecen with envy\*')) Taps fingers on desk with uncontrolled impatience.

Hmm. Microvetec monitors, was using a BBC 'B' with one last week, superb monitor. Envy, envy."

((Hah! And so you should be - I may not have the money to link my Apple to Prestel YET, but I've actually got my Microvetec. Er... well not actually yet. It came last week, but we couldn't get it to work. After pulling out chip after chip (we thought we might just have pulled the wrong one) we eventually found out that the monitor itself was defective... and I had to send it back! Damn these people that's another two weeks I have to wait for them to replace it.

Talking of Prestel though (I didn't know they had a modem for the Spectrum), is it possible yet to link BBC machines up to it? If so, with that, Apple and Spectrum, there could be quite a few hobby members ready to plunge into electronic mail/games. Great stuff. Will there come a time I wonder when Dib is released as an electronic zine? No more printing. No more envelopes. Magic! Certainly food for thought.

Mind you, I'm now seriously thinking of getting the Spectrum for my son. There seems to be a lot of educational software around for this machine, plus he's using it at school. This is an area where the Apple seems to fail miserably - it's geared to adults/business.))

oo000oo

And to finish....

CATHY CUNNING:

"Dear kind, nice, gentle, understanding (can I stop now?), Tom, ((No no, carry on, I quite like it))

"Yes, Biggles is the hobby's smoothest talker - why he was my heart throb for a while. I know this is news for him, but you don't think I got into this hobby just to play postal games do you? Didn't work though - something about me being in America and him in England - such a small thing too. ((Biggles? Heart throb? You gotta be kidding - what a waste!))

I still need the postal Sopwith rules. ((I've sent a couple)) Also big news is that I will soon - like August 15 - be editing my own zine! Well it's kind of a hand-me-down like The Road... It's called The Shogun's Sword and was passed from Tom Swider to Mike Barno and now to me. Anyways Tom vaguely mentioned something about maybe running a game of Sopwith here in the States and if I could get the postal rules from you, then we might have a better time at getting a game started."

((So, Sopwith spreads to the states, eh. But I HAVE sent some rules. If you need any more let me know. I wish you the best of luck with your new zine Cathy - you'll have to write a flyer, letting us know what you intend to call it, what