

DIB DIB DIB

39



TRASK TAKES TRENDY  
TUNES TO TASK (p10)

Now that you've exhausted yourself by ripping open the envelope (probably breaking a fingernail in the process), you can at last sit back, relax, and read your favourite postal games zine... yes, Dib Dib Dib 39 has arrived. A monthly (roughly) magazine, organ, tome (whatever) catering solely for those who like their wit/humour mixed up with good reading, tasteful presentation, games, and not costing more than 35p per issue. This is where Dib comes in: Costs 35p an issue exactly, UK rates; 45p to Europe (unless it's overweight); and still a small bloody fortune to America. Comes to you from Tom Tweedy, living at 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513

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#### EDITORIAL

What a start to this issue! I've had everything except a couple of games typed up for the last sodding week - earlier than I've ever been before - and what happens; we end up with a sodding Postal strike from the Wednesday leading up to the deadline, until the following Monday! I had to ring everyone I had no orders for.... and that was only if I had a number for them. I warned you all before; sometimes there IS a need for me to contact you by phone. Thankfully the strike didn't last long so I didn't have to hold any games over - but it was touch and go there for a bit for a least 6 games.

The postal dispute hasn't been quite settled yet, and it's likely it could blow up all over again. So please, if you don't want me to have your phone number, then check with me to see if your orders are in. Better still, try and get them in early.

Now, before I start anything else, a warm welcome to all the new subscribers Dib has picked up over the past couple of issues. If I haven't been in contact personally, and you've asked for information, please remind me again - what with the rush and my bad memory I can't really be held at fault for forgetting the hundred and one things people are likely to ask me.

One of the things people keep asking me is, when am I going to start another Sopwith game. At the moment I don't have a Sopwith Waiting List because I'm running more games than I already care to (I just don't have any more spare time). However, a couple of people have offered to GM games for me. This will take some of the pressure off me of course, so I may well take them up on their offer at some later date. I certainly won't be starting another until one of the present games has finished. I suggest if someone is desperate enough to want a game now, then write to Richard Morris, 1 Highland Ville, Lightcliffe, Halifax, W. Yorks, HX3 8AG - who is the hobby's Sopwith Statistician and used to run the Sopwith CGS. (Actually Pete Tamlyn needs one more player in The Acolyte I see....) Still, if anyone just wants a copy of the postal rules and map from me, please let me know.

Meanwhile, what's happening to me, I hear you ask. Well not much really. I made another journey up to the Arabian Stud Farm in Lincolnshire two weeks ago. Not a bad trip up this time; things looked a mite better, well, not so gloomy with all the spring flowers out. They sort of softened the close, uncomfortable feeling of the dykes somewhat. A good day was had by all, with yours truly quaffing nearly a whole bottle of one of the better quality Bern Kastels; dining on an excellent meal of roast lamp; and finishing off with gallons of coffee during the afternoon, with selected bits of a chinese meal in the evening. Coming home it must be said, that I was feeling quite dozy, and pleasantly stuffed. Good job I don't have too many days like that, or my manly figure might just end up being a little too manly.

The only other thing of note, is my involvement in the Ode 42eme Top Ten Invitational game. In which I'm supposed to be playing against the best Diplomacy players the hobby has to offer. Blackguards the lot of them mind you, but I have to admit, there's one or two nifty players. My only complaint is I have the treacherous Mike Close as a neighbouring Russia close to my innocent, vulnerable, and beloved Turkey. Better I should have cut off my right hand instead. Any man would have cried out for a better deal, it's not enough that he

will turn the very heavens against me. But I shall prevail in the end never fear; I have the easy-going Walkerdine playing Italy, who, if his Jotto playing is anything to go by, will fold easily under any subtle pressure from the infamous Rob Chapman playing England. Who's bound to get into TYS by Autumn 1902 before anyone can stop him. Looks like it's gonna be a tough game...

It seems I made a mistake in regards pricing the Roneo Contact Sheets in the last issue of Dib. Well, I didn't exactly, Jan did. She told me they cost 10p a sheet; and as they come in a box of 100, I naturally assumed I had paid £10 per box. Oh how wrong I was... I in fact paid £20 per box! And here was I selling them for 10p a sheet to all and sundry! I've sent some to Konrad Dolata, Pete Tamlyn, Richard Morris and John Webley already - so there has been quite a lot of interest. It's a good job I found out now.

Anyway, the cost of future sheets is 20p per sheet + postage. If you want to just try some, or you don't feel like paying out for a whole box, just write to me. That, or you can write to my supplier direct. If so, ask for Tim Doouss (if you ring) he knows all about them. If you prefer to write, the address is: Tim Doouss, Harrow Business Services, 7 Love Lane, Pinner, Missx., HA5 3BE. Tel. 01 868 3301/5756. And what you ask for is: Roneo Contact Sheets, Item No. 42354. Tell Tim I sent you.

[NOTE: I've just found a new Kores stencil with a plastic sheet already attached to the front, at the same price as ordinary stencils - is this a new idea for printwheels? I'm trying them now to see how they turn out without contact sheets - judge for yourself. I'm keeping my fingers crossed.]

I received a copy of The Guilder edited by William Whyte the other day - actually, for the second time. William sent one in time for me to review in Dib 38 but I forgot because I rushed trying to get the zine out on time. So, what's it like? It's a little difficult for me to give it any fair judgement actually; for a 1st issue it was certainly better than Dib's first issue; it's quite scruffy - I could hardly read any of it - but that's no problem as format and presentation often pick up after editors gain experience and become more familiar with their duplicators. It's also very FRP/D&D orientated (something I don't have much experience in), although William is trying to change all that by breaking into the Diplomacy/games hobby. TG costs 40p per issue, is 16 pages long, and has game reviews, book reviews, hobby news, and game openings for Diplomacy. The only real gripe I had with it was the two staples down the page in booklet form. I much prefer the single corner staple in A4 mimeo zines. I wish TG the best of luck with what appears to be a good start. Anyone interested in Traveller, D&D, Hexacapture (Hexawot?) and seeing new zines should give it a try. It's certainly different. Write to:-  
William Whyte, 215 Upper Lisburn Road, Finaghy, Belfast, BT10 0LL.

While I'm on the subject of zines, I see Steve Norledge's zine Rapscallion has made a very smooth shift over from litho to mimeo production; issue 6 sported the title Crapstallion with an excellent drawing of something that can only be described as a minatour without horns sat on a loo farting ('Poot', Steve?) - a superb, and very neat-looking zine. Damn Norledge, but I think Rap looks even better than Dib and he's only just started using the mimeo format! Don't know the cost, but has 38 A4 pages and has enough game openings to make you sick, of Dragonsong (exactly like Sopwith only with dragons instead of planes), Excalibur, Diplomacy, Soccerleague, The Prisoner, Circus Maximus and Downfall. The only thing I don't like about it is the very unnecessary sub-zine tacked on the back, run by David Messenger of Oink fame. All in all though, and I hate to say it, I really do recommend this rubbish bit of tat from the stables of (get it? Crapstallion? Oh never mind):-  
Steve Norledge, 75 Hawkhurst Way, W. Wickham, Kent, BR4 9PE.

ZINE POLL COMPETITION: Yep, ready to jump on any bandwagon, I've come up with an excellent idea (not that I get many ideas you understand) of getting a preview, perhaps some inkling, of who, and what, is likely to win this year's Zine Poll well before it happens. All I want you to do is send in what you think will be in the first five placings, as I did last issue - in the correct order! My

guesses were: Mad Policy, Greatest Hits, Dolchstoss, Acolyte, Hopscotch. Gamefee is 25p, with the winner taking all that's collected after the results of the Zine Poll have been published. I'll be printing the results/guesses as they come in as an added interest. Can YOU guess the first five placings correctly? If so, send them in to me.

And, as an added reminder, don't forget the Zine Poll '84 Deadline: Thursday, July 19th 1984. All votes for the Poll must be sent to: Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 6PG:

[Well damn me! Hopscotch just turned up today with this very same idea for a Zine Poll game in it. Apparently Alan (Parr) ran the game last year. I dimly remember something about it (you must remember, I tend to forget what happened yesterday, never mind last bloody year), but had simply forgotten. Still, it's the only idea I'm likely to get and I'm sticking to it. No-way am I scratching the above. At least I offer a prize!]

Oops, back onto zines (well Hobby Service zines actually). The latest Diplomacy Quarterly from the hobby's Diplomacy Statistician, Pete Calcrafft, has just turned up. Another good issue, giving all the latest Boardman Numbers, a little chat, letters, who owns what computer in the hobby (by the way Pete; I don't own a Dragon. I have an Apple II+ linked to my daisywheel with 2 disk drives, and a BBC B), his latest Diplomacy Ratings System, an Openings Survey, The Finishing Touch (Diplomacy endgames and who won them), and In the Beginning (latest game openings). Good value for money for those interested in Diplomacy. Costs seem a little complicated, if Pete keeps changing things around, being 11p per section + 17p postage. Normally 4 sections per issue. Pete Calcrafft, 25 Garners Lane, Davenport, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 8SD. Tel. 061 483 3604.

Also just turned up is the latest 20 Years On from Mark Billenness. Mark made quite a good job taking over from his brother, Simon, with this zine register. The whole issue was done on Mark's BBC B computer, which should make the job of editing and storage of such a zine a lot easier; plus making the information more reliable for us. A neat looking job for a dot-matrix printer, though lacking the pictorial polish that Simon seemed to give it making full use of the litho capabilities at his disposal. No need to advertise this here as I always print it in Dibs and Drabs at the back. My congratulations to Mark for a smooth takeover though.

JOTTO: I've decided (another good idea?) I'd like to run another game of this. The last two games were so popular, and because other zines seem to be starting it back up again I thought, why not... So, all those interested in playing another Jotto game in Dib should get their names in for next issue. No gamefee, and the prize for the winner is 3 free issue of Dib. The rules are quite simple:-

I choose six words from the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, each six letters long. Each month you send in one word and I then score each letter against each of my six words. For instance, if you submitted DETOUR and the six secret words were: RESORT, BASKET, GENTLE, PRIEST, MORTAR, BOTTLE the scores would be: 4, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3 respectively. Obvious aim is to find all six words.

When you think you know all six words you may take a guess at them (you must guess all six) - but you must get ALL six right! Get one wrong and you're out. Anagrams of the secret words are accepted. If you want to play then send in 3 words/guesses to start things off for next issue. And that's all there is to it...

Just this little space at the bottom. These stencils seem to be cutting okay so far. The only complaint I can find with them is that the plastic sheet is easily caught on the platen rollers when feeding through - which won't help the 'torn stencils' complaint from one user of printwheels in GH.

THE MAKING OF HOBBY HISTORY (or, Legends in Our Time)  
Memoirs of the Godlike, John 'Pryderi' Piggott

Well, young 'un, when you've been in the hobby as long as I have (14 years) I hope your past indiscretions will keep catching up with you! I refer, of course, to the Nationwide televised Diplomacy game, and my own shameful appearance therein.

This started as a perfectly normal game - Courier 71/9, as I recall. I was playing England, and Graeme Levin (he of the bankrupt retail empire) was France. The headed notepaper belonged to the Russian player, one Peter Robertson ('Petrovitch Robertsonoff - Tsar of all the Russias'); in fact, although he didn't do well in the game, he hung on until about 1908, long enough to exhaust his special paper, after which he wrote on ordinary lined paper and signed himself the 'revolutionary' 'Count Nostrebor'.

Anyway, the game lumbered on until by 1910 Graeme had at last got the better of me in our game-long alliance - well, it was a pretty secure alliance by Graeme's normal standards, as he stabbed me only every other move - and I was down to three units. The Nationwide people got involved almost by accident; Graeme was seeking publicity for his first games shop and for Games and Puzzles magazine, and I think he just mentioned postal games to them in passing. But they had just improved their arrangements for regional studios so that, for the first time, material from the regions could be transmitted live over the network. It occurred to one of their junior producers that this postal game, with players living in various far-flung parts of Britain, provided a splendid opportunity to use this new facility.

And so, on 4th April 1974, I found myself travelling the 60 miles from Oxford to Birmingham in an ageing taxi paid for by the BBC. On arrival at Pebble Mill Studios, I was directed to the 'bus shelter' where I was offered a drink of... tea! (The official name for the 'bus shelter' is the 'hospitality room' - something it became only when I sternly demanded whisky and some was brought.) Across the country others were on their way to BBC studios - one to Plymouth, one to Bristol and one to Edinburgh. Graeme Levin was in London.

Came six o'clock and in we went to the studio. First I had to sit quietly for half an hour, with my Diplomacy board set up on a picnic table in front of me, while Tom Coyne read the regional news and introduced other 'Midlands Today' items. At last the big moment arrived. Graeme burred on knowledgeably for a few minutes to Sue Lawley, face to face in the London studio, mainly about his great plans for selling games and how this was a growing market. Then he outlined the strategy he'd used in our own Diplomacy game. Finally Sue Lawley said, 'Well, let's go to John Piggott in our Birmingham studio - what did you feel when France attacked you?'

This was the stab. You have heard about people seeming tongue-tied and frozen in front of the TV cameras? That is how I appeared. Yet it was not quite like that - I had my answer prepared; I had even been briefed about the questions which might be asked. What happened was this: In front of me was a monitor - an ordinary black-and-white TV set with the sound turned off. The sound came to me through an earplug. Thus I could see and hear what was going on. What no-one had told me was that there was a second or so's delay on these, and as I started to say my piece I heard my own voice coming back at me through the hearing aid - a second or so out of synch! I stumbled over my words, thinking that some other idiot was trying to speak at the same time as me...

I recovered eventually, of course. But the magic had departed from the occasion, and when, a month later, I received my cheque for five guineas, this marked the end of my glittering career as a famous TV personality. A short time afterward I became a civil servant.

Well, Tom, you asked for this and by heaven you've got it! I trust the above will satisfy the curious for the next few years at least.

THE CATACOMBS OF COPERNICA  
A Postal AD&D Game by Chris Sandow.

Turns Seven - Nine

SIR GUY DEWAYE (Derek Andrews)

With the help of a "Charm Person" spell Sir Guy has gained the co-operation of the captured pirate, and has learnt a lot of highly useful information. What's more, they have now been led to the pirate's den, where Sir Guy was hoping to dupe the pirate-leader into treating them as allies. Unfortunately the wily captain of the pirates has a trick or two up his sleeve - like a gypsy-girl who can read minds! And the captain has just introduced the girl to Sir Guy....

AINA-AMARTH (Nick Clark)

While exploring the corridors in their area of the dungeon, the paladin and his companions found a room which appeared empty, but from which sounds could be heard. Jumping to the conclusion that there was an invisible creature (or creatures) in the room they threw in an improvised Molotov Cocktail - only to discover that the room (or, to be more precise, the floor of the room) was not quite how it appeared...

RANDOLPH THE RANGER (Dave Tant)

At present, Randolph and Co. are exploring a room which is affected by a peculiar dimness (like a 'Darkness' spell that is only partially working). So far they have discovered a gong, two candles, and a large door-shaped mirror - all of which they are treating with understandable and commendable caution...

CADELLIN SILVERBROW (Simon Craddock)

In hot pursuit of the troll which they bumped into last time, they have now come across the said troll's owner; an eccentric and somewhat paranoid individual, to say the least...

THORN (George North)

Led (sort of!) by Erasmus, and accompanied by the sage's gnomish side-kick and kobold guards (the combination of gnomes and kobolds is making Thorn decidedly suspicious of the whole set-up!), Thorn and his party are off in search of treasure - treasure which is supposed to be protected by many lethal traps, two of which they have already discovered. Erasmus knew how to avoid one trap, and he knew the nature of the other one (involving a pit of spikes to be crossed, with an invisible barrier at the other side - nasty, eh?), so that Thorn was able to find a safe way across. But from here on Erasmus is as ignorant of what's in store for them as Thorn is. They're on their own now...

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT...IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT...IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT...IMPORTA

The Catacombs of Copernica are now ready to be opened to two more players, and as far as I can see, the next two on the waiting list are:-

Victor Hall  
John Boogert

If you could write to me, letting me know whether or not you are still interested in entering, and, if you are, enclosing the £3 game fee required. I will then send you the introductory booklet (Second Edition).