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Welcome to the 57th issue of Dib Dib Dib - a rather largish issue due to clearance of articles, letters, etc. The cost is a fixed rate of 45p per issue in the UK and 28p + postage overseas. Send money, to Tom Tweedy, 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks., HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513

EDITORIAL

I must take this space to give you warning. After this issue I'll be cutting Dib back a bit: no editorials, less letters, and less articles. The reason is that over the Summer (up until late Autumn) we'll be busy househunting, or rather a larger garden hunting (on Jan's instructions). I don't know where to yet, but no further north than Birmingham, no further west than the Welsh border, no further east than Cambridge, and no further south than where I am or perhaps Reading. It's a lot of ground to look over, and I don't want to be held down to long deadlines. THIS IN NO WAY MEANS I'M FOLDING, I'm certainly NOT. Dib will be carrying on for ages yet. What it will mean is that Dib's turnaround will be speeded up and the zine will be 4 weekly instead of 5 weekly. Though if we find something earlier it'll mean I'll be able to get back to normal earlier. We'll have to wait and see.

I realise that some of you get the zine because of the chat side of it (especially trades), if this is the case and you want to stop trading or receiving Dib please let me know - though I'll be sorry to see you go, I realise nothing can be done about it. GOOD that's all the boring stuff over with, now I can get on with it.

I seem to be meeting a lot of new hobby people lately. Richard Downes has been up a couple of times (I think I mentioned how 'normal looking' he seemed last time, ~~didn't I?~~). Then, ~~right out of the blue~~ John Bycroft turned up (on Richard's second visit) and last night Roberto Della-Sala and Pete Sullivan arrived on the doorstep.

John Bycroft was a surprise, looking more like a bank manager than anything else with his pin stripe suit and black attache case. Intrigued I asked him what was in the case, and John managed to piss me off by unloading a 650K Olivetti flat screen portable computer + modem. What do these men DO I wondered, to be let loose in the world with equipment like this!

Yes, John was a surprise, however seeing Pete Sullivan was a shock. My God I thought Gary Piper was big, but Pete blotted out the sunlight as he passed the patio doors! Mind you, I'm not referring to his ample girth (a 'little' bigger than mine maybe) but more to his height - the man must be 6' 6" at least!

Of course I managed to con both Roberto and Pete into doing some work on Spots of News before they left (thanks fellas), and whilst Roberto hunkered down on the floor easily in comfort (apart from getting pins and needles) I had to turn a whole settee over to Petel God knows how his mum manages to feed him - probably throws a leg of mutton at him to be getting on with! No, just joking Pete, honest...

I had to chortle though at Richard Sharp's latest offering using his new Amstrad word processor. Not that Dolchstoss was bad mind you, far from it. It was just Richard's naive quote that using a computer things MUST get easier to do in the long run, eh? Ha ha, hahaha HAHAHAAaa... I mean... doesn't he realise that now he's hooked, now he's made the £400+ investment, his troubles are only just starting! Everyone knows that computers are designed to cope with one problem, merely to create another! After a month we'll have another dedicated terminal junkie; hollow-eyed, balding of head (though Richard has no problem here), with hooked talons stabbing spasmodically at the keys in the hope that THIS time things will turn out right. Be kind to him, another traditionalist has succumbed, and this could be the passing of an era.

Another of those 'schoolboy' editors, 15 year old Mark Campbell is keeping up the tradition (were Steve Agar, Pete Northcott and others left off) of starting up a new zine called Taste of Paradise which will be out in early April. Those interested need only send Mark a 17p stamp. Mark Campbell, 27 Cardigan Drive, Belfast, BT14 0LX, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland

DECISIONS

(Loosely based on 'Busy' by A.A. Milne)
by Michele 'Hacker' Morris

I think I'll sub to DibDibDib. That would be rather swell. Or MP could be better. It's so difficult to tell.

Perhaps I'll try Vienna? No, I think I'll take a dram. I'm feeling rather funny and I don't know who I am -

But

What to do,
And what to do,
And what to do, again?
All around the zine scene,
The zines for Diplomacy.
What to do,
And what to do,
And what to do again?

I think I'll play as Russia, play without a care. I think I'll play as England, who gets another centre, beside another centre, because it's only fair.

So

Who to be,
And who to be,
And who, what, what'n'who.
What to do,
And what to do? Who to?

I think I'll try a Juggernaut and cross the map with ease. I think I'll try Lepanto, poor Austria for to tease.

Perhaps I'm just a stooge, behaving like a lamb. I'm feeling rather funny and I don't know what I am.

But

What to do,
And what to do,
And what to do, again?
All around the zine scene,
The zines for Diplomacy.
What to do,
And what to do,
And what to do again?

I think I am a Novice, looking out for fun..

I think I am a nation, who

Is looking for an ally, who

Is looking for an ally, who wants me on the run.

So

Who to be,
And who to be,
And who, what, what'n'who?
What to do,
And what to do? Who to?

THE 1986 GLADYS AWARDS

Well, as I mentioned in my editorial last issue, it would take a strong personality to get these awards up and running again after the Pyrrhic Victory Rapscaillon failures, and we may well have it in the shape of the new custodian, Geoff Challenger (editor of Home of the Brave). I certainly hope so, and wish Geoff the best of luck. I'll support him so why don't you. It's only supposed to be a bit of harmless fun leading up to the main 'Diplomacy Zine Poll'. It's getting the backing from its originator, John Miller, who hopes it'll be used again in the fun it was intended. It wasn't until Mike Alloway took it over that the categories started getting serious. Anyway, 'nuff of this, on with the show. Geoff invites nominations for the following categories; as many as you want for each category, or vote for just one category - it's entirely up to you.

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|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Best Diplomacy Zine | 8. Best Looking Zine |
| 2. Best General Games Zine | 9. Best New Zine |
| 3. Best F.R.P. Zine | 10. Best Zine for Hobbynews |
| 4. Best Chatzine | 11. Most Improved Zine |
| 5. Best Lettercol | 12. Best Diplomacy GM |
| 6. Best Writer | 13. Best Games GM |
| 7. Best Subzine | 14. Most Regretted Fold |
| 15. The Dame Edna Everidge Award for Nicest Hobby Person. | |

Oh well, no comic categories this time it seems. What happened to the 'Grass Widow of the Year' category? Jan won this the first year - wot a cheek. Anyway, all nominations must be sent in to Geoff by May 8th 1986 to 117 Shrubbery Road, South Darenth, Kent, DA4 9AP.

JOTTO Turn 6

The prize is £4.50. Don't forget if anyone forgets, or loses, their words or their results, feel free to contact me for a check. And talking of checks, I made a little mistake with Matthew's 5th word last time. His result should have been: 5th 221211. Rosie has NMR'd again so you all have a better chance of winning... Mike, you're still one move behind remember.

ROSIE ROBERTS : 5TH NMR; 6TH NMR	MATTHEW WRIGHT: 6TH 110210
ULF JIRETORN : 6TH 332212	DENISE SMITH : 6TH 423222
KATH COLLMAN : 6TH 543133	MIKE CLOSE : 5TH 120120
MICHELE MORRIS: 6TH 223202	BILL HAYGARTH : 6TH 213101
BRIAN MOORE : 6TH 433014	

It had to come eventually - so I'll just quickly get it out of the way. A not-so-brief intro from the one and only: LUKE CLUTTERBUCK

You asked for a brief personal introduction so here goes: I began life in Ankorage, Zambia in 1335. One of my parents was a US medieval historian doing some fieldwork, one was a gnat vet and the other was a specialist in making wine from yak vomit. After a childhood spent in seclusion, I was eventually severed from my identical Siamese twin, Louise, and attended Kabul University where I studied the theory and practice of hot dogs in industry. At this point I should explain that I was not actually 'born' in the normal sense. Nor was I hatched, mined or harvested. In fact I was knitted into being and I think it was this that first led me to becoming a tailor.

Unfortunately, the green uniform they gave us to wear clashed with my purple skin and it wasn't easy to sew with tentacles either so I left to pursue my ambition to become the first twenty-sided creature to beat Tom Tweedy in a game of D&D. Politically I used to be an anarcho-syndicalist-

humanist-conservationist before moving on to Diabetes after a brief fling with being a Martian. People often ask me how I managed to live so long. Well, I've drunk forty bottles of Creme De Menthe every day for 651 years so it can't be the alcohol. And, being a Mormon, I've been married 78,000 odd times so it can't be the women. Maybe it's the cigarettes I avoid that's caused my longevity. I did try to smoke about 482 years ago but I didn't like it. One final thing, the name 'Clutterbuck' is of course made up - no-one would believe my real name.

((Yes, okay, all that explains a lot; that you are definitely Australian, but it doesn't explain why you're so WEIRD!))

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BIRMINGHAM WEEKEND DIPLOMACY

from Danny Collman

((I had this fully typed up to be included this issue. It was with some surprise then when I saw this article published in the latest Zeeby. I won't publish articles that have been printed elsewhere (sorry Danny, but there's lack of space as well) unless it's articles on gaming strategy and tactics of interest to novices. However, I've carried on with Danny's article where I think there's some relevance.))

"If perchance you happen to live in or near Brum, and want to know why the hell you didn't know about this little happening ((the Birmingham weekend)), I suggest you have an insy-winsy little word about it in a certain editor's ear... the one who left the letter at the bottom of his 'in' tray.

As for the next BWD, sometime in May, those who come are expected to bring along a friend, and I shall have already found some people by then (how's that for optimism?). If you're interested, then look out for advance publicity. It'll cost you £1.50 for six hours (or more) play, against people pretty much of your own standard.

What you lot can do in the meantime is consider these two Gordian Knot-type puzzles: a Scoring System and a Rating System with the National and International use in mind. Yes, I know Manorcon and Midcon have their own scoring systems, but I don't think much of either. In both cases they are based, at least partially, on your performance matched against 'same country' performance in other games, rather than your performance in your own game (and sometimes that as well). Also, in both cases a degree in higher maths is needed to work out your own score.

I know Richard Sharp has his own Rating System (which I don't like because it does not start from '0'), it assumes a hypothetical rating for your very first game. Then, after a game or two, your actual rating goes up or down from there, I think.

I'm hoping to repeat the success of the last Birmingham Weekend Diplomacy at the end of April/beginning of May. The last one was very successful in terms of sheer enjoyment, and I'm hoping to get larger numbers this time. At the time of writing, I've been unable to book the date (can't get through to the damned woman) but Saturday 3rd of May is the date I want: the doors will open at 4pm and the games start at 4.30. They will stop, if not already finished, at the end of the Autumn season following 11pm.

The cost will be £1.50, and I'm hoping to actually cover my costs this time. My phone number is 021-554-9401 for enquiries, and my address is in Dib 56 under Diplomacy Conference Maps in Dibs and Drabs. If you know someone who might be interested bring them along."

LUTON AIRPORT: I was going to answer this to some great extent but I've left it a little late. Suffice to say that I think Danny is taking on more than he knows. The various Rating systems have been tried and tested over a period of time, and people won't be too pleased at someone dragging the systems through the mud without a better way of replacing them. You have been warned Danny.,

CUP OF CONFESSION

by Alan Powis

I recognised him as soon as I saw him, even though I did not know him. I knew his type. To me his walk, the frown of mental concentration on some, unfathomable problem, the lack of attention to his surroundings all marked him as different. I decided to find out more about him.

He was in the cafe when I entered, sitting at a table, drinking coffee. I ordered a coffee and watched him, studied him, while it was being poured. The frown, the intense mental concentration, the air of indifference, they were all there still. My coffee arrived and I carried it over to his table.

"Do you mind if I join you?" I asked. He started visibly as he realised I was speaking to him.

"Certainly," he replied. I sat opposite him and decided to get straight to the point.

"I know you." I said. He looked at me, puzzled, trying to put a name to my face. "No," I went on. "We have never been introduced but I know you. One of the band of postal Diplomacy players that, banded together, call themselves 'The Hobby' with capital letters."

"How did you know?" he asked, the frown vanishing to be replaced by a smile.

"I recognised the signs." I replied. "I would like to know one thing though."

"And what is that?" he asked.

"Why do you play Diplomacy?"

The question, simple as it was, seemed to take him by surprise. He sat back on his chair and considered a while how best to answer. Finally he was ready.

"Firstly, there is the game of Diplomacy. No dice, no cards to draw, no luck factor, only skill. The only other game to compare it to is Chess, but with Chess you can beat your opponent simply because he has a bad night. With Diplomacy you have six opponents and the only way you will beat all of them is with skill.

"Next there is playing the game; the art of Diplomacy, Communicating with your opponents, bending them to your will, persuading them to do just what you want them to do, persuading them that you mean what you say. There is skill in that but the joy of sending and receiving letters gives some satisfaction. I often find myself waiting eagerly for the postman to arrive. Sundays, when there's no post are terrible.

"Finally there is the pleasure of receiving the 'zines. There is usually so much more than just the games, but the main things are the game reports. Oh, the misery of it when you read that the promised support never materialised. Oh the despair when someone stabs you and you are already in a desperate position. But, ohh, the pleasure when everything goes well, the expected gains are gained. And the ecstasy when a stab works and you find yourself at the throat of a vulnerable opponent. You know how he will feel when he reads the report and the picture of how he will look makes it even more enjoyable. That is what it's about."

At this, his eyes closed and an ecstatic smile spread across his face as he remembered some past Triumph no doubt.

When I opened my eyes again I was alone. There was nobody seated opposite me. Mine was the only cup on the table. Of my questioner there was no trace, if, indeed he had ever existed. I looked around me but no one was paying any special attention to me. Still, I decided to drink my coffee and leave quickly, just in case someone had heard...

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((It's no use saying "there but for the grace of God...", we all know most of us act this way with our hobby, admit it! It's just that in Alan's case he can't help being schizoid. Thanks Alan.))