

# 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

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#### 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?

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((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.))

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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