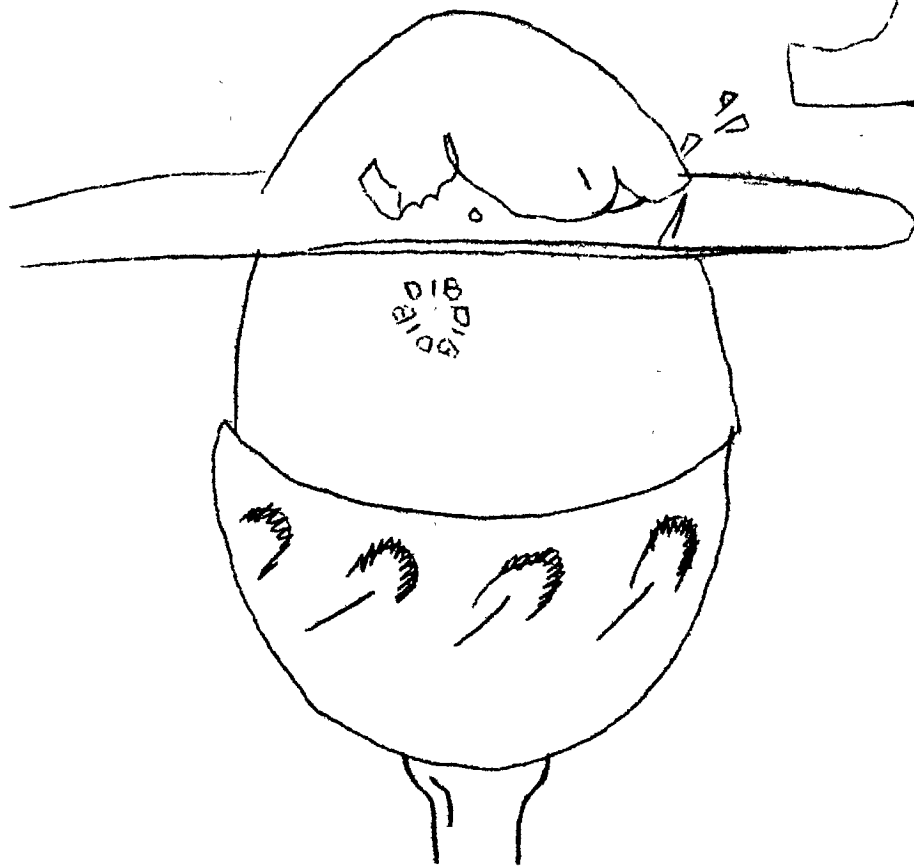


DIB DIB DIB

51



When I asked for a "bold" design, I think my artist misunderstood.....

A warm welcome to the 51st issue of Dib Dib Dib - not so much a bumper issue celebrating a milestone of fifty-one, more an overflow from fifty. The cost is a fixed rate of 40p per issue in the UK and 23p + postage overseas. Anyone wishing to send money, send it to Tom Tweedy, 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks., HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513

EDITORIAL

It's a difficult time for me to sit here doing this. It's a lovely sunny day outside, Jan's just finished laying the paving slabs for the patio (only a temporary measure as I'll get a rich uncle of mine - in the trade - to lay it down properly once we've got used to where we want it). I can see it from here - sun-hot white slabs (beige actually) surrounded on two sides with cool green grass - butterflies flitting around. Ah the ingredients of a summer's day. Actually she's made quite good job of it if I may say so myself, under my supervision of course. Anyway I should be out there sunning myself instead of typing this - laying on my back watching the passing puffballs of cloud (my God it makes a change though from thunder clouds) counting the myriad of bumble bees coming to service the plants bordering the patio - yes, Jan's a good gardener as well. Ah, life can be idyllic at times. BUT I'M STILL SAT HERE NATTERING TO YOU LOT! I must be mad. What IS it that keeps us humble zine editors stuck to our typewriters when all we really want to do is skive off? It make yer wonder, dunnit? Well it makes ME wonder.

Well I refuse to be a slave to this mag - er, with permission from you lot - I haven't much to talk about so I'll just get on with it, finish it and dash off. Enclosed in this issue is a copy of the Bourse rules in case anyone is interested in playing another game in Dib. Also there is some mention in the letter column about other types of games - notably 'En Garde'. If there's anyone out there who knows of a good GM, and is reliable (not always the same thing), please get in touch. The reason I'm wary about GM's is because once bitten and all that - because you'll find some mention of Chris Sandow who tried to DM a D&D game I wanted to run in Dib. A disaster. All those that played in 'Catacombs of Coper-

nica' please note Chris' letter. Please accept my apologies for mucking you all about.

The only other thing of note is on the printing side of producing a magazine. I've been interested for a while now to find out if matrix printers work properly with duplicators. I feel I didn't want to be tied down to a daisywheel printer when matrix printers are more versatile, better catered for in regards software printer drivers, and a letter quality print that is getting better all the time. Anyway with finding out about all this in mind I sent some stencils and 'Contact sheets' to Jake Cheung and Richard Downes (for those who don't know wax from stencils can often clog daisywheels and matrix printers. Covering the stencil first with a contact sheet prevents this). The results were extremely impressive. For those who already get Back to the Dark Ages they'll have already seen the quality of print Richard produced. Letter-quality print AND graphics on a duplicator (as matrix printers can 'draw' pictures). So as to prove this is not a fluke I waited for the return stencils from Jake - the result was almost the same - perhaps even better. So, the conclusion is, and in case anyone asks you, some matrix printers (though perhaps not all) CAN produce duplicated zines without any mess, trouble or bugging up the matrix printhead. Mind you, I don't know how much trouble you might get cutting stencils WITHOUT using the clear film 'Contact Sheets'. I do have supplies of the sheets if anyone wants to try them out - give me a ring. They cost about 15-20p each but you can use them for at least 30 pages.

THE 1985 ZINE POLL RESULTS

	Pts	1sts	Vts		Pts	1sts	Vts
1 Mad Policy	468½	12½	83	13 DIB DIB DIB	160½	-	40
2 Dolchstoss	302	20	56	14 Back to the Dark Ages	157	10	25
3 Home of the Brave	292	7	53	15 Rapscollion	151	5	28
4 Hopscotch	289½	11½	50	16 Rostherne Games Review	135½	3	34
5 Zeeby	285	7	51	17 Vienna	132	9½	20
6 Denver Glont	284	12	42	18 Lokasenna	129½	1½	23
7 Greatest Hits	268	1½	56	19 Morrigan	129	3	25
8 War & Peace	239	5	43	20 Gazfinc	122	1	30
9 Ode	236	5	46	21 Sauri's Allstar Unltd	120½	4	26
10 Cut and Thrust	226	8	43	22 Howay the Lads	119	-	32
11 Thing on the Mat	219½	11½	33	23 Prisoners of War	114	1	24
12 Boojum	169½	6½	34	24 NMR1/ABolFroB	111	1	25

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 Hits
8th Our 'Enry	Hannibal	Relief	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	NMR1	F of Eagles
4th Lemming Expr	Megalomania	NMR1	Chimaera	The Acolyte
5th New Statsman	Mr Gladgrind	Chimaera	F of Eagles	NMR1
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	Megalomania	Putty Riffo	H of the Brave
9th PTN	Gallimaufry	Tinamou	Ode	Chantecler
10th Greatest Hits	Tinamou	Filibuster	P. Victory	Chimaera

Poll No. 11	12	13	
Pos.: Aug 1983	Aug 1984	Aug 1985	Thank goodness, more of a sensible result this year.
1st Greatest Hits	Hopscotch	Mad Policy	Dib came 13th (19th last year), which was more or less what I expected, but in their correct positions (in the top ten) comes Home of the Brave (last year it came 20th), Greatest Hits (last year it came 22nd), and Denver-Glont (which came 32nd!).
2nd Mad Policy	NMR1	Dolchstoss	Some difference. Which just
3rd The Acolyte	Mad Policy	H of the Brave	
4th NMR1	Die Pop-Rev	Hopscotch	
5th Denver Glont	Dolchstoss	Zeeby	
6th Hopscotch	Cut & Thrust	Denver Glont	
7th Ode	The Acolyte	Greatest Hits	
8th H of the Brave	Church Mouse	War & Peace	
9th Lokasenna	M Die Spuhl	Ode	
10th 20 Years On	TTYF	Cut & Thrust	

goes to show this must be by far the better method of voting, with the right zines appearing at the top where they should be. Though I'm sure there will be many who will disagree with this - there always is. Congratulations must be in order to Richard Walkerdine for Mad Policy winning most convincingly. I'm sure Richard will be well pleased with winning his poll after so many years of

coming second. Also one who must be congratulated is Richard Downes as best newcomer bringing Back to the Dark Ages up so high in his first poll. The number of people who voted this year was fairly good, though it was exactly 10 down from last year. 1983 had 224 voters, 1984 had 258, this year 248 voted.

As you can see 40 people voted for Dib (not too bad I suppose out of 110 subscribers and trades), but no-one voted it TOP? - this is impossible! I suppose it must have something to do with the couple of bad issues I put out beforehand. I hope so anyway. My thanks to all those that did vote for Dib though, coming 13th out of a total of 85 listed zines (143 zines voted for) just isn't bad. The results speak for themselves but just to explain the headings: 'Pts' based on the 3-2-1 method where if a voter only sends in votes for two zines the top zine gets 2 and the last one 1; '1sts' the number of people who had the zine at the top of their list; 'Vts' number of voters who voted for that zine.

Zine Poll Game:

TOM TWEEDY: 1st Dolchstoss; 2nd Mad Policy; 3rd Ode; 4th Hopscotch; 5th Greatest Hits.

DANIEL BROOKS: 1st Mad Policy; 2nd Ode; 3rd Dolchstoss; 4th Dib Dib Dib; 5th War & Peace.

DAVID ABBOTT: 1st Mad Policy; 2nd Dolchstoss; 3rd Greatest Hits; 4th Hopscotch; 5th War & Peace.

ULF JIRETORN: 1st Mad Policy; 2nd Dolchstoss; 3rd Ode; 4th War & Peace; 5th Dib Dib Dib.

The correct order was: Mad Policy; Dolchstoss; Home of the Brave; Hopscotch; and Zeeby. As you can see David and I got three guesses in the top five right, but David got Mad Policy, Dolchstoss and Hopscotch in the right order. So he receives the prize - a whole £1 note from Dib's coffers - as his reward. This will be included in his credit (therefore it goes right back where it belongs into my piggy bank) unless the rotter really wishes me to go to the trouble of writing a WHOLE cheque out! Hard luck the rest... maybe I'll have better luck next year.

THE CATACOMBS OF COPERNICA The Final Chapter

"The management regrets to announce that the Imperial Surveyors - having examined the catacombs, and having found them to be structurally unsound and beyond repair - have advised that the said catacombs should be closed to the public forthwith.

As the players no doubt will have already guessed, the Catacombs campaign has run into difficulties. I apologise for taking so long before announcing the closure of the game, but I've been trying to see if I could solve the problems. Unfortunately the Campaign suffers from too many basic design faults (the result I suppose of my never having run a postal campaign before) and the only solution would have been to scrap the game and started again from scratch, which hardly seemed reasonable.

So, my apologies to all the players, especially those who had only just started. You will all be getting your money back very shortly. My thanks to you for the entertainment you gave me, and I'm sorry it couldn't carry on any longer."

Chris Sandow (DM)

((Chris, according to my records the following should be getting their money back: Simon Craddock, Derek Andrews, Clive Booth, Nick Clark, George North, Dave Tant, Victor Hall, Mike Close, and I think Ian Tillson, but perhaps those players involved could contact Chris at 2 Coronation Avenue, Keynsham, Bristol, BS18 2PT Tel: 027 56 68874.))

DIPLOMACY BOURSE HOUSERULES

The 'Bourse' is not really a Diplomacy variant, but a separate game run in conjunction with a game of Diplomacy. The rules are believed to have been created originally by Don Miller, although many changes have been made over the years. In this version players are allowed to retain a balance in Dollars.

1. It is usual (but not compulsory) to play in a Bourse using a pseudonym.
2. Each player begins with 1000 units of the seven active currencies: Austrian Crowns, English Pounds, French Francs, German Marks, Italian Lira, Russian Roubles and Turkish Piastres. All currencies are equal in value at the start of the game. With one unit of each currency worth \$1.00. Throughout the game the value of each currency is always denoted in terms of Dollars.
3. The deadline for Bourse orders is the same as the deadline for the Diplomacy game. The orders are in two parts, selling and buying.
4. On a turn a player will sell some currencies and buy others. He may never sell more than 500 units of any one currency on a turn, but he may buy as many units as he can afford. If his total purchases on that turn costs less than the income he has generated from his sales, the surplus is retained as a balance in Dollars. This balance may be used on future turns when he wishes to buy more units than he can afford from sales. The Dollar balance may grow to any size but may never be in deficit.
5. Each turn the value of a currency will change according to the amount of trading in that currency. The value of a currency will increase by 1 cent for every 100 units bought, and will decrease 1 cent for every 100 units sold. The overall movement of a currency will thus be determined by the difference between total units bought and total units sold. If, for example, 2990 units of a currency are bought and 2000 units are sold, the difference is +990 units and the value of that currency would rise by 9 cents (fractions of cents are lost).
6. In his orders a player should list all of the currencies, their current unit values, his holdings in them, and give details of his buying and selling and any adjustments necessary to his balance of Dollars. It is important to check that you can afford to make the purchases you specify. In the event of an error the GM will attempt to make/buy as much as possible for you, but cannot guarantee to carry out your exact wishes.
7. Each season the GM will list who has sold and bought what, old price, new price, each players holdings and the total value of those holdings in terms of Dollars.
8. When a country is eliminated from the Diplomacy game (which is only possible in an Autumn season) the value of its currency falls to zero and it no longer plays any part in the Bourse. Apart from this no currency may fall below a value of 1 cent. There is no upper limit to the value of a currency.
9. Anyone may join the game at any time and will start with 1000 units of each currency still active in the game.
10. The Bourse ends when the Diplomacy game ends. The winner is determined by computing the 'credits' of each Bourse player by multiplying the number of units of currency he currently owns by the number of supply centres owned by that country at the end of the game and dividing the total result by 100. The winner is the player with the highest 'total credits'. Thus if England wins with 18 centres and the surviving countries are Italy (10 centres) and Russia (6 centres), a player who had 6000 Pounds, 5000 Lira and 8000 Roubles would have total 'credits' of $1080 + 500 + 480 = 2060$. Any Dollars still held at the end of the game are lost.
11. No conditional orders are allowed.

These Bourse rules were copied exactly from BttDA 14 with kind permission of Richard Downes (who got them from Mad Policy) - thanks Richard. Waiting Lists for this are now open on the back Dib.

JOTTO Turn 7

A lot of NMR's this turn. I think Rosie managed to scare you all off last time with her 6 - wotta buncha nancies; no staying power. The kitty still stands at £5. Andrew if you can't get 3 guesses in next time I'll have to take your name off - it's too difficult to print and GM otherwise.

KATH COLLMAN: 7th: 431123
 BRIAN MOORE: 7th: 113121
 MIKE DEANS: 7th: 221132
 ALAN POWIS: 7th: NMR1

R.J. LAMPARD: 7th: NMR1
 RICHARD DOWNES: 7th: 220111
 ULF JIRETORN: 7th: 223242
 ANDREW SMITH: 6th: NMR1
 7th: NMR1
 RICHARD SHARP: 7th: NMR1

ROSIE ROBERTS: 7th: 224232

LETTERS

MICHELE MORRIS: "The lettercol in Dib 50 was quite interesting. It was, of course, much enhanced by the addition of my spouse and self. ((Undoubtedly)) Thanks for the warm welcome, you sycophant you, if that's your response to a £3 cheque all I can say is that you must be as desperate for the green'uns as we are! ((I HATE it when women 'understand' me))

I've decided to ignore your chauvenistic comments on page 11. I'm not so naive that I'll rise to the bait so easily. It would be a bit pointless anyway, you only seem to have 3 or 4 female subscribers so any arguments in our favour would be rapidly descried by the misogynists among your readership."

((Hey, unfair comments! For a start a lot more women than you realise read Dib - the wives of Dib subscribers for a start (Dib is a family mag!) - but their husbands have them under proper control. Anyway, for someone who wasn't going to comment you certainly got a lot of cracks in - I haven't been called a misogynist for quite some time now. Kris, DO something....))

MICHELE (CONT): "Very nearly forgot. As Danny Collman said it does take several readings of the rules before they are comprehended. Isn't this true of many good games also (have you read the rules to Monopoly lately?). For sheer lack of clarity nothing beats the rules of 'Colditz'. If anyone knows how to play that and can summarise the rules in plain English we'd be truly grateful.

I'm very sorry Danny ((Re Danny Collman's letter last issue)) but your rewrite of Rule XII is just as bad as the original. As a true novice (we only bought the game in June), I can say your explanation did nothing to clarify the situation. The fact that you think it does is an example of just how difficult it is to write truly clear instructions to anything. In order to be able to write (or rewrite) the rulebook you have to have a full understanding of the game. You are thus far removed from the difficult position of the beginner. What you may consider to be the stumbling blocks may not in fact be what bothers the novice. Add to that the loose ends and often imprecise nature of the English language and you have a scenario ripe for chaos. Because you know what you meant to say you may find it impossible to interpret what you have written in any other way. An outsider without previous knowledge of the game may view your 'unambiguous' sentences in totally the wrong way.

Learning theory states that we learn most easily when the learning situation allows active rather than passive learning. translated into 'plain English', if there is such a thing, it is easiest to learn by doing. As Tom suggested the best way to learn is by actively playing the game or as Gibsons suggest by working your way through the examples (or even as Danny Collman has done by rewriting the rules in your own words).

Either way is preferable to just passive learning i.e. reading the rules. When learning anything the way to make progress is, therefore, to get stuck in there!"

((I don't think I need to make any comment here, Michele says it all in regards Danny's Diplomacy rules. As for the 'Colditz' rules, come now Michele, a women of your calibre, the rules are EASY. Mind you, I don't think I could explain them in printed form all in one go - perhaps if you fired a question at me one at a time I could help you.))

DANNY COLLMAN: "Naughty, naughty! Do I detect a hint of petulance? (Uther Gamestart) Kath is having fun trying to decide who she can trust.

My final word(s) on the rule revamping, mainly answering your comments. I'll accept that you understood the rules instantly (unlikely though that seems) - but how on earth did you find out about the hobby? There was no mention in my game when I got it, and I only found out (re. letter, Dib 50) after writing to Gibson's. This particular problem has only this April gone and been rectified by Richard Bairstow's box-fliers.

I still feel very strongly (gently echoed by others) that the rules are badly written. I don't want them changed, just written in a way that the normally intelligent person who wishes to play at home with friends, can understand them. For your perusal I enclose a copy of the finished revisions (despite what I said last time I decided to do the job myself). The curious supplement is the result of my ignoring certain sections with the words 'As published', then realising that I did not intend them to be as originally published. If anyone else wants to see my revisions - A4 or A5 S.A.E. with an extra 17p stamp, address as per Dib 50 'Uther' gamestart.

Your quotation of Kevin Elliott in 'Hacking Times': where the hell does he get his reading of rule 9? Neither the 1971, nor 1983 rules (photocopy enclosed) say that at all, never mind rule 9, and in the 'Basic Rules' sheet (photocopy enclosed) published by Gibson's it's their one appalling error at rule 10 in an otherwise commendable effort to paraphrase the rules.

Above are my final words on the rules."

((I haven't had time to read your rules closely so I can't make any comment on them yet. However looking at Gibson's supplement it seems as though Kevin Elliott was going on about rule 10 - and as you say, you recognised the error.

I joined the hobby first, having seen it advertised the 'Games & Puzzles', and asked the NGC Custodian, Richard Sharp, what sort of games were played postally. He told me Diplomacy was the main game (it was a strong Diplomacy hobby in those days) - so, I went out and bought a box. I thought my entrance into the hobby was pretty straight forward.))

BRIAN MOORE: "Re. Diplomacy Rules: I was given a copy of the 1971 game, given, because the person who had bought couldn't understand it. At that time I was also getting G&P, and saw an ad for the Postal Games Association 'run' by Richard Sharp. I sent a pound and heard nothing more, till a couple of months later when I received a flyer telling me that the PGA wasn't running any more but I could write to the magazines listed. I chose one called Bellicus because the editor, Will Haven, lived in Chorley and I could also ask him about T&T/D&D as well as Diplomacy. I soon found myself also subbing to Chimaera where I played my only game of postal Diplomacy, 'Deneb', apart from playing in 2 or 3 others as stand in. I came second in Deneb.

I've not played Diplomacy since, either F&F or PBM. Reason: Diplomacy played well needs oodles of time devoted to it in analysing positions, yours and others, and also in writing to all the players, or most of them every month. With all my other hobby commitments I just can't devote enough time to a game which in turn would spoil it for the others. I never did get my pound back from Richard Sharp.

You say you are looking for something else to run. Something like