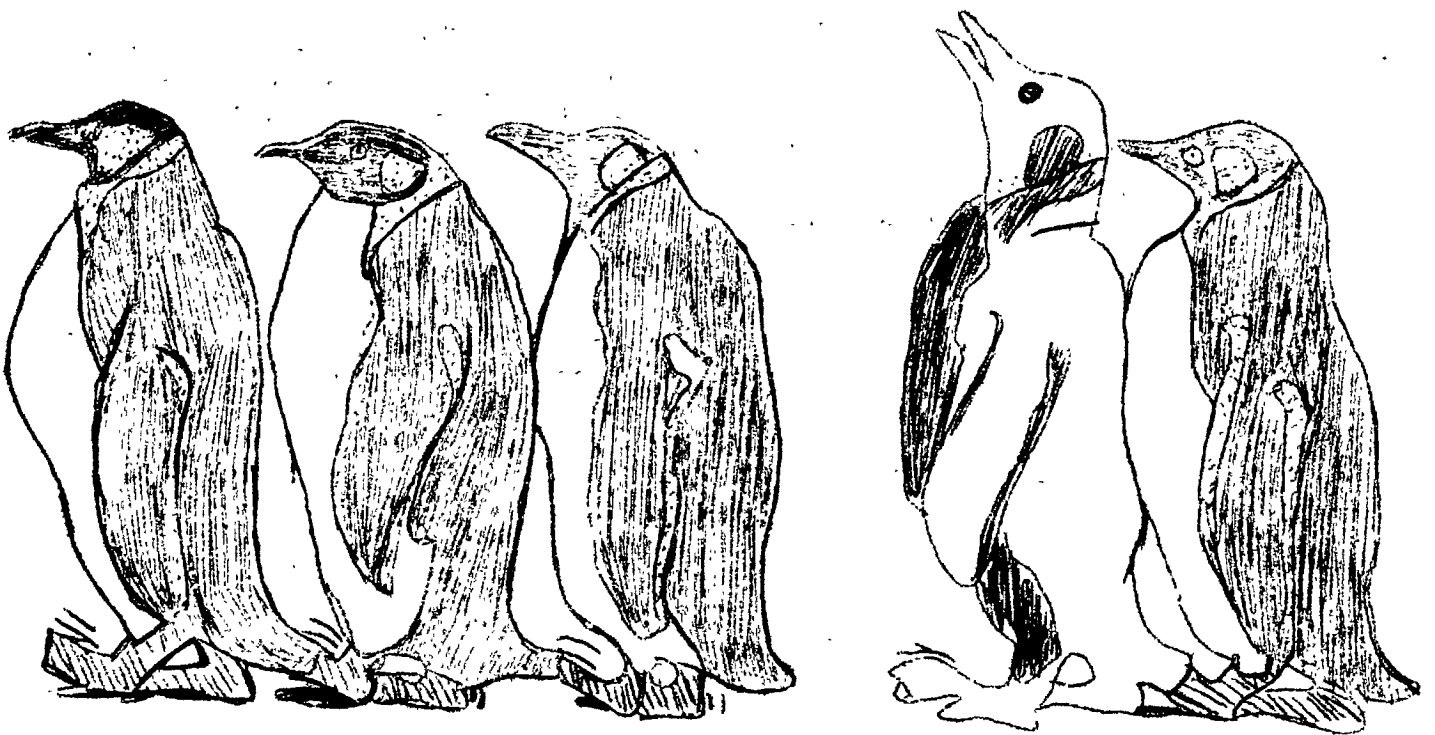


DIB DIB DIB

38

There's a potential Dib subscriber, everywhere!



Welcome to Dib Dib Dib 38 - a Diplomacy, Sopwith, D&D and anything else zine catering mainly for the rejects and misfits of our society. (Those that think they don't fit into this category shouldn't be reading this!) As always it costs the paltry sum of 35p per issue UK rates, about 49p to Europe, and a small bloody fortune to America (I hope you're listening Ms Cunning!), and comes to you from the nimble digit of Tom Tweedy, presently and for the foreseeable future living at, 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513

EDITORIAL

My God, it's that time again. It doesn't seem more than a couple of weeks since I was doing the last editorial. You lot soak up comments like a comedian loses jokes on TV. I wonder, if I left last issue's editorial on the computer, whether you lot would notice? So what's new this time I hear some of you ask (wake up, Chapman, I'm talking!). Well, not a lot really, what can happen in a month? I was invited up to a friend's house for dinner... does that count? To LINCOLNSHIRE!! Actually it's Jan again forcing me to move my backside when all I want to do is sit back and relax with my pipe and slippers. Even so, after she managed to rouse me, I found myself getting quite carried away with the prospect of travelling half way across country, because these friends have an added interest of owning an Arabian Stud Farm. And I must say, I do have a special fondness for horses, and the Arab breed in particular.

But stone me, what a nightmare drive up there! Up the A1 to Cambridge, Peterborough, Eye (via Sleaford 'cos of Jan's bad navigation!! - a fault I could cheerfully throttle her for from time to time), Spalding and Boston, and on to... I forgotton where now... a memorable place though... oh yes, Carrington. I suddenly decided then and there, I most definitely cannot stand fen country. Miles and miles of prairie-like contryside (bare earth instead of wheat), flat and stretching as far as the eye could see. As for the road itself, it was straight as an arrow and about 15 foot higher than the surrounding countryside. It was like travelling along a causeway, with absolutely no fences or hedges to stop the odd drunken driver from veering off the road into the dykes. It must be hell out there on dark and rainy nights.

Still, the horses were magnificent. What I saw of them that is - it was a miserable day with the drizzle and wind. Never mind though, we've been invited up again sometime in the Spring or Summer (all depends on when I can make the time), and Paul, the stud owner, has offered to take Stuart riding. This should prove interesting, because although he's been able to ride since he was five, I've never actually seen him do it. It would be nice to see what the riding fees I've been paying out for have achieved. Well, the truth of the matter is, I'd like to see my son achieve something! (He just failed his 12+ - but I don't want to talk about it.) Oh and I mustn't forget to mention Jan's reason for going up there, namely a litter of Dalmatian puppies and 4 adult Dalmatians!!

The only other thing we've done this month was to be dragged off (once again by Jan) to the Dalmatian Dog Show at Towcester. It appears as though my highly trained eye was needed yet again (yes, I do have some uses, she admits - even if it is only the one eye) to try and pick out a suitable stud for our Dalmatian bitch, Della. Yes, Jan has decided it's time to try for another Champion (fat chance, we haven't had the first yet!) and that we should have another litter. I think we stand a better chance this time because (a) we've more experience, and (b) I thought to hell with it, it's a gamble anyway, why not try line-breeding to a line we like. So, I've chosen the stud (well it's a choice of two actually), and time will tell whether our decisions will pay off. It would be nice to campaign a possible Champion I suppose... I dunno, I DO have to suffer a little with packed lunches and suchlike on these little outings you know. It's not as if she remembers to pack the pate or other civilised necessities even! Damn woman can be most inconsiderate at times. Even Stuart enjoyed himself, he found a 15 foot pile of dirt and taught Ian Tillson's 3 year old, Daniel, to roll up and down the side of it!! He's quite good with younger children is my son, he'll probably grow up to be a social worker.

But enough of the trivial natter. I suppose it's time I talk a little of the hobby. Not that there's that much going on though. Pet gripe of the month must go to Brian Creese for his title page of NMR!. It went way over the top this time, with a topless and bottomless, stockinged and suspended woman kneeling down with her legs spread apart. Not a bad drawing some might think, some drawings like this can of course be 'artistic' even, but it was really quite unnecessary for a hobby games magazine. Jan's comment was that it seemed to be drawn by someone who hated women. I don't know about that, but it certainly wasn't very flattering to women. And I DIDN'T like the fact that Jan felt it necessary to mention about Stuart opening the envelope. I've said more about this in the letter column, so I won't say anymore about it. I would have written to Brian personally of course explaining my dislike of the cover (I meant to) but haven't had the time. Ah, so it goes....

Mike Allaway has finally and most definitely folded Phyrric Victory - after all this time. Can't say as I blame him exactly, I just wonder why it's taken him so long to do it. It seems Mike has decided to pack in his job, sell-up what he can, collect his savings together, and take a 6 month trip over to America to see/be with his new girlfriend. More than that he has no idea what is happening. He doesn't know if he's going to apply for a work permit, and as far as I can gather he's just made up his mind to go over there until his money runs out. I wish him luck, but personally I like a more predictable life than that.

As for the 'Gladys Awards'... I'm not too sure what's happening about them either. I think Mike has decided to cobble together a final issue with them in, and then hand over the 'responsibility' to another zine to do with as it will. Brian Creese has already offered to take them on (and so have I if no other home can be found), but I think the final decision will be left up to John Miller, ex-editor of the once excellent zine, Mr Gladgrind, and founder of said awards.

ZINE POLL '84

Ah yes, it's here again. The much loved, sometimes hated, always controversial, but never ignored, Zine Poll. This poll is run every year by Richard Walkerdine to find out which zines you, the general public (readership, etc, so to speak), find the most enjoyable. This is about the only time subscribers get a chance to say what they like or dislike about the zines in the hobby. Well actually, it's not much of a say, but VOTES TALK!, as Pete Birks would say. Anyway, enough chatter, and on with the rules.

1. Eligibility: Any European amateur zine which is concerned with postal gaming and which has published at least two issues since January 1st 1984.
2. Voters: A voter must vote for at least two zines and should vote for every zine he reads regularly. Editors and co-editors may not vote for their own zine. But wives can vote.
3. Voting Method: Votes should be given to each zine in the range 1 (low) to 10 (high) to one decimal place. You can give several zines identical votes if you wish.
4. Assessment: Results will be calculated by the average votes method. Richard might also try a few variations on this, for general interest only.
5. Inclusion: A zine must receive votes from at least 8% of the voters in order to be included in the overall results. Richard hopes to be able to publish a few mini-polls covering some of the zines receiving fewer than 8% as well though.
6. Deadline: Thursday, July 19th 1984. All votes must be sent to: Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 6PG.
7. Results: Will be published in Dib after I receive MP 99 in August. Anyone who doesn't normally receive MP can have a copy with the full results if they send Richard some stamps to cover postage.

That's it then, as Richard says, that gives you 4 months to get your votes in. Last year saw a record number of 224 voters, which was an excellent turnout. Let's hope we do even better this year. Please do give this Poll your support, with, of course, putting Dib at the top. My predictions for the top 5 this year? Mad Policy, Greatest Hits, Dolchstoss, Acolyte, and Hopscotch. Maybe even in

that particular order. Of course, I'd like Dib to at least be in the Top Ten - but I don't hold out much hope with 60 odd zines to compete with. We'll see.

On a completely different tack. Some of you who subscribe to Greatest Hits may have noticed talk in recent issues of using computers and daisywheel typewriter/printers to produce zines and cut stencils. Actually one of the things said, was how bad daisywheels were for cutting stencils. Normal complaints seem to be daisywheels clogging up with wax and the spinning daisywheel ripping stencils. Well I can now safely tell you that problems like this can now be cured. As I told Pete Birks, I've never cleaned my printer once since I bought it - and you can see for yourselves how well it cuts here. What I do of course is cover each stencil with a thin clear plastic foil, called a 'Roneo Contact Sheet'. This insures that the type cuts straight through, no bother at all, leaving the wax on the foil. They're not very expensive (about 10p per sheet), and one Contact sheet does a whole issue of Dib. Mind you it can be a little difficult to get hold of some. They might also prove useful for use in ordinary typewriters - I used them successfully with my Praxis electric for quite some time before getting a daisywheel.

If anyone is interested, and has difficulty with supply, certainly I'd be only too happy to supply them with some of mine. I get them in boxes of a hundred - but if you need less than that I could split them up. Price would be: 10p per sheet + postage. God, I hate this; it sounds as if I'm trying to advertise. I'm not... I'm just trying to help.

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#### COMPUTER GAMING

"BLUE MAX" from Synapse Software. Reviewed by DEREK ANDREWS  
Available for Atari 400/800 or XL series and CBM 64.

1915. World War I. The Allies are struggling to hold Europe against the might of the Axis power..... You are the renowned "Blue Max" - terror of the Skies. Your objective is to make a final assault on three specially marked targets within the city. But first you have to earn the privilege. This can only be achieved by annihilation of certain prime targets - specially marked buildings, planes, cars, ships and bridges - and it is essential that you destroy a certain number of these targets in order to advance to the next level. Your plane is a biplane fighter/bomber and you only get the one - so look after it!

The games graphics are excellent. A diagonally scrolling 3D screen offers three combat zones. The first is general terrain, dissected by a river. The "prime" targets are bridges, ships, buildings, enemy planes and cars. Success leads you to screen two: a major road into the city. The road cuts through the forest, and contains airstrips, vehicles, planes and buildings as the "prime" targets. Give Jerry hell and you make it to your goal - the city! Progress is impeded by anti-aircraft fire and Kamikazee pilots. The enemy planes don't shoot you down - they crash into you!!

The lower quarter of the screen is your information panel. The display informs you of altitude, damage, approaching enemy planes, etc. A bell sounds as you approach a "friendly" airstrip, where you can refuel, re-equip and undergo repairs. The only problem being that Jerry has a nasty habit of dropping bombs into your cockpit whilst you're grounded.

This has got to be one of the better games for the CBM64 and the only complaint I have against it, is the price - £25.75 - which is totally unreasonable.

((Thanks, Derek, please accept this issue free. Perhaps others of you out there will now feel encouraged to submit others articles of this type - especially for the BBC and Spectrum.))

LETTERS

MARTYN IVES:

"I must object in the strongest possible way at being labelled a loony (or a misfit come to that) as a professional musician I am a highly sophisticated ..... sophisticated artist ((Martyn I do so agree...)). Mind you the other bit about drink, girls, board games, girls, frivolities, girls and frivolous women was about right, oh, I don't like the politics or music but I do like the girls. ((How much not to tell Christine, YOUR WIFE, Martyn?)) I was going to send you a couple of quid but I stuck the envelope down!"

((So starts a typical Dib lettercolumn....))

oo000oo

NICKY PALMER:

"Thanks for sending me DDD again - carrying on this correspondence is clearly an excellent wheeze to get a free sub!

You and Pete make three suggestions about Flagship that the writing be jazzed up (Pete), that the articles go into more depth (Pete quoting Bob Brown) and that the general approach should be more lavish, in particular changing the cover each issue (you - though I think you'd agree with Pete's points too).

I'm coming to agree with Pete's two, though not, I'm afraid, with the third. The basic problem about writing is that the people who know most about a game are not necessarily the best writers: I'd love to revive Sharp's series, for instance, but his involvement with postal gaming has been pretty limited lately, though the return of Dolchstoss will change that. I'm now getting a much wider choice of writers who've volunteered after seeing the magazine, and without any disrespect to the early contributors (who've included myself!) I think the average standard is looking up.

The initial issues were very deliberately aimed at the PBM player who has only played one or two games and thinks they're pretty typical, and/or that there aren't many others. The flood of letters saying, good grief where do all these games come from?, confirmed that there are a lot of these about. In the long run it doesn't make sense to stay on this level, and the next issues are shifting sharply towards more analysis, using the extra space (36 pages in issue 3 vs 28 in issue 1) to accommodate it. Bob suggested that there aren't enough serious PBM players to make this worthwhile, but one of the functions of the magazine must be to create more of them - and anyway I doubt if non-serious players read magazines about their games.

An interesting point about the above is that the requests for better, and livelier writing have been exclusively from the Dippy hobby, whereas the requests for more depth have been mainly from the experienced, non-dippy players - the latter's not surprising, but the former is intriguing. Is it because the active general PBM players are so interested in the subject that they'll forgive lapses in style? Or that the two groups are more different than they look? I suspect a bit of both: Dippy players are on average older, for a start, and I think they're less game-oriented on the whole, especially the 'hard core'. Writing for both groups is an interesting challenge.

Where we part company is over the appearance, and in particular the ludicrous comparison with 'other glossy magazines'. Take Imagine, for instance, which I think is a first rate FRP magazine (which incidentally is also doing a lot for Dippy). Their circulation is well in excess of 30000, i.e. more than 15 times Flagship's they have substantially greater advertising; they have are backed by one of Britain's biggest games business, with further back-up from the biggest U.S. fantasy company; the target audience is so large that fantasy game books are appearing in the best sellers lists, whereas the total number of PBM players world-wide is unlikely to be over 15000, including the whole of the Dippy hobby and all the varieties of American Games. Of course they can afford to change the cover every issue! You might as well ask why we don't have interior colour like Newsweek. It would cost exactly the same as 12 pages in the magazine to change the cover every issue; we expect to go up to 40 pages next time (+12 on the start), and I really don't believe that more than 1% of the readership would rather have a changing cover. In fact the overwhelming weight

of feedback (insofar as about 100 replies can be said to be overwhelming weight of anything) suggests that people are mostly very happy with the appearance, calling it the only really professional-looking PBM magazine and the like. In fact most people seem pretty happy all round, but I do accept Pete's points all the same. Incidentally, the per issue price is £1.50, not £1.70, assuming you subscribe.

Sorry, when I seem to have gone on at more length than I meant to - a bad habit from the days when my primary negotiating tactic was to write two-page letters of detailed plans in the hope that the recipient wouldn't believe that I'd go to so much trouble if I was going to stab him. It worked quite well at first, but like all good tactics it gradually became known and lost its effect!"

((There's no need for me to comment of this letter at length, I'll leave it for others to do - besides it speaks for itself. You do make one point though, Nicky, when you said: "Bob suggested that there aren't enough serious PBM players to make this worthwhile, but one of the functions of the magazine must be to create more of them." How true - but how to go about it? Certainly PBM players aren't born. Attracting them to the magazine first should be the first course of action, then entertain and convert them afterwards. Backed or not, Flagship attracts first and entertains afterwards. It's no wonder it's become so popular.))

oo000oo

DAVID BIRD:

"Thanks for Dib 37, which I thought seemed somewhat different this issue. No offence intended, but I thought the printing quality was very good indeed. I prefer A4 size zines because I find them easier to read. ((Dib's fullscap?))

Mention of the CGS reminded me of my experience, which was similar to Bill Hagarth's. My first postal game of diplomacy was with BR. Although this proved to be something of a rip-off, this was by no means the fault of the CGS. Without the CGS, I doubt if I would have persuaded with my interest in the hobby. For all its faults, whatever one may consider them to be, I think it is worth remembering that this is only a hobby, and no-one ought to expect professional service."

((Thanks for those few kind words, Dave. It's certainly true I can't cover all the problems that crop up with the CGS; trying to seems to have created a harder job than I intended taking on. Perhaps it's time for me to pass it on?))

DAVE (CONT.):

"I have had a rather interesting week at work, which included a visit to a Pub, where a colleague and myself had to measure the lengths and bores of all the pipes in order to calculate the volume of beer contained in each pipe. Then we could calculate the amount of beer lost when the pipes are cleaned. We occasionally do this in order to substantiate the declared takings, but I personally had not done this before. It made a refreshing change from just looking at the accounting records."

((Now that's what I call a worthwhile job....))

oo000oo

STEVE RENNIE:

"Please don't be annoyed by the criticism of the CGS. Even if you have made a mistake you do provide a good and generally appreciated service. I originally tried to get in the 'hobby' via the old NGC but got no reply and only got myself a gamestart by chance (somebody I know had started playing in Pygmy). Services like the CGS and the Novice Package would have helped me tremendously.

I think there may be a mistake on your address list. As far as I know Nick Hoyle's move to Germany is relatively permanent and not just a university term time address. Certainly I know that he's over there working as a translator and not to study."

((Thanks Steve, Nick did write and let me know anyway. Not to worry, I haven't been annoyed by the criticisms of the CGS, I was just a little surprised there was any, that's all. Thanks for dropping me a line though, pointing things out.))

oo000oo

BILL HAYGARTH:

"Thanks for the latest Dib, I'm really impressed with the turnaround - from a deadline on Friday to receiving my issue the following Friday, very good indeed, it's a shame there aren't more editors who do the same. I think a quick turnaround is probably the most important single thing for a zine as most subbers prime interest is the games and a good regular turnaround keeps them moving nicely. ((Er, yes but it doesn't happen often; I've only just started pushing Dib's turnaround.))

On a completely different subject I can remember many years ago seeing a news item on telly about Diplomacy. It was on one of those early evening Nationwide type programmes and they had someone in the studio who was playing a game that had been going for a few years. The only details that I can remember was that the Austrian player (or was it Russian?), ((sounds like the start of one of my better jokes)) had gone to the expense of having special notepaper printed for the game with the Imperial Crest on it and that the other players took exception to it and quickly removed him from the game. Now I think of it the programme was in black and white so it must have been ages ago. Dare I ask if you were involved with the game that long ago Tom?. If you were, and remember the programme, could you tell me who it was I saw on the box and who the other players were as it has been bothering me ever since!"

((Involved? - my God I'm not that old! One person who is though, is John Piggott; the person I believe you saw on that programme ('Nationwide', John?). I didn't see it, but certainly it's famous enough for me to have heard of it (what isn't famous when Piggot has turned a hand to it?), and no, I haven't been in the Dipomacy hobby for that long. I'm a realative newcomer only being in this hobby for seven years or so.))

oo000oo

But, speaking of the man who could tell you more about it than myself, next it's....

JOHN 'PRYDERI' PIGGOTT:

"Thanks for Dib and the start of the 'P' game. Less than a fortnight since I asked for a game - who needs the CGS when private enterprise can be put up this kind of performance? Before I forget, I enclose a cheque to keep the wheels of Capitalism turning.

Amusing to see the flurry of interest in the 1962 rulebook. Before the 1971 edition came out, the house rules of every decent zine were riotously complex, due to the need to resolve the omissions and ambiguities in the published rules. Thus the immortalisation of many American GMs with such things as Koning's Rule, Pandin's Paradox, the Gilliland Situation, and so on. I wonder what Tweedy's Law would have been..... ((Tweedy's Twist? - but surely most of the Diplomacy problems have now been thrashed out?)) Birks, of course, is seducing the innocent by offering Nick Lourie a quid for his 1962 Rulebook. It's worth far more than that. Furthermore, as I read his letter Birks hopes to get the entire Diplomacy Set for that £1 as well!!! Some things never change, and Pete is two of them."

((There you are, Nick - John suggests you hang on for a better deal. What kind of market is there though for old games? I never know where people can find the space to have all this weird and wonderful collections. Take Richard Bairstow for instance, he collects milk bottles. I tell you, where the hell does one put 60 crates of empty milk bottles!))

oo000oo

MATT QUARTERMAIN:

"A page or so of chat. (Sod it - the phone decided to go and I just spent 40 minutes talking to my sister and now what I was going to say has gone completely out of my head!)

Ah well... Gil Gavel's letter about war games and war made the comment about war being 'jolly good fun' - well it used to be and it used to be relatively harmless as well. Not until 1914ish did it suddenly turn into something rather more sordid than a bunch of grown men slugging it out on a little field in the back of beyond. Now civilians are willy-nilly involved in the operations. They were before, but to a limited extent, i.e. they were expected to serve the armies hand and foot and whatever other parts the soldiers wanted, ((no-one offered their other parts to me when I was in the army... are you getting them all, Ives?)). But now aeroplanes have made the bombings of cities possible, war is not quite so nice any more. I suppose it might have started like that with the advent of heavy artillery, e.g. Big Bertha (although I have the feeling she was more modern again)... ((You're not kidding there. She was used in the 2nd World War to fire shells across the Channel. Bloody great thing, moved on railway tracks I believe.))

Anyway someone else would be able to put it better, so, as I'm now 40 minutes behind today's schedule, I'll sign off.

P.S. I think rather than give your, er, biased opinions of the jokes, you might like to throw a vote open. Joke Poll of the Year, not to be confused with other joke Polls of course..."

((BIASED! Sounds like a good idea though - any ideas how you would set it up (e.g. rules, voting method, etc). I could work it out myself, but didn't want people suggesting I was BIASED with any of the rules I put forward! Damn you, Quartermain, must you persist in trying to 'keep me in line'.))

oo000oo

STEVE NORLEDGE:

"Thanks for a continuing supply of Dibs, I find the zine very enjoyable and the humour competition is a gem of an idea (and I want points for the vampire joke!). The main point of this letter, however is not to indulge in more ego-messaging but to request a CGS Diplomacy Game! ((Damn, and you were doing so well there as well.))

Now that I've gone mimeo I can look to running a few more games - and once I want to run a game of Diplomacy (and my subbers don't seem quite so interested) and I could do with some subscribers.

Now onto the letter column - I can't let Larry Trask get away with some of the things he has been saying about Pop Music..

The first point I would like to make is that Larry is guilty of making ridiculous generalisations. Sure, a lot of the Chart, Pop Music is pure rubbish, but in amongst the chaos there are artists who can write intelligent lyrics, excellent music, who can sing well and who are good musicians. I could list some but it would be hard to resist personal bias. The problem is that 'big business' has become involved and has allowed elements other than musical merit (such as image) to become all but predominant - hype has a lot to answer for....but I digress.

Secondly, music, like any other art, can serve more purpose than just to entertain. Would Larry say that there is no more to traditional, pictorial art than what the eye sees. There is symbolism in pop music as well as other forms of art. You first need to look for it.... Persevere Larry, you might find something you like if you try!"

((I never was one to bother much about symbolism in Art - to me it smacks too much of power to the critics. It's not really necessary; most people can look at a painting and decide whether they like it or not. To me, that should be the final test - civilised art should stand or fall on personalised judgements. Which, to a certain extent it does. It goes without saying, of course, it differs with each person - naturally it should. Appreciation. Nothing more,



nothing less. It looks as if Larry has stirred up a hornets nest though....))

oo000oo

DEREK ANDREWS: (severely edited...)

"Against my better judgement, I've decided to enter the current debate concerning contemporary music.

Music, in general, is a disposable commodity. It represents the attitude of the time, and as the mood changes, so should the music. Music which had a certain relevance in the 60's is now defunct as the attitudes prevalent in the 60's is no longer valid. The belief, that love 'n' peace would solve the world's problems has been negated. Bells, beads and incense were the 'things' in vogue, as was CND rallies and anti-Vietnam songs. It is true to say that our native ideals were the source of much amusement amongst certain quarters, but we tried. We believed in something, and we were prepared to demonstrate our beliefs no matter how futile. The music, (the Doors, Moby Grape ((who?)), Thirteenth Floor Elevators, etc.) mirrored this attitude, as today's music is indicative of current trends.

It is tragic, that rock music is the only media which is trying to do something constructive, in today's futureless environment. Songs are not going to solve unemployment, promote disarmament, create racial harmony, but they may serve to point people in the right direction. A number of recent groups have used their music to this end, namely UB40, The Clash, The Sex Pistols, The Jam, Tom Robinson, Aswad, etc.

You cannot judge contemporary music on the strength of Duran Duran, ABC, Bucks Fizz, and all the other insipid bands whose only commitment, is that they keep their fashion updated and wash their hair regularly. Look outside of this and you will find the 'real thing'.

The evident prejudice in Larry's letter is cause for concern. I would be interested to know, which bands, if any, he has taken the trouble to listen to. I would suggest that he listens to 'Mr Clean' by the Jam, (from the album 'All Mod Cons'), if he believes there is lack of merit in today's music, as he should discover, that this song is in complete accord with his own views.

All music has its good points, you only have to discover the style that suits you. My personal 'recommended' listenings would be: Joy Division, Cabaret Voltaire, Joseph K., The Twinkle Brothers, Culture, Chalice .... but you pay you money and take your choice. It's only rock'n'roll innit? ((Quite))

By the way, amplifications is a necessary evil. Having played in a rock'n'roll band, I have first hand experience of its benefits.... You get yourself heard above the sound of people ordering drinks, chatting to their mates and generally being a nuisance. They soon shut-up when you pump 200 watts of pure power down their left-ear. Makes their ears bleed it does!!!!!! ROCK ON!"

((Yes, well, I think there must be a better criteria for appreciating music than making your ears bleed. But I take your point; most classical stuff is played to an audience that listens quietly - very rarely do I hear wolf-whistles, screams, etc. Whilst the reverse is true for popular music it seems.))

oo000oo

ANDREW SMITH:

"Here did you see the latest cover of NMR? What is happening to Brian. Probably cracking up, poor chap. The strain of almost being 50 issues old, you know..."

((Yes, I did see it, and I wasn't too amused about either - my son opened the envelope! If I wanted porno pictures with my breakfast - and in my younger days this was nearly always most certainly the case - I'd have kept up my subscription to Playboy and Mayfair. Excellent publications both - or they used to be. Brian had no excuse for going too far.))

ANDREW (CONT.):

"I see Larry has a long spell on music. Will I concede defeat, you're asking? Well, let's have a look at what Larry says. I'm not really sure I understand Larry's first point - how can the gadgets, amplifiers, etc. actually distract from 'their conspicuous inadequacies as musicians' All these gadgets are an intrinsic part of the musical process in pop music, I'm afraid. People are moving with the times; just as Djb is reliant on a home computer, so all the latest sounds are provided by the latest 'gadgets'. It would take me a long time, I'm sure, to come to grips with all the sounds possible of a 'gadget' and the ways in which they are produced, let alone mix all the sounds together to present a successful song at the end.

As to comparing popular records to the popular press, there's obviously something to be said for it. 'Popular' papers are successful because they provide the light relief that the average working person in Britain needs. But perhaps I can venture a comment or two here drawn from my experience in (albeit run by students) radio. We found that you can educate your audience to accept a certain thing. When the style of presentation changes in a given programme, there are always complaints, but the listener soon gets used to the 'newness'. I don't really see why this shouldn't apply to Newspapers either. People still buy the Times even though Rupert Murdoch has changed it considerably since he took over as boss. So what I'm saying is that people are largely with newspapers as they can turn to Radio and TV for objective reporting. ((eh?)) And it's been proven that they do as well. It's all a question of what you want to use your radio for. (I firmly believe that it has two functions. To provide news information and secondly background music. For example, I am listening to Radio Caroline as I write this because of its 'uninterrupted music' style. This means I don't have to stop and listen to what someone is saying every five minutes.) So people see newspapers not as organs of record, but as a source of entertainment. There will always be the more discerning amongst us who want to change things for ideological reasons.

But I'm getting away from the subject, except for perhaps showing that it's wrong to judge pop music in the same breath as the press. As for being 'odious and unpleasant' and a waste of time, and not 'genuinely rewarding', there can surely be fewer things less financially rewarding than being a successful pop band. OK so Larry will say that money isn't everything - I agree there but pop musicians obviously enjoy themselves.

I also think it's wrong to try to separate an assessment of intrinsic worth from an assessment of contributions to culture. I think the former should be judged in terms of the latter. If everyone was like Larry and hated pop music, we'd never heard any of it and it wouldn't be part of our life.

As regards the lyrics I take the point that inane words will be a disaster..... but if they can be originally inane, viz. the 'Police' song "Do de doo doo dee", they can capture the popular image ((?)). Some songs are successful because of their well written lyrics which are coherent and are about a specific point. Perhaps Elton John is a good example of this. If lyrics are not supposed to be part of Music's appeal, as Larry suggests, why do they get written in the first place? Why did Mozart feel the need to have them in the 'Magic Flute'?

On the side issue of abuse of the English language, it was Ben Johnson who observed as long ago as the 16th century that language changes. If language itself changes, so will its structure and use. It seems as though I'm coming to the conclusion that Larry is not in favour of linguistic, musical, or any other form of cultural development or advance. As to 'the poetry of Homer', or poetry in general, if Larry can accept structural contortions, strange uses of words and the like in verse, why not in song?

OK, that'll do. I must say that I share Larry's opinions on newspapers, probably for the same reasons, and as a matter of taste, dislike some aspects/style of the popular music scene. I simply can't accept that Larry's appreciation of 'pop' is limited to Peter, Paul and Mary. C'mon, Larry, don't you have time for anything else???"

((I wouldn't dare challenge Larry on the English language if I were you - he may be an American, but this is one subject he can certainly hold his own with! Anyway, to cover one of your points: You were right when you said that language changes (it's necessary I suppose to cover new words technology and suchlike

comes up with), but it's a dangerous move to link Music and Art up with it. You see it's not essential that that Music/Art ever changes. Even though it may be preferred for those who like to experiment, or express themselves. It could carry on in the same style for centuries with no problems to our society. But what would the world be like today if the English language was allowed to stagnate? It just couldn't be done.))

oo000oo

BRIAN MOORE:

"I now have a Spectrum besides my Video Genie. I bought it because of the large amount of software available for it and because my VG could be said to be 'out of date' and has been replaced colour computers, or 'CoCos' as the Americans like to call them. Yes, serious software is available for the Spectrum, Educational as well as Utilities. I still think the best Adventures are/were written for the VG/TRS 80."

((Nah, the best ever Adventure game was written for the Apple -- Apple's famed 'Wizardry' campaigns, produced by Sir-Tech. I've seen nothing else to better it and it's been out now for close on to 2 years. I hear now it's being produced for the IBM machines. As for Spectrum, Brian, if you care to do a couple of reviews on serious software/hardware for D1b I'd appreciate it.))

oo000oo

KONRAD DOLATA:

"Thanks for your note. I'm a bit in a hurry now with the NR and my league in Psycho demanding a large amount of my free time. Beside of that I got a letter yesterday, telling me that I will get a job as a teacher in our area in June. As German teachers are very severely hit by unemployment and the first two years are intended to be something like an apprenticeship with another 'full' exam at the end this will mean that my active time in the hobby will be restricted to an extent that it will only allow time for editing NR and GMing Psycho. However I'll try to keep as many zines as possible for the time being but my letters will certainly become scarce in the future. I hope you don't mind.

Still, two years are not an eternity and once I've hopefully settled in my job I would like to start again where I have left off before. Well there are still some months left but with the hobby being very slow in terms of finishing games etc. I simply have to do some planning.

I'll be visiting Britain from July 1st to July 20th, perhaps we can meet during this time."

((Certainly, Konrad, you're most welcome - give me a ring or something nearer the time, you have my number. It'll be a sad state of affairs to see no more Konrad Dolata letters, but of course, one's job must come first. Hope to see you back in full swing once you've got settled though.))

oo000oo

NICHOLAS CLIFTON:

"Dear Santa,

Chameleon is GO! The first payment is already on the way to your numbered Swiss Bank Account. It would be best if the hit could be made to look like an accident, say having Tom mauled to death by his printer, or maybe dying of exertion when he takes the dog for a walk.

Yours Nicholas Clifton."

((Need I make ANY comment about Clifton....))

((Many thank once again to all who wrote, another good column I think. I have had a few complaints (from certain undersibles of our hobby) that this column is starting to get too serious - not enough Chameleon letters and suchlike. Piffle I say....))

EUROPEAN WIT V BRITISH HUMOUR

Many many more. It seems all the world wants to be a joker - especially half of Dib's subscribers, whom I suspect are closet comedians trying to break out. Is there something significant in this? Anyway, on with the, er, show....?

NICHOLAS WHYTE:

Q: What's the difference between RTE (the Irish Broadcasting Company) and the Titanic (the Belfast-built liner)?

A: The Titanic had a decent orchestra!

((Definitely should be classed as a European joke; absolutely lacking in humour - just 2 points I think.))

STEVE GREGORY:

Fly the Flag - With British Airways you can have your breakfast in London, lunch in New York... and your luggage in Hong Kong.

Q: What do you call a student who marries a gorilla? ((Short sighted?))

A: A social climber

Sociologist: "If you think there's a problem now, just wait until we've solved it."

Q: Why did the robot scratch?

A: Due to a technical 'itch.

((Not a bad collection there, Steve. Especially the Sociologist one. A few oldies but goodies - 6 for the lot.))

MARK MANDER:

Q: Where's the capital of the United Kingdom?

A: Mostly abroad

Q: Why did the hedgehog cross the road?

A: Because it wanted to see its flat mate.

((Mark, you don't actually want me to mark these do you...! -2 for putting me to the bother.))

NICK HOYLE:

"After six weeks or so on the wrong side of the English Channel I have reconfirmed my earlier awareness of the German's inability to comprehend irony. However as you requested, how about a bit of Yank bashing this time?"

Many people never think about the more basic aspects of some of History's most celebrated episodes. For instance, Noah's Ark. A wooden boat full of animals. Has nobody ever wondered about the sanitation problem?

The animals weren't exactly house-trained and Mrs Noah was beginning to complain about the smell. So old Noah gathered his sons around him and said, "Look lads - we'll have to do something about all the s\*\*t. Get your brushes and we'll sweep it all together into a big pile."

Because of all the animals, they had to toil for day and night and soon had a massive pile of droppings. Then Noah said, "Now let's sweep it all to the stern of the Ark and push it overboard."

So they did as they were told, pushed the heap overboard and Columbus found it 4,000 years later.

((Heh heh, excellent joke - I was tittering with this long before I reached the end; mainly because I guessed what was coming. 10 out of 10 for the, er, Europeans. Well Nick does spend most of his time in Germany!))

ALAN FROST:

American Jew in a restaurant sees this Chinaman, so goes over and empties a bowl

of spaghetti over him.

Chinaman: "Why did you do that?"

Jew: "That's for Pearl Harbour."

Chinaman: "But it was the Japanese, I'm Chinese!"

Jew: "Chinese, Japanese, Siamese, all the same to me."

A few minutes later, the Chinaman responds by smashing the Jew over the head with a Salami.

Jew: "Why did you do that?"

Chinaman: "That's for the Titanic."

Jew: "But an iceberg sank the Titanic!"

Chinaman: "Iceberg, Goldberg, Greenberg....."

((Not bad that, Alan. The important point was you managed to have a dig at the Americans. Well done. 5 out of 10 for the British.))

MATT QUARTEMAIN:

There was this fellow, y'see staggering across Paddington Station with two enormously heavy suitcases, when another man approaches him and asks him the time.

"Certainly," replies the fellow, putting down his suitcases with obvious relief. Looking at his watch he presses a button and says, "Half past five."

"I say, that's a jolly nice watch, if you don't mind my saying so," he is told.

"Why thank you!", he replies. "Now I've put my cases down let me show you what else it does. See, date, time, seconds, minutes, day, alarm, and see, it's twelve thirty in New York at the moment. And in Italy it's, let's see, half past six."

"Well that's rather useful, what?"

"Oh, that's not all. See it converts into a calculator here..."

"Wonderful!"

".....and if I open out this bit, there's a miniature computer, with a printer and four kilobytes of RAM, expandable up to 48k..."

"How fantastic!"

"...and if I pull up this aerial, I can pick up Radio Three in V.H.F., Stereo, and if I want to, Radio 4 on 1500m long wave, not to mention the medium wave and short waves..."

"I'm speechless!"

"...and if I pull up this bit, I can watch BBC 2 on the watch face, not to mention the other stations, and it automatically returns all the channels to the local transmitters..."

"Quite unbelievable"

"...and if I pull up THIS aerial here, see it's a microphone - I've got a direct radio link to my wife...Oh hello darling, yes I'll be back in an hour or two, dear..."

"Absolutely terrific!"

"and if I were to buy the special attachments which are still in the process of design, I'll have an automatic process controller..."

"I'm quite knocked out"

"..but there is still one snag," confesses the man, as he once more grips the handle of his colossal suitcases, "the batteries are damn heavy....."

((My God, Quartermain - talk about a shaggy dog story! Would have been fine but what a lousy punchline. 2 out of 10 for trying to bog me down with typing.))

STEVE NORLEDGE:

The Venusian's space ship flashed through outer space towards Earth. A couple of hours later and the strange, eerie shape was entering the atmosphere of the Green/Blue Planet and descending gradually until it reached a height of a few thousand feet. The Venusians had a mission - to discover if there was life on Earth! The Captain of the ship switched on the video screens and began to study the terrain below. There was a great river, and on that river there was a small black creature rowing a craft of some sort down the river.

"Hmmm," thought the Captain. "I wonder if we can get a better idea of what it is?" And so he despatched a small sensor craft.

Soon he was able to close onto the creature, it was making some sort of noise: "Old Man River, dat Ol' Man River, he jest keeps rollin' along," sang the creature.

"Beam him up," said the Captain, and in a flash the creature was sitting in a bemused look on his face in the middle of the ship.

"Ol' Man River, Dat Ol' Man.....what's dis den?" said the creature.

"Hmmm, perhaps it is intelligent," said the Captain. "And the root of intelligence seems to be in the round bit at the top."

So just to check, they opened up the creature's head and took out half the small grey substance inside. They then beamed him back down to the river.

"Ol' Man River, dat Ol' Man River, he jest keeps rollin' along."

So, to check just once more, the Venusians beamed him up and took out the other half of the grey substance in the small round bit at the top of the body. Then again they beamed the creature back down to its river.

"Right let's see if that makes any difference," added the Captain as he despatched the sensor once more. Gradually, sound and vision tuned in...

"Oh Danny Boy!....."

((Heh heh, excellent - oh more, more! This is definitely another 10 out of 10, but this time for British humour - see how it's done, Konrad?))

NICK HOYLE (WHO PREFERS TO REMAIN ANNONYMOUS):

Q: What's the difference between Turks and Jews?

A: The Turks have still got it coming to them.  
Bad, eh?

((Oh yes - one can see why you might wish to remain anonymous, so I'll respect your wishes: forget I ever printed this, and I'll forget to mark it.))

SCORES SO FAR: EUROPEANS 37 BRITISH 51 ((The British streaking ahead now, even with my more than fair bit of marking.))

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'Brigida' (1981DV)

Autumn 1913

ITALY STRIDES AHEAD AS RUSSIA LOSES CONTROL

FRANCE (William Fisk) \*A(Vie)-Gal, A(Bel)-Nor, F(NTH) C A(Bel)-Nor, A(Ruh)-Bel, F(ENC) S  
A(Ruh)-Bel, A(Bur)-Mun, F(Yor) S F(NTH), F(Edi) S F(NTH)

ITALY (Chris Bartrum) F(BAR)-StP-nc, F(NWG) S FRENCH A(Bel)-Nor, F(Con)-BLA, F(Bul-sc)stands,  
F(AEG) S F(Bul-sc), A(Ser)-Rum, A(Bud) S A(Ser)-Rum, A(Tyr)-Vie, A(Tri) S  
A(Tyr)-Vie, A(Ven)-Tyr, A(Apu)-Ven

RUSSIA (Martin Allen) \*A(Rum) S A(Gal), A(Mun) S A(Boh)-Tyr, A(Boh)-Tyr, A(Sil)-Boh, A(Ber) S  
A(Mun), A(Kie) S F(Hol), F(Hol)stands, F(HEL)-Den, A(Gal) S A(Rum),  
A(StP) S F(Nor), F(BLA)-Ank, \*F(Nor)stands

Retreats: FRENCH A(Vie) dies (NRO); RUSSIAN A(Rum) dies; RUSSIAN F(Nor)-SKA

Winter 1913 Adjustments:

FRA: Bre, Par, Por, Spa, Bel, (Hol), Lon, Lpl, Edi + Nor Builds: A(Par), A(Bre) for 9

ITA: Ven, Rom, Nap, Tun, Tri, Gre, Mar, Smy, Con, Ser, Vie  
+ Bul, Rum, Bud Builds: A(Rom), F(Nap) for 14 (1 SHORT)

RUS: Sev, Mos, StP, Den, Swe, Ank, (Nor), (Rum), War, Ber,  
Kie, (Bul), (Bud), Mun + Hol No Change for 11

34

PRESS:

zBRAIN - AUSTRIA:

The more hectic your social life the less time you have for baths.