

DIB DIB DIB

ISSUE

35

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"How many times have I told you before
Tom, you can't keep phoning me at work."

Here we go again. Why do I bother, I ask myself - no-one bothers to read colophons anyway. So I can print what I like, can't I? Good then I can save myself a lot of trouble and copy a welcome start from another issue. Welcome to issue 35 of the wonderzine Dib Dib Dib catering for anything and everything, but mainly for loonies who like to involve themselves in anti-social pastimes of boards, dice, Diplomacy, lots of fantasy, politics, funny little animals and other such rubbish. All typed, formatted, printed, and presented, stamped and addressed by Tom Tweedy (with a little help from Jan as slave labour) of 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Telephone: Amersham (02403) 4513. For all this (and quality as well) it will cost you the ridiculous (meaning small) price of 35p per issue. There, now go out and tell your friends.

EDITORIAL

I HATE starting a new page and a new paragraph. It reminds me of a very apt little cartoon I saw in the latest Gazfinc from Richard Bairstow, where there was this vulture-like bird sat in front of a typewriter thinking. Stupendous things must be said....an editorial to get out....print that could shake the world! The vulture sits with his single digit poised. The air is electric with anticipation, and.... "CLICK!" and the mighty writer is left rummaging on the floor for the eraser!

Yes, that's me alright. The only difference is, I can easily correct any mistakes because I use this computer - any mistakes I notice that is. So what's new this month? Well, not much, I can tell you. The first issue of Flagship came out. Also the latest new-style Games Gazette - but more about these later. No more folds that I can remember. Talking of folds, an ex-editor, of a rather messy one, seems to be thinking of making a comeback of sorts and GMing some Diplomacy games. Richard Sharp has written to Martin Le Fevre wanting to know what he should do about the Diplomacy requests he gets via his Diplomacy book, and asking if it might not be a good idea for him to start GMing their games (see Sharp's letter in the letter column). God forbid that this man should be allowed start again until he's cleared up his debts (as far as I can remember he owes me a fair bit of money). Not that anyone can stop him I suppose if he's a mind to try.

Sure Richard is an excellent, and very often entertaining writer - one has only to see his old 'Bedbug Island' series to see that. And let's get things clear, I don't blame him for the initial messiness of the Dolchstoss fold - going through a divorce is a good enough reason for anyone - but I can't see that ex-editors should be allowed to take on novices when they haven't made any attempt to clear up matters and debts incurred. It'll be interesting to see how Martin handles this one. Last I heard he was hoping to rope Pete Birks in on this, as Pete has been down to many a SharpCon and is reputed to be on friendly terms with said culprit. I wish them both the best of luck.

Actually, talking of the diminutive Birks. I notice in the latest Greatest Hits he thinks prospective editors wanting to start new zines in today's hobby, can't hope to compete against the 'three grand's worth of equipment' that some editors have. I only notice because he happens to mention that I have an Apple/IBM typewriter link-up. It's only a small point really but I don't have an IBM golfball - my Apple is linked to an 'Olympia ESW 103' daisywheel typewriter/printer. Yes, an expensive bit of machinery - but surely it doesn't count for as much as Pete says? I think he's wrong to assume new editors can't 'make it' in today's hobby with second-hand manual equipment (as we did in our day). What of the editor with an actual flair for writing? If he can make his zine more witty, interesting, or reliable than mine, or any other zine, why wouldn't the reading public find it more preferable? (I think I've got you this time, Pete). Mind you he's right about one thing; his argument about duplicators is probably correct. Because of office photocopiers are becoming more common, it's become increasingly more difficult to get hold of a good second-hand duplicator. This being so, I wonder when the second-hand office photocopiers will come on the market for fanzine editors? I must admit I'm tempted, the same as Pete, and I've already started thinking on the lines of a good plain-paper

photocopier. But at what kind of price. Perhaps Pete is right again - this hobby editing lark is getting a bit out of hand. Oh happy days.

Diplomacy gamefees! Why bother with paragraph link-ups say I - just get stuck in and say what has to be said - they'll understand. I've finally decided to do away with the £1 deposit system idea as being impractical. Yes, like other veteran editors it's finally come to my notice just what a bind it is to remember to send the solitary £1 every time someone finishes a game. My memory is not very good at the best of times... eh? See what I mean? So from now on Dib's Diplomacy games will be £2 a shot. You do understand don't you - I need to be able to extract the extra £1 from you legally. Have no fear though, all those that started their games under the deposit system (all those up to and including 'Macha') will still get their £1 deposit back at the end of their games.

Nicky Palmer's new glossy Flagship arrived just the other day. I must say, I'm not too impressed with what I've seen so far. It's early days yet of course; the magazine is young and it may get better, but Nicky has had enough experience now to know what he's doing. I'd have thought he would have tried for a bigger splash, seeing as first impressions DO count; especially in the gaming mag field. So, what was wrong? Basically there seemed to be four major points to the magazine: the artwork, the computer moderated game reports, Rob Chapman's article (which I include Simon Billenness' article in the same category), and the short SF story 'Tribes of Crane'. Rob Chapman's article was superb, and said all the things I ever wanted to say about the Diplomacy game but never could (rats to you Chapman!). The rest left me feeling as if more than just a little was missing from the overall layout. The SF story was rubbish (TSR's Imagine had a much better one that was put down in their dummy issue); the artwork, average to poor; as for the computer moderated game reports, well... try as I might I couldn't seem to separate them - all the reviews read very much like the first one (even though I WAS interested in regards to 'A State of the Art...' in computer-type games). To sum up I'd say if Flagship has to stand any chance in such a competitive market, competing with such as Imagine, then they'll have to dish up a more varied diet.

EUROPEAN WIT v BRITISH HUMOUR

Nothing from Korad Dolata this time, apart from a short explanation on how most jokes seem to suffer in translation. I find this difficult to believe as Konrad's English is superb... chances are this goes to prove Europeans lack a sense of humour. But read on...

RICHARD WERNICK: (Eastern European Jokes)

A Pole is standing in a long queue outside the meat shop. Suddenly he exclaims: "That's it I've had enough of this, day in, day out, I'm going to shoot General Jarurzelski." An hour later he comes back. "Did you do it then?" asks his friend. "No", he says and spits in disgust, "there's a bloody mile long queue!"

((Not bad. We'll keep that as European then, and try Clive Booth's idea of marks out of ten - 5 out of 10))

Q. What are 20 tank divisions, the cream of the Red Army, doing in Afghanistan?
A. Looking for the person who invited them!

((Terrible! - only 2 for this. And last from Richard...))

"Here is the latest news. The East Berlin Pole-Vault champion is now the West Berlin pole vault champion!"

((Good grief - Jan reckons I should give this 5 for its age. But I'll give it 4 for cheek.))

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MIDCON '83
by Robert Lozynskyj

Midcon '83 was held for the third consecutive year at the Royal Angus Hotel in Birmingham. This was my first appearance at this, the premier con, and only my second at any con - the first being Manorcon earlier in the year. Midcon certainly had a lot to live up to if it was to emulate the excellent Manorcon.

We set off, Gareth Cook, Pat Lenihan, Simon Craddock and myself, from London at 3 o'clock Friday afternoon and reached Brum approximately 4.30. It was another half an hour before we located the Hotel. After off-loading the bags in our room - one that was to a high standard with colour T.V., shower, and kettle for tea! - Pat and myself went in search of life. Predictably the bar was already open and a sizable congregation had gathered in its locality, including Richard Walkerdine, Brian Creese, Ken Bain, Geoff Challinger, Niall Litton, and Bill Dove to name just a few. I had come well prepared. I pulled out a map of the Dib game 'Fergus' and dragged Julian Shepley and Richard Bass from the growing ranks to discuss tactics in the game. We then tackled the mighty Piper (name that tune) - the result of the discussion may become evident very soon!

Having sunk a few pints it was time to eat and I decided to join the remnants of the Guildford Mob - Messrs Walkerdine, Bass, Bain, Dove, Richard Bairstow and Ray Miller at dinner in the Hotel restaurant. It was a revelation to hear their plans for Hobby Domination. Unfortunately I have been sworn to secrecy! The meal was excellent - though perhaps a little pricey. It was after this that I made my way to the main hall to take part in the elimination round for the Midcon quiz. It was a written quiz and my team - London North-West Intellectuals with Pat and Simon, struggled badly until Pete Doubleday turned up with a few answers. Quite a number of answers came our way from spies of other teams, taking pity on our handful of replies. In this way we obtained a creditable fifth, but only the top three qualified together with last year's winners for the Saturday night showdown.

It was gone midnight when Nick Kinzett grabbed Pat, John Webley, Paul Oakes and myself for a game of Cosmic Encounter. Nick's enthusiasm, energy and knowledge of games makes it a must for everyone to play a game with him. And so to bed about 3 o'clock in the morning.

After a hearty breakfast, it was to the tables for the highlight of the weekend - the Diplomacy tournament. I found myself as Italy, with Steve Jones (fresh from a thirteen hour game of 1829 that had finished at six in the morning!), as England; Niall Litton, France; Andrew Glynn, Germany; Shaun Derrick, Russia; Simon Billeness, Turkey and Julian Shepley, Austria - John Wilman was the GM. A game played in almost the Diplomacy spirit. An Anglo-French cartel broke down when France stabbed his ally in 1905 after taking Germany out. An Austro-Italian alliance took Turkey out before Austria decided to stab a hapless Italy bogged down by a French attack. At the crucial moment, with Austria leading on nine units, the GM NMR'd Julian exactly as Russia stabbed him! Yes! an NMR in a face to face game! 'Hardman' Wilman stuck by his decision as he had warned Julian that he had one minute to write his orders. Julian never recovered and with Russia racing for victory France and England patched things up, and a three way draw was settled upon with Italy on 4 units and Austria one still left in. A very enjoyable game.

Searching for something else to do I succumbed to Tony Wheatley's pleas for another game of Dip. I played Germany to Tony's Austria, John Wilman's Russia, Derek Caws' England, Julian Shepley's France, Martin-Clifford King's Italy and Simon Craddock's Turkey. Not a game to remember - I went down in 1903! A strong Austro-Russian alliance was held by England to another three way draw.

The Midcon quiz was played during the game with John 'Bamber' Dodds and scoreman Chris Tringham chairing it. Dave Thorby's 'doorbell' buzzer system sorted the men out from the boys, and the final saw last year's winners - Blackmail comprising of Mike Woodhouse, Colin Gamble and Richard Walkerdine - up against the challengers of Howay the Lads with Will Haughan, Keith Pottage and Keith Black. A close event saw Howay the Lads run out worthy winners with Keith

Pottage shining throughout the film questions.

The evening finished with a couple of games of Nuclear War and Hoax with Nick Carter and Steve Gregory to name but two. And so to bed at 3:30 am. Should I add that Tony Wheatley had started another game of Diplomacy with the recently arrived Peter Northcott!

The second round of the Diplomacy saw me as Turkey with Martin Clifford-King as Austria; Mark Lipton as Russia; Pat Cathorp as Italy; David McCraith as Germany; Laurance Green as England and William Pugh as France. The results of the day before and the thought of having to play Turkey was all too much. I ended on one unit with Italy out and the rest sharing a five way draw. My fortune at staying in this game saved me from another game as Tony Wheatley, who had an early exit in the Tournament set up his fifth game of Diplomacy over the weekend!

So to the results in a very close event - only supply centres seperated the winners, we have a new champion in JAMES MILLS - congratulations James.

- 1st James Mills ((Surely this isn't James Mills-Hicks?))
- 2nd Richard Young
- 3rd Bart Huby (the only outright winner during the weekend)
- 4th Shaun Derrick
- 5th Niall Litton
- 6th David Waggett
- 7th David Crichton

Last year's winner, Nick Carter, was given a hard time in the games and never got a look in. (Doesn't do well to make a name for yourself in this hobby!) Tony Wheatley also won a prize for hiswell whatever you want to call it. Many other games were played over to the weekend from the ancient to fantasy and science fiction. Mind you if you wanted a game of '1829' or Civilisation you would have a hard job ousting those 'epics' players, Geoff Hardingham and Keith Loveys from their seats!

My thanks out to the entire Midcon Committee for a very enjoyable weekend and my apologies to all those I did meet but didn't mention above - there were over 120 people there. What more can I say except see you all again next year.

((Thanks for the report Robert, for some time there I was beginning to think I'd have to do without one this year. Please accept this issue free.

So much for face to face Diplomacy Tournaments. Where was Nick Carter, last year's champion - bombed out, eh? I've said all along that finding the REAL champion in a Diplomacy Tournament; someone that could be good enough to win year after year (someone in the class of Rob Chapman, Mike Close and John Norris) - just can't be done over one weekend at a face to face tournament. The only practical way would be to have a play-off tournament over the year by post in various zines - THEN play the finals face to face over the Midcon weekend. I'm sure we'd get a much fairer and more consistent result.))

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And from that keen observer of human behaviour, Big G himself, a scene that all of us has experienced at one time or another; a scene of domestic bliss; people who don't understand our delight in playing games, and the annoying bigmouth wanting to learn what we do with those 'funny little plastic bits'. A much more cynical George from the one that wrote the early Postman's Knock.

SATURDAY MORNING  
by George North

Well, the postman finally arrives and there we are with a handful of lovely bills, the Reader's Digest, a catalogue for wifey and a zine with the Diplomacy moves all worked out. Just what we wanted to keep us busy all morning. So we retire to our workroom at the back of the house and set the board ready for play. It is a large board but a fairly small table, you understand.

Wifey enters with a cup of tea and a saucer and stands watching and waiting.

Then she panics as something starts burning in the kitchen. The panic spreads as we quickly make room for the cup and saucer by easing the board to one side. No the Turkish fleet in Russia and the Russian armies are on the floor. We drink our tea and the place goes back to normal.

We are deep in thought and wondering who best to stab when suddenly the wireless blasts you out of your chair. Tommy has arrived and wants to listen to Tony Blackburn. You turn it down but Tommy turns it up again. You quarrel with Tommy about Tony Blackburn until wifey arrives and there is a knock at the door. Tommy races wifey to open the door and we turn off the wireless.

Auntie Flo and Uncle Ted and that lot have arrived. We pretend not to notice and there is a conversation in the passage. They are unloading and hanging up coats and doing a million things relatives do when they come round as a nice surprise. We are safe for only a few minutes because Uncle Ted has slipped through and approaches the back room.

"Hello there, how is the Snakes and Ladders coming along?" Uncle Ted prides himself on his remarkable wit. "Still playing yourself I see!"

We mutter something unintelligible that sounds like a greeting and otherwise ignore him. He places the ashtray in the North Atlantic and looks around for a chair. He wishes he had his camera with him and we wish he would go away. He wants to know how to play the game and what are these little pointed bits. We are saved because Aunt Flo arrives and tells Ted not to interfere with George while he is playing his games. Ted goes and looks round the garden.

Auntie Flo wants a kiss and suddenly we find baby in our lap. Baby is in our lap and wifey is showing Flo her workroom upstairs. Baby grabs the Italian army that is in Tunis and starts to eat it. We rescue Tunis and give baby its dummy. It is a fair exchange. Now baby drops its dummy and starts to wriggle. We retrieve the dummy and become engrossed in our game again. Baby is playing at throw the dummy on the floor and make us pick it up. We are bigger suckers than baby.

No, we will not pick the dummy up again. Baby starts to howl. Wifey and Auntie Flo come tumbling downstairs like an avalanche and rescue baby. "Did the naughty man make you cry then? Here, baby smack the naughty man then". Auntie Flo bends to pick up the dummy and baby grabs our zine and puts it into its mouth. We grab our zine. Baby has it in a vice-like grip. We lose our front cover and half of page two. We loosen babies grip and take the zine. It is wet and soggy and baby is yelling fit to bust.

"Now look what you done," wifey accuses us.

"Yeah, I tore my magazine," we growl back.

Ted meanwhile has left the garden and gone to the car. He returns with a huge dog that wants me for dinner. Ted tells us it will not hurt us. Ted says it is a big old softy. The big old softy is tugging at the leash. Ted admits defeat and says he will leave Bonzo in the garden. Ted disappears.

It is Saturday morning and Diplomacy is out of the question. We will go and watch football in the park, have a pint on the way back and play the old boys at dominoes.

"Ted will go with you," calls wifey, but we are already gone.