

DIB DIB DIB

ISSUE 32



DISCOVER THE
UNEXPECTED
READ DIB

This is issue 32 of the games cum-chat zine, Dib Dib Dib. An average to middlin' zine (according to the latest results of the Zine Poll) costing (to those who subscribe) 34p per issue - a little more for overseas rate (usually an arm and a leg). From the depths of Tom Tweedy's mind at 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513

EDITORIAL

Well, try as I might, I can't make this zine any later. I'm just going to have to push this editorial out at great personal sacrifice. Oh good ... Hang on a minute readers there goes the door bell..... (Well it will if I wait long enough)

Oh God, oh good, Booth has just turned up right in the middle of what would have been a magnificent editorial. Now he's actually asking to take control - "Gissago, gissago!" Oh well, I suppose one must humour ones subscribers, I just hope he can spull, er spiti, er spell.... Rats.

Clive's contribution:

STOP! That's enough of this drivel from Tweedy, I don't know how you lot put up with it month after month. I even moved house to stop the infernal DIB dropping through my front door month after month but the blighter still tracked me down. Oh yes, I suppose I'd better tell you who I am hadn't I? Well I am the world renowned ex-editor and GM, Clive F. Booth, one of the best things that ever happened to this hobby (since Sharp folded Dullstuff). I am presently in Amersham having come here as part of a hit squad to destroy that blot on the face of the present hobby known as DIB DIB DIB. I gained access to 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham by a clever ruse that completely fooled the pathetic Tweedy, i.e. I rang the front door bell, and glancing past his housekeeper as she opened the door I saw in the hall a pile of ancient, yellowing copies of DIB, obviously returned regularly month after month by harrassed subscribers. Evidently the hobby had remained more discerning during my absence than I had imagined..... Get off Tweedy, ouch, leave me alone I've not finished yet..... No, no, please not that, not Jan I'll go, I'll go, please not Jan AND the telephone it's more than a man can stand.....

Normal service will now be resumed... ((DIB normal! That'll be the day (I'm still here see, fooled you Tweedy)))... Should the 'Hunting of the Snark' be amongst you favourite bedtime reading (mine of course is 101 things to do with a pillow) ((Clive here, the only thing I can think of to do with a pillow is to lay me head on it)) (My God Booth, that's 102!!), you will no doubt be cognisant with the animal the Boojum. Which brings me neatly (I hope!) onto the subject of Richard Morris's new 'zine. Damn, Booth's activities have completely destroyed my chain of thought - I give up with this editorial. Just accept it's enough when I say that the first issue of Boojum was very good indeed - one of the best first issues of a 'zine I've ever seen. ((Did you ever see the first Chimaera?)) No. ((Well there you are then...)). Highly recommended.

Just to finish off a quick word about the NGC Rating List attached to the back of Dib (many thanks to Wink Thompson for supplying it). These latest ratings are calculated solely on the results of the latest batch of stats from Pete Calcraft. Nevertheless they give a fair idea of players abilities - best players at the top, etc. (That's why I'm at the top and Booth is at the bottom). ((Hold it, hold it, I'm not having that, I'm still reading over your shoulder Tweedy. I am not at the bottom, I am in the upper half. I tend to play fairly and can't bring myself to stab all and sundry like some, nudge, nudge, know what I mean.)) I give up!

((Good, Tweedy's gone, he's given up with me so I can do pages and pages of entertaining chat and amusing anecdotes to amuse you in your leisure hours and to give you value for money in this decrepit little magazine for a change. What shall I begin with? Just a minute come away from that plug socket Tweedy ... don't pull that, you'll qwpklll clhggfnm aamnbety))

JOTTO Turn 13

That's it! Finally, for his 13th guess R.J Lampard made a stab at all six words and got them right. Congratulations Richard, you get a £2 cheque added to your credit. And now, the six words:-

1. SAHZEN, 2. JURIST, 3. MONKEY, 4. BUNGLE, 5. PLACID, 6. FIXATE.

I made a slight mistake last issue having counted Robert Lozynskyj twice - I put him down as an NMR (which was wrong), and having unsuccessfully taken a guess. Sorry about that Robert, the first part of my report was right.

A successful game I think. It lasted longer than I thought it would, and it certainly attracted enough players. Anyone fancy another game? I'll start one if I get enough names.

** DIB'S GALLERY **

NAME: Mike Close (by his Psychologist)

"Mr Close is a most interesting subject, one I shall be making [a great deal of money out of] a deep study of for many years. When he first came to me (by order of the County Court following a conviction of cruelty to chameleons brought by the R.S.P.C.A.) he filled in the personal details for me as follows:-

STRENGTH	: 6	GOLD PIECES	: 140		
INTELLIGENCE	: 16				
WISDOM	: 10	HIT POINTS	: 12	AGE	: 28
CONSTITUTION	: 4	EXPERIENCE	: 0		
DEXTERITY	: 14	ARMOUR CLASS	: 9		
CHARISMA	: 11				

LANGUAGES: ENGLISH, FRANGLAIS, BASIC, FORTRAN, COBOL, PASCAL, 6502 ASSEMBLER

SPELLS: CHARM PERSON, CHARM ANIMALS.

As you can see, he has very little contact with the real world - his only concession to this being to read the Daily Telegraph each morning.

Mr Close is intensely paranoid, has strange fantasies about chameleons, and enjoys watching the TV programme SOAP. Has a tendency to drink too much (any number of pints greater than his constitution above) usually when trying to delude himself that he can play cricket and snooker. Takes great pleasure in baiting a certain Tom Tweedy.

- Tends to live by only two rules:-
- RULE 1:) I AM ALWAYS RIGHT
- RULE 2:) IF I'M WRONG, RULE 1 APPLIES.

Annoyingly, this is far too often the case.

Signed: Erhart Schmidt."

((Free issue grudgingly given because I cannot think of any reasonable reason not to... "always right..!!".... damn his eyes... mutter mutter mutter...))

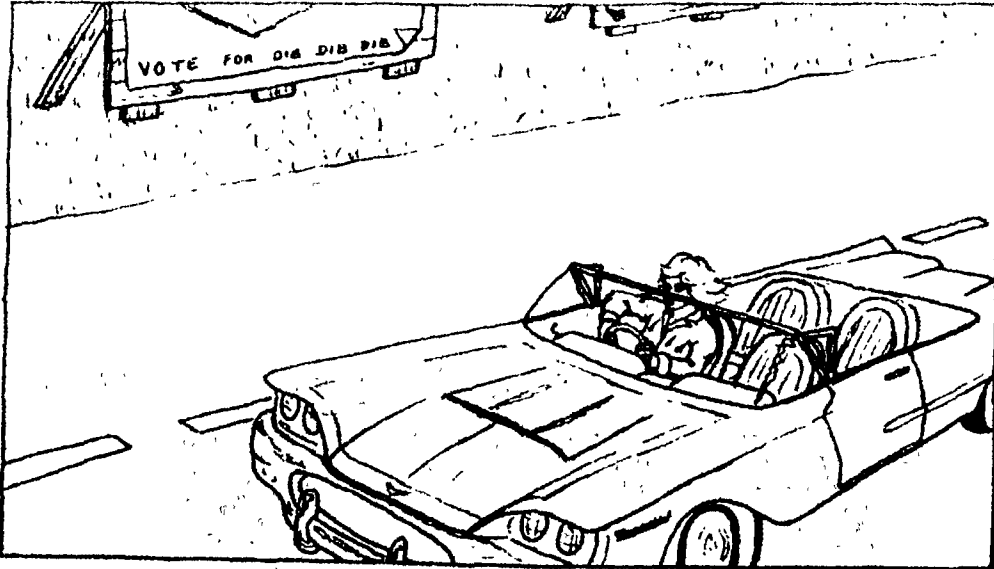


THE RETURN OF

DAGEL

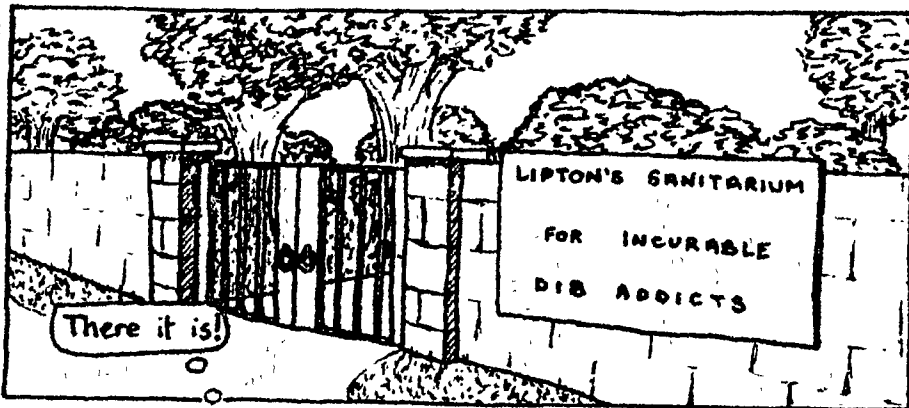
by

Chris Gandow



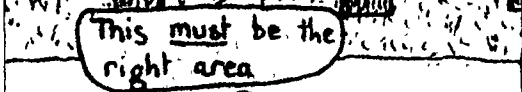
TWEEDY FOR NEXT PRIME MINISTER

There is no alternative!

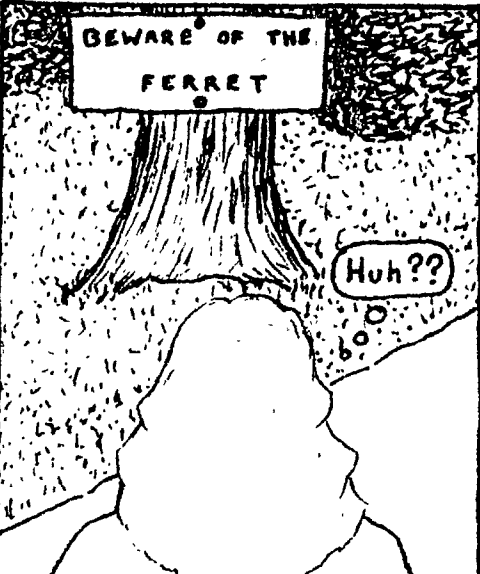
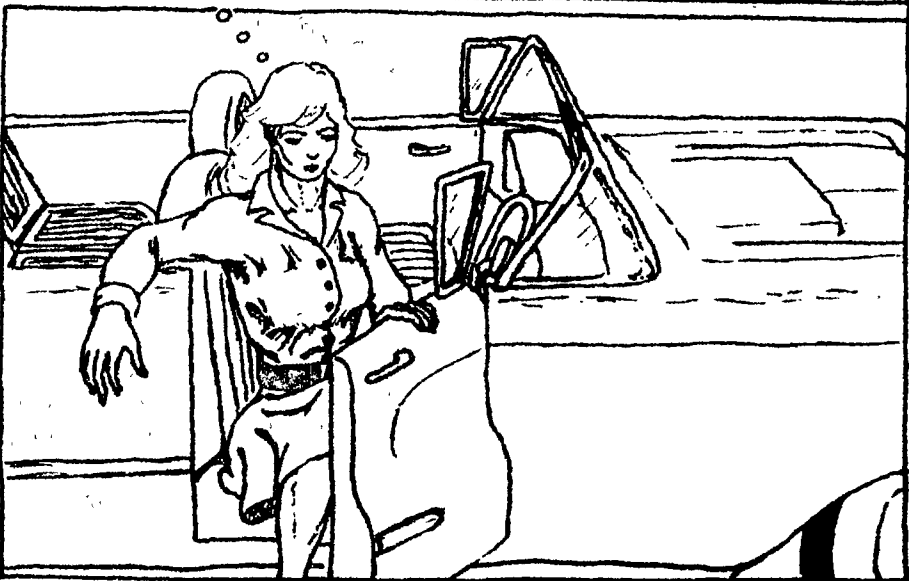
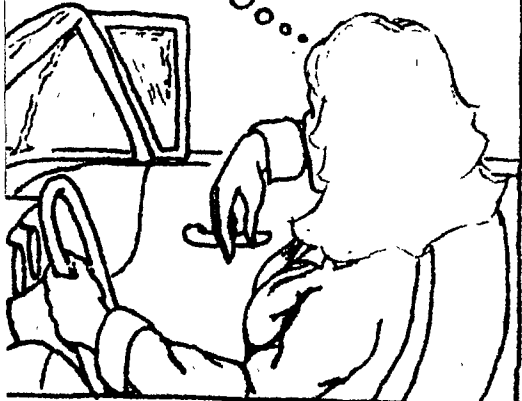


LIPTON'S SANITARIUM
FOR INCURABLE
DIB ADDICTS

There it is!



This must be the right area.



BEWARE OF THE
FERRET

Huh??

DAGEL

TO BE
CONTINUED

READING BETWEEN THE ZINES

Hopscotch: (Issue 34) Edited by Alan Parr. It's difficult to explain the attraction of this zine and why it seems so popular with everybody. Yet popular it is. To describe it I would have to say that it's appearance is quite scruffy; editorial, letters and games are very closely packed together. Alan doesn't believe in wasting an inch of space. Cannot be classed as a 'chat' zine as such (in fact Alan would be disgusted if you said so) because he generally only talks of games and/or hobby-related material. Even so, he makes the hobby news seem more interesting than most (important for us editors because we read the same news over and over again in other zines). I suppose if one HAD to find a category for this zine, it would be a games zine. Alan will run anything you care to mention. This being the case I can say it's attractive to games-players - but this doesn't explain why readers (i.e. subscribers who don't play the games in it) find it so interesting. I guess it can only be put down to Alan's friendly approach to his subscribers, and his willingness to give everyone their moneysworth. At the moment runs: Politburo, Hare & Tortoise, Eleusis, Railway Rivals, Up and Under, 221B Baker Street, Mystic Wood, Sopwith, etc, etc; but as I say, will have a go at running anything. Does NOT however run Diplomacy. I like it - definitely a zine I'd recommend.

Alan Parr, 6 Longfield Gardens, Tring, Herts, HP23 4DN.

The Acolyte: (up to issue 50) edited by Pete Tamlyn. This latest issue makes zines like Dib seem like mini-issues and sported an amazing 60 pages! Done at a time when Pete should have been on honeymoon (having just got married - naturally), this shows dedication very rarely seen in our hobby nowadays. Obviously his wife, Kathyryn, is letting him get far too much of his own way (no doubt time will improve this). Acolyte is a chat zine dedicated to what used to be a dirty word in our hobby - FRP gaming. Not a thing I go in for much myself (I don't seem to get the time to learn the various rules) but nevertheless, makes interesting reading. Mind you, he does get a lot of practice; apart from putting out his own zine Pete also writes a regular column in TSR's new glossy, Imagine, called 'Tavern Talk'. Anyway, Acolyte has plenty of chat (though he can be a bit vitriolic at times when attacking some poor unfortunate in print); articles on Role-Playing, long letter column, etc; and has openings for Regular Diplomacy (£1), F(Rom) Diplomacy (£1), Snits Revenge (£1), Sopwith (£1), Origins (50p), Cline 9-man (£1), Utrecht (£1), and Machiavelli (£1). Reported to be one of the best FRP postal hobby zines around. Having only seen a couple of others I can't really say, tho' it's the best of the bunch I've seen, and was also tipped hot favourite for winning this year's Zine Poll. What more can I say. I like this one also. Highly recommend if you don't mind getting your zine in two parts. (When are you going to get a bigger stapling machine, Mr T?)

Pete Tamlyn, 2 Poplar Road, The Coppice, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP22 5BN.

Home of the Brave: (issue 29) edited by Geoff Challenger. Rather a strange magazine this. Considered one of the zines that form the backbone of our hobby. I wouldn't argue with this, Home is a fine zine. However it does get rather staid and stuffy at times. Plenty of chat, hobby news, articles, large and healthy letter column make up the content of what seems to be mainly politics, finance, accountancy and stuff like that. Interesting maybe, but unfortunately lacks any traces of humour. Don't let this put you off however, as I'd say Home is required reading; reporting much of the up to date hobby news that zines like Dib might miss out. Runs many games of Diplomacy, Cline 9-man and Mercator - but I can't find any open waiting lists! If I didn't trade I would subscribe to this zine, but I can't say that I enjoy every issue. Picking up the sub-zine, Serendipity by John Webley hasn't exactly done anything for it either - but then again sub-zines very rarely do. Worth a look if you prefer a more serious approach to your hobby.

Geoff Challenger, 100 High Street, Swanscombe, Kent, DA10 0AH.

THE CATACOMBS OF COPERNICA

A Dungeons and Dragons Postal Campaign (by Chris Sandow).

Slowly, ponderously, the heavy, iron-hinged doors creak open to reveal a long, dark-stoned corridor, dimly lit by the fluttering light of innumerable torches. Echoing down the length of the corridor comes the sound of insane, cackling laughter as the DM is carried off to his padded cell...

Yes, the campaign is about to begin - the Catacombs of Copernica are now open to the public! Listed at the end of this article are the names of those lucky (ho, ho, ho!!) people who will be first into the Catacombs, but don't worry if your name doesn't appear there - the waiting-list is still open, and as soon as I am sure that I can cope with the extra work I shall admit more people in. And of course there is always the FAINT possibility that one of the players MIGHT get his party killed off, unlikely as that may be (would I lie to you? Heh, heh, heh...!)

If your name IS on the list below could you please write to me to confirm that you still want to enter, and if so enclosing your address and (where possible) telephone number, plus the gamefee (at last I'll be able to pay the gas bill...) and in return I will send you a mind-boggling, eye-opening 'introductory package' which will be worth the gamefee all by itself, and which will tell you everything (I hope) that you need to know to enter the game.

In the meantime, and also for those who are still on the waiting-list (patience, patience!), here are a few notes about how the game will be run:-
I will be using the standard AD&D rules (modified where necessary), so anyone who wants to play will have to have access to the AD&D Players Handbook. However beginners to Dungeons & Dragons are very welcome, and I will be glad to answer any queries, either about the game in general, or about this campaign - my address and telephone number should appear at the end of this article. ((And the back page Waiting List))

Each player will have his own character plus a party of six companions and henchmen (who the player can give orders to, but who will actually be under the final authority of the DM - me!), and each of the players will start at different entrances to the Catacombs. Players whose parties meet up will be quite free to work together, exchange information, etc, but exchange of information between players whose parties have not met WILL BE SEVERELY FROWNED UPON, and will result in slapped wrists all round. So there. Apart from if they meet up the only way in which the players - and everyone else, for that matter - will know anything about what is happening to the other players will be in the 'summary' which should (!) appear in each issue of Dib (and which won't give very much away!)

Hopefully that should be enough to whet the appetites of the first entrants, and to keep the rest of you interested...!

AND NOW...!

GAMESTART GAMESTART GAMESTART GAMESTART GAMESTART GAMESTART GAMESTART GAMESTART

The Catacombs of Copernica

The Lucky Six: Clive Booth	DM: Chris Sandow
George North	2 Coronation Avenue
Dave Tant	Keynsham
Derek Andrews	Bristol
Nick Clark	BS18 2PT
Simon Craddock	Tel: (027 56) 68874

Gamefee: £3.00 (cheques, P/O's payable to C.J. Sandow); plus a SSAE to be included with each set of orders.

Deadline for payment: September 23rd

THE 1983 ZINE POLL RESULTS

Greatest Hits wins the Zine Poll yet again! My congratulations go to Pete Birks for an outstanding achievement - doing what no other zine has done in the history of the Poll; winning 4 times. To tell you the truth, I thought Mad Policy would get it this year (it came close), which would have somewhat embarrassed Richard, I think, if it had actually won. Still, Richard must be well enough pleased with the turnout for the Poll - no fewer than 224 people voted! That's 70 more than the previous high Poll turnout. Not bad. Anyway, including the latest results, the Poll history so far looks something like this...

Poll No.	1	2	3	4	5
Pos.:	Jan 1974	Jun 1974	Mar 1975	May 1976	Apr 1977
1st	Ethil The F.	Dolchstoss	Dolchstoss	Chimaera	Chimaera
2nd	Mad Policy	Mad Policy	Mad Policy	1901 a.a.t.	1901 a.a.t.
3rd	Dolchstoss	Orion	1901 a.a.t.	Mad Policy	Jigsaw
4th	1901 a.a.t.	1901 a.a.t.	Fifth Column	Jigsaw	Dolchstoss
5th	War Bulletin	Frigate	Hyperion	Trojan Horse	Rats...
6th	Grafeti	Fifth Column	Greatest Hits	Ad Nauseam	Mad Policy
7th	Frigate	Comet	War Bulletin	Bumm	Greatest Hits
8th	Our 'Enry	Hannibal	Relief	He's Dead Jim	Ad Nauseam
9th	S of Bellicus	War Bulletin	Lemming Expr	Rocinante	Trojan Horse
10th	Hannibal	Ct. Circular	Frigate	Dolchstoss	PTN

Poll No.	6	7	8	9	10
Pos.:	Apr 1978	Jun 1979	Jul 1980	Jun 1981	Jul 1982
1st	Dolchstoss	Greatest Hits	Greatest Hits	Greatest Hits	Ode
2nd	Ethil the F.	PTN	F of Eagles	PTN	Greatest Hits
3rd	Chimaera	Chimaera	PTN	NMR!	F of Eagles
4th	Lemming Expr	Megalomania	NMR!	Chimaera	The Acolyte
5th	New Statsman	Mr Gladgrind	Chimaera	F of Eagles	NMR!
6th	Tinamou	F of Eagles	Putty Riffo	Persp Dreams	W Your Back
7th	Jigsaw	Filibuster	P. Victory	Ripping Yarns	Dib Dib Dib
8th	1901 a.a.t.	Pigmy	Megalomania	Putty Riffo	H of the Brve
9th	PTN	Gallimaufry	Tinamou	Ode	Chantecler
10th	Greatest Hits	Tinamou	Filibuster	P. Victory	Chimaera

And now... the 11th Zine Poll

Pos.:	Aug 1983
1st	Greatest Hits (I placed this 2nd with a vote of 9.5)
2nd	Mad Policy (The zine I considered the best - relative no-hoper?)
3rd	The Acolyte
4th	NMR!
5th	Denver Glont (STILL haven't seen a copy yet - must ask to trade)
6th	Hopscotch (Excellent games/non-Diplomacy zine - first time eligible)
7th	Ode (Last year's winner? - what's it doing down here?)
8th	Home of the Brave
9th	Lokasenna (New litho zine - surprised me it got this high)
10th	20 Years On (Non-Diplomacy zine listing others - first time eligible)

So what happened to Dib, I hear you ask. Well it actually came 15th out of a list of 47 zines (16th in the 'Ratio Listing'; =12th 'Points Listing'; and 15th 'Apportioned Points Listing'). Not too bad considering the zines above me - but slightly disappointing nonetheless. My own fault I suppose, I've been letting Dib slip of late; letting it just truck on without giving much thought as to content. Should I try and do better job for next year? Maybe. But if I can't shift myself out of the rut and gain inspiration through normal channels - I can't see the Zine Poll spurring me on.

I was shocked to see the low positions of both Watch Your Back (22nd) and Last Stand (39th!) - surely they don't deserve these positions? Last year WYB beat Dib... I don't think it has deteriorated in any way over the past year at all, and certainly not to the extent of reaching 22nd position. I knew this year's Poll would be different because of the eligibility change - but hell,

that much?

On the other hand it comes as no surprise that Hopscotch (6th) and Home of Brave (8th) did so well - both are excellent zines (though Home can get a bit heavy at times). Perspiring Dreams (13th) should have done better - certainly should have topped 20 Years On (10th) - which shouldn't have been included in the Poll at all (excellent though the magazine undoubtedly is).

Out of a circulation of 111 possible voters in subscribers and trades, 65 of Dib's number voted in the poll. This is a wee bit strange though because it seems, according to the votes table, that 72 people actually voted for Dib! Even taking into account the obvious inclusions - the wives like Jill Parr and Kathryn Tamlyn - that still leaves 5 unaccounted for. Maybe this is where I picked up my couple of grudge votes, eh? This is how my 72 votes from 1-10 were spread out:-

Votes 1-10.....: $\frac{1+}{2}$ $\frac{2+}{1}$ $\frac{3+}{-}$ $\frac{4+}{4}$ $\frac{5+}{6}$ $\frac{6+}{13}$ $\frac{7+}{17}$ $\frac{8+}{13}$ $\frac{9+}{13}$ $\frac{10}{3}$
 Distribution of Dib's votes:

My thanks go out to all who voted for Dib (apart from the 3 nerds of course who receive a zine they obviously think is diabolical), I'm pleased to see a high percentage of you considered it to be an 'average to good' zine. That's good because I think I make/do a more than passible job at running the games. Anyone wanting to see a full list of the results should contact Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 6PG (Tel. 0483 577312). What more needs to be said?

This has been reprinted by kind permission of George North and Clive Booth from an old Chimaera article now some five years old. In actual fact it was this very article which sparked me off to make my first contribution to this hobby. I enjoyed it so much I thought I'd do a follow up from a novices point of view - and so 'The Postman's Knock II' appeared in the following issue of Chim. It's a timeless piece, and would appear just as humerous today, for today's novices, as it did in my day so many years ago (though George didn't think it was the best he'd ever done). I'm sure most of you will have felt the feelings expressed below at some time or another, so will accept it for what it is. PK II will hopefully be included in the next issue. Until then, I proudly produce...

THE POSTMAN'S KNOCK
by George North

I was up and about by half eight this morning and casting anxious sidelong glances out of the window in case Postie should come along; but do you know what he did? He shot up Wigton Way which is almost opposite my house and he did this without delivering my mail. This means that he will be another hour because he has that ghastly block of flats at the other end of Wigton Way with which to contend.

So I pretended to read the paper so that Wifey would think that I didn't care but at half nine I was on my knees by the front door and alternatively listening at the letterbox and looking through the window on the landing so that I could see him if he was coming.

I can see at least five doors down and he usually calls at one of them. Next door has a hedgerow that is partially in the way, but it is thinned out where I lopped a few twigs off some weeks ago and I can see through it now without much bother. It means standing on the third stair up and leaning over a bit but that is all.

At half nine the postman still hasn't come and I was getting real worried, especially since that lorry had parked out front and blocked the view for nearly ten minutes. I rather suspected that this was just the incentive the postie wanted to slip by without my seeing him. These postmen are dead crafty, you know.

What must have happened is that he came down Wigton Way and then continued

along the far side of Wigton Road where he will turn at the bottom and come back up this side making my house the last delivery on his walk.

So I paced up and down the floor like a frustrated tiger, clenching my hands behind my back and wearing a scowl upon my countenance that frightened the life out of the cat. You just wait till he gets here. I'll tell him a thing or two.

Ah! Here he comes now. Plop, plop, plop go lots of letters on the welcome mat. We fall upon them with tears of joy an relief and we wrap our arms around them and clutch them to our breast. "Morning postie. Thank you postie." He's a nice chap, is postie. Must remember to get him a cup of tea ready tomorrow. Now about these games....

THE GERMAN POSTAL HOBBY
by Konrad Dolata

In comparison to the 1000+ hobby members in the UK, there are just 2000/3000+ hereabouts. It all began back in 1975 when a Swiss teacher, Walter Luc Haas started to promote Dippy and released his zine BUMM. This result zine is still running now with 54 games finished and about 20 still going (one of it dates back to 1976 and the remaining 5 players have decided to reach the time of WW II - it's 1923 now). To fill the game with strategic/tactical flavour and a relevant amount of information he issued BUMM-SPECIAL. This chat-zine used to be the backbone for the hobby for about 5 years but then Walter decided not to type the letters anymore but to print pre-typed contributions. This lead to a standstill as there was not much time/interest left with the readers (handwriting is so much easier) and there were other zines arising.

BUMM-SPECIAL still survives but it has become a zine for 10+ contributors and only 50+ readers. In the first years Walter's enthusiasm was still in its prime and he translated many articles which he got through his extensive trades. But now the "old" man has become tired as it seems. Apart from this Dippy branch Walter released a zine called Joker in which he commented upon family games and Cosims((?))/Fantasy/Role-Playing. It's his achievement that these games became popular in a country that never before had even heard of them. (Apart from those lucky ones who attended the cons of the British/American soldiers who used to play boardgames and table-top.)

Later on Walter divided Joker into 2 parts (one for family games the other for Cosims etc). But as he changed to prepared articles the number/succession of issues was cut as well. His most important contributions remains E-HOBBIES, ((Europa Hobbies)) a collection of 2000+ games he obtained from the US and the UK. Until recently this was quite a chance to get cheap games as he didn't use this "store" professionally. But with the rise of the dollar it gets more and more expensive as Walter calculates on the basis of this currency.

Out of Walter's players two editors arose in the late 70's to release the first German zines: Die Poppelrevue and Der Grinsende Beobachter. They both started with Dippy but soon changed to a variety of pbm-games other than Dippy. A short time ago the PR changed into a review zine assuming "partly professional" status. The GB on the other hand still is one of the most popular zines (with 40 pages a month for 80p incl. postage) and its editor, Dietmar Plohl, ((think I've spelt that name wrong)) introduced United to the hobby which became Germany's most popular game next to Dippy.

Further games that are favourites here are 1829, Railway Rivals, En Garde and After the Holocaust. Two more zines appeared about the same time as PR and GB: Der Stabsanzeiger and Saurian Allstar Unlimited/Genesis. The former took the abandoned games from PR and constitutes together with GB and SAU/G the competing trio at the moment.

Some more zines appeared in the 80's which were born out of enthusiasm for United but they soon took over other pbm games. So there are about 10 zines at the moment depicting a rather small hobby compared to the 50+ of the UK. But the

hobby keeps expanding with GB and SAU/G reaching 100+ subscribers each (BUMM has got 120; Joker 220 but a lot of non-pbm'ers). SOPWITH had been tried in GB but the public/players soon were annoyed with it because some players kept hiding, and by way of prejudice one sample game was regarded as a sufficient test to vote it down. ((A similar reaction to what heppened here, until I started the Sopwith Ratings))

Apart from the "pure hobby" (Dippy, boardgames + United type games) there is another branch dedicated to table tops and to Role-Playing. They even created a German Fantasy game (related to D&D/Runequest with the title MIDGARD. Around this game a large following gathered which developed into a group that combines Role-Playing) Table Tops in our zine "MYTHIS" and which has regular cons. But otherwise the branches of the hobby are still divided.

Much has to be done over here and in my opinion we can learn a lot if we compare our hobby with that of the UK some years ago. As to the distribution of hobby members throughout Germany, 2 major centres can be seen. The first one centres around Hamburg in the North with PR and Stabsanzeiger the other one in the populated Rhine-Ruhr area (Cologne - Dortmund) with the other zines.

In general our German zines are very much games-orientated with SAU/G being the exception that favours chat (which I do as well and made me look for subs of British zines when I got my first issues via the ZINE BANK).

((Konrad tells me this was an abbreviated version of what he sent to The Church Mouse. If this is true it must have been one hell of an article - this one was big enough. Thanks Konrad, you earn yourself a free issue.))

LETTERS

ANDREW SMITH:

"I had planned to let my sub lapse; after all, I'd never actually taken the plunge and entered for a game. But then I read the lettercol., which masterpiece made me ask myself if I could really pass up such high-quality monthly entertainment.

Consequently, here's a cheque for another £3..."

((Well, that's what it's all about - entertainment is the name of the game, eh. Thanks for the cheque, Andrew.))

oo000oo

And...

STUART BAILEY:

"It must be the effect of the pike I skillfully blocked with my head. Or possibly the fact that I'm still sulking after being shot for mutiny on Sunday (blow the Sealed Knot I'm going to stick to rugby in future). But I have decided to subscribe to Dib Dib Dib. "

((And why not - seems a sensible progression of ideas to me. You're not the only Sealed Knotter I have in my zine, Stuart - there's also Pete Mearns and Colin Bruce (both ex-editors of Puppet Theatre News - once a wonderous zine) - but you don't want to take up with the likes of them, troublemakers both.))

oo000oo

But talk of the devil...

PETER U. MEARNS: ((On a postcard from his tax haven in sunny Portugal))

"Dear all, Pah! You'd all really hate it here, I mean, private swimming pool, topless sunbathing and wine at 50p a bottle. Apalling! We had a quiet night yesterday - polishing off 5 bottles of wine plus various beers, in the

process. Oh well, I suppose I'd better go down to the barbecue...."

((Good grief, you piss me off, Mearns, you really do - it would seem as though your firm is paying you far too much. Mind you, if the wine is anything like the bottle you brought me back from France (my insides still haven't got over the shock of what I poured down it) you deserve all you get!))

oo000oo

And, yet another rich Dib subscriber that can afford a holiday...

CHRIS SANDOW:

"Here I am on holiday in Cornwall, and what am I doing? Sunning myself on the beach? Sight-seeing? Nope - I'm working on the dungeon! What dedication! What commitment!! What mind-boggling stupidity!!!"

((What...? Ah, well, I DO expect this much dedication from my outside GMs you know. What do you think I'm running here, another Hopscotch ?))

oo000oo

MIKE CLOSE:

"I do hope that Chris Sandow has nothing better to do for the next two years than run the D&D game. With twelve plus players, he's not going to have much time for other things, such as work, going out with girls, going to the pub etc. Has he never seen a sample of George North's D&D orders? Perhaps Dave Tant can supply him with a copy."

((I fear he's just about to find out for himself.))

MIKE (CONT.): ((I hope I won't have any regrets printing this...))

"Did you see that paragraph in the Telegraph in mid-August about the French girl who tried to commit suicide by jumping off the Notre Dame? She landed on a group of Canadian tourists, killed one and injured two others. She died later in hospital. Boy, the French must really hate tourists!

In work, this led to an interesting discussion about the aerodynamics of falling French girls - did she have a skirt or jeans on, for instance. This progressed to falling bodies in general, and pigeons in particular, because pigeons are particularly streamlined, especially if they come down beak-first. ((The mind boggles at a pigeon ready to commit suicide.))

Also, in view of what they are training pigeons to do now - help spot survivors in helicopter air/sea searches, pilot nuclear missiles on to target (the ultimate pigeon shit) ((heh heh, yeah)) and so on, perhaps it's possible to train kamikaze pigeons to assassinate world leaders. Maybe the Russians have thought of this already.

Any further speculation on the use of pigeons in this way I shall leave to the vivid imaginations of your other subscribers!

Is it true that Janet is a fearsome redhead? You lucky devil!! Has she got any sisters (preferably not interested in dogs)?"

((Well, I can't see her redhead because of her covering brown hair - but she does have pink toes if that's any help.))

oo000oo

JAMES COWIE:

"I was under the impression that you editor boys had to obtain the written permission to print anything that they said. I had no idea you were going to print my views, nonetheless I got a big kick out of it. I still think your zine is great, but now I am a little wary of a sly editor."

((And that's the way it should be - keep the subscribers on their toes. But to tell you the truth, James, all letters to the editor are fair game unless you put "Not For Publication" on them. In this case an editor would respect your

wishes and not use them - though I did once make a mistake.))

JAMES (CONT.):

"One gripe I have is that I thought the zine was male only, somehow or other two mere women (maybe more) have managed to infiltrate into the hobby. Off the record ((Er, of course)) I can't for the life of me see where they get so much free time from, they mustn't be doing the regulation 24 hours-a-day housework. ((Now that you point it out...))

I think we ought to do something about these shameless women, by we I mean everyone - I for one don't fancy taking them on all on my todd. That LYNDA LOUISE FOSTER sounds like a real mean hussy, to say nothing of Cathy what's her name."

((That's what I like to see man after my own heart; sexist, but chicken. I quite agree though - Cathy? Lynda? - why aren't you chained to the kitchen sink like James says you should be? Remember James, this was all your idea...))

oo000oo

Actually, talking of Lynda Louise, I've had quite a few letters on ferrets (which I had to scrap of course) but have managed to salvage the end of one talking of ferrets and polecats:-

STUART BAILEY:

"But none of these creatures match a good terrier. Who is loyal, obedient (well some of the time) and if she does decide to upset a herd of half wild steers at least she is right beside you as you dive headfirst through the strands of barbed wire fence. Finally terriers don't smell as bad as ferrets (most of the time). ((I was going to say this sounds like the wife, but that last sentence disallows it on the grounds that I could get shot saying so.))

However if you are handing out photos of Lynda 'The Bane' Louise Foster, who seems a very nice young lady even though she has some very strange ideas. Here I should point out I'm very new to the hobby. There was I peaceably wandering round University looking for the Chess Club, when I was set upon by the Wargames Society, who turned out to be a drinking and D&D society hiding under a respectable title. So perhaps after a while longer Lynda's ideas might turn out to be quite normal."

((Oh quite possible. However I hasten to point out, we're more respectable than the ordinary run-of-the-mill Wargaming Society - we don't always play D&D.))

oo000oo

Oh dear, I have a long and interesting letter from Konrad Dolata (8 close-written pages!) which I now have to edit. What makes it hard is that all 8 pages are interesting, meaning I'll probably split it up and include most of it, if not all of it (hope you don't mind me chopping your letter about a bit, Konrad). I hate decisions - oh for a crayon-scribbled Richard Walkerdine missive that I can just blue pencil.

KONRAD DOLATA:

"Sopwith is going to be an interesting game as my favours have shifted more and more towards it. A friend from our fortnightly games-meet invited me to his home where he showed me his 600+ (incredible) games and one of these was the original SOPWITH. As he is very generous - I can take whatever I like whenever I feel like it - and there's a load of zines as well (Games & Puzzles, The Wargamer etc). I have got the game now with me and we've played it a few times already with some managers of my United League. As we have a weekly deadline for Dippy in our Badminton Sports Club as well and the last game was finished two weeks ago (oh! grammar) we are pondering on the idea to start a game of Sopwith just for a change. In about half an hour two of our Dippy group are visiting me to see whether they like it or not."

((Well I hope they do like it, Konrad, it can be a damn good game when played

correctly (that is, everyone getting stuck in and shooting the hell out of each other). This seems to happen normally in a f-t-f game, but needs an outside boost in postal games. The most successful outside boost, we found, is the Sopwith stats run by Richard Morris, in which players are rated so they can achieve the Ace status as described in the box game. You must gain 40 hits on other players to gain aedom (if you drop below 40 you lose your ace satus). If you'd like to see a copy of the stats, Konrad, contact Richard, his address in on the back page.))

oo000oo

Actually, talking of Sopwith, here's a letter in reply to my re-written review I did for 'The Novice Package' and Nicky Palmer's new glossy, Flagship ...

NICKY PALMER:

"Many thanks for your very readable review: just the sort of thing I want. Issue 1 is thundering through the long typesetting/printing now, but the piece should be a 90% probable for issue 2. ((And too my request for subscription and subscription rates for publication...))

Good heavens, a subscriber! (No, we have got a few, actually, though the main bulk should be when we distribute the famous flyer in thousands of copies over all corners of Britian - saw the film Wargames the other day, and wished I had a few hundred to thrust at the audience, who all looked like computer freaks, gamers, and allied professions...) Subs are £6 a year (for 4 issues), post included. The single issue price is £1.75, and if you get so disgusted with your sub that you want to give up we'll refund the unused part at a month's notice (which means if you tell us 2 weeks before issue N comes out you get saddled with it anyway, as we've printed it by then on the assumption that you were still subbing) after deducting £1.75 per issue already sent. Cheques should be made out to FLAGSHIP.

*** CONSUMER WARNING ***: It isn't as some people think a postal Diplomacy zine writ large: it's a magazine about the whole postal hobby, which means the readers have to be willing to read about Starlord and Tribes of Crane and suchlike: if they buy it for Dippy they will find it pretty limited fare. My theory is that it's time the different wings of postal gaming knew more about each other! Issue 1 will contain ads for Dippy novices from Acolyte and Drooling God, by the way - if people try both it will certainly show what a varied lot we are!"

((Well there we are, what advert could I do that might possibly better that? Certainly I will be taking out a subscription. Nicky should be sending out some flyers soon (perhaps next issue), so keep an eye out in future issues of Dib, that you might judge for yourselves. For those that don't want to wait, Nicky's address is: 7 Delahay House, 15 Chelsea Embankment, London, SW3 4LA.))

oo000oo

PAUL DONLEY:

"There doesn't seem to be many Welsh members of the hobby, which is a pity as then the hobby meets occur miles away. If there are any out there, could they be persuaded to get in touch. Anyway it's probably a good job that there aren't many of us, if there were you English would never win anything."

((You show me a Taff that's a winner, and I'll show you a backstabbing slimy little cheat. Hey, that sounds like Mike Close - does he live in Wales? Actually now that you mention it it does surprise me that there are no hobby meets in Wales - because a lot of hobby members do live there. Anyone interested in forming such a hobby meet should contact Paul at, 7 Dan-yr-heol, Cyncoed, Cardiff, CF2 6JU.))

oo000oo

And on the subject of World War II/heroes last issue...

KONRAD DOLATA:

"Unbelievable for you but reality for us: Children playing with models of WW2 tanks, planes are looked down upon here (i.e. they accuse their parents of giving them the toys) although on the other hand children are often invited to 'Army Shows' to let them ride on tanks thus developing their sense for armament (they don't want any followers of the disarmament-movement, do they?).

War heroes and Air Aces whatever their amount of commitment for the NSDAP might have been can't be idolised as everyone starts believing you're promoting the ideas of nazism. Even as a teacher of History you'd better not start the subject of heroes unless you want to get sued."

((So much for freedom: freedom of thought, freedom of speech... At the risk of rubbing salt into the wound - is it a racial guilt suppressing the people; how long are the German people to remain a conquered nation?))

oo000oo

RICHARD WERNICK:

"On the subject of Rommel; he was undoubtably a brilliant field commander and personally brave. However he was quite content to rise in the service of the Third Reich and to accept Nazi honours and decorations, obviously knowing all about the Gestapo and the SS concentration camps. Like the other July Conspirators he only turned against Hitler when it was clear the war was lost. They hoped to form a government which would make peace with the USA and Great Britain, while continuing the war against the Soviet Union, and keeping the lands overrun in the East. Teaching German children that there was anything glorious in WWII would be dangerous. After all neo-Nazi groups like the NPD, German Citizens Initiative, and Association of Expellees continue in being, while the activities of the Hoffmann 'Military Sports Group' had to be stopped after the bombing of the Munich Bierfest. Of course these groups only have a few hundred supporters in the FRG, but they keep the Nazi torch alight: glorification of Germany's part in the last war would play into their hands."

((It makes sense what you say in the last sentence, Richard - obviously you know this subject far better than I. However it still seems a shame that the likes of Rommel cannot be shown the acclaim they deserve because of fears of Nazi resurrection groups. You say that Rommel knew what was going on and seemed content with the Germany he saw. Here I might disagree. I put it to you that Rommel, like many Germans, fought not because of the Third Reich, but because of the love of their country. And like most people in a war, they were caught up in events they had no control over. Would YOU dare refuse Nazi honours and decorations publicly? How would that help the right-minded and right-thinking (not to be confused with 'right-wing') Germans and their country? It's possible a lot of Germans did not know the real purpose of the SS concentration camps (how much do we know of our own government?) - and even if they had heard whispers, who would, or even could, possibly believe them?

As for glorification of war to German children: if it's wrong for them to read of their heroes, play with toy soldiers etc, then it's wrong for children all over the world. And remember, if you agree with this final argument, then you must then in all fairness take into account ALL heroic deeds/stories with a conflict situation: the small band of British soldiers holding off a thousand Zulus at Rourke's Drift, Custer's 'Last Stand', The Charge of the Light Brigade, etc, etc.))

oo000oo

BRIAN MOORE:

"The 'Archer & The Sorceress' and 'Conan' I'll be watching next week, and 'Excalibur' the week after. This weekend I've watched Poltergeist, with its good special effects, and Caligula which I couldn't follow and was bored with, despite the fact there seems to be plenty going on. I can recommend Brubaker and Dressed to Kill, but the latter only for the unusual murder theme and the twist at the end. I hope to take a look at The Sorceress, Sword & The Sorcerer and Thor before I write again."

((Hmmm. Caligula I never fancied seeing. From what I've heard of it, it's an excuse for one long round of over-exposed visual orgies; which might give one the feeling of being a voyeur. So I'm told. Not having seen it I can't say - but knowing a little of the Caligula subject, it wouldn't surprise me; the man was sick. Not that I have anything against voyeurism you understand - but in PUBLIC? Nothing wrong with closet voyeurism; that is, at home, NOT standing in a closet looking out (I hasten to add for the likes of Booth). Which just goes to show my Catholic upbringing I suppose.

Haven't heard of The Sorceress and Thor, I'll have to keep a lookout for them - but Sword & The Sorcerer was rubbish. The hero who owns the sword (the triple-bladed "Tri-sword") is none other than the man who plays the long tall Texan, Matt Huston (of the selfsame series) on TV. He looks absolutely ridiculous. And hardly ever uses the famed Tri-sword, preferring instead to fight with his fists (I suspect he has difficulty picking the bloody sword up!). The only decent shots were of the demon he had to fight. Oops, gone to far on this. 'Nuff said...))

oo000oo

KONRAD DOLATA:

"Re Hobby Organisation (zine): What's your opinion to the debate launched by John Dodds? ((1)) You're not very satisfied with the stats the way Pete publishes them. As you're another member of the 'Services' would you like to send your CGS material to a hobby editor or would that mean to let him have the credit for the work you do? ((2)) Furthermore what about having a zine that collects ideas otherwise scattered among 50+ zines? No one, even very efficient editors can put up with the vast production of 'zines' every month. ((3)) Being a foreigner I don't want to judge but for myself I would think that such a zine could be of great help (especially as I'm collecting information for my article-series 'What's On?' in our German zines)."

((Hmmm, as I told John Dodds, I wanted to keep out of this debate for various reasons. Still, now that you've asked I suppose I'd best make my reasons clear (my points being as valid as the next man's). I'll take your points in order:-

1. The truth is I think the whole idea of a Central Hobby zine trading with all zines is unworkable. Don't get me wrong it's a good idea, but there are far too many obstacles to overcome: there's too much organising to do; too much co-ordinating, and that's even if you could settle on a decent editor for the job (which is unlikely to happen), what happens if he fails to do the job properly - will it be possible to throw him out? More importantly, HOW are we to throw him out? Who will set the standard of service the zine should give the hobby: the hobby itself, or the editor? There's too much mistrust - and wisely so, because the hobby has been turned topsy-turvey before by an organisation going haywire. So many questions... I think it's silly even discussing the matter. But it makes interesting reading I suppose:

2. I don't mind in the least sending my CGS material to the Central Zine editor, but what is there to send him, the names and addresses I collect? He might as well then do the job himself. If that is the case then it's a different kettle of fish (er, another matter); I would then personally have to consider NOT whether he was suitable for the job as editor, but whether he was suitable for the job as CGS Custodian. No great hardship I know, but other hobby services would have to judge him in the same way. Bringing the same problem as above:

The problem regarding the Diplomacy Stats Service pinpoints the whole trouble with this Central Zine idea; Pete Calcraft hasn't given a satisfactory stats service to the hobby, but what can the hobby do about it...? Nothing. To my way of thinking, it would be the same if we handed everything over to an unsuitable zine editor. And to finally answer this point: taking credit for doing one of these services doesn't even enter into it.

3. 20 Years On manages to trade with all the zines okay - and is sufficient to tightly link our hobby together; all zines are known, and all I suppose seen in some form or another by natural overlap of trades. New ideas or whatever are generally passed around through the grapevine because of these overlapping trades. If anything I'd say 20YO is the closest thing we could ever get/have to