

DIB DIB DIB

441

CONGRATULATIONS to Paul Morton on his recent marriage and
Happy anniversary to Elaine and Ian Tillson on their recent
Richard Wernick on his recent success in gaining his
rate payer and mortgage owner also congratulations to
girl friend on getting such a magnificent catch (Pete's paying
me to say this and please can I have the game fee Gary Piper and
thanks to Mike Dean for the bottle of wine and to you next time
Steve is sorry that you are in the neighbourhood.



This is Dib Dib Dit 41, a game and chat zine for all those that like the casual approach to their gaming. Costing 40p an issue in the UK - this includes postage so I'm not sure what this largish issue will cost to America, South Africa, Australia and Europe yet. For those that wish to subscribe, etc, I'm Tom Tweedy, living at 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513

EDITORIAL

This has been a bad month for me, hobbywise. Shock upon shock every time I open a bloody zine. Fold upon fold... Perspiring Dreams folding, Lokasenna folding, Panzerkreuser folding, Psychopath folding (though I believe Wallace Nicoll and Doug Rowling are taking this on), Acolyte folding, Martin Le Fevre litho machine going bust, and then the results of the latest Zine Poll. What the hell is going on? To say it's depressing is saying the least! I always thought I had a fair idea of how the hobby, my hobby, was constructed. One always has a reasonable idea of what zines are better than others, what zine should appear above what zine in the various polls - everyone knows (or I thought they did). Oh yes, there was always one or two freak surprises. Even though I like Ode I feel it's only fair to say that it wasn't good enough to win 1982's Zine Poll - things like that. So it is with some dismay that I view the wreckage of what has passed the past month; to find my hobby isn't really like I thought it was. So much has changed and I didn't realise - how did I lose touch? The way the hobby is now, with all the folds, is it the way I want it? I suppose if I hang in there, I'll find out - but it'll be an uncomfortable period for me meantime. I'll more than miss a couple of the above zines. Zines like Acolyte I thought would go on for ever. I hope the rumour going round that Pete was driven out of the hobby because of the bad flak he's constantly receiving is not true? Whatever the reason, it's the hobby's loss.

I'm not making a very good argument for the way I feel... probably because I'm feeling to depressed about it. I know what I mean, and if it doesn't come over in the right way, tough on some, I'll get back on the rails next issue let this issue go to pot.

One good thing on the bleak horizon though, is the good ol' reliable Home of the Brave looking superb as an A4 photocopied booklet - exactly the way that I'd like to produce Dib if I could afford the plain paper copier. Mind you, I was aghast at Geoff's revelations about what happened to second-hand photocopiers. Apparently, every time a company wants to upgrade their photocopier, the old one is taken away and smashed! This is done merely to keep the price of the new machines stable - can't have good quality cheap second-hand machines going round on the market you know. Not good for business. But what a crying shame, eh? Doesn't look as though second-hand photocopiers are coming to the gaming hobby after all like the second-hand duplicators did. Unless of course..... some fell off the back of a lorry. As Geoff said, I suppose one could always try making a deal with the odd mechanic (that's occasional, not peculiar) that comes to change them. But how much of a chance is that? There must be some better way to deal with them.

I notice in GH 117 that Pete Birks makes some mention of the fact another magazine holds the rights of the Greatest Hits name, and that if he ever went 'pro' he'd have to change the name to something else. He should worry! I've wanted to change Dib's name for some time now, but won't because of the Archives and my sanity. If I ever did change the name, it wouldn't be Dib (obviously) and I'd feel obliged to start again at issue 1 with whatever the new name would be. I don't fancy that. For some reason the issue number means more to me than the zine name. I guess I use the issue numbers as milestones; the higher they go the more I feel better about the wasted effort. It's silly I suppose, but I do, quite often, think I waste a lot of valuable time and energy doing a 'mere games magazine'. I wonder if my time couldn't be better spent writing something else. Quite frankly, because I do the zine I never get time to work this problem out. Jan says if I'm giving fun to my circulation of 120 (94 subscribers and 26 trades) it must be worthwhile. I suppose when she puts it like that....

However, while I'm knocking myself out each month, little snippets in the odd magazine don't go amiss - like once again in the latest GH Pete says: "I'd like to write something nice about Dib Dib Dib. I'd like to write something nasty about Dib Dib Dib. Unfortunately the latest issue (40) inspires me to write nothing at all." That's the trouble with being quietly efficient, Tom ((plus he mentions a few other names)), people just forget to write about you."

Great eh? That's what I'm doing wrong. I know what he means though. Unlike some editors, I don't have to prove myself by having an opinion on all and sundry. I do have my opinions of course, but generally I keep them to myself. A point which is a great failing in this kind of hobby I can tell you.

It's not that I'm the shy retiring type, or anti-social or anything. It's just that I've been brought up to believe that, by listening, one learns far more about the way of things and the people around you. And if you are the type to shout your mouth off (what I'd call a motor-mouth), generally you end up with someone's foot in it, or taking a licking some other way.

Anyway, this means I'm afraid that Dib will still be sticking to the usual low-profile ways that makes it so unmemorable. No way will I be tricked into the hobby rat race of, "Oh, NMR publishes pub guides, I suppose I should!" Sod that for a lark; that's the long spiralled fall to a fold. And I don't intend doing that yet!

For those newcomers who're interested, I still have back issues of Dib 38, 37, 35 and 33. For anyone that wants them, they cost 20p each including postage. There's not many so it'll be first come first served I'm afraid. After that all spare issues will go to Alan Parr's Zine Bank (advertised in 'Dibs and Drabs'.)

~~~~~

ZINE POLL GAME

Guess the first five placings in this year's Zine Poll in the correct order (if possible). Collected prize (now standing at £1.75p) goes to the closest guess (see below). 25p gamefee has been deducted from credit.

- TOM TWEEDY: Mad Policy, Greatest Hits, Dolchstoss, Acolyte, Hopscotch.
- GEORGE NORTH: Hopscotch, Astradyne, Rapsallion, Dib Dib Dib, Greatest Hits.
- NICHOLAS WHYTE: Acolyte, Dolchstoss, Mad Policy, Rapsallion, Dib Dib Dib.
- SIMON CRADDOCK: Greatest Hits, Mad Policy, Acolyte, NMRI, Dolchstoss.
- RICHARD DOWNES: Mad Policy, Greatest Hits, Hopscotch, Dolchstoss, Acolyte.
- RICHARD BASS: Mad Policy, Greatest Hits, Hopscotch, Acolyte, Dolchstoss.
- JEREMY MILES: Acolyte, Greatest Hits, Dolchstoss, Dib Dib Dib, Church Mouse.

The official result for the top five positions are: 1st Hopscotch, 2nd NMRI, 3rd Mad Policy, 4th Die Poppel-Revue, 5th Dolchstoss. The closest guesses were Simon with 3; Richard D. with 3; Richard B. with 3; and myself with 3. However I think I must drop out because I put Hopscotch last. Simon Craddock is out because he didn't have Hopscotch in his guess at all. Which leaves Richard Downes and Richard Bass in a tie, position wise, except Richard Bass does have Dolchstoss in the right position. So, Richard Bass takes the prize; the princely sum of £1.50! Well guessed Richard... and my thanks to those who entered.

~~~~~

STABBED... BY THE GM
(Cause for complaint?) by Richard Sharp

Ratings and statistics in Diplomacy have always held a fascination for half the hobby, the other half considering them a pretentious waste of time. Though I have always counted myself among the fascinated, my recent readings of old stats zines have made me wonder: just how many games of the 1000+ so far completed in Britain would be disregarded on the grounds of improper GMing if we knew the truth? Certainly these, from my own playing career:-

1973-BG, in which I played France, was recorded as 'abandoned', and I am listed as 'dropped out'. I had in fact NMR'd by accident in Spring 1912 - just one of those things, where you wait a day too long for a letter that never comes. Fortunately, the GM - Hartley Patterson - lived only five miles away, so I took my orders round to his house personally for Autumn 1912. NMR again! Pete Cousins, playing Turkey, refused to continue unless the season was replayed - Hartley took no notice and NMR'd Pete as well. He followed up this fine effort by disappearing from the hobby, complete with War Bulletin. I think Pete would have won, with me second, but the game should be rated as a 4-way draw.

1974-BJ, in which I played France again, was an incredible business. When the Spring 1901 adjudication arrived, the English orders (attacking France) had been written by someone I'd never heard of. I rang the GM, Brian Yare. 'Oh yes,' he said, 'England missed the deadline, but fortunately so-and-so happened to drop in, so I got him to write some English orders.' 'Right,' I said, 'either you readjudicate with England NMRing or I resign.' 'You can't resign,' he said, 'my house rules don't allow it.' Naturally, I sent no orders... but when the next issue of Grafeti arrived there was my name as France, and there were my units moving! Who ordered them? Yare himself, probably. This game should be considered a variant, and is not rated by me.

1974-N, in which I played Germany, is the saddest case. This superb game, which lasted until 1924, had everything: Nicky Palmer playing the Scatter Theory, a devastating stab to take England out in 1903 (a rarity indeed), superb defence by Dave Johnson and Roland Prevot, the two best players I've ever encountered, to deprive me of what looked a certain win, and a 5-unit Turkey with A(Bul), F(BAR), F(NWG), F(NAO) and F(Cly)! By 1924 Dave Johnson (F) had recovered from 3 centres to 14, but masterly defence by Roland (R) had secured a 4-way draw position, in which I was represented by A(Ber), having at one time had 16 centres. The GM, John Piggott, rightly pointed out that the draw was certain, and called for votes. When Ethil failed to arrive, I rang John. 'Yes,' he said, 'Ethil's late, but 1974-N is over - everyone voted for the draw.' A fitting end to a great game... but, Ethil never appeared again, and I myself left the hobby. Many months later I got a letter from Robert Correll, the Canadian who played Turkey. John, it seemed, had let 1974-N be orphaned to Ode but had said nothing about the draw vote. Nor apparently had he passed on my permanent order [A(Ber) S RUSSIAN A(Mun)]. I knew nothing of this - I hadn't even opened Ode. Why should I? I'd left the hobby, and I'd never played in Ode anyway. But the crowning blow was that Robert Correll had also NMR'd... hardly surprising, since his Ode had travelled by sea to Canada, taking four months to reach him. As a result the game was conceded to a very surprised Dave Johnson. But it should be rated as a 4-way draw.

Filibuster 7 was the unkindest cut, though. This was my comeback game in 1981, and I was admittedly getting hammered by Geoff Challenger and Doug Wakefield. GM Adrian Baird stayed with us for our anniversary weekend in October, as usual, and I gave him my orders in front of numerous witnesses. Not only an NMR, but Adrian commented 'Typical Sharp.' Nice to have friends, isn't it?

((I suppose there should be some method of canceling games if there's some legitimate 'cause of complaint'. I think the only person to sort that out though is hobby statistician, Pete Calcraft. But this is all supposing that one is even

bothered about where one comes in the ratings. Richard seems to... he goes on to say:-

"I've played 33 games; won 3; drawn 8; come 2nd 4 times; 3rd 3 times; 4th twice; 5th 4 times; 6th twice; 7th 3 times; and dropped out 4 times. Not brilliant, admittedly, but I defy you to devise any method of rating me below average."

Which might well be true I suppose - according to the latest Wink Thompson Ratings List, dated September 83, in 1st position we have David Phillips with a rating of 286.42 with 5 games; your position (Richard) is 120, with a rating of 133.27 after 30 games - but I mistook yours for John Piggott's position of 140, rated 121.79 for 39 games. Even so, with Andy Davidson coming at 159 rated 114.95 for 64 games (!), and Colin Grubb 350, coming last, rated at 44.04 with his 6 games, I think it could be said that you are still above average. Though to be quite frank, I'm one from the old school that believes coming 2nd, 3rd, etc, is nowhere. The name of any game is coming first, or if not that, at least, to draw. To my way of thinking, losing 30 games is abysmal whichever way you look at it.))

~~~~~

AN OLD GAME REVIEWED - 'CONTRABAND'  
by George North

[The game has a sticker on the outside reminding me I paid the exorbitant price of 11/6d in old money for the game. The token money used by the players also ages the game a bit, and yet it has stood the test of time as a fairly decent game for a small party with nothing better to do with themselves.]

This is a game for three or more players. The object is to smuggle contraband through the customs without paying too much duty on the luggage, which is represented by a pack of cards - there being fifty-four cards to a pack. The cards represent articles upon which to pay or not to pay duty.

| LIST             | DUTY | FINE | TOKEN MONEY     |
|------------------|------|------|-----------------|
| Brandy           | £5   | £15  | 50 x 5 = 250    |
| Whisky           | £5   | £15  | 50 x 10 = 500   |
| Perfume          | £10  | £30  | 25 x 20 = 500   |
| Nylons           | £10  | £30  | 25 x 50 = 1250  |
| Camera           | £15  | £40  | 25 x 100 = 2500 |
| Watch            | £20  | £50  | 25 x 200 = 5000 |
| Diamond Necklace | £250 | £100 | ----            |
| Crown Jewels     | £200 | £400 | 10000           |

First a Customs Official must be selected. His term of office lasts until the pack of cards is exhausted and then somebody different will become the Customs Official. The fairest way is for every player to have an equal number of turns at being the Customs Officer. The CO then shuffles the pack of cards and plonks it face down on the table. He also shares out the token money equally amongst the players, also counting himself. Any money left over is not wanted for this game.

The player on the left of the Customs Officer will now take four cards from the pack, looks at them and shows no-one else. He must then declare items on which he intends to pay duty and places the four cards face down for the player on his left who is the second player. Having declared what luggage is on the cards he consults the above list and pays the Customs Official.

The second player may now pick up the four cards and look at them without showing anyone else. He may discard just one card but must pick up another from the top of the pack. Now this second player must declare what he has in his luggage and pay any as shown on the list above. He then puts down the four cards for the third player who may change just one and declare, etc, etc.

But don't go away - it gets better. Let us start with the first player again. He picks up four cards and he sees he has 2 watches and a Diamond Necklace which is going to cost him £90 in duty if he declares - so he looks innocent and says he has nothing to declare.

The customs man is suspicious but will have to pay the first player £200 if he searches and finds nothing. If he tells the first player to open his luggage the first player will have to reveal what he is smuggling through, pay the fine according to the above list and also pay for the goods he is smuggling.

The customs man is fooled and says nothing. The first player is all smug because he has got through the customs, but he must not be too smug because when he lays down the four cards with the two watches and the diamond necklace the second man must either pick up the same stuff or turn 'informer' and tell the customs man to search. He doesn't always do this because if the Customs Official searches and finds nothing, the second player who is the 'informer' must pay the first player £200. On the other hand, he does sometimes because if he informs the Customs Official must stop in and search. And if the Customs Official finds articles upon which duty should have been paid (and the player has not), he rewards the informer with £50. Meanwhile the smuggler must pay the fine and the duty according to the above list.

So the first player looks innocent and he gets past the Customs Official, and he doesn't look too smug and rouse the suspicions of the second player who can now pick up the four cards which have been placed face down in front of him - the player sees the two watches and the diamond necklace and promptly has a heart attack.

No, he doesn't do that. He can swear at the first player under his breath but must look innocent enough to fool the Customs Official same as the first player. He decides to get rid of the necklace so places that card on the discard pile and picks up a card from the fresh deck. It is a bottle of whisky.

He declares the bottle of whisky and pays the Customs Official the £5 and places the four cards with the watches and the whisky in front of the third player. The Customs Official is fooled a second time but only the third player can turn informer. The first player may urge the third player to turn informer because he knows there are watches in the luggage, but the third player must decide whether to believe or not believe the first player (mostly he will not, because if he informs and a search is made and nothing found, he has to pay the victim of the search £200).

So the first player does not inform and picks up the cards and finds two watches and a bottle of whisky. He is choked but does not show it. He changes the one watch card and picks up the Crown Jewels. He is looking as innocent as he can and either declares it all and pays up, declares just the watch and the whisky, or says nothing to declare and swears on his mother's grave.

He may also declare diplomatic bag. The Diplomatic bag card means you can go through the Customs and not pay for a single contraband item. There is only one Diplomatic Bag but I have known four players claim such immunity in one game. The Customs Official may still search if he doesn't believe, but he pays £200 to the man if he is telling the truth. But if the player is lying he must pay for all items upon which duty should be paid, plus the fines.

Whenever the luggage is searched the four cards are revealed for all to see, and then the Customs Official places them on the discard pile. The next player will take up four more cards from the pack and start again declaring or not declaring etc.

Obviously the idea is to catch the player with the crown jewels if possible. The game ends at a pre-arranged time, or when everybody has had an equal turn at Customs Official, or whenever. The player with the most money at the end of the game is the winner. Borrowing is permissible but all debts must be paid up

before the count up.

((Thanks George - please accept this issue free. In actual fact Waddingtons I believe still sell this game. Though the game is now called 'Smuggle'. Jan bought it for me about a year ago - a nice simple game, good fun, and certainly not as difficult to play as you made it seem, George. Or is it just that I had to type it up? I can't find the game pack offhand (I think my son filched it) so can't tell you what the price was, but certainly I can remember it being a good fun, backstabbing game to play.))

### THE 1984 ZINE POLL RESULTS.

Well, a strange set of results this time. My congratulations though go to Alan Parr for a well-deserved win - Hopscotch is a good, solid, steady games zine. And this result proves that his recent inclusion in this Poll was the right thing to do. Hopscotch is more the face of this hobby that I suppose any other zine I know of... I'm sure Alan was modest enough to not even dream that H would come first, and it was probably as much as a surprise to him as finding GH out of the Top Ten. This is what the table looks like since the Poll was started...

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

  

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

| Poll No. 11        | 12           |                                              |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Pos.: Aug 1983     | Aug 1984     |                                              |
| 1st Greatest Hits  | Hopscotch    | (A worthy, and I'd think popular winner)     |
| 2nd Mad Policy     | NMRI         | (I bet Brian is fed up still not making 1st) |
| 3rd The Acolyte    | Mad Policy   | (I thought this would come first)            |
| 4th NMRI           | Die Pop-Rev  | (Although I hear it's good - never seen it)  |
| 5th Denver Glont   | Dolchstoss   | (A good return for Richard)                  |
| 6th Hopscotch      | Cut & Thrust | (Is this a joke?)                            |
| 7th Ode            | The Acolyte  | (Should have been higher)                    |
| 8th H of the Brave | Church Mouse | (A good position - Dave should be pleased)   |
| 9th Lokasenna      | M Die Spuhl  | (Never even heard of it!!)                   |
| 10th 20 Years On   | TTYF         | (Never seen it)                              |

There was a good turnout of voters this year - although the greater increase seems to be because of the inclusion of European zines. 1983 had 224 voters, this year had 258. A good turnout, maybe. However it does pose the question of whether it's a good thing attracting all and sundry to take part and vote, at the expense of making a right balls up of the whole poll. When Richard gave me the results over the phone (before they had reached me in print) I thought he had to be joking; one of the renowned Walkerdine hoaxes. Unfortunately it was true. It seems to me all of a sudden this perfectly fun-type poll has been turned into a farce. Voting, although not rigged by Richard, must be controlled by the few who (maybe even unknowingly) vote not on merit, but for position (i.e. prop votes of 10 one end, and grudge votes of 1 the other); a failing the the Average voting system allows.

Of course all this is mere supposition on my part, but then how else can zines such as Greatest Hits be pushed so low? Take a look at some of the positions: Dib came 19th (it was 11th last year - this suits me fine considering the quality zines that came below me); Home of the Brave 20th (from 8th! how come?); Greatest Hits 22nd (marks more than anything else I think, that tactical voting was used); Denver Glont 32nd (though it's admitted DG was sunk by Glover himself not wanting anyone to vote for him); 20 Years On went down from 10th position last year to 29th, though this was certainly because of the editorial changeover; and last but not least, Watch Your Back 17th last year went down to 34th. Oh the fickle readers... Surely these magazines haven't deteriorated to level these new positions reflect? I refuse to believe it!

According to the results 59 people voted for Dib. This is strange because according to the list, only 50 (out of a circulation of 126) of my subscribers and trades voted in the poll altogether - and that's assuming the wives were voting as well. Dib subscribers: Ken Bain, Pete Birks, Mark & Simon Billenness, Richard Cross, John Bycroft, Mike Close, Nicholas Clifton, Jake Cheung, Brian Creese, Simon Craddock, Geoff Challinger, Terry Dibden, Konrad Dolata, Mike Deans, Mike Dean, Richard Downes, John Dodds, Graham Freeman, John Field, Neil Hopkins, Steve Jones, Nick Kinzett, Geoff Kemp, Robert Lozynskyj, Pete Mason, Richard Morris, John Marsden, Jeremy Miles, Grahame MacLennan, George North, Pete Northcott, Alan & Jill Parr, Sandy Peters, John Piggott, Gary Piper, Matt Quartermain, Richard Sharp, James Steele, Dave Tint, Dave Thomas, Pete & Kat Tamlyn, Larry Trask, Chris Tringham, Richard Walkerdine, John Wilman, Ian Winstanley, Nicholas Whyte. So how come 9 extra people get to vote for a zine I never send them? How am I supposed to know if they read it regularly? Somefink wrong somewhere.

My link to the poll is <http://www.dib.com>. I'm at least supporting the thing keeps the poll alive and gives me something to talk about. As for those who didn't vote, don't worry about it. I know many of you still think highly of the zine, but either don't want to take part in the poll or just don't have the time to vote. Till next year...



JOTTO Turn 4

|                  |             |                 |             |
|------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Richard Steel:   | 4th: 122011 | Richard Sharp:  | 4th: 314222 |
| James Conroy:    | 4th: 32131  | George North:   | 4th: 221302 |
| Ulf Jiretorn:    | 4th: 331212 | Brian Moore:    | 4th: NMRI   |
| Larry Trask:     | 4th: 021002 | Richard Morris: | 4th: 111103 |
| Richard Lampard: | 4th: 313131 | Tim Collieu:    | 4th: 322222 |
| Richard Downes:  | 1st: 231211 | Nicholas Whyte: | 4th: NMRI   |
|                  | 2nd: 222212 | Victor Hall:    | 1st: 213121 |
|                  | 3rd: 422131 |                 | 2nd: 222102 |
|                  | 4th: 212314 |                 | 3rd: 223113 |
|                  |             |                 | 4th: 222113 |

Questions: (1.) Do I allow hyphenated words (e.g. ACK-ACK) - No. (2.) Do I allow plurals not actually in the SOED (e.g. CAMELS) - Yes, it'll be marked/adjudicated, but that doesn't mean to say I have any plurals as my secret words. Finally, there's a NORD if you want to catch up just send in two guesses.



LETTERS

And to start with I think, a couple of letters regarding the price increase of Dib I mentioned last issue - both very different indeed...

COLIN PICKARD:

"With regard to the proposed price increase: why should you subsidise our (90 subscribers) hobbies? Are all zine editors financial masochists? ((Yes)) For the work you put in to helping us all with our hobbies the least you should expect is to break even. I think you ought to increase the price of Dib accordingly."

((Nice of you to say so, Colin, but 40p really is a realistic price. Most other mimeo mags charge this, and, if for nothing else, Dib must remain competitive.))

oo000oo

MARTIN CLIFFORD-KING:

"I see your attempts at coaxing money out of the readers has come in for some criticism. ((Coaxing? Criticism? Where?)) I don't object to them (the attempts - I'm not sure about the readers!), but I'm not so sure of their effectiveness. When I get a zine, I keep the zine and throw the rest of the gubbins in the bin; so when it comes to writing orders three weeks later, I haven't got a clue of my credit. I much prefer the 'bad boys list' or credit written on the zine."

((Are we talking about the same thing? Last issue I wasn't 'coaxing' extra money out of readers; I was letting them know what has to be the price if I'm to be able to afford keeping the zine going. As for criticism, I've heard none. Who could, or would, criticise a charge of 40p?

As for your other point, Martin, my wife sorts out all the credit. And as she needs every name to go with an envelope, it really is much easier for her to put the credit by the name. This is generally all done while I'm still typing up the zine. Putting credit on the zine makes for a longer turnaround.

Anyway, everyone should know when I need more money; I always send out a polite credit renewal/reminder form whenever credit gets low.))

oo000oo

And to my plea regards boxed game flyers and CGS/HDF money...

SIMON BILLINNESS:

"As regard the 1829/Diplomacy box flyers - I've arranged for Graham Staplehurst to sort things out with Le Fevre/Tringham/HP Gibson/Hartland Trefoil & co. He's a very reliable sort and so, hopefully, he can sort out the mess caused by the breakdown of Le Fevre's machine since I'll be in the States there's nothing I can do any more."

((Does anyone know if Graham has sorted anything out? From the Diplomacy point of view CGS applicants have slowed down considerably. The only newcomers to the hobby I've seen lately arrived via Imagine and Flagship - and not many of these. Are newcomers not welcomed in the hobby any more? Or is it because Martin Le Fevre's machine has broken down and consequently the Novice Package isn't being sent out?))

oo000oo

ANDREW SMITH:

"I sense that the traditional English meal is reserved for the winter months... is there a traditional English summer meal? I can't think of one (I don't really think that 'Strawberries & Cream' counts). Your lettercol in issue 40 mentions eels. Recently I had some conger eel put in front of me. As well as being very reasonably priced (to suit the self-catering student's pocket) it was also surprisingly very good to eat."

((I never fancied the look of eels, but I've always envied the way some people seem to eat them with such relish; they appear to enjoy them so much. Although, I've made up my mind to try everything once before I meet my maker - drawing the line at unlawful acts of course.

As for traditional summer English meals... what about salmon & cucumber sandwiches? Cockles? Fish 'n' Chips (eaten anytime). But it's my guess the English are generally too busy to worry overmuch about food in the hot weather (if they ever do at all!), and just stick to a casual approach, as they might their clothes.))

oo000oo

JOHN PIGGOTT:

"Unfortunately the great food debate must now end, Larry having stabbed himself with the reference to steak sandwiches. This fetish for putting bread around things is of course an American speciality; and what with bread being so cheap, they naturally have money left over to sue each other, pay medical bills, make tax-deductible contributions to Nixon's campaign funds plus all the other things Americans love so much.

As for ethnic foods, I've never had snails; didn't like the look of them. But I have eaten frog's legs. I could hardly turn down the chance, although they cost 16 francs. In fact, they're quite innocuous, with a very mild taste, one very easy to acquire I think."

((Once again, I've never fancied the thought of frog's legs, but (\*Sigh\*) I guess I'll have to try them someday. I agree entirely that Larry has sunk himself talking about steak sandwiches, but, I fear we haven't heard the last from this American verbalist.))

oo000oo

Talk of the devil...

LARRY TRASK:

"Pecan pie? Hominy grits? Gumbo? What is this Piggott person gibbering about? ((Gibbering? John? He'll not stand for that...))

Perhaps I'd better make it clear that I am not only an American but a northern American, and, like all northerners, I regard the southerners as something of an alien species. That goes double for their food, and all these bizarre objects mentioned by Piggott are purely southern - I would no more eat a hominy grit than a sheep's eyeball. My native cuisine is the pot roast and the pumpkin pie, succotash, johnny-cake, Boston baked beans and hash brown potatoes, toll house cookies, sloppy joes, devil's food cake, and the great American BLT. Now that's food! Away with your English offal, your French frills, and your southern slop! Hot turkey sandwiches and strawberry shortcake forever!

Of course, being raised on this fabulous cuisine leaves one ill-prepared for the rigours of the English diet. Like all Americans, I had the English mustard experience soon after arriving on these shores. This trial-by-mustard ordeal consists of making a ham sandwich, spreading it with a thick layer of English mustard, and biting into it. In the USA, mustard is a spicy sandwich spread; here, in contrast, mustard is a particularly potent variety of carbolic acid, and should carry a HAZCHEM label and be stocked in the shops next to the Domestos and the caustic soda. ((Buncha softies these yanks...))

And then, too, I've had the English cake experience, or rather experiences. I've experienced your aptly named "sponges", which are so amazingly dry that, unless the consumer has been alert enough to coat them first with cherry jelly, they instantly absorb every molecule of water in the oral cavity, leaving the hapless victim to face major surgery to remove the impacted object from the environs of his epiglottis. And I've experienced your Christmas cake, that indestructible time capsule for sixpences, closely resembling a slab of Irish peat but far more durable. ((I am aghast.... phillistine!))

But most of all, after the mustard experience, I remember the English wedding cake experience. In my early years here I attended a friend's wedding

reception, complete with traditional English wedding cake. This consisted of a slab of asphalt-like material, covered with a thick layer of what appeared to be almond-flavoured bricklayers' mortar. The host found it impossible to insert a knife into the cake; two of us, by leaning all our weight on the knife, were just barely able to force it slowly through the cake, an exhausting labour not dissimilar to carving up a tarmac road. An American friend of mine getting married in England, determined to avoid a similar fate, gave the bakers firm instructions and the recipe for a proper American wedding cake. Bemused, they followed instructions, and produced a lovely, light, tender cake of impressive proportions. However, she had forgotten to give them instructions for the icing, and so this splendid cake arrived encased in the usual thick layer of bricklayers' mortar and utterly sealed off from the outside world. A knife applied with moderate force to the outer surface of this object had no effect; a knife applied with tremendous force still failed to penetrate the mortar, but succeeded in deforming it considerably, with the unexpected result that the cake inside, designed merely for eating and not for reinforcing bomb shelters, gave way gracefully. The so-called icing thus travelled all the way down to the table without allowing itself to be penetrated by the knife, thus succeeding brilliantly in its assigned task of protecting the edible interior from the attempted ravages of the guests' incisors. For all I know the damn thing is still inside there, another triumph for the resourceful British cuisine."

((Well that explains it; you were either using a cheap American-made blunt bowie knife (instead of one of our finely-honed Sheffield steel blades), or it's as they they say: "If yer don't get brought up on English mustard and sixpences coated in Christmas cake, yer can't cut wedding cake!" An old English proverb. A bit like the sword in the stone theme in reverse.))

oo000oo

NICHOLAS WHYTE

"Theodore Sturgeon's First Law of SF is, 90% of all SF is rubbish; but then, 90% of everything is rubbish.

This applies to all kinds of music too. However, we can safely assume that most of the rubbish will not survive. Since more classical music was written when people were dead the rubbish has had a lot more time to get lost, and a great amount of it would never have got a patron in the first place, so I find that the classical music I have heard, I do like most of it - the only composer who really is pathetic is Bela Bartok. I like a good tune or a good harmony or both - Bartok has neither. The same goes for heavy metal bands. I seriously doubt that any heavy metal records will be remembered in the same way that Beethoven is remembered today - and remember, Beethoven was a trendsetter in his time. The good pop music is the stuff that survives - e.g. the Beatles. Even though there are many people who don't like them their records still sell respectably ((?)) well. Remember the Emperor's original reaction to The Marriage of Figaro; "Far too noisy, my dear Mozart. Far too many notes."

What I am saying is that you can't judge music too soon, or simply from accidentally listening to Top of the Pops, which every week is at least 70% rubbish. ((What happened to the 90%?)) As you've probably guessed I'm not too keen on pop music either, meaning music written within the last 10 years, but I approach every piece I hear with an open mind. Do you count Vangelis as writing pop music? The piece of his music used to introduce the late night snooker on the Beeb is very nice, but was written recently. If Larry doesn't count recent music as Pop music simply because he likes it that could be called hypocrisy, but never mind."

oo000oo

IAIN FORSYTH:

"I have no wish to get involved in an argument with Larry Trask over the dubious merits of South Africa's political system. I wished to make only two points. Firstly, sport is an ineffectual political weapon and should not be used as such. Sporting boycotts of South Africa will not hasten political change here. Such change has occurred and will occur only through gradual political

evolution. Those who delude themselves into thinking otherwise are both naive and ignorant of the true situation in this country. Perhaps Larry would care to explain to an Afghan tribesman what benefits accrued to that country through the boycott of the 1980 Olympics? I can see none.

My second point was that sportsman should be free to choose against whom they wish to compete. If David Gower wants to teach the Kremlin how to bat then let him do so without issuing dire threats as to the consequences. It's his decision, and in a free country why should that preclude him from playing for England for the next four years? Who knows, perhaps he might persuade just one Russian that Britain wasn't such a terrible place after all. And maybe David Gower would discover that not all Russians have two heads and an AK 47. Wouldn't that then bring Russia and Britain just a tiny bit closer together, and isn't that what sport should really be about?"

((A spot on argument, and all of which I agree with entirely - and said so last issue. It doesn't matter what the situation is in whatever country; sport should be a method of bringing people together, and should not be used as a weapon or vessel to bring about political change. Political views are only a matter of which side you decide to argue from - and, sometimes they're pretty damn petty arguments at that.))

oo000oo

LARRY TRASK (AGAIN!):

"I had originally intended to pick up Mike Dean's comments on English in his own zine, but I was too busy last month to write. I'm therefore extremely grateful to you for giving me a second chance.

So you and Mike Dean think that it's Americans who have trouble with English, eh? ((Ah, I never said so, Larry)) Well, let's look at the facts.

Three centuries ago, a number of Englishmen pulled up their tent pegs in Amersham and Wigan and set off to populate the environs of Kenosha, Wisconsin. Naturally they took with them their sturdy English tongue, which has since flourished in the prairies as nowhere else. But it's obvious to all concerned that some funny things have happened somewhere along the line. Let's consider what they are.

Take pronunciation first: 300 years ago all English speakers pronounced their Rs in all positions. We still do, as do the Irish and the Scots. But fairly recently the English got into the vulgar habit of dropping their Rs in certain positions, so that most of them no longer make any distinction of pronunciation between FATHER and FARTHER, or between BALMY and BARMY, or between TUBA and TUBER. This comical pronunciation has even come to be accepted as 'posh' in England. The very posh Brits take this to extremes, so that, not only do TA and TAR become identical, but both of them become homophonous with TIRE and TOWER - to Americans, the English cricket captain appears to be called DAVID GAH.

The English have almost managed to lose track of the vowel difference between BOOR and BORE - a distinction retained by all Americans. Indeed, some Englishmen have confessed to me that they don't even distinguish the meanings of these two words!

In a slightly different vein, we Yanks have retained the original pronunciation of such words as MISSILE and FERTILE - the English, in contrast, having suddenly learned to read, have decided that these words ought to be pronounced, like MILE. No doubt you would also like to pronounce MOUNTAIN as 'moun-tane', because of RAIN.

But the most amazing thing you've done to English pronunciation is to decide to eliminate as many syllables from the language as possible. As a consequence, MEDICINE in English mouths comes out as 'medcine', POLICE as 'pleece', PRIMARILY as something like 'primely', and both TEMPORARILY and TEMPORALLY as, roughly, 'temprly'. It's as though you had decided that no word of English should be more than one syllable long. We Yanks, in contrast, are quite up to the task of pronouncing all the syllables that our common ancestors pronounced.

Not convinced? What about grammar? American English retains the traditional distinction between I INSIST THIS IS DONE (a strong claim) and I INSIST THIS BE

DONE (a demand for action); British English has virtually lost the second form and uses the first form indifferently for both meanings. Similarly, you limeys, by losing the traditional participle GOTTEN, have lost the difference between I'VE GOTTEN IT (I've obtained it'); no doubt you will also soon be saying 'I've forgot'.

Vocabulary then? American English retains the splendidly evocative Anglo-Saxon word FALL (for the season), while you Brits have lost it in favour of the colourless French affection Autumn - no doubt introduced by the same sort of people who pepper their speech today with au contraire. ((No doubt already spoken by the Pilgrim fathers also))

In many cases we have given you back a word that you carelessly lost - just to cite one example, that vigorous verb TO QUIT had disappeared from British English until it was introduced from America several decades ago. ((Then of course Larry there is Kentucky fried, hamburger, bussing, gray, male suspenders, not forgetting AIDS, Herpes...))

Still skeptical, or even sceptical? Consider spelling, an area in which every Brit is darkly convinced the Yanks have been up to no good. Take the suffix in words like REALIZE and JEOPARDIZE. In the States we retain the traditional spelling, but in England in the 18th century the suffix became unaccountably confused with the quite distinct suffix of surprise and advertise, and the bastard spellings REALISE and JEOPARDISE became increasingly common. Indeed, these ignorant spellings are now the norm in England, though a few bastions of conservatism, such as the Times, continue to resist the innovation. Or what about such words as CENTER and THEATER? Until the 18th century, the spellings with -ER were universal in English, but then once again you Brits were afflicted with that incomprehensible desire to ape the French, and the ludicrous innovations CENTRE and THEATRE were inflicted upon the hapless British Public. ((But Larry the 18th century in England is renowned for being the age of Reason, and of the Enlightenment, can we help it if you American Colonials, lag so far behind?))

The conclusion is inescapable. The well known vigour and responsiveness of American English are soundly embedded in a conservative respect for the traditions of language. The more coarsely-textured British idiom, however, has lost many of the useful and subtle distinctions which formerly characterized the language here too, and it has suffered grievously from an abject subservience to French influence. We can only hope that the renewal made possible by increased contact with the sturdier American variety will be in time to prevent British English from deteriorating further into a series of monosyllables muttered through clenched teeth."

((What have I started?! This letter is being left for others more capable to answer. Come on lads, you're not going to let this yank have it all his own way, are you?))

oo000oo

ANDREW SMITH:

"Decent Heavy Literature?: a difficult one. Start with Dickens, whom I will not rave about at length here, save to say I've read all his books. Or, for more up to date stuff, try Samuel Beckett or William Godding. 'The Sun' is not a patch on them.

Finally... can't someone do something about Mike Close, or have they already tried?"

((Many people have tried.... it hasn't done any good so far though. If you're volunteering for the job, see he gets the chop before the 'Ode 42eme' Top Ten game we're both in finishes, will you?))

oo000oo

And just to finish, a letter that I held over from last issue....

RICHARD DOWNES:

"I feel that you have made a wise choice in buying a BBC. I mean who wants