

DIB DIB DIB

48

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life



Welcome to the 48th issue of Dib Dib Dib - and, because of the games only holdover, a rather large issue this time I'm afraid. The cost is a mere 23p + postage (40p in the UK) - not like these expensive photocopied or litho'd zines. Anyone wishing to send money, send it to Tom Tweedy, 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks., HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513, and I'll do my best to see it's put to good use.

EDITORIAL

Before I start anything else, PLEASE PLEASE remember to put 'Avenue' after Stanley Hill when addressing orders to me (Tim Collieu please note), the man at 29 Stanley Hill is getting very pissed off with sending stuff on to me (the cantankerous sod) and is even holding some of my mail over for two weeks before sending it on to me. You have been warned.

I had a nice surprise the other day - the inventor of the boxed Sopwith game rang me right out of the blue just to let me know, in case I was interested, that the Sopwith game was being re-released. Of course I told him a knew, and that I'd already ordered a couple of boxes (one to go to David Crawford who apparently can't get games too easily in Northern Ireland) and another one for me as I was interested to see how they would present the new version. He kindly offered to send me another box, free, complimentary. Very civilised of him I thought.

Actually, talking of civilised people - after a long absence, Mike Allaway is back in England with his new American wife, Robin (not that he had an old one before I hasten to add). A VERY nice lady! A couple of weeks ago Mike and Robin came round and had a very pleasant couple of hours chatting, playing 'Abandon Ship' (at Mike's insistence) and Sopwith (at my son's) when I happened to mention the fact that, as a lover of good whiskey (but who'll also accept bad in a pinch) I've always been interested in trying out the American bourbon. I've said it once, and I'll say it again, I must try everything at least once before I die (not that I'm likely to go yet you understand). Lo and behold, the next time Mike and Robin pops over, they only went out and bought me a bottle of Jack Daniels didn't they! Are you listening you lot - this is the way this hobby makes friends!

Anyway, it's still time for the Zine Poll 85: the Deadline is SATURDAY JULY 20TH 1985, and, because of the new voting method, that of only voting for a maximum of 10 zines (minimum of 2) giving your choices in order of preference, it's going to need all you subscribers out there to get Dib anywhere even near a respectable placing if I'm having to compete with the high subscribership of zines like Dolchstoss and MP. I am bothered (a lot of editors say they're not - phooey) but I think the ego boost is mainly because I'm competitive. The only games player I know who isn't, is Alan Parr - even so, I find it unbelievable; one should play games to win. Alan doesn't, he literally plays games for the fun of it - couldn't care less if he wins or loses. He's totally mad... But I digress, VOTE FOR DIB, AND SLEEP BETTER AT NIGHTS! Other than that, have fun, I will.

Zine Poll Prediction game: Due to popular request I'm running this again this year. Right up until the results are made public anyone can join - just send in your guesses for who you think will be in the Top Five positions. Gamefee will be 25p which will be collected together for the prize. The one with the closest guess gets the money. I'll start it off with: 1st Dolchstoss, Mad Policy, Ode, Hopscotch and Greatest Hits. See what you can do, get your guesses in now.

But now we come to the boring serious bit, which I think I'll take a deep breath for and start over on the next page.

It would appear my little off the cuff remark about Pete Calcraft's unsuitability for doing the Diplomacy stats has hit a raw nerve last time. Nothing from Pete himself, defending himself as you might expect, but from the unlikely source of Richard Walkerdine (I think Geoff Challinger said that...), who went on to mention in Mad Policy of the "hysterical outburst" I made in Dib 46.

I can hardly believe my 'outburst' can be classed as hysterical - that is only the case when one argues without reason. I was reasonable... I didn't state my case because I didn't feel there was any need to defend what I said! What Richard doesn't seem to realise is that I (and every other editor) have given Pete Calcraft every chance to come through and deliver the goods. Believe me, more chance than Pete himself would give anyone else. There's been many a time in the old days when Pete's caustic couldn't-care-less attitude towards others, and his subscribers in general, appeared in Spirit of the Age. Many's the time I've been irritated to read quotes/remarks to his subscribers telling them that if they didn't like what he'd decided they could piss off. But this isn't my argument, this is just the reason why I take such a hard line with him; I judge him as he would judge others, no more no less.

My main argument is that we're not getting the standard of service that one had come to expect with the likes of Mick Bullock. It makes no difference if Pete hasn't the time because he's doing exams, moving house etc, because if that's merely the case he shouldn't have taken the job on in the first place - there's plenty of others who would willingly take the job over. The only understandable excuse is if there's sickness in the family - is anyone sick? If not forget it, Pete stalled for a long time before anything was done. I complained that there was no stats. Pete stalled again, saying that he couldn't produce anything because of all the extra bills he'd entailed from printing sota and the stats. (This amused me because we hadn't seen any stats, and anyway, how the hell had the other hobby statisticians managed to pay their way in the past? - I assumed it was because Pete wanted to use expensive litho productions... and nothing else would do.)

Anyway, it was decided while I was CGS Custodian that we (the hobby) should help him out by granting him some money from the Hobby Development Fund - to me this was throwing good money after bad but it wasn't up to me. This worked fine for a few issues... but now, it seems to me, Pete had dried up yet again. If I was wrong, and Pete nearly has something ready, fine, I apologise. But I will not listen to any shit about lack of stats and Boardman numbers because someone doesn't have time with having other things to do. Sticking to the same attitude as Pete - put up or shut up - if you can't do the job, hand it over. John Marsden says in Home's letter column: "Frankly I think it's time the hobby sacked Calcraft." Hah! I'll tell you this... no way will Pete ever turn his work over to the hobby... it doesn't matter how bad a job he does. What happens then, when even Richard Walkerdine's patience is tried, will we just sit and twiddle our thumbs like this again? All I ever asked of Pete was stats, or failing that, information for why there aren't any. I rest my case.

NORTHERN IRELAND HOBBYMEET. As Nicholas Whyte says: "As you have perhaps more Northern Irish subscribers than anyone else (31) could you please publicise the first Belfast Hobbymeet?" ...Which I certainly will. I don't know if it's to be a regular hobbymeet, no-one has actually said, but it is to be held at The Eglantine Inn on the Malone Road (just past Queen's University on your way out of town), at 7.30 on Monday April 29th."

I believe Gibson Games are asking for suggestions on any rule changes in the Diplomacy game. Personally I don't like it, the game and rules have been fine up to now with most people knowing the rules off by heart. All ambiguities have been thrashed out under the present rules - maybe with any changes the answers to these might change. I'd be very careful with tampering with these rules, but if you feel you must, write to Richard Bairstow (editor of Gazfinc) who's co-ordinating thgestions, 20 Queen's Drive, Guildford, GU2 6PP.

THE 1984-5 GLADYS AWARD NOMINATIONS.

Right, the rules are simple - all you do is list the nominations of each category in order of preference; most deserving at the top, least deserving (like Mad Policy and Dolchstoss) at the bottom. Where to send your votes to is given at the bottom. And PLEASE if you have time give these awards your best support.

1. MOST EAGERLY AWAITED ZINE: Atu XVIII; Denver Glont; Dolchstoss; Greatest Hits; Hopscotch; Lokasenna; Mad Policy; Rostherne Games Review.
2. BEST DIPLOMACY ZINE: A Bolt From The Blue; Atu XVII; DIB DIB DIB; Denver Glont; Dolchstoss; Home of the Brave; Mad Policy; Ode; War & Peace; Zine to be Believed.
3. BEST GAMES ZINE: Back to the Dark Ages; Boojum; Diversions; Hopscotch; Masters of the Prime; Ode; Prisoners of War; Rostherne Games Review; Zine to be Believed.
4. BEST CHAT ZINE: Atu XVIII; Denver Glont; Greatest Hits; Lokasenna; The Wind's Quarter/The Mike Oldfield Collection; Rapsallion; Thing on the Mat.
5. BEST PERSONAL ZINE: Atu XVIII; Lokasenna; Monochrome; Now Eat the Rabbit; Ode; The Wind's Quarter/The Mike Oldfield Collection; War & Peace.
6. BEST DIPLOMACY GM: Ken Bain; Bryan Betts; Geoff Challinger; Shaun Derrick; John Marsden; John Norris; Glover Rogerson; Richard Sharp; Dave Thorby; Richard Walkerdine.
7. BEST GAMES GM: Mark Billeness; Brian Dolton; Brian Douglas; Richard Downes; RIP Gooch; Nick Kinzett; Keith Loveys; Richard Morris; Alan Parr.
8. BEST LETTER COLUMN: Atu XVIII; Denver Glont; DIB DIB DIB; Greatest Hits; Imazine; Lokasenna; Mad Policy; Rapsallion.
9. BEST LOOKING ZINE: Cut & Thrust; Gallimaufrey; Lokasenna; Morrigan; Prisoner of War; The Wind's Quarter/The Mike Oldfield Collection; Up Tight.
10. BEST NEW ZINE: Back to the Dark Ages; Coolnacran; Diversions; Morrigan; Now Eat the Rabbit; Pigbutton; Prisoner of War; Up Tight.
11. BEST ZINE FOR HOBBY NEWS: Home of the Brave; Mad Policy; Rapsallion; School for Scandal; Zine to be Believed.
12. MOST IMPROVED ZINE: Gazfinc; Home of the Brave; Mad Policy; Ode; The Five Year Plan; Rapsallion; School for Scandal.
13. BEST PLAYER: David Balfour; Mike Close; Len George; Steve Jones; Nick Kinzett; Richard Morris; John Norris; Geoff Tonks; Graham Staplehurst; Richard Young.
14. THE DAME EDNA EVERAGE AWARD FOR NICEST HOBBY PERSON: Ken Bain; Derek Caws; Robin ap-Cynan; Brian Creese; Brian Dolton; Pete Doubleday; Steve Doubleday; RIP & Kim Gooch; Trevor Mendam; Steve Norledge; Glover Rogerson; Graham Staplehurst; Derek Wilson.

Voting will be really tough this year, as there's not that much to choose between the different zine. Going down the list my own opinion is:-

1. This is just another way of saying best zine - out of that lot I only trade with Dolchstoss, Hopscotch, Greatest Hits and Mad Policy. And, copping out, I look forward to getting all four equally. Ode, if it was in it would have been my choice here, because I'm playing a game in it.
2. Obviously I'd like to plug for Dib here, but can't help feeling although I'm reliable and on the nose (99% of the time) in regards the adjudicating; zines like Dolchstoss, Zeeby, Home etc publish more Diplomacy articles for the Diplomacy enthusiast. Here I may go for the rubbish Dolchs oss.
3. There are some excellent game zines here, but two of the favourites must be Zeeby and Hopscotch. BattDA is a good up and coming new zine, but I can't help feeling it is yet too new (though I wish Richard all the luck in the world - I think even getting in this list is good going for a new zine). I may plug for Zeeby here.
4. Th difficult. Chat zines are a matter of taste, and believe me, no two of this lot are the same. As I only trade with two zines list here, at the moment (GH and Rap) I'd have to go for GH because that young whippersnapper Norledge surely can't compete with the great sage for chat (Birks talks like a

machine gun!)).

5. Bleah! Make of this category what you will, it means nothing to me. I'll go for Ode because I know it.

6. Another tough one - there's some damn good GMs listed here. Personally I've only been GM'd by John Marsden; Richard Sharp and Richard Walkerdine - and none of them ever made mistakes with me (well, Sharp did fold before I finished my game so I'll kick him out). Er... eeny, meeny...

7. Yet another difficult choice - Richard Downes I'd have to say is the fastest. yet Nick, Alan and Richard M. handle more. Back to the eeny, meeny again.

8. This has got to be Dib's SURELY? Having won it for the last two years I know that the standard of content has slipped a little (having got more serious), but then the letter cols in the others is hardly better. All have a serious content. I say vote for Dib and have done with it - but as I can't vote for myself (a terrible breach of human rights - MP's can vote for themselves) I'd have to go for staid, miserable Mad Policy.

9. This is easy - Morrigan - it's halfway to being professional while still being in the hobby.

10. Another difficult choice - there's so many good new zines about. BttDA, Morrigan and Pigbutton is what I trade with, so the choice for me is from them. By a short hair, Pigbutton I think.

11. Aahhh, decisions, decisions - I gather 99% of all my news from this lot. I can't choose... I CAN'T! Damn you, Norledge, another sleepless night!

12. This is silly - Home, MP, Ode improved? When were they bad? All appears as before, to me.

13. This is easy - I choose either Mike Close or Steve Jones for this, JUST to make sure they get the noteriety, and consequently they'll get jumped on by EVERYONE every time they start a game - heh, heh. (What do you mean, this is because I'm playing in game with them? This is my vote, and I'll vote how I like, push off!)

14. Ridiculous - everyone KNOWS I'm the nicest person. I rest my case.

The DEADLINE for getting your Gladys votes in is: Wednesday 26th June. All votes should be sent to Steve Norledge, DO please vote, as it can be a lot of fun.



JOTTO Turn 4

Now things are beginning to look up - with four more people joining us the prize money is now set at £4.50 - a nice little sum. Also we have last times winner, Rosie Roberts, back to take up the challenge I threw down last time. Will she win it again? Surely not, nomatter how good Rosie is, surely she can't beat the head start Andrew now has? It'll be interesting to find out. A small slip of your Jotto words should be included with this issue, so if you haven't spotted them yet go and rescue the envelope from the litter bin.

KATHY COLLMAN: 1st: 211323
 2nd: 213322
 3rd: 121011
 4th: No Hyphens

BRIAN MOORE: 4th: 132231

ULF JIRETORN: 1st: 111002
 2nd: 231124
 3rd: 123241
 4th: 101112

ANDREW SMITH: 1st: 322112
 2nd: 212312
 3rd: 321233
 4th: 511236 ((11))

R.J. LAMPARD: 2nd: 321113
 3rd: 412233
 4th: 113232

MIKE DEANS: 4th: 224222

RICHARD DOWNES: 4th: 231133

ALAN POWIS: 1st: 331234
 2nd: 221233
 3rd: 421235
 4th: 222112

ROSIE ROBERTS: 1st: 321014
 2nd: 221121
 3rd: 113211
 4th: 112221

READING BETWEEN THE ZINES

Before I start I must stress here that this section is only done in fun and is purely my own opinion. In part I'll be sticking my neck out here trying to predict relative positions where each zine might come - and would ask editors not to take this part as any criticism of their zine.

Gazfinc (16): Edited by Richard Bairstow. 20 pages of neat A4 photocopy - I say neat because Richard uses his BBC micro to type it all up. Lots of interesting chat, up to date hobby news, this issue an interesting article on working in Bahrain, and lots of games. Has openings for: Railway Rivals (50p), Sopwith (50p), Maneater (£1) and Diplomacy (£1). It has always seemed to me that Richard has had an easy time of it editing a magazine, what with being the protege of Richard Walkerdine and talked into it by other members of the Guildford mob - one minute he was relatively unknown, the next he had a fully fledged zine. Still, no zine editing is easy. A good zine to play in if you're interested in what's going on in the hobby. I'd give it 8 out of 10, and predict it'll come in the top 10.

Richard Bairstow, 20 Queens Drive, Guildford, GU2 6PP.

Home of the Brave (47): Edited by Geoff Challinger. An A5 photocopied reduced booklet which is extremely reliable. Very similar to Ode in many ways. To tell you the truth, and I've said it before, I sometimes find Home very staid, very dry and precise. Mind you this is no bad thing, it's certainly a magazine I would subscribe to if I wasn't trading (the ultimate test I think), and it's always packed with the latest hobby news. Home (this issue) runs to a regular 32+ pages, including Editorial, general chat, hobby news, large interesting letter column, article for discussion from Rob Chapman (which I'd dearly love to answer if I get time - not likely though unfortunately), games, a sub-zine called Bellicus (which I couldn't read because of the faint print), and another sub-zine (the official one from John Webley), Serendipity. At about 44p an issue (it's £1.75 for 4 issues) it's good value for money. Home has waiting lists open for Diplomacy - Regular, Origins, and Downfall. Waiting lists for Serendipity are: Sopwith, Executive Decision, and Railway Rivals. Recommended. Out of 10 I'd give it 8, and predict it'll do better this year (last year it came a disgusting 20th) by coming in the top 10.

Geoff Challinger, 117 Shrubbery Road, South Darenth, Kent, DA4 9AP.

Back to the Dark Ages (13): From Richard Downes. A very nicely produced A5 reduced photocopied booklet done on a Macintosh computer. This really hasn't been out that long, but it's so fast, coming out every two weeks on the dot. This issue, number 13, actually came out two or three days after number 12! Supposed to be just a games only zine with no chat at all but this issue had zine reviews, a small editorial, his subscriber list, a very interesting profile of himself and how he entered the hobby, a layout of how many games he's playing in (44 games and on 30 waiting lists - STRENGTH!) and various game and house rules. Has Waiting lists for: Diplomacy; Sopwith; Dune; Vain Rats; Middle Earth; Railway Rivals; and Bourse - all for 50p. Thoroughly recommended if you like fast turnarounds. Out of 10 I give it 7, and predict it'll come between 20 and 30. If it comes much lower it'll be because Richard, like so many good new zines, don't yet have enough subscribers. Which means there's no shame in that.

Richard Downes, 2 Brisbane Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 1XZ.

Hacking Times (7): A new one (to me) from Dylan Harris. About 30 pages (this issue's were not numbered) of photocopied, centre stapled, A5 booklet. There's not too much I can say about this yet as I've only seen two issues. Off the cuff I'd have to say Dylan is still finding his feet: although some of HT is good - the general chat, hobbystuff, editorial games articles - a lot of the 'extra' stuff I find totally confusing. By extra stuff I mean bits and pieces that I can't see any reason for - right in the middle of the zine is something called 'Dead Centre' (which is probably why it's in the middle) which seems to consist of things like a small ads stion which is totally

incomprehensible (at least to me) partly, I'll admit, because the photocopy is faint. Better than most magazines though, and, because of the production method and Dylan's obvious enthusiasm, still has room to improve. Waiting lists for: Beginners Diplomacy; Experts Diplomacy; Cline 9; Civilization; Definitive Mercator ((?)); Ultra Stab; Machiavelli; Railway Rivals; Executive; Morning Crescent; and The Maya. Can't see the price. Out of 10 I'd give HT 5, and predict it'll come between 25th - 35th.
Dylan Harris, 55 Station Road, Tempsford, Sandy, Beds., SG19 2AU.

Quartz (11): A sort of SF spin-off zine edited by Geoff Kemp. A5 litho reduced centre stapled booklet, quite small (only 16 pages) but packed with games of all sorts. Geoff doesn't go in for much chat as he's often far too busy, but what he does have is generally SF related material. A refreshing change from the ordinary run of the mill games zine - not pretentious in any way. Has openings for: Cline 9 Man Diplomacy; Diplomacy; Formula 1; Nuclear War; Revolt on Antares; Scrabble; Soccer Supremo; Sopwith; and Youngstown (is that all?). Gamefees I believe are 50p, refunded when the game finishes. I'd give Q 7 out of 10, but I'm not sure where it'll come in the poll because I don't know how many subscribers Geoff has - I'll plug for 15th! There, can't get nearer than that. A good zine, but, I think a little slow to turnaround.
Geoff Kemp, 23 Raygill, Wilnecote, Tamworth, Staffs., B77 4JY.

Morrigan (10): Compiled and edited by a fair sized crew of about 5 (so it seems to me), but I only have dealings with 1, the person I send Dib to, Steve Lewis. This zine is perhaps the best looking zine on the market - it's not enough to say it's an A5 reduced centre stapled booklet, it's about as professional-looking as a zine can get and still stay in the 'friendly postal hobby' bracket. At an enormous 59 pages costing a mere 35p an issue and containing more stuff than I could possibly mention here, it's got to be good value for money. Mind you, this is one of what I would call one of the 'new wave' zines the hobby seems to be getting nowadays; a mite cliquey and a little less friendly than zines of old, but this might be just me being a little biased against multi-editor zines. I'm not too sure how this will do, but deserves to do well. I predict it'll come in the top 15.
Steve Lewis, 8 Norwood Avenue, Holywood Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT4 2EE.

Ode (65): Edited by John Marsden. Another nicely produced photocopied A5 centre stapled booklet. This zine is 100% solid and reliable - never late, never bad, and never too much trouble to read. Ode has always had a good reputation for hobby news, articles and good solid reading. John has taken a lower profile over this last year because of being so busy, which has meant Ode has become a little less controversial, but nothing short of Armageddon will stop this zine from coming out, which means we'll have this zine yet for years to come. Has waiting lists for: Diplomacy (£1.75); Mercator (£1.75); 1829 (£1.25); and Wooden Ships & Iron Men. Highly recommended. Out of 10 I'd give it 9, and it should come in the top 5.
John Marsden, 17 Church Road, St. Leonards, Hastings, TN37 6EF.

Boojum (18): From Richard Morris. Excellently produced A4 mimeo zine typed up on Richard's BBC B computer. 18 pages with not much chat and mostly well-run games. Reminds me of the late Chimaeras, only without Clive Booth's witty chat - which is not too surprising I suppose as Richard took over Chim lock stock and barrel, and even has a Chimaera Corner where Clive is quietly running down his games. Has waiting lists open for Diplomacy (£1.25); Railway Rivals (£1); Sopwith (75p); Talisman (50p); Vain Rats (£1.25); and Kingmaker (£1.25). A nice reliable zine to play games in. Out of 10 I give it 7, and should come from 10 - 20th position in the poll.

Richard Morris, 1 Highland Ville, Lightcliffe, Halifax, West Yorks., HX3 8AG.

Newspeak (12): From Lee Paddon has been going around for a while, but I've only just started trading with it. The zine is A4 and is printed either straight onto a page with a good-quality dot matrix printer or mimeo. This issue sported an interesting article on 'Why Play Postal Games', a Top Ten film list from one of his subscribers, film reviews (In Focus) by Steve Little, a small letter column, and a good hobby news section - this zine has improved a lot since I first saw it. Has game openings for: Diplomacy (75p+75p); Circus Maximus (75p+75p); Soccerleague; Sopwith and 1829. Really it's still too early to give this zine a fair judgement but I'd say out of 10, maybe 5, and should come between 20th and 30th position (merely I think because it hasn't made much of a name for itself yet - could be good if it keeps on as from this present issue).

Lee Paddon, 2 Bexley Cottages, The Street, Horton Kirby, Kent, DA4 9BU.

Pigbutton (5): Edited (co-edited with Peter Groome) by Clive Palmer. I keep getting this mixed up with Oink - I don't know why because Pig is good, whereas Oink is bloody diabolical! The mix-up must be due to the name connection I guess. An A5 reduced centre stapled litho'd booklet - which means it's nicely printed - Pig can be a little confusing at times. I never noticed before but it has also picked up Bob Mulholland and 'Ratadan' as a subzine! This is a little strange for a young zine still finding its feet. However, the whole collection is not unpleasant, there's certainly something to interest everybody; articles on D&D, music, games, chat, letter col (two small ones!), and plenty of maps and graphics - a spin-off from Glover Rogerson's Denver Glont. Has spaces available for: Judge Dread; Downfall; MAD Dip; Regular Dip; Sopwith; Baseball Wars; and Fictionary Dictionary (how the hell do these young zines manage to have the time and space to offer all these games?!). Costs 20p + postage per issue, and I predict it'll come between the 10th and 20th position, and I'd give 7 out of 10. To subscribe write to:-
Peter Groome, 7 Woodstock Road, Redland, Bristol.

Dolchstoss (87): From Richard Sharp. What can I say about this magazine that hasn't been said a hundred times before? Produced in the popular A5 reduced centre stapled booklet format of which D (and Ethil the Frog) was one. (two?) of the first. Always reliable (apart from a two-year hiccup), always on time (an excellent turnaround), and always neat and well presented. One of the last truly purist Diplomacy zines I think, containing intelligent chat, a good letter column, a confusing chess and Bridge column, and, nearly always, stats, articles, chat and so on, entirely about the gentlemanly art of playing the Diplomacy game. Other than that I hate it - it always does well in the Zine Poll merely because of the Sharp advertising and bullying tactics. D subscribers about this time of year are continuously subjugated to pleas and bribes and even threats to get their votes in on time - not like me. Anyway this zine costs 50p and openings for (oops, can't see any) I guess Diplomacy. Obviously this zine will do well in the poll - I predict it'll either be 1st or 2nd.
Richard Sharp, 27 Elm Close, Amersham, Bucks., HP6 5DD.

C'est Magnifique (3): Edited by Peter Sullivan. I've only seen two issues of this, which is hardly surprising seeing as Peter has only produced three, so I cannot yet say much about it. So far a rather scruffily printed A4 mimeo zine with lots of appeal. Friendly and very much like the zines of old - should go far later on, but too new to do well in the Zine Poll, as Peter probably well understands: This issue has 10 pages (tho' why some blank sides...?) ochat, which includes editorial, hobby news, Zine Poll rules, rules for Silly Diplomacy, and a small but 'Very Original' letter column. A very nice little zine (I hope Peter doesn't take offence over the 'little' title) - has waiting lists open for Regular Diplomacy; Abstraction (£75p); Downfall III (£75p); Intimate (no gamefee, £1 deposit); and Rather Silly Diplomacy (no gamefee). Out of 10 I'd give it 5, and don't think it'll have enough voters yet to get it into the Poll. Costs 8p + postage and comes from:-
Peter Sullivan, 36 Bushey Hall Road, Bushey, Watford, Herts., WD2 2RD.

(Cont'd over...)

Unfortunately I haven't had the time (or really the space) to review all my trades this time as I'd hoped, the rest I think I'll leave until next issue. Still showing no favouritism here, I just reviewed the zines as I picked them up off the pile.

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LETTERS

NICHOLAS WHYTE: "At last we agree about something! Namely, what's Pete Calcraft up to? Something must be done about the Boardman Numbers - for heaven's sake there are games about to finish which haven't got one yet! I suggest that, quite simply, a list be compiled by someone competent, for preference a widely trading editor, or someone who lives near enough to him to examine his files, and then be published by said editor. Question: who are the most widely trading editors in the hobby? Answer: Walkerdine and 20 Years On. Surely there is someone living near Guildford or Southampton willing to do this?"

((Well, thankfully what you've said has in part has been taken up - Richard Walkerdine has recently published some Boardman Numbers, though not all of them. But this still doesn't detract from the fact we still haven't seen any stats from Pete Calcraft, cheating us (the hobby) of extra little things like Wink Thompson's Diplomacy Ratings List - that's really what I miss.))

NICHOLAS (CONT.): "Gumbo was the fifth Marx Brother. My apologies to John Piggott (a Coolnaran subber), but it is a historical fact that Gumbo was a Marx Brother. Check your Encyclopedia Britannica."

((My what! - people don't actually buy them for the home and stand them on groaning bookcases, do they? Anyway, it's no use accusing poor old John of not knowing historical facts - even though he is an historical fact himself - I don't think even the Encyclopedia Britannica has reached Canvey Island yet.))

PETER SULLIVAN: "Knicker elastic for a tea chest bass? This Mike Close guy evidently doesn't know what he's talking about. ((You'll get no argument from me here)) I'm an expert on the double bass (and not at all bad on the lino - old Two Ronnies joke). To make a tea chest bass you use just ordinary string made taut and not elastic. The acoustics and resonance of elastic would be appalling, and unless you used 1-inch wide stuff it would be very dangerous and liable to snap."

((Snap! My mother-in-law's elastic? - you must be joking. I agree though using it could prove dangerous. Now all we've got to prove is that Mike Close is dangerous. Ah, the typical Dib lettercols are back...))

DANNY COLLMAN: "Dear Mr Tweedy,

I've used the formal 'Mr' since you may disown me by the end of this letter. Which will merely show that you dish out the nasties without being able to take them. On the other hand you may have a very good answer to my comments - if so, power to your elbow.

Before that - my wife, Kath, would greatly enjoy showing you (and all comers - she's not kidding) how to play and win at Jotto. Her comment about your use of Shorter Oxford is: "Rubbish, what's wrong with Chambers, the puzzler's dictionary". I assume merely that you have no Chambers. But she's right - high powered Puzzle Magazines (Top Puzzles and Tough Puzzles) expect Chambers to be used. I should point out that her quoted comments about Jotto are my thoughts of her capabilities, not what she's actually said.

I've no idea how far into the Hobby Clique one has to be either to criticize or achieve publication, but criticism I have got. Publication

doesn't worry me, but you have caught one of my hobby-horses - bad spelling, and particularly American spelling in British publications.

I accept that you simply don't have time to correct every typing error, and that sometimes you're simply not sure: (a) p7 final paragraph 'competetive' (twice) should be 'competitive' (as per competition). (b) Final page, bottom - 'coherent' has no 'i' at all.

But American spelling, especially repeated, are utterly unforgivable: ((sic)) p6, final paragraph, p7 bottom, twice - the word 'plow'. In English the word doesn't exist, it is 'plough'.

No, I wouldn't like to take over your job, I already print one (non games) magazine which my wife edits, so I'll leave you to it. But I still refuse to accept Americanisms."

((Hah, another worthy opponent, someone else to stand up and be counted and put himself blindly in front of the firing line! Will these wretches never learn? Other critics that have tried to take on Tweedy now lay whipped by the wayside i.e. such greats as Piggott, Sharp, Close, Walkerdine, et al. They are now long since forgotten having learned their lesson.

It's strange, having such an aversion to Americanisms, it surprises me that you stoop to using their method of starting off sentences with 'but' - no less than three times! Surely we were taught that starting a sentence with 'and' and 'but' was a no-no (good word that). Of course I do the same thing, on the grounds that the prose flows more freely using the American method. Any other way can sometimes seem to come out stilted - and hell, why should the Americans get it all their own way? It's odd though (now that I think about it) in the proper context of talking about a plough I would always, automatically, spell 'plough' correctly, and yet it never occurs to me to spell it any other way when I wish to use it out of context; as in 'plow on'. I didn't know I did it."

As for 'coherent' and words like 'competitive', well as you could see I DID make some mention of it at the time, didn't I? I wasn't sure of the spelling and couldn't at that time be bothered to reach for the dictionary. Actually, that problem is all too often the case with me, and a few others I could name (lazy see). Consequently the spelling in Dib will always be a bit hit and miss. Don't you ever get mental blocks on words? I've been stuck on words like 'use' before now, and for no particular reason other than someone had spelt it wrong when I was copying and I couldn't get the wrong way of spelling it out of my mind.

Glad to see your wife, Kath, has taken up the Jotto challenge to show Rosie how it's done - that's what I like to see, confidence. You're wrong about the Chambers though, I do own one. Of course if you insist that I use it I'll have to retrieve it from under the table leg. Don't let Kath worry about the fact I might now have to eat off a wobbly table now, will you? I'll manage somehow... and never fear, she'll get her words out of the Chambers.))

And two views on my letter column...

ANDREW SMITH: "On the subject of Jotto, does this stunningly simple game have any history? - like who invented it, how long ago etc etc. ((Actually I don't quite know - Ethil and Dolchstoss were the first magazines that I ever saw the game in. I must admit, it would be interesting to find out.))

And now the Dib lettercolumn is getting too serious? Well, I joined the illustrious band of your subscribers shortly after the chameleon phase (and I still can't spell it) and, on the whole, things are pretty grim. As I look through my back numbers, it becomes apparent that the vital sense of humour is not there any longer. A leaner, fitter, more resourceful zine has struggled through the recession and heaved itself into Mrs. T's 'competitive' marketplace of the 1980s.

There seems to be more longer letter snippet- perhaps people are bored with 'major issues' and don't write anymore and you have to fall back on your 'regulars' who talk about the hobby. But there's room

for other things - viz. the Chameleons... and I remember having a rather good exchange with Larry Trask about music."

((All this unfortunately is true, but I can only print the letters that I get. Mind you, I have to admit that I've tried to make Dib a little more serious, but only as a change of pace - it gets boring if subjects are always taken for a laugh. I still prefer printing humourous stuff when I get it though - if it's worth printing that is.))

TIM COLLIEU: "Firstly may I clear up the little muddle over my room number, I'm dyslexic and while I normally overcome it, sometimes I get things wrong this must have been one then, the number is 409. ((Thanks for letting me know, Tim.))

It must be about a year since I started being involved with the hobby, and Dib was the first zine I subbed to and it's still one of my favourite 'zines. The letter column seems to me the best part (even if my disjointed and demented ramblings appear in it).

It is always well balanced and free from the bitching which goes on in other columns. However, there's always been one thing that's bothered me for the last year or so, and that is, what is the relationship between you, Mike Close and Chameleons? Is it something Luke Clutterbuck got told you would regret making public knowledge? I only ask out of curiosity."

((Tim, PLEASE... there is no relationship between myself and Mike Close - I wish to scotch this ugly rumour right from the start. The nutty chameleon letters only started after Richard Hucknall wrote a letter about humans/nature being able to adapt to change. Believe me, it's a part of Dibs history that's best forgotten.))

RICHARD EGAN: "I hope you don't object to me dropping you a line, but I saw Dave Birds' comments about Hobbymeets in a copy of Dib 46 and I felt compelled to write.

'I was there', and if Dave Bird found an evening in the pub exchanging pleasantries and even playing a game of Diplomacy with a fair mixture of other postal games players an unpleasant experience then I sincerely wish him success in finding his enjoyment wherever else he seeks it. Few of the twenty or so present had met before, so the Meet in question was most likely the least 'cliquey' you could hope to find: Graham Freeman did a great job of pulling things together and buying everyone a pint, such that with the notable exception of the rule-proving Dave Bird (whose presence was, shall we say, of limited duration) we all enjoyed ourselves immensely at Graham's expense.

If someone sets out to a Hobbymeet expecting fireworks and the Second Coming of John Lennon they're going to be disappointed; Dave may find other Meets more to his taste, and you were right to encourage him to try another, but if he intended the comments in Dib Dib Dib 46 for publication then perhaps he - and maybe even you - could have refrained from specifically naming another of your subscribers in passing comment."

((One of the things I find so fascinating about this hobby is the way one can get to know the other people... and perhaps find out what makes them tick. This is not as cold and calculating as it sounds - I'm sure most people are interested when they see the various 'hobby profiles' detailing likes and dislikes of other hobby members. I remember enjoying reading about the exploits of celebrity members at the various annual conventions and trying to picture the events, and the people - recognising, understandably, that the facts had been stretched all out of proportion just for the fun of it. This is what makes the hobby seem so friendly; I've never met most of the hobby members, yet I feel I've known them personally as friends for years. This is why I publish names - if Graham had read what Dave had said, he might have written in and given his own account of his hobbymeet. If I don't find every excuse and use every opportunity to encourage people to write (leaving aside the fact I like a

letter column in Dib) how am I supposed to get to know them? How are others supposed to get to know them? At least some write to me when sending in orders.

I published Dave's letter verbatim to actually encourage Dave to write back and explain his disappointment, not to 'get at' poor Graham (who, if he bought everyone a pint, deserves more than mere praise - that's bending over backwards in the extreme to make everyone happy). I'm curious to find out why Dave didn't enjoy himself though, aren't you?))

MIKE POLLARD: "You probably have the Tory stereotyped image of an unemployed person: a scrounger, lazy, and collecting a hundred pounds a week for doing nothing.

You should try it. Your illusions would soon be shattered. I would like to be 'unemployed'. I am not lazy - I have a multitude of activities I would rather pursue, than having to spend so much of my life in a conventional job. But there's no way I can afford to do this - not because I'm greedy - my salary is hardly generous, so I'm quite prepared to live a modest life.

The wealth is here, don't doubt it. Again and again we're shown how much wealth there is in the hands of so few people.

Mr Sainsbury earns 37,000 times as much as his lowest paid employee. The boss at the equivalent Spanish supermarket chain earns 4 times as much.

This is the way to run things fairly. I want an equal share - even if it means I have to give."

((I know you said some of what you've written is not for publication on the grounds of length and space in Dib, Mike, but I really feel I must reply to some misconception you quite wrongly have of me. I also apologise if I've taken this letter in any way out of context - it was rather long as you pointed out.

I don't have the "Tory stereotyped image of an unemployed person as a scrounger, lazy, and collecting a hundred pounds a week for doing nothing", Mike, and I certainly have been unemployed before now. But it seems my way of looking at things must be drastically different from yours. I'm of the firm belief that one has to try and stand on one's own two feet first. Then if you find you can't, only then should one try and seek outside help. I remember one time when I was out of work and eligible for the dole, I went out and got work on the land instead, potato picking. Hard work believe me, it nearly killed me. Not much pay, but somehow, I never felt right about picking up dole money and not doing something for it - it made me feel uncomfortable. This is not so the case with a lot of people - I've actually heard people on the dole say, "I'm not going for that job. I get more money on the dole." I've even heard them say it when the money from both is the same! It's all wrong.))

And just a small and final word about Ethiopia...

NICK CLARK: "In 1798 the Rev. T. Malthus put forward his theory of population change and resources development, in which he said that the population will increase at a greater rate than resources become available, so there will come a time when the resources are unable to support the dependant population. He then went on to say that a positive check will occur (usually some major disaster (e.g. Famine, earthquake, etc)) sent from GOD to get the population down to a reasonable level. Now while I find the idea of a God sending down a disaster to punish the wrong-doers somewhat unlikely, these problems seem to occur every year in one form or another (as any good Blue Peter watcher can tell you), which seems to suggest to me that Man as a race will increase the length of his life, and reduce the number of fatal diseases, thus increasing the population to such an extent that the local resources can not cope, and thus a disaster is bound to occur. So, the problem in Ethiopia is due to the West's efforts to 'improve' the lifestyle of the 'peasants', who were

probably better off as they were. But, having said that, it should also be noted that Brazil exports more than enough fish to feed the entire Brazilian slum areas to the west, who make cat food from it. Thus the average European moggy eats better than 37% of the Brazilian population.

Wow, I've finally found a use for all that 'A' level population Geography I had forced on me... ((Power to your elbow, eh Nick?))

On a slightly lighter note, recently I purchased 'Acheton' from Acornsnot ((sic)) for the BBC micro. This is probably their best adventure so far, but is only for DISK users, seeing how it comes on TWO disks, and has a huge data base (about 4 times the size of 'PHILLY QUEST', and that's just the descriptions). At one point I was given a 41 line description of a room, just prior to dying for the Nth time. A mind twisting adventure, but only for those with lots of free time, and a stable personality.

At £17.95 it isn't cheap, but will take quite a while to solve (it has 50 treasures....) - now, how do I get past the big, big bird with the sharp claws? (You guessed it, I'm stuck in the Roc garden...).

((Personally I'm not that keen on text adventures no matter how 'intelligent' they seem. I know they do a set of Apple adventures (also for the IBM) called Zork 1, 2, and 3 which are supposed to accept and understand whole sentences - which makes playing the game a lot easier I suppose - but at £60 a game... forget it.))

PAUL DONLEY: "So, you're into computers? I've just bought 'Football Manager' (from Addictive Games) for the Spectrum. This is probably the best game I've seen yet for a micro. The only trouble is I can't stop playing it. I nearly got promotion from Division 3 in my fourth season, only I then turned the power supply off ((by accident I assume)) losing the game and putting me back into the 4th Division again. I'm sure Bob Paisley never had this problem! If you see it for your Apple buy it - it's great."

((Yes, it is a good game, we already have it for the BBC. The only fault I can find with it is one tends to start out on the easy level - getting to see all the graphics - and by the time you want to move on to something more difficult, it's old hat. It definitely is better to start off at least on the 'average' level.))

BILL HAYGARTH: "Thanks for Dib 47 - only 3 to go to the magic 50 eh? But, games only this time - still - if getting a new computer is good enough reason then I don't know what is. Replacing your Apple with a Canon takes you out of the 'home computer' category and into that of the 'business user'. I suppose running a zine is a bit like a business - just not very profitable!

I have an IBM PC at work which I use for a spreadsheet and PERT ((?)) as well as for talking to our main computer. I have never come to terms with bringing it home, although I keep thinking up these wonderful things I could do with it. I suppose it's because the PC is something that I associate with work that makes me reluctant - you don't know how lucky you are!"

((Oh I think I do - the only trouble is one tends to want to spend even more money on it once you get it - things like games, other utilites, modems, etc. I find working out how to use these things compulsive.))

PETE BIRKS: "A games only issue! How am I meant to respond to your normal pithy remarks of bottomless wit if you produce games-only issues, sir?"

My first games only issue was, I think, No.49, a four-pager produced on my old manual typewriter (used for issues 1-12) due to electronic typewriter malfunction and only 24 hours before I flew off to Israel for a fortnight (all expenses paid - the Social Science Research Council had money to throw away in those days). Actually, for 122 issues, GH has gone