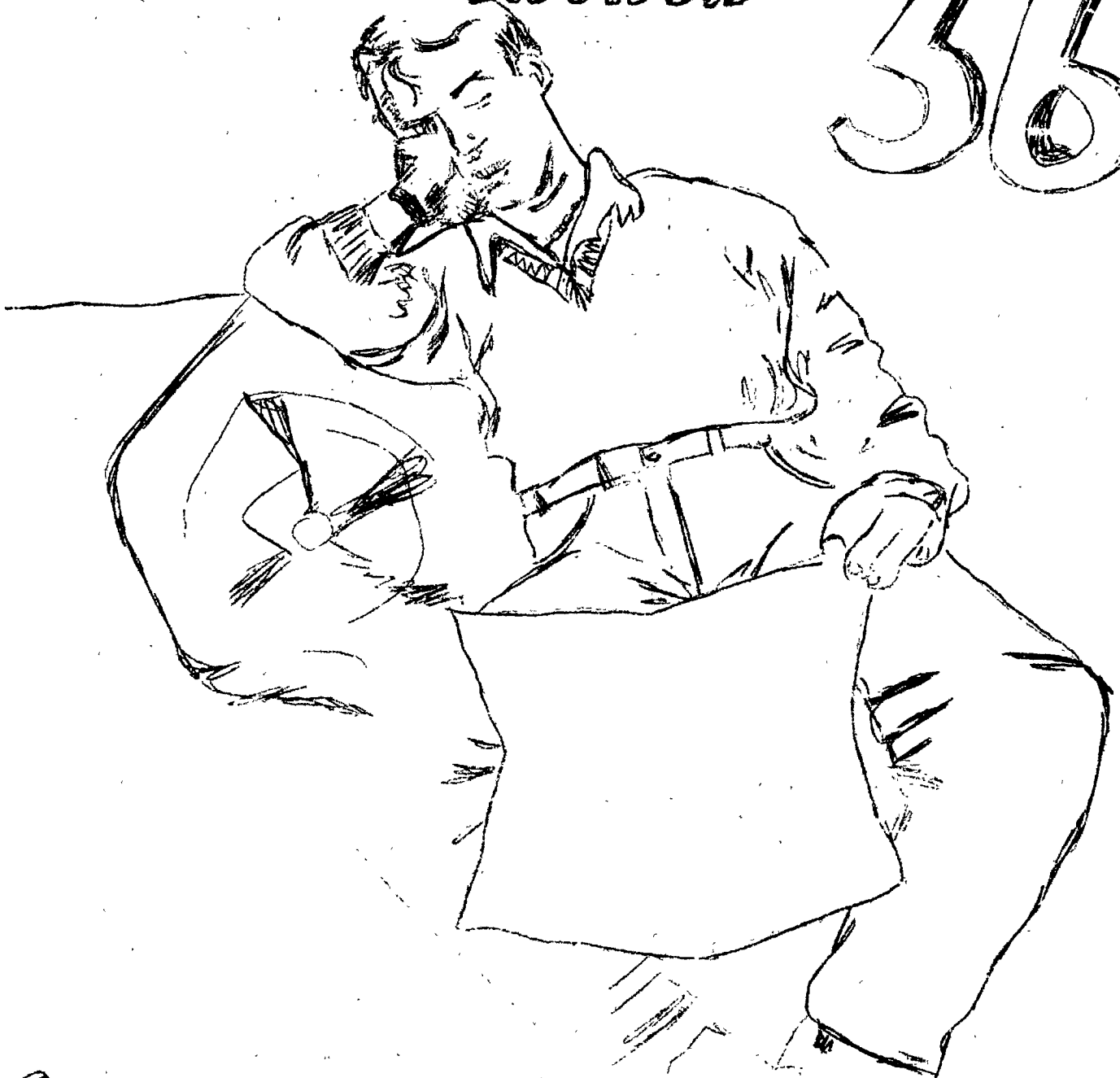


**DIB DIB DIB**

**36**



Rise and shine! It's the Dib Dib  
Dib Zine!!

This is it. I've got the number right this time. Welcome to issue 36 of Dib Dib Dib - still a zine catering for the loonies and the misfits of our hobby; those who like drink, girls, bawd (er, board) games, music, politics, and other such friivolities (that is, etc etc). And for all this you'll be glad to hear the price is still the same - 35p per issue. From the very poor (skint after Christmas) Tom Tweedy living at 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513. So anyone wanting to send me more money, now need feel no shame in doing so.

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#### EDITORIAL

Quite a largish issue this time I'm afraid, so I'll just plod on if you don't mind. Not much an editorial this time more a collection of Tweedy ramblings trying to clear out odd pieces of rubbish cluttering up the ol' brainbox. Garbage disposal in computernik terms (horrible word that).

Yes we had a rather jolly Christmas thank you, we had so many Christmas cards (170 at the last count) we had them strung out on almost every wall - place looked like a card shop. Still, many thanks to all those who kindly sent one.

THIS NEXT BIT IS ABOUT COMPUTERS IN CASE GEORGE NORTH WANTS TO SKIP IT. Stuart got his BBC computer. Hell, he hasn't been off it since it was unpacked. I warned him at the time that he needn't think he was monopolising the colour TV all the time (I gave him my old 9" black and white one, to use in the dining room), but to tell you the truth I've quite enjoyed watching it myself, and it's been up to Jan to ban us both from the main TV so she can see her programmes now and again (she always spoils things - women just don't understand).

He's got quite a collection of reasonable programs already - Johnnie Reb (quite a nice 2-player wargame that); Paras (computer verses human wargame); Cylon attack (similar but nowhere near as good as Atari's 'Star Raider'); Space Adventure; Killer Gorilla; Hopper (similar to Frogger but better); 3D Bomb Ally; Gunfighter; a really excellent Chess game; a music synthesiser program; and a couple of others. Not a bad collection so far. What surprised me was the fact that Stuart raved about getting the fast-action arcade games, only to end up favouring the more sedate thinking-type wargames. I'm quite pleased about that; they make far less noise. (Though we get noisy when the playing gets personal, and he smashes my advantageously placed Confederates.)

Mind you compared to Apple or Atari computer games the BBC programs are really quite primitive (apart from the Chess cartridge that is). I guess because the Beeb is relatively new (only being out about a year) the only programs about are ones mainly rewritten from other machines. Things like Apple's famed Wizardry took about a year to write, and maybe software of this quality are ready to come on the Beeb market. The only thing I can see holding them back is that not many Beeb users have disc-drives yet. And I haven't seen ANY disc-based games advertised.

Actually one funny thing I must mention whilst on the subject of BBC computers - IMPORTANT DISCLOSURE OF MEARNS FALLIBILITY - was when Pete Mearns came down last weekend on his two-week stopover working in Ipswich. Pete came in raving about apparently being the bees-knees at playing Killer Gorilla and had I seen someone finish the 4th level yet? I told him I hadn't and Stuart had only just reached the 4th. So, cracking his knuckles, and applying nimble fingers to the keyboard he proceeded to show us just how miserable he really was at playing the game - in fact he never did get off the 1st level. But the really funny part came when Stuart went on to not only exceed his previous score by completing the 4th level, but sailed on to do the 5th, 6th, 7th, and nearly the 8th. I was in stitches by this time watching Pete's reaction, with tears streaming down my face, whilst Pete could only gape miserably with an open mouth. "Stupid bloody game anyway," was the last thing I heard him mutter. You'll do for me Peter!

But enough of us and onto hobby matters. After my plea for information last issue on the Diplomacy box flyers, it seems that things have finally been sorted

out (though who really decides and allocates these jobs I don't really know). Simon Billenness rang me up a couple of weeks ago saying that from now on he'll be handling the flyers. He'll get in touch with HP Gibson, and also sort out printing and suchlike with Martin Le Fevre. So that leaves payment, which I think should be the job of the Hobby Development Fund. But this is really up to Pete Birks, Rob Chapman and Nick Kinzett to decide. Anyway Simon says he'll get in touch with all concerned when he's ready. Boy, am I glad this is sorted out. Thanks for taking the job on, Simon.

The Fall of Eagles Diplomacy ID Tournament is finally coming to a close after 3 years of play, with yours truly finally in the final (er...). When it started we all chipped in the £5 starting fee - now it's Richard Scott and myself (as I said) down to the final. After winning my semi-final from John Jackson (a very tough game for me indeed) I received my £16 semi-final cheque from Richard Hucknall just in time for Christmas, thank you very much. The winner of the final game gets a nice round £40 - I don't like to count my chickens but hell, I've always been an optimist. Why play the bloody game say I if I didn't think I could win! At the moment it looks as though I have the edge, but one never can tell in these bloody ID games; fortunes change so quickly.

Putty Riffo folding - a sad loss. It's funny, but PR never was what one might call a regular zine. In fact it used to turn up once in a blue moon. The odd thing was he always got away with it; Rob's subscribers and trades will always look on the zine with some fondness. Beats me why even though I'm one of the gullible ones, if I tried his kind of turnaround I'd get my ears chewed off. Mike Allaway's Pyrrhic Victory is another zine that seems to get away with it. Anyway Putty Riffo 39 sees it out as the last one. Rob says he no longer has the facilities to produce the kind of zine that he wants. Nevertheless, he goes on to say that he may start up again in the future one his time and enthusiasm returns. And it'll be welcomed back.

Once again it's time for hobby members to vote for who they think has done most for our hobby in the Les Pimley Award for 1983. Les was one of the hobby's earliest editors who died in his late twenties in 1976 - and it was thought at the time it might be a good idea to remember him by giving this very personal award to one person each year who most deserves the hobby's thanks. The nominees are: Simon Billenness (for his work with 20 Years On and doing the most to advertise our hobby to the public); Clive Booth (for the years of joy he gave us with Chimaera and being the first to introduce a 'games magazine' to the hobby); Martin Le Fevre (for his work in litho printing quite a few of the hobby's zines and his work on 'The Novice Package'); and Nick Kinzett (for his work as OGR Custodian and - HDF - moneylender). If you'd like to vote then please rank the above four and send your list to Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 6PG. Deadline is February 11th.

I forgot to mention in the last Dib because of my rather rushed weekend turnaround that the latest Diplomacy stats - Diplomacy Quarterly 5 from Pete Calcraft - turned up on time again in its new zine format, and made very interesting reading indeed. I now have no qualms about recommending these stats if you are interested in such things to one and all. Though I notice Pete has chickened out of his "I'll match every £1 I get with a £1 of my own" promise with some excuse about getting more donations than he thought he'd get. So I hear anyway - don't hold me to that. Is this true, Pete? Anyway DQ costs 50p four times a year, and can be had from:-

Pete Calcraft, 25 Garners Lane, Davenport, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 8SD. Tel. 061 483 3604

I see Boojum is now out with the latest Sopwith stats, and also sports the new computerised format of left and right justified margins. Richard has interfaced a new Silver-Reed EX44 daisywheel to his BBC 'B'. It certainly makes it look a lot neater. That makes three of us now that I know of using word processors to do their zines - the shape of things to come in the hobby? Certainly I think in a year or two computer produced zines (whether in hardcopy or electronic/video format) will become more the norm.

As for the stats, Richard has 4 sections this issue: the list of Aces 'Aces High'; the normal Ratings List (based on damage done); a Keith Loveys (?) Ratings List (based on positions in game); and an 'In Flight' section requested by John Norris, detailing status of all current games not completed. Seems a lot of hard work to me to please certain people. Still, it makes interesting reading. Aces so far are:-

<u>ACES HIGH</u>	<u>DGE</u>	
1. Tom Tweedy	(90)	It is clear that I was meant to be at the top, but
2. Richard Morris	(68)	Morris will insist in doing other Ratings that don't
3. Dave Tant	(62)	show me in my true light. Ah well, as he is Sopwith
4. Sandy Peters	(62)	statistician I suppose I must humour him. But it
Brian Moore	(62)	galls, it galls. Anyway, those next likely to reach
6. Nicholas Clifton	(53)	this Ace list are: Nick Hoyle (32); Iain Singer &
7. Frank Dunn	(49)	Richard Turner (29); Larry Trask (27); Malcolm Peltz
8. Rob Chapman	(41)	(25); and Brian Douglas & Ian Tillson (24).

And just the quick Top Ten of both Ratings lists:-

#### SOPWITH RATING LIST

<u>Pos.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Games</u>	<u>Pts.</u>	<u>Best</u>
1.	Richard Morris	29	2	58	50
2.	Frank Dunn	24.5	2	49	26
3.	Nick Hoyle	14	1	14	14
4.	Tom Tweedy	13.66	3	41	42
5.	Dave Tant	13.33	3	40	26
6.	Sandy Peters	12.4	5	62	21
7.	Rob Lee	12	1	12	12
	Derek Povey	12	1	12	12
9.	Alan Sharples	10	1	10	10
10.	Len George	9	1	9	9

#### SOPWITH POSITIONAL RATING LIST

1.	Len George	6	1	6	6
2.	Frank Dunn	4.5	2	9	5.5
3.	Karl Piper	4	1	4	4
4.	Richard Morris	3.5	2	7	6
5.	Ray Harper	3	1	3	3
6.	Tim Sharrock	3	1	3	3
7.	Tom Tweedy	2.83	3	8.5	6
8.	Rob Chapman	2.75	2	5.5	4
9.	Sandy Peters	2.7	5	13.5	3.5
10.	Keith Loveys	2.66	3	8	5.5

Well that's it for the stats - if you want to see the full results, write to Richard Morris, 1 Highland Ville, Lightcliffe, Halifax, HX3 8AG. Costs 5p + postage.

#### THE 1983 GLADYS AWARDS

This is another thing I meant to mention last time but didn't. I think it might be past the deadline but do try and vote anyway. Mike has kept everything very low-key this time (why is that Mr A?), and with his rather lax turnaround might well include any late voters. Supposed to be a very light-hearted lead up to the more serious Zine Poll, but has recently taken on a more serious note when some people mentioned the fact that it showed things in a truer light i.e. zines/people getting credit for the things they do best. Pity, I preferred it light-hearted. Anyway, the categories to send nominations in for:-

1. Best Diplomacy Zine.
2. Best Games Zine.
3. Best Diplomacy GM.
4. Best Games GM.
5. Best New Zine.
6. Best Zine for Hobby News.
7. Best Letter Column.
8. Best Postal Game.
9. Best Looking Zine.

Like I said, be quick getting in nominations if you want them to be accepted. And send them to Mike Allaway, 60 Poynter Court, Gallery Gardens, Northolt, Middx, EB5 5PA.

This next piece is reprinted from both Putty Riff and the computer moderated game glossy, Flagship, by the kind permission of Rob Chapman and Nicky Palmer. I first noticed it printed in Flagship, and thought at the time that it was too good an article to let go and waste without some sort of comment. For those that didn't catch it, it was a piece written by Rob Chapman for one issue of PR which I had somehow overlooked. It says all the things I ever wanted to say about the game of Diplomacy (as Rob has a very similar playing style to my own), but of course couldn't. I never could push myself to write articles about the game. Matter of discipline I guess. Also, it must be said that I'm not as meticulous as Rob in regards to keeping copies of letters, orders, etc, in special files or a folder. That's too much like hard work for me. Anyway, for those new to the hobby, here's some very good advice on how to play the game of Diplomacy, without making too many enemies.

#### HOW TO PLAY POSTAL DIPLOMACY AND WIN (or at least Draw)

By Rob Chapman.

##### Some practical advice

Articles about tactics, the best openings for Italy or theories about German mid-game strategy, are all very interesting and entertaining to read or write, but will rarely give you any worthwhile advice about the practicalities of playing. A game of Diplomacy is more than just an exercise in strategic planning and tactical manoeuvring - it is a clash between seven diverse and often discordant personalities. No two games are ever the same. There are probably as many different ways to play the game as there are players. Not everyone will agree with my approach, but nevertheless I will offer some suggestions about how to best organise your games and conduct effective negotiations in order to achieve profitable game results.

First of all, then you need to ORGANISE ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION about each game. Some kind of filing system is required. I use a ring folder, into which I file all incoming correspondence; I keep a record sheet in the front of the folder, with the GM's and players addresses and telephone numbers, and I record the date each letter is received or sent.

It is impractical, and seldom convenient, to set up the board every time you want to consider the moves, so each season I make a map of the current position which I carry round in my pocket to study at leisure (a simple photocopy of the board with symbols for units and a different colour for each country). This also helps me to keep track of who owns which supply centres throughout the game. The map is filed in the game folder after each adjudication when a new one is drawn.

It is useful to keep a copy of all your correspondence to other players and to the GM (especially if your memory is as erratic as mine). I use duplicate books and keep a note of the page number sent to each person on the record sheet (each book contains 100 pages, and I am currently on volume 29...), but many players prefer to type their letters and keep a carbon copy which can be filed in the game folder.

NEVER NMR. Obviously, you must ensure that you always get your orders to the GM before the deadline. Make a note of the date on a calendar or in your diary, or on the game map itself. It's a good idea to submit a set of orders as soon as you receive an adjudication, you will probably want to change them again later as a result of your diplomatic efforts, but at least you will have a set of orders on file in case you forget the deadline. Always keep a copy of your orders.

WRITE LOTS OF LETTERS. Write to everyone in the game every season if you can manage it. Write long friendly letters (it's a very friendly hobby, enjoy your correspondence). Analyse the game, exchange information, suggest possible moves for your allies, ask for suggestions for your own moves. When you can't discuss the game, talk about something else, the weather, what you did on your holidays etc. Get to know your opponents: introduce yourself at the beginning of the game by giving some personal details about yourself, the others will usually

reciprocate. Stay friendly with everyone as long as possible.

**ASK QUESTIONS.** A question will provoke a response, your correspondent is obliged to reply. Ask direct questions Make your opponent commit himself. "What do you intend to do with your A(Bur) next season?" If he tells you, all well and good. If he doesn't, or is evasive, then you have good reason to be suspicious about his intentions (so ask him again). If he tells a lie, then you can claim he has double-crossed you and you have a good excuse to stab him) if you want to).

**TELL THE TRUTH.** Too many players think Diplomacy is about treachery and deceit. It's not - it's about honesty and trust. You will have to trust people throughout the game, and you will want the other players to trust you. They won't trust you if you demonstrate a willingness to tell lies. Tell the other players what your moves will be when you can, especially during the early stages of the game - build up a reputation for being truthful, this will prove very useful later on...

**DON'T STAB INDESCRIMINATELY.** If you are going to stab them then make it count, it's not much good if you don't make substantial gains. Attack the weak - persuade others to attack the strong. Be sure you have good reason for the stab; if you are the aggrieved party ("...he double-crossed me...") then neutral powers will not be so concerned about your belligerence. Try to avoid being seen as the aggressor. Apologise to your victim immediately and point out the very good reasons why you were FORCED to take such drastic action (blame another player if possible); remain on friendly terms (you might need his help later on and you don't want him to bear any grudges).

Always expect to be stabbed yourself. Each season work out what damage your neighbours can do to you and be prepared for the worst. If you are stabbed, write to your assailant in good humour (disguise the exasperation) and discretely point out the dire consequences of his rash decision. Whatever happens keep negotiating.

**EVERYTHING IS NEGOTIABLE.** Promises are not binding (although you can claim they should be if it is someone else making them). Keep your plans flexible, your options open - don't commit yourself or your forces, to any long term strategy. Be prepared to respond to the changing fortunes of the game.

And finally, **KEEP A LOW PROFILE.** You don't want to become a target so avoid getting a reputation. If you do win a few games, don't tell anyone. Don't start your own zine or become involved in Hobby politics. And don't write any Diplomacy articles...

((Thanks, Rob - of course it goes without saying you earn yourself a free issue.))

~~~~~

An account of one undersirable's visit to the Tweedy household. A weekend I'll never forget in a hurry. I feel I must point out though the fact that Martin has embellished the story just a little here and there... the cloak he was talking about was in actual fact a bedsheet stolen from the local asylum.

THE BIG SHOWDOWN  
by Martin Allen

They both knew that the Big Showdown was inevitable and it was on a melancholic day in late November that the ultimate Battle Royale transpired. The hero knew that his evil and long term adversary would employ every dirty, cunning and underhand trick possible to defeat the representative of the forces of good who had for so long restrained the tyrant from absolute domination.

He tentatively approached the impregnable fortress, his cloak flapped in

the slight but ominous breeze. All was silent as he approached to forbidding gates, the heads of many a defaulting subscriber mounted on the battlements a testimony to those who had tried to storm this bastion of evil but valiantly failed. He swallowed hard as he read the name plates below them. There were all there: Paul Tucker (an early crusader); John Field; Sundry Peters; Clive Booth and many others good and true.

The hero's hands were supplicating as he reached out for the huge brass knockers. A bead of cold sweat trickled down his forehead - would he succeed where others had failed?

Suddenly he recoiled with shock, the adrenelin raced around his blood system and he peered with nervous trepidation: already the first trick had been sprung - the huge gates had been left invitingly open. He drew his vorpal sword and approached tentatively. The passage was about 5' wide and 10' long. He mapped it carefully upon his TSR(UK) hex paper (R) and cautiously entered the Temple of Tweedy. He realised with nervous anxiety that danger could strike from any quarter. No trick was mean enough for this fiend.

Almost from nowhere he appeared, in his full majestic glory the clouds of smoke whispered around his feet and his dark sinister eyes pierced him, leering almost mocking his futile efforts. The hero suddenly felt a hideous shiver as he became aware of his dreadful inferiority to this powerful figure looming in front of him. Obviously he had underestimated his sinister adversary, with a tone of resignation he enquired:

"Black Tom, I presume"

"He's in 'ere," came the reply.

So, this was not the evil computer wizard but the heir to his empire: 'The Great Hope' - The Black Prince of Amershamozia, known to his close friends as Stuart.

Slowly he approached the grand chamber of the wizard and gradually the sound of sadistic, hystreical laughing grew louder.

The door creaked open and the hero entered, his footsteps amplified a hundred times by the grand chamber. He stood still and observed a figure stubbing madly at a computer keyboard and laughing hysterically.

"Tom?" the hero asked.

He spun quickly round and replied with great emotion:

"Hello Martin."

The hero realised that the computer wizard had been connected to the American Defence System and that he was planning to destroy the world. Fortunately, however, he'd forgotten to turn it on.

He thought quickly, he'd got to stop him carrying out his plans and with no regard for his life took control of the computer and conducted himself admirably at such games as 'Swashbuckler'; and the other tests which he easily refuted. Furthermore, he successfully sabotaged the computer by cleverly concealing bits of cheese and onion crisps in the keyboard. ((Grrrr...))

His ploy seemed to work, for four hours he held off the repeated attacks by Tweedy, outmaneuvering the might of his computer at every turn. Frustrated, reinforcements were called for and soon the Baron Keight ((John Keight: local law ENFORCER)) appeared and the hero submitted to Wizardry. He retired a shattered man, marginally defeated. But the battle was far from over.

As the early sun rose across the azure sky on the second phase of passing (about 9.30) the second assault took place. The hero was opposed with a challenge from the expertly trained Prince. A game of dubious and sinister origins, known as 'Tri-Tactics' against such an opponent the inexperienced hero was soon in retreat and by 1pm was in full flight.

A minor set-back it may have been, but certainly not a defeat. The hero retired to make plans for the counter-offensive: rumoured to be in January but as yet unconfirmed.

((Hell, that doesn't give me much time to plan a means of punishment for this defamation of character (I'm a pussycat really). You escaped me this time Allen... snake... teller of lies. Next time you'll not be so fortunate, I promise you!))

~~~~~

THE CATACOMBS OF COPERNICA  
An AD&D Postal campaign by Chris Sandow

Turns Two - Three

Cadellin Silverbrow (Simon Craddock)

From the vaulted chamber they are in, Cadellin's party chooses to ignore the exit which leads to a room containing an enticingly-placed chest (what a suspicious lot you players are!) and instead they wander off down the corridor. It just serves them right that they promptly have an unpleasant encounter with an overgrown ape (of the animal variety, that is). Fortunately the ape is chained up (although by a long chain).

Unfortunately it's blocking their way...

Aina-Amarth (Nick Clark)

This so-called paladin has been indulging in a bit of tomb-desecration, opening up a large sarcophagus. So far nothing unpleasant has befallen him and his party (more's the pity), but how long can they safely go on poking their noses into tombs which emanate evil?

Sir Guy DeWaye (Derek Andrews)

Sir Guy and his companions have just given an ingenious demonstration of how to reach an out-of-reach trap-door using only a handily placed boat and some lengths of rope (the mind boggles, huh?). The Boy Scouts would have been proud of them...

Climbing up through the trap-door they discovered a small pile of crates of bottles containing a certain rare and expensive wine of which they have heard. The only problem (?) is that it's an unguarded pile of crates, in the middle of an empty corridor.

Could it be that things are not what they seem?.....

Randolph the Ranger (Dave Tant)

Randolph and crew have (at last!) found what appears to be the way down to the catacombs, but at least their three turns of searching have not been wasted - they have managed to discover a chalice and an expensive-looking book (I should try taking it to Sotheby's if I were you - seven and a half million quid is not to be sneezed at). The only question now, is whether they are prepared to take the risks that are apparently involved in using the way down which they have found.....

Magnus Simonson (Clive Booth)

Magnus' party has uncovered no treasure, but they have found some scraps of paper, half burnt books (of a somewhat sinister nature) and a half-burnt notebook with a few pages still legible - all of which could prove useful, if they can figure out what they all mean!

They have also found the stairs down to the cellar and, they hope, the Catacombs, although their magic-user (who is a frail type at the best of times) passed out at the sight of the symbol painted on the door at the bottom. An omen of things to come?

Thorn (George North)

Having quickly and safely found their way through to the stairs down to the Catacombs, Thorn and his accomplices-in-crime (oops - sorry, Stebbins (she's a strict paladin, doesn't approve of that sort of thing)) have made their way along a corridor to arrive on the balcony of a hall with a black and white tiled floor- the kind of lay-out that's apt to make the most fearless (foolhardy?) of characters jittery.

Good luck George. Because you can bet your life you're going to need it, as well as a lot of sheer cunning.....

Press:

Derek Andrews: Is adventuring a dying art?

((Good grief is that IT? Hasn't anyone else got any press? Anything will do (er,

(Cont'd over...)



well almost anything, Derek...); even just comments on the game (as long as they're complimentary, of course) or genral chat. Anything to fill up the space. If you don't I shall start putting in press of my own, full of slander and libel and gossip about the players, so there!

Well that appears to be it for this month. Things are actually beginning to happen in the game, and by the time of the next report I think there should be plenty of blood and gore spattering the walls of the Catacombs - even if it's only mine as I blow my brains out, having been outwitted by the players yet again! (Well, actually only one player has managed to out-think me so far.....))

### LETTERS

A large letter column this time to contend with, so I'll carry on as I started and just dive in; no time to sort things out, see how it looks at the end. Definitely some letters of interest though. And we start with a little dig at one of our resident Yanks (glad the subject is music and not the English language - Larry can hold his own with that as we saw in recent issues of Greatest Hits!).

ANDREW SMITH:

"I don't really understand what Larry is getting at on the music point. It's one thing to say you don't like the stuff - anyone can accept that, especially since Larry's not the only one - but it's another to try to justify your views and fail abysmally. The whole point is that the musicians 'who make up the shabby world' etc. etc. (makes me ill to think of it, I'm sure Larry...) need electricity to give the audience their music.

The pop scene of today is but an extension of a kind of folk music into an era where instruments do have to be plugged in to work. Traditional songs from centuries ago are still with us, and the best of pop music songs soon take a place in contemporary music history. Do I take it that Larry denies the influence and importance of Folk music/songs? - they only lasted five minutes too. Does music have to be long to make a point? Punk songs from the late seventies invariably lasted much shorter than anything else - about 2½ minutes to a 'conventional' song's 3½. But the point that the songs made, coupled with how the groups looked was as violent reaction against the social and political outlook of contemporary Britain. Here is an obvious case of the music providing the focal point of the reaction, whose other aspects were influenced by as Larry puts it, "posturing ninnies". Also, the point of music is therefore not always to entertain. Listen to the lyrics of so many of today's songs and you'll appreciate that there's a lot more to them than a bouncy beat and a load of noise.

But that's not to suggest that I don't appreciate all kinds of music. In different forms it takes different amounts of time to make a musical statement, and in the orchestral form, some are unpleasant as well - look at some of the works inspired by war - symphonies by Shostakovitch, for example or even the popular 1812 overture by Tchaikovsky - I could go on, but to the extent of boring you, I guess. I think I made the point."

((Yes, I think you did indeed -- a heavy enough start. Mind you, to put in my two cents worth and carry on a point Larry himself brought up, it matters little whether music is electric or not (as Larry, being slightly biased, apparently hasn't gathered), but whether the 'noise' generated can be either (a) understood, or (b) is appreciated. Matters of taste, although important to the individual, does (do?) not necessarily make any particular piece 'bad music'. One isn't limited to any forms of material when painting or doing a sculpture - and likewise, one shouldn't be limited in regards to instruments one uses with music. I think that says it all.))

ANDREW (CONT.):

"Yeeh Gods! Richard Wernick's comments were a bit on the 'heavy side',

weren't they? Can't say I disagree, though: "Dib gives you the balanced view" - a new slogan for you, Tom.

... And finally, so what if you're trying to cheat your way to 100 issues?!!! - at least it's original. All the other are only complaining as they are just jealous!"

((Just so.))

oo000oo

NICK LOURIE:

"Thanks for the copy of Dib Dib and the Diplomacy rules. I have a problem however in that your rules say that the 1971 Diplomacy rulebook is used. My rulebook is dated 1962 - do you know how I can get hold of a less ancient version."

((1962 rules!! Er, perhaps it might be better to invest in an up-to-date version by paying a visit to your local games shop. I don't know of anyone else with a '62 version and don't really know the changes - though I believe they might be considerable. Actually, as you already own a set, you might try Avalon Hill (or is it HP Gibson now?) for a rule book on the grounds of updating their own game. Can anyone else help?))

oo000oo

NICK KINZETT:

"Ha, are you trying to ruin my filing system, Tweedy? Dib 35 it says on the cover, but Dib 33 on the issue before. You've obviously adopted the Gooch/Doubleday/Chapman Gambit of missing an issue out (or putting two together), ....probably to reach a milestone more quickly, eh? ((As if I would))

Let us entirely sympathise with George North. Gratuitous visits by relatives are among the most barbarous of British customs, and are possibly a latent re-enactment of the Viking raids of old. It's worse when you're an editor as well, having to outline the whys and wherefores of it all (when all you really want to do is get on with hammering out the Civilization report or whatever) to people who clearly think you're mad for doing it all in the first place and worse because you actually lose money at it. And all the time it's glaringly obvious that you don't gratuitously visit them because you've a thankfully time-consuming hobby..."

((Well it looked like hubby, but I assume you mean hobby Nick. But no, I get your point, Nick. How true.))

oo000oo

And talking of raids - it seems as though I had a narrow escape with the Yanks not being content just invading Grenada. In reply to my editorial comments last issue...

CATHY CUNNING:

"...However, one of your more crueller acts was the degrading of the British manliness. Do you realise that your statements support all of Terry "Englishmen are either tall skinny faggots or short skinny faggots" Tallman claims? Oh Tom, how could you sink so low? How could Janet let you do this?"

((Ah, see, that's just where Tallman's got it all wrong see, and he should damn well get his facts right before spouting off about us perfect-to-a-fault British. I'M not skinny at all, see! - I've got what you might call a 'manly' figure...))

HER ... (CONT.):

"Never mind, I have many ways of dealing with you. Secret agents Coughlan and Arnwoodian were unable to find you on their last mission in Britain but next time you will not escape! And Arnwoodian will bring his hampsters for you to

play with. Yes a very cruel fate. You have been warned!"

((Yanks' trying to invade my nice, peaceful country abode carrying furry rodents! It's enough to make me reach for the trusty old blunderbuss. I'll show them hands across the sea and all that - Bunker Hill will be but a pale shadow with what they'll have to deal with. I had enough with the bloody chameleons. Mind you, if these secret agents of yours are anything like your CIA, they probably wouldn't be capable of finding my place if they just had to cross the street to do so!))

oo000oo

IAIN FORSYTH:

"As you can see I've joined the ranks of the ex-patriots once again. On the great Golf Course of Life, Evander is when your ball gets stuck down a rabbit hole, but it's good experience and the money's not bad. We'll see how it goes. How are the 101 dalmatians?"

((So, it's back to dodging native African spears again, eh Iain. Will you never learn? COA noted, see that you keep in touch or else. Lancejak Dalmatians (that's our kennel name) are doing fine thank you - Jan's trying to arrange another litter for March. Hope we get a decent show dog this time.))

oo000oo

RICHARD SHARP:

"Many thanks for the bundle of zines. Haven't had a chance to do more than glance at them so far, but it's clear that you run a superior kind of ship. Why I might even apply for a game if I wasn't blacklisted in every self-respecting zine (and Mad Policy ).

As regards your remarks about myself and Dolchstoss , these amount to 'fair comment' on a matter of public interest, but perhaps I might set the record straight in a couple of respects.

(1) It is not accurate to say that I made no attempt to refund credits - in July 1979 or thereabouts I circulated all zine editors known to me with a letter inviting people to claim credits. Only one did so, (not you!)

(2) As regards my letter to Martin Le Fevre, I think there is a slight misunderstanding. The letters I get nowadays are almost all from people who have read my book; clearly they should get a personal answer if at all possible. Many of them specifically ask for a game of Diplomacy in Dolchstoss, and it seemed to me polite to offer to run a game for them as well as providing them with the necessary data to enter the hobby through the meat-grinder in the usual way. A dozen or so, to date, have taken up the offer, but will of course finish up with a Dolchstoss game after all. The argument about my indebtedness is not relevant to this, anyway, as I was offering FREE games. It is not true that I still get a few NGC letters, but barely one in ten of these relate to the hobby proper - they are nearly all from wargamers.

(3) In quoting from D70 you adopted the Booth-like tactic of omitting the key phrase, thus robbing the quote of it's context! ((You dare liken me to Booth...!)) What I said (page 4) was: "It is an unfortunate fact that I cannot AT PRESENT trace who is owed how much. Therefore Dolchstoss is free to former subscribers until further notice." This clearly implies that I expect the situation to change.

To go into slightly more detail, my up-to-date credit list was one of a number of hobby related things, destroyed in 1979. But I have had a bit of luck - I found an old list, which I had been too inefficient to throw away, dating from July 1978. There was also a paying-in book for the Dolchstoss account for the remaining period until I stopped accepting subs. All that was needed was to collate the two.

This I did, and by the time copies were mailed I was able to put the correct figure on nearly all of them. Yours, for example, should have had (85)

on the envelope, but may have had just (T) if it was one of those I mailed before completing the list. In other words, then, I owe you £5.60 now that we are trading. If you can bear with me a little longer, I am waiting a Dolchstoss cheque book which will enable me to get at the £70 odd still buried there, and I shall do the necessary once it arrives.

For the record, using your very welcome subber list, I can tell a few more of your readers what I owe them. If they contact me saying they want to receive Dolchstoss existing issue numbers will be honoured, ignoring the price increase; or to obtain a cash equivalent, subtract 69 from the figure quoted and multiply by 35p. The lucky winners are:

Richard Bairstow (74), Peter Calcraft (73), Rob Chapman (72), Mike Close (72), Brian Creese (70), John Keight (73), John Lee (75), John Marsden (74), Julian Shepley (70), Dave Tant (70), Les Tassell (76).

Those with credits of 70 will get 70-72 anyway if they contact me, as will former traders (Messrs Birks, Hucknall, Mearns, Piggott). The only other former Dolchstoss readers on your list are Messrs Thompson and Walkerdine, who have already been in touch.

Enough of this.

Good God, you've inherited George North. Did I really say TWO short planks? I must have been in a mellow mood that day. ((See, George, he noticed you again))

Aaaaaaaaagh, BRONWYN, not BLODWYN, for Chrissssssake, would I have married someone called Blodwyn!!!!!! ((Well, now that you point it out... Sorry, Bronwyn.))

I seen Martin Le Fevre has a sense of humour - the idea of sending in Birks as the 'Hobby Muscle' has a charm all of its own."

((Heh heh, yes, I see your point. Glad you enjoyed the Dibs I sent you and thanks for putting the record straight. Though I don't think I said you made no attempt at returning credits - I just said you hadn't done so. How could we make such demands as asking for money back? You were in such dire straights at the time with your illness and suchlike, most of us would have felt guilty in doing so. In fact, at that time I remember the collection going round to help you with money matters, not take it away; with the medical bills, etc. My guess is I think it was just the sheer size of the disaster which shocked people and made them think, never again. There was also the fact that you didn't seem bothered about putting matters straight after you were back on your feet again. I think that irked a bit. Still, all this matters not a jot now - the fact is you ARE putting things straight. That's good enough for me.))

cc000cc

But, now that you mention George...

GEORGE NORTH:

"Thank you for mentioning Spanner. I have threatened to produce this so often that it will be easier to have a bash than to forget the idea completely. It is a frightening prospect though isn't it? I keep putting it off but sooner or later it will be zero hour. My main worry is the draughts and I am through to round three of the British Postal Championships, which means the last sixteen. I really did not ought to start a zine while this tournament is still on and yet I suppose I will have to do so since the draughts could go on for a long time. Getting into the last four or even the last eight does not seem possible, but who knows! My game can only get better from now on, but these boys are tough nuts to crack.

And what games to introduce? The Postal League for Soccerboss sounds about the best but takes up lots of spare inches. ((You ain't kidding there!)) A continous Chess Tournament I can run efficiently but might not be very popular for months until it gets going. Over Christmas one of the grandchildren had this game, "Guess who" which is a sort of identity parade of some dozen characters which you gradually eliminate by asking questions that have a yes/no answer. You eliminate until only one is left or take a wild guess. Guess wrong and you lose