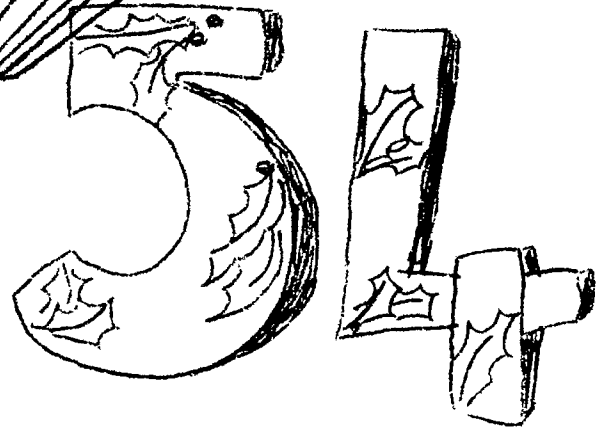


DIB DIB DIB



AMARR  
CHRISTMAS

Welcome to the 54th issue of Dib Dib Dib - the Christmas edition packed in before the festive rush, with hopefully another weekend turnaround to see you get to read it whilst eating the old Christmas nosh. What else could one ask for as a present, eh? 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

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#### EDITORIAL

Deadline after Christmas: Friday the 17th January is really too early after the Christmas rush, the 24th can't be done because I have to produce the Dalmatian Club magazine, Spots of News over that time, ready to get it out for the 1st February, which just leaves Friday 31st January 1986. Sorry if it's an overly long turnaround, but there's nothing else that can be done - I really think the extra time is needed. Mind you, I'll expect everyone to get written orders in with such a long deadline, surely no-one will need to phone their orders in on the Thursday?

Thanks to all those who sent cards or wished us Merry Christmas - as for those who haven't sent cards... WHY haven't you? Mind you, I mustn't grumble I suppose, much as I hate to admit I do have a reasonable bunch of subscribers. You all have your own little foibles which makes my life more interesting; Nick Hoyle sends me his own Christmas card which he made (though this time it was a sort of mobile to hang up); Michele & Kris Morris take time out to send me drawings, one a Christmas one; John Piggott generally signs his cheques to me with "Pay Tom Tweedy the sum of 'so many pounds' AND NOT A PENNY MORE!" (what a Scrooge); Danny & Kath Collman start their letters with "Not a long letter this time" and proceed to write 4 or 5 pages each; George North (a prolific and much-appreciated Dib contributor) and ~~Luke Clutterbuck~~ just write; and Mike Close and Nicholas Clifton pester me and call me names. Of course there's dozens more Dib characters almost too numerous to name, Emblem, Sharp, Deans, Quartermain, Bycroft, Downes, etc who contribute to the zine and make it what it is. I'd like to thank you all, and wish you whole-heartedly a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and a happy 1986!

News of the month must be that Richard Walkerdine is handing over the work of his beloved Zine Poll to the infamous John Piggott. I think this may have cost Richard a lot more than he makes out in MP 113, I am sure he greatly enjoyed the razzamatazz of doing the Poll himself. He must have - he's been doing it for years. The change over is due to a combination of reasons: Some felt Mad Policy had an unfair advantage in the Poll; others felt the voting system/eligibility system needed looking into (none of which bothered Richard much as differing sets of ideas along those lines had been put forward before); also been suggested that MP has no other targets to aim for now it has won the 1985 Poll; but the main reason ~~is~~ Richard now has a lot of other things on his plate with regards the new stats work he rescued from Pete Calcraft. All in all I think Richard has shown a lot of character in handing the Zine Poll over - in his position, I'm not sure I would have done the same.

However, what of the NEW Zine Poll Custodian? Well apart from all the nasty things I'd like to say about him, with words like reprobate, blackguard, villain of the highest water, ex-'hard core' member and someone voted as 'most unlikeliest person to turn one's back on', I must admit he might be the best man for the job. John will be giving the poll back to the Diplomacy hobby, much of which will meet with great approval. Gone will be Soccercross zines and fringe zines of the hobby. If it doesn't run Diplomacy, it won't get a mention. Also to go will be the European zines, no bad things from my point of view as I don't receive any of them anyway. This should give us back a trimmed down and much more respectable Diplomacy Zine Poll with the results being a little more realistic.

Of course there is a danger, a mere possibility, John may now resurrect Ethil the Frog to run the Poll in (look how Walkerdine succumbed), so pressure must be brought to bear to assure us that such will not be the case. The last things the hobby needs is another of the 'Old Guard' crawling out of the woodwork foisting us off with their miserable dusty tomes. Do we really need another zine with the quality of Dolchstoss? I say no! - after all how else am I to get the chance to win the Zine Poll?

News on the Dib front. I'm only really interested in GMing Diplomacy, but I realise people must be interested in other games so, some time in the new year Dib may well take on a subzine to expand in other games. Sub-zine editor will be the ultra-reliable Richard Downes, who's interested in taking on my Sopwith games, and also wishes to run Bourse, Railway Rivals and 'Broadside'; Graham Holmes' sea-faring Sopwith variant. It's early days yet, but Richard seems eager enough to start. I'll have to watch him with this extra bid for hobby domination, he's getting as bad a Walkerdine, Kinzett, or even the Morris/Collman combol

I meant to include Len George's 'Postal Games Poll' last issue but mislaid it - now I've found it I fear I might have left it too late; there's no deadline.

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#### JOTTO Turn 1,2,3

Not too many yet. Rosie must have scared most of the competition off. There's some plucky people though I'm pleased to say. Welcome back, and best of luck to:-

|                |               |             |            |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| ROSIE ROBERTS  | : 1ST 120221; | 2ND 214112; | 3RD 221132 |
| ULF JIRETORN   | : 1ST 121033; | 2ND 322201; | 3RD 212221 |
| CATH COLLMAN   | : 1ST 321231; | 2ND 111113; | 3RD 132111 |
| MICHELE MORRIS | : 1ST 322132; | 2ND 122122; | 3RD 112022 |
| BRIAN MOORE    | : 1ST 212002  |             |            |

So, anyone else interested? For anyone who feels up to it, just send in 4 guesses next time to catch up. The gamefee is 75p with 50p going towards a prize. As you can see so far the prize is £2.50. And the rules...

As before I will choose six words from the Chambers dictionary, each word will be six letters long. Each month you send in one word and I then score each letter against each of my six words. For instance, if you submitted DETOUR and the six secret words were: RESORT, BASKET, GENTLE, PRIEST, MORTAR, BOTTLE the scores would be: 4, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3 respectively. Obvious aim is to find all six words.

When you think you know all six words you may take a guess at them (you must guess all six) - but you must get ALL six right! Get one wrong and you're out. Plurals are accepted. Anagrams of the secret words are accepted.

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#### THE IMPENETRABLE MILK CARTON

from Alan Powis

The last few issues of Dib have seen many topics raised and discussed, but I would like to raise what I believe to be an issue of National importance; the Impenetrable Milk Carton. Let me tell you the whole story.

It all started last Tuesday evening. Our stocks of milk were at a low ebb and I was threatened with the catastrophic prospect of having to do without my morning bowl of Cornflakes. I volunteered to go to the local shop which is the only place one can buy milk at 9pm. I found that the only milk they had left was "Long Life" milk which comes in cardboard containers, so I purchased two

cartons. I took them home, put one in the refrigerator and tried to open the other. That is when my problems began.

The instructions were simple, "Lift flap and tear", but having tried this, it is my belief that these cartons should carry a government health warning "Trying to open this carton could seriously damage your health" or something to that effect. I know I am not the strongest man in the world but I did once tear a telephone directory in half (the Rutland edition). One strip of cardboard on a milk carton should have been no problem, or so I thought.

At first I believed my inability to tear the strip was due to my holding it wrongly. Perhaps if I changed my grip and tried tearing from the edge of the carton back towards the middle I may succeed. I changed my grip and tried it, unsuccessfully. For several minutes I wrestled with the carton, using my right hand, changing to my left hand, tearing from the centre, tearing from the edge, all to no avail. I put the carton on the kitchen table and considered the problem while I mopped the sweat from my fevered brow. Would I have to do without my breakfast cereal after all? The prospect of this was disconcerting to say the least. Then, suddenly, the idea came to me. I needed reinforcements. The Scissors.

Now every household has a pair of scissors. Usually they are about twenty years old, never sharpened and have trouble cutting fog. Ours are no exception. I finally found the scissors in the drawer in which they are kept (under the insurance policies but on top of the marriage certificate) and tried them on the carton. At first nothing happened. No matter how hard I tried they just would not cut the card. Then, just as I was about to give up they closed shut. At last! I thought, the damned thing is open! No, wrong again. What had happened was this. The cardboard strip I was trying to cut had bent, the blades of the scissors had closed together without cutting the strip which was now lodged firmly between the blades.

That did it. Now I was angry. I managed to get the scissor blades apart and with one Herculean effort I tore the strip of cardboard off the carton. The result was disastrous. Instead of leaving a spout behind which makes pouring the milk easier, I took most of the side of the carton too, sending at least half the contents of the carton cascading onto the floor. Still, there was enough milk left for our morning tea and my morning Cornflakes.

Which brings me to tonight, Saturday, and Wendy has just informed me she will be making a rice pudding tomorrow. "After all," she said "We may as well use that other carton of milk".

I may just stay in bed all day.

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MICROBIT  
from James Cowie

Micro was a real-time operator and dedicated multi-user. His broad-band protocol made it easy for him to interface with numerous input/output devices even if it meant time-sharing.

One evening he arrived home just as the sun was crashing, and had parked his Motorola 68000 in the main drive (he had missed the S100 bus that morning), when he noticed an elegant piece of liveware admiring the daisywheels in his garden, he thought to himself, "She looks user-friendly, I'll see if she'd like an update tonight".

Mini was her name, and she was delightfully engineered with eyes like COBOL and a Prime mainframe architecture that set Micro's peripherals networking all over the place. He browsed over her casually, admiring the power of her twin,

32-bit floating point processors, and enquired "How are you, Honeywell?" "Yes I am well," she responded, batting her optical fibres engagingly and smoothing her console over curvilinear functions.

Micro settled for a straight line approximation. "I'm stand-alone tonight," he said, "How about computing a vector to my base address, I'll output a byte to eat and maybe we could offset later on."

Mini ran a priority process for 2.6 milliseconds then transmitted "8K, I've been dumped myself recently, and a new page is just what I need to refresh my disks. I'll park my machine cycle in your background and meet you inside." She walked off, leaving Micro admiring her solenoids and thinking, "Wow, what a global variable, I wonder if she'll like my firmware."

They sat down at the process table to a top of form feed of fiche and chips and a bucket of Baudot. Mini was in conversational mode and expanded on ambiguous arguments while Micro gave occasional acknowledgements although, in reality, he was analysing the shortest and least critical path to her entry point. He finally settled on the old 'would you like to see my benchmark subroutine,' but Mini was one step ahead.

Suddenly she was up and stripping off her parity bits to reveal the full functionality of her operating system software. "Let's get BASIC, you RAM," she said. Micro was loaded by this stage, but his hardware polling module had a processor of its own and was in danger of overflowing his output buffer, a hang-up that Micro had consulted his analyst about. "Core," was all he could say.

Micro soon recovered, however, when she went down on the DEC and opened her device files to reveal her data set ready. He accessed his fully packed root device and was just about to start pushing her CPU stack, when she attempted an escape sequence.

"No, no" she piped. "You're not shielded." "Reset baby," he replied. "I've been debugged."

"But I haven't got my current loop enabled, and I can't support child processors," she protested. "Don't run away," he said, "I'll generate an interrupt."

"No that's too error prone, and I can't abort because of my design philosophy"

Micro was locked in by this stage though, and could not be turned off. But she soon stopped his thrashing by introducing a voltage spike into his mains supply, whereupon he fell over with a head crash and went into sleep state.

"Computers" she thought as she compiled herself, "All they ever think of is hex."

((I make no excuses for this, I see nothing wrong in linking a micro to a mini, anyway it's all Mr Cowie's fault. All letters of complaint to him. Mind you, here I am worrying about giving insult to my female readers and getting Dib branded as a sexist magazine, when it was two women to replied to Y-front and knicker letters in the letter column! They always say, woman are the worst! Incurable. Er... thanks for the article, James.))

Ha! Just got a little space here for a spacefiller. Did any of you see our hobby superstars on 'Masterteams' on the 10 December? They didn't do too badly really. A slow start to begin, with Birks looking as though he wished he was somewhere else, and John Webley (sub-zine editor in Home) playing a blinder - to tell you the truth he held the team up. The only surprise for my part was thinking Geoff Challenger should've looked like John Webley, and vice versa.

SOPWITH STATS (AUTUMN '85)  
from Andy Murby

These stats were copied from the recent 9th edition of The Sopwith States. I won't give the full set of stats, I haven't got the space. If you wish to see the full set of stats just write to Andy Murby, 12 Townsend Lane, Donington-Le-Heath, Coalville, Leics. And will cost you 5p + postage. Other things of interest are the games in progress, and a breakdown of finished games.

ACES HIGH

Richard Morris	121
Brian Moore	119
Tom Tweedy	102
John Bycroft	91
Nicholas Clifton	90
Dave Tant	82
Sandy Peters	62
Ian Tillson	51
Michael Woods	51
Rob Chapman	50
Frank Dunn	49
Matt Quartermain	46
Martyn Ives	45
Stephen Woods	40

Aces High: To become an Ace you have to score a minimum of 40 points. This score must be reached in 5 games or less. Your totals are added, including minuses, to see if 40 or more can be reached.

Ratings List: The scores from all your finished games only are totalled and divided by the number of games finished plus one.

Positional Rating List: When you end a game you are given points depending on how many other players you beat. Generally you receive one point per player beat. However, if a player crashed or died at the same time as you then only half a point is awarded. A sole winner of a game receives a bonus point. Rat is worked out by dividing total Pts x No. of Gms + 1

SOPWITH RATING LIST

Pos.	Name	Rat	Gms	Pts	Best
1.	Richard Morris	21.6	4	108	50
2.	Tom Tweedy	19.16	5	115	55
3.	Malcolm Peltz	17.5	1	35	35
4.	Dave Tant	17.5	6	123	40
5.	Martyn Ives	17	1	34	34
6.	Ian Tillson	16.5	1	33	33
7.	Frank Dunn	16.53	2	49	26
8.	Nicholas Clifton	15	5	90	41
9.	Brian Moore	14.8	6	104	71
10.	Ray Miller	13.5	1	27	27
	Ken O'Brian	13.5	1	27	27
12.	John Bycroft	13	1	26	26
	Brian Douglas	13	1	26	26
	Doug Rowling	13	1	26	26
	Ivo Steyn	13	1	26	26
	Stephen Woods	13	1	26	26
17.	Martin Adlem	12	1	24	24
	Derek Gomer	12	1	24	24
19.	Mark Billenness	11.5	1	23	23
20.	Mike Hanns	11	2	33	18
21.	Steve Norledge	10.3	2	40	26
	Sandy Peters	10.3	5	62	21
23.	Rob Chapman	10	4	50	32
	John Norris	10	1	20	20
25.	Dave King	9.5	1	19	19
26.	Nick Hoyle	9	3	36	14

SOPWITH POSITIONAL RATING LIST

Pos.	Name	Rat	Gms	Pts	Best
1.	Tom Tweedy	3.33	5	20	6
2.	Dave Tant	3.06	6	21.5	6
3.	Frank Dunn	3	2	9	5½
	Len George	3	1	6	6
	Ken O'Brian	3	1	6	6
6.	Richard Morris	2.9	4	14.5	6
7.	Neville Cooper	2.75	1	5.5	5½
	Derek Gomer	2.75	1	5.5	5½
	Malcolm Peltz	2.75	1	5.5	5½
	Doug Rowling	2.75	1	5.5	5½
	Ian Tillson	2.75	1	5.5	5½
	Stephen Woods	2.75	1	5.5	5½
13.	Brian Moore	2.5	6	17.5	6
14.	Mike Vernon	2.33	2	7	4
15.	Sandy Peters	2.25	5	13.5	3½
16.	Mick Antrobus	2.2	10	23	4
17.	Mark Billenness	2	1	4	4
	Rob Chapman	2	4	10	4
	Nicholas Clifton	2	5	12	4½
	Brian Douglas	2	1	4	4
	Richard Downes	2	2	6	5½
	Simon Hatcher	2	1	4	4
	Nick Hoyle	2	3	8	4
	Martyn Ives	2	1	4	4
	Ray Miller	2	1	4	4
	Steve Norledge	2	2	6	5½

The rest of Dib's subscribers: Ian Singer & Andrew Smith 29; Simon Craddock 35; Alan Parr 43; Robert Lozynskyj 45; George North 47; Terry Dibden, Richard Downes, Steve Gregory & Alan Sharples 48; James Cowie & Clive Palmer 61; Konrad Dolata 65; David Crawford 78; Matt Quartermain 90; and Richard Bass 112.

George North 30; James Cowie 31; Iain Singer 35; Simon Craddock 36; John Bycroft 48; Robert Lozynskyj 55; Terry Dibden, Matt Quartermain, Andrew Smith & John Marsden 58; Richard Bass & David Crawford 79; Cathy Cuning 84; Alan Parr, Julien Shepley & Chris Sandow 98.

LETTERS

ROBERT LOZYNSKYJ: "Thanks for the surprise games only issue of Dib 53. I'd like to see a bumper issue to compensate next time!"

((Thank you, Rob, it helps to know I have an understanding audience. Actually this has all the makings of another unintentional bumper issue, without even my answers to the letters the computer says I have twelve pages. I may have to cut some out and hold them over until next issue. Though what will happen if that's a large column as well I dunno.))

MICHELE MORRIS: "In reply to Mike Deans I have no desire to discuss Y-fronts or what's in 'em. As my dear departed mum used to say "once you've seen one...?" Come to think of it I suppose that should be once you've seen them both. After all there are two varieties. Reminds me of a fella I used to know at Uni. He was always asking if I wanted to see his operations scars. I eventually found out (and I'm not telling how!), that he'd been circumcised.

((It's always the best stories that get left out.))

CATHY OZOG: "The letter column is getting rather large isn't it? I thought life stopped after 50, but you ((the zine!)) seem to get better and better. Or is it Jan that is really running the show?

As for 'knickers' we Americans don't use such words. Why it's underwear or nothing at all. And there are some who wear nothing at all. But I'm a married woman now, I can't talk about such things anymore - such is life."

((I should think so too - but is this discussion really necessary, when I have to take into consideration my ~~ether female~~ male readers? I should say not! Stop trying to lower the tone of this excellent zine, Mrs Ozog, have you no shame? I think I'll change the subject before the rest of the pimply youth succumb (so far, thankfully, only Deans and Close have been attracted by this, but what else is one to expect from degenerates such as these?).

As for the letter column... yes, it is getting large, even after weeding out most of the undesirable elements. None of this however has anything to do with Jan (apart from her sometimes driving me to the typewriter with threats) it's all my own work I'm afraid. I don't need subzine editors like Webley or Bain to boost this zine to the top of the Zine Poll! Ignore Richard Downes, he is merely an extension of me. Now, who have we next... oh no, is HE back from the prison colony already?))

NICHOLAS CLIFTON: "I must chastise you on your letter column - it is far too sensible. What ever happened to those endearing Chameleons, those enchanting Angel Dolls, the enticing delights of prehensile rubber ducks? Where has the flair, the charm and the lack of taste gone? I say to you that you must start a guest column by George North, print full page articles on knicker elastic and blow-up men (for your female readers). Come Tom, it is time to lower the tone of Dib once again!

Love and kisses..."

((Yeuk! Go away, Clifton, I thought I'd given the Authorities enough evidence to keep you over in Ausy for the rest of my natural. Don't say you came back to bugger up my letter column once again? Of course Dib's letter column isn't vulgar any more, I'm going 'up-market' now, I have more control over the contents... apart from the Collman's, Morris', Close, Sharp, Piggott, Emblem, North, etc... but their days are numbered believe me!))

RICHARD MORRIS: "It's a small world. My parents came from the Plymouth area (though I don't think we are related to Kris) so I've always considered myself to be a bit of a local. Though despite the 'Welsh' surname you will find me claiming to be a Scot, since I was born and raised in Fife,

for reasons which will be apparant to anyone from Plymouth."

((Know what you mean, squire, know what you mean - mind you, surely claiming to be a Scot is worse? Heh heh, that'll start off Deans and the others....))

And you can't have a lettercolumn without some mention of George and his mishaps...

GEORGE NORTH: "Thank you for another zine with the giant letter column. I haven't ploughed through it all yet but a couple of items sort of stopped me dead in my tracks. Dave Fish for a start off. He is quite right about heavier objects being used on free range eggs, or any other kind of egg, for that matter.

Do you know, Tom, it is possible to throw an egg over the roof of your house and then run round to the lawn at the back, and find the egg lying there unbroken. That is because eggs thrown high into the air will always land point downwards and are as tough as old boots on the pointed bit. ((Well I go to the foot of our stairs...))

You can also tell if an egg is hardboiled by spinning it like a top on its point. if it spins then you know it is hard boiled, and if it doesn't spin then it is still soft.

I know lots of interesting things about food since I do most of the cooking in our house. Peg used to cook at one time before she realised that this cooking was a disaster area in her case. I remember the first time Peg tried to toss a pancake.

Admitted the pans were a bit cheap because we bought a set of four for five bob from Woolworths and Peg ws using the largest of the four. The small one was stolen by a chemist at the Brewery who wanted to test some solution or other, and the middle sized two I left accidentally, on the bus on the way to work.

So Peg did one side of the pancake and then tossed the pancake high into the air so that it came down near the wall. Undeterred, Peg jabbed at it with the frying pan, and the pan hit the wall and sort of buckled up, leaving the pancake to drape itself around the handle, split slowly into two, and hide itself behind the gas oven. So Peg went off cooking and left me and the rest of the family to always cook our own.

The only other discovery that might be of interest to somebody out there is when I dripped bisto into a saucepan of boiling water, the bit that splashed up was brown in colour. So I can only assume the Bisto doesn't actually sink when dropped, but bounces back up again. Isn't that curious?

And finally I have to admit that Peg and I have just returned from a marvellous week at an Adult College where we learned about life after retirement. First our Brewery pension, then the Government Pension, then how to invest and how not to have to pay much tax. All boring stuff.

However, what came out of the discussion was hard facts that after retirement the expectancy of life for men was 22 years, and for women it was 27 years.

"Why," asked our teacher, "did we think woman lived longer than men?" I suggested they did less work and nearly started world war three, but perhaps somebody out there might know the reason?

Won't bore you with the rest of the week except to say we modelled clay, made confectionary, learned a splattering of Italian and played croquet on the lawn. All symbolic, I suppose. we also had a day of gymnastics and a grand party to finish up with. Roll on retirement after that lot."

((You don't make retirement sound very palatable George - it sounds more like they sent you back to school. Makes me wonder how how people managed retirement 50 years ago - perhaps they all flunked, what with them not going to Adult College an' all that. Doesn't it get you angry people treating you that way?))