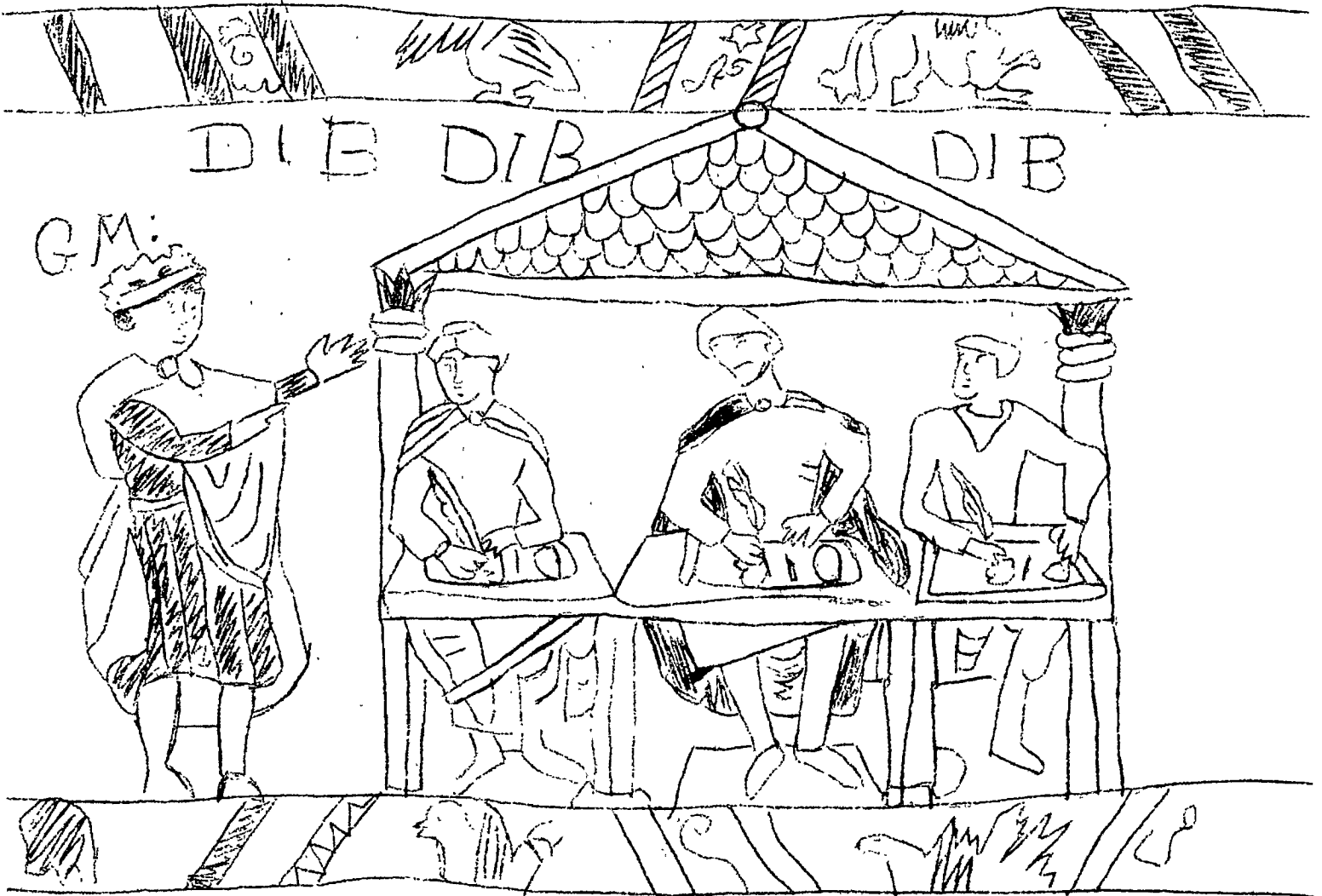


DIB DIB DIB

45

one of the longer established
zines



Welcome to Dib Dib Dib 45 - the not-so-special New Year edition which carries on in the old tradition of games, chat, hoaxes, feuds, and other such ridiculous pastimes. This issue will cost 40p to all those in the UK; and 23p + postage for overseas. Anyone wanting to subscribe, or merely wishes to send more money, send it to me, Tom Tweedy, 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513

EDITORIAL

Ah, Christmas was a great time - a little quieter than some I've had, but a nice break nevertheless. While I remember let me just thank everyone who sent me Christmas cards (I must have had 200+) and best wishes. Yes, we have made a note of those who did, and the laggards, the scrooges who didn't. Mind you, there were a couple of exceptions who made their excuses, they tried to an' all that, but something cropped up; the postman ate it or something. One such was Richard Sharp, who said:-

"Reason you didn't get a card from us is that you live in Amersham, therefore I left it on the hall table with this letter ((the one in the lettercol)) to await suitable moment for delivery - it's still there. Sorry!"

Typical, eh? What a cheapskate... says he remembered... nearly. He was right on one thing though, I do live in Amersham. I wouldn't mind so much but, knowing Richard, if he DID remember then the card will be tucked away in a draw somewhere ready to send NEXT year! It's easy to see how he can afford his right-wing ideals. But, enough of this banter, I'm getting a bit carried away here... Christmas.

Yes, once again I managed to overdo it: each New Year I swear - recently on a stack of Dib's - NEVER AGAIN! Santa managed to send a lot of presents though. I got Jan what she wanted: a bag of peat, an adjustable spanner and other such useful things she so desperately needed. (You think I'm joking?) Stuart got her something ridiculous like a personalised leather credit-card holder - now she's begging me to fill it using MY cards. This could be a set up... she already has my chequebook (on the ridiculous pretext that I'd spend the money on non-essentials). I got some stuff for my computer, cigars (I have given up smoking but I like a nice cigar after the Christmas dinner and such times), wine, a gold twin-blade razor (very decadent), tapes, books, ZZ Top's 'Eliminator' album, cough cough, um... 'Green Velvet' LP, the usual socks and tie from the mother-in-law (in colours that can blind at night in a thick fog at sixty paces), and last but not least, a genuine replica flintlock pistol (also from the mother-in-law) guaranteed not to rust wherever one might happen to bury it. I'm hoping I don't have to keep hanging it up on the wall every time mother-in-law comes! Actually, I've just thought of a great idea - why don't I put them up as first prize in the Jotto game? I bet Jan won't let me... I'm sure it'd attract a lot of subscribers to play though, don't you think?

HOBBY BITS: Roll up, roll up! John Marsden has decided to run a new ID competition in Ode called, THE 1985 INTIMATE DIPLOMACY KNOCKOUT COMPETITION. (A grand title, eh?) The last such a competition was run by Richard Hucknall in Fall of Eagles - of which, I am proud to say, I won the nice tidy prize of £40! I like ID games, and certainly I was very tempted to enter this one (as it's a cinch that I could win it again). Unfortunately I have too much on my plate at the moment. Still, I wouldn't hesitate in recommending you all play in this one (if you can even get in that is). Sixteen players will be signed up and most of the gamefees will go into a Prize Fund. The fee is £3.50 (£2 will be paid to the winner, and 75p to the losing semi-finalist) therefore First Prize will be, if all places are subscribed, £32, and second prize £12. Non-subscribers to Ode may play, and all those interested (hurry up if you wish to be sure of a place) should send their cheque for £3.50 accompanied by a s.s.a.e. to John Marsden, 17 Church Road, St. Leonards, Hastings, East Sussex, TN37 6EF.

Actually, talking of Ode, John Marsden did a very interesting frequency survey on British zines in his latest issue (62), with Dib coming a very respectable 5.7 - which was about middle of the list. The frequency of the top zine, Dolchstoss, was a very slick 4.25, and frequency of the bottom, Road, was 7.7. John worked it out that the average for 1984 was 5.55 weeks - the reason that Dib was higher than this was because of my long 11 week holdover over the summer break (remember when we had the Dalmatian puppies?). As it was I had an intrim deadline for games anyway so I'm not sure the slowish 5.7 frequency counts. The frequency for Dib last year was 5.13 so, this being the case, I guess that makes for a fairly steady 5 weekly zine considering. Not that it matters much anyway because I'll always muck up my frequency with long deadlines over Christmas and suchlike. Read into the frequency list what you will, but one thing that is interesting is the fact that zine turnaround times seem to be getting longer; when I first entered the hobby zines tended to be 4 weekly, now 5 weekly seems more the norm.

According to Nick Kinzett's Zeeby, MANORCON is on, and will be held at the same place, The Manor House, Northfield, Birmingham - HOWEVER, since Zeeby hit the streets Pete Calcraft has released a Diplomacy Quarterly flyer stating that Manorcon is now most definitely OFF (at least, until the summer time). A possible alternative venue is being looked into for about the 19th-21st July, but more will be put out about this later. Meanwhile the people concerned:-
Cheques (though don't send anything yet) should be made out to 'Universities Diplomacy Tournament' and sent to Richard Walkerdine (Treasurer), 144 Stoughton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 6PG.
Organised by Pete Calcraft (Secretary), 13 Ridgeway Road, Long Ashton, Nr. Bristol, BS18 9EX. Tel. 0272 393357
Inquiries and offers to help to Nick Kinzett (Chairman), 11 Daleway Road, Green Lane, Coventry, CV3 6JF. Tel. 0203 414759

ATTENTION FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO PLAY SOPWITH IN DIB - please check Sopwith Waiting List on the back page.

~~~~~

JOTTO Turn 8

|                  |             |                 |             |
|------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Richard Sharp:   | 8th: 132020 | James Cowie:    | 8th: 242212 |
| George North:    | 8th: NMR!   | Ulf Jiretorn:   | 8th: 414111 |
| Brian Moore:     | 7th: 332120 | Richard Morris: | 8th: NMR!   |
|                  | 8th: 222311 |                 |             |
| Richard Lampard: | 7th: 323113 | Tim Collièu:    | 8th: NMR!   |
|                  | 8th: 121122 |                 |             |
| Nicholas Whyte:  | 8th: 311121 | Richard Downes: | 8th: 122203 |
| Rosie Roberts:   | 8th: 341123 |                 |             |

No-one taking any guesses yet - this game has lasted longer than most. Don't forget, there is a whole £1 prize for the winner of this (subscribers 3 free issues)!

~~~~~

Richard Downes has sent me issues 5, 6 and 7 of Back to the Dark Ages for a quick perusal (so I can have a laugh at, he says). No need for laughing here, Richard's doing a good job so far of running his games to a 2 week deadline. People are saying, well, this type of fast-turnaround zine has been done before, and it failed because they couldn't sand the strain. Well I think BttDA is different - it's so EASY to produce game adjudications on a computer, correct them, and run them off at the drop of a hat. It's the chat that takes a long time. If Richard can resist and keep that down, there's no reason why he can't continue to run a fast efficient service. Still only 4 pages of computer print, but recommended to those who like fast turnaround games.
 Richard Downes, 79 Caling Croft, New Ash Green, Kent, DA3 8PY.

HINTS FROM A GENTLER AND BYGONE AGE

I've been tempted to do this section for some time now, ever since I came across a very old (published in 1882) delapidated book called 'Consult Me'. It's a gem of a book, and I feel it only fair that I can copy from it even though it goes against Piggott's Law of Fanzines with regards publishing original material. Most of the advice found inside, has I think, long since been lost by most people - which is a crying shame, because some hints, if not useful, are grand indeed. So, without any shame at all, I'll copy faithfully any bits I find as I dip into... A Gentler and Bygone Age.

BEDS, to detect dampness in.

"After having warmed the bed with the pan, place between the sheets a wine or beer glass; if after a few minutes, the glass collects no vapour, it is safe, and vice versa. In all doubtful cases, such as a strange bed, sleep between the blankets."

BEER, Excellent Table:

"On three bushels of malt pour of hot water the third of the quantity you are to use, which is to be thirty-nine gallons. Cover it warm half an hour, then mash, and let it stand two hours and a half more, then set it to drain. When dry add half the remaining water, mash and let it stand half an hour, run that into another tub, and pour the rest of the water on the malt, stir it well, and cover it, letting it infuse a full hour. Run that off, and mix all together. A pound and a half of hops should be infused in water, and be put into the tub for the first running.

Boil the hops with the wort ((malt extract used as a medium for culture of micro-organisms; pertaining I think to the first procedure BEFORE hops and yeast are added - check dictionary)) an hour from the time it first boils. Strain off and cool. If the whole be not cool enough that day to add the yeast, a pail or two of wort may be prepared, and a quart of yeast put to it over night. Before tunning, all the wort should be added together, and thoroughly mixed with the lade-pail. When the wort ceases to work, put a bit of paper on the bung-hole for three days, when it may be safely fastened close. In four weeks the beer will be fit for drinking.

NOTE: Servants should be directed to put a cork into every barrel as soon as the tap is taken out, and to fasten in the vent-peg, the air causing casks to become musty."

And quite right too... Great stuff, eh? Now you know what's been going wrong if your beer hasn't been turning out right and getting all musty.... you forgot the servants!

But seriously, this book has every hint one can think of - ask it anything, from warts through to curing bacon, hams, and cooking... whatever. In fact do that, ask me hints on anything (pertaining to that era of course - flying to the moon doesn't count), and I'll see if there's a recipe or remedy to suit. There's a challenge for you - you never know, an old piece of knowledge, long since forgotten, might help you in brewing that old fashioned beer or whatever that's been stumping you so long. I wonder if it tells you how to make cheese...?

Just received the latest Road with an attached postscript. This seems to carry within it, an implicit threat, that either someone (Challenger and Litton were even named!), lends, or better still, gives Gary a duplicator or dire consequences will ensue! This situation apparently has arisen because Gary's duplicator has developed creases in the silk screen, which according to Gary requires a replacement at some £100 cost. Don't know if your Gestetner is at all

(Cont'd over....)

1

like our ancient Gestetner, Gary, but Jan has had the same fault and solved it for 25p, by washing the screen (carefully) and ironing it between two damp cloths. This Heath Robinson repair has lasted 18 months and some 13200 magazines with no sign of the crease. I was surprised to see Gary threaten 'foldur' if no Samaritan appears, however he also says that he's taking over all Question Mark (1?) games, so I don't really think Gary will be so irresponsible as to come to the end of the road now.

LETTERS

DAVID CRAWFORD: "Something I've always intended to ask you is if you play any Diplomacy Variants, and if yes, which is your favourite? To date I have only tried Nuclear Diplomacy in Bill Wrights' zine, Sodder, and think it's a great game. It's particularly satisfying to see the fellow who stabbed you one season getting a couple of his supply centres frazzled with your nukes the next.

Another variant I am going to try to get a zine to run is 'Mobtown'. This variant is based on the gang battles in America during the 1920's and has some interesting little additions to it. I especially like the one which gives you the option of sticking your opponents feet into concrete and chucking him in the river, should you manage to capture them. After the way I've been handled in some of the regular games I'm in, this seems quite a fitting punishment for some I could mention - and I'm certain most people would give their right arm to drop this Tom Tweedy person from the end of a pier! On the other hand, this might be a bit tricky with one arm...

I wonder if you, or any of your subbers have ever seen a game called 'Fast Attack Boats' by Yaquinto Games? It's a war game based on Naval conflict during an Arab/Israeli war and features units of Egypt and Syria on one side and the smaller but more efficient Israeli Navy on the other. The snag is, the producers almost went bust earlier this year, were forced to greatly reduce their range, and unfortunately this was one of the games to get the chop. At best it can be a dodgy affair getting games in Ulster (or at least in Tyrone), and when a game is out of print it's downright impossible. If anyone out there has a copy they would be willing to sell, or know a shop that still has it for sale, I would appreciate it if they would let me know."

((Well, if anyone can help David and has a game to sell, his address is, 14 Kiln Street, Fintona, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland, BT78 2BG. Actually this is a good way of buying and selling games. If anyone has any similar ideas of this ilk, let me know and I can advertise what they have to sell, price etc, in the Dibs and Drabs section.

As for variants, to tell you the truth I'm not that keen on them. I have enough problems with the regular Diplomacy game without learning extra rules for others. I seem to feel the same for other standard games e.g. Sopwith. To my mind the original is good enough and anything taken from it, copied etc, I feel is just rip-off. It's a bit like taking Lord of the Rings, changing a few words, giving it a new title, and saying the book is worth reading. Mind you I haven't analysed my feeling towards this to any great extent - I just switch off when I see the word 'variant' and turn the page.

Mind you, having said that, I do have one exception to the rule - and for this I think I have good reason. I find Intimate Diplomacy (a ridiculous name) a marvellous addition to Diplomacy game, merely because of the difficulty in finding other players, and because it has a similar feel to chess - one man pitted against another so to speak. As you can see from the editorial, John Marsden is starting up an ID Tournament in Ode - oh yes I freely admit, I was sorely tempted to put my name down this.))

DAVE BIRD: "I am hoping to move to Dover in a few weeks time. I will still be working for Customs & Excise, but no longer in a VAT office. I always wanted to retire by the coast!

It seems that the Beeb want to make a short series of programmes in the form of a drama about the work in the Department, though I can't see what is so fascinating about drinking tea and playing cards? Perhaps they will give me a bit part as a Collector, as no-one ever sees them, apart from on the golf courses!

In my capacity as Accomodation Officer at Harlow VAT office, perhaps I could put some HMSO stationary your way for a small consideration?! Mind you, apart from 600 toilet rolls which we didn't want, we seem to be short of just about everything else."

((Listen here, Bird, are you trying to insinuate that Dib should be printed on low quality loo paper? Most zines might well end up in the loo, but by hell I'll make the uncivilised blackguards who try it suffer, by using stiff fullscap paper. I should say! Best of luck in your new, er, job? - possibly as a superstar.))

CUTHBERT ELBOW (alias Richard 'The Book' Sharp): "I see you've resorted to the ancient device of inventing characters to write silly letters to you - Walkerdine came up with one called 'Knee', for God's sake. 'Dave Bird' is a bit more realistic, though 'Fred Insect' would have been more mellifluous. I like being called 'pedantic', of course, recognizing it as a word used by the uneducated to describe their betters. But why does your character need a supervisor? Is he dangerous? ((More than likely... but no more so than other Dib subscribers, I would think.))

On, on. Rachel Roberts, far from being a figment of my imagination, is a distinguished actress, and I congratulate you on obtaining this up-market subscriber. To retaliate, I have sent a free copy to Clint Eastwood, but have not yet had a reply. I note that you have also heard from her namesake, Rosie Roberts - I have lots more of these intellectuals on my books, and will gladly make them available to you at 50p a shot, to give Dib a bit of that academic firepower it so demonstrably lacks.

((Yes yes, I did make a mistake (well actually it was Jan) and I really must apologise to Rosie for getting her name wrong and allowing the mistake to go unnoticed - most ill-mannered of me. Also, I agree, it was very nice of you to point Rosie in my direction - it seems you knew a select magazine when saw one and realised that she would fit in quite well. As to any other reason you might have for handing over such an intellectual, I can only hazard a guess at - perhaps there was a feeling of guilt that she might become smothered under the rather weighty prose within the dusty pages of your infamous rag? Perhaps I should charge you 50p for using Dib to give Rosie a breath of fresh air?

As for 'inventing characters, well you might be right there, I wouldn't put it past Walkerdine to invent his whole subscribership (perhaps even the whole hobby), however, I feel I'm safe in saying that the whole of Dib's subscribership is real. Sometimes only too real. I'll admit there have been times when I've doubted names myself - take for example the one you chose, 'Dave Bird'... when he first wrote to me he signed his name 'D. Bird'. I was sure this was going to turn out to be 'Dicky Bird'. As for Luke Clutterbuck, well, we'll not mention him will we - or more to the point, for a keen sense of humour, with cutting remarks, how about Dick Sharp, Private Investigator.))

RICHARD (CONT.): "I didn't bother to react to your Ethiopian ramblings, but I suppose it's my duty to point out the obvious, as no one else has. The reason all those people are dying of famine in Ethiopia is the same reason that all those other people die unnatural deaths every year in every African country but one - namely that these countries are ruled by ignorant, greedy savages. Ethiopia is worse off than most, having had only a very short period of European rule (and then only Italians). The responsibility for all this suffering rests partly with the previous generation of criminals (Gandhi and so on) who agitated for an independence they were unfit to receive, partly with the weak European governments that gave in to them, and partly with the United States, which used unscrupulous bullying to ensure that no one should have colonies except themselves and the Russians."