

DIB DIB DIB

6

O.K. so I'm Sorry...



5

I know I'm late...

Welcome to the 65th issue of Dib Dib Dib - a zine dedicated to games, games players, loonies, but mostly, to the civilised game of Diplomacy. 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.

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 \* EMAIL: I can also be reached via bulletin board on 'West London TBBS' \*  
 \* 0895-52685 (1200/75 or 300/300 baud - No parity, 8 data bits, 1 stop \*  
 \* bit), where all orders, articles and whatever can be sent to me on the \*  
 \* public message board or the private mailing section. \*  
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#### EDITORIAL

Yes I had a nice Christmas, thank you to all those who sent Christmas cards, greetings and well wishes for the New Year. We had hundreds of cards and great difficulty finding a place where to hang them. But apart from that I've had a TERRIBLE New Year so far. In fact I know of NO-ONE in my circle of friends and acquaintances who has had any good luck this year. I've had friends go sick, and one even died!

I blame it all on Jan of course. I'm not kidding, before I met her I had the devil's own luck. My life was one long round of wine, women, women and song - I didn't have a care in the world. After marrying Jan all hell broke loose, she attracts bad luck, but it veers away from her and hits the people around her. We've had workmen working in the house who have put chisels through their hands, drilled through electric cables, and damaged themselves in various other ways too horrible to mention here. Not a pretty sight at times.

Anyway, this brings me to the reason why Dib is late. First late orders because of the snow, then my disk drive broke, emitting horrendous alarm sounds and grindings before we quickly shut it down. The price to repair it... £160! We were given a temporary IBM drive which lasted a day before breaking down with the same fault as the Canon drive. "A million to one fluke" the man said (I glanced at Jan - was the 'Chance in a Million' programme coming back to haunt me?). I got a call yesterday, the special Canon drive chip can only be bought in America. We rang Canon to find out why we couldn't get a chip over here:

"Oh we don't mend Canon drives, we merely replace them!"  
 I asked for the replacement cost... £300 !!

Anyway, then I had to drop Dib to help with an even bigger issue than normal of 'Spots'. But I don't let any of this get me down now do I? I'm strong - I mean in the middle of it all I still get letters from the Morrises, Collmans, and Clutterbuck, don't I? These certainly are testing times.

Talking of testing times, an even more serious problem has cropped up. It seems some people have joined my games who don't bother writing and diploming to anyone. I've said it once and I'll say it again, Diplomacy can't be played properly by post without writing letters. I strongly suggest to those who don't have the time, or don't like writing, not to put their name down for any of my games. It make things more difficult for me, and it also spoils the game for the other interested players who fork out a lot of good money to entertain themselves. Steve Thomas writes:-

"The orders I submitted last month for 'Zin' for Autumn 1901 should stand. I'm disappointed with this game - as the person who requested the double deadline said, there's been very little correspondence so far, at least insofar as few letters have reached me. It's disturbing that three people have been unable to sustain their interest in the game until the end of the first year. Things can only get better."

I certainly hope so. Now there's even talk of folding the 'Zin' game, something that has never happened in Dib. I hope it doesn't, but if it does, and the culprits know who they are, then I suggest they don't sign up in a Dib game again - the hobby can do without those kind of players.

On the hobby front. I've recently received a couple of letters/flyers and a new zine from Danny Collman detailing his intention to start up 'A Novice-only Magazine'. Roughly this means that all newcomers will be channelled into Danny's zine, Springboard, to be weaned before coming into the hobby proper. Danny got the idea, from the questionnaire I returned, that I disapproved of him running a novice-only magazine. I don't - Danny made quite a good job of it, SB looks quite good - I just think it isn't practical. In issue 1 of Springboard Danny takes six pages to describe the do's and don't's of Diplomacy and information to 'ease' the novice into the hobby without getting bruised. The trouble is how MANY novices is Danny catering for? To reach all the novices that come his way those six pages are 'essential' reading in issue 2 as well, and issue 3, and so on, as I assume he will receive newcomers as these are published. This poses the question as to whether it would be desirable for the 'old sweats' of SB, who've been subscribing for a couple months, to receive and pay for these pages?

So, will Danny change his novice information as he goes along? It seems likely - but then what he'll end up with is a normal magazine after a year, with novice-only players who'll be far from novices. What then has he achieved? Just what the rest of us editors have - a zine to play games in where an editor gives advice as and when it is requested from him.

This then comes down to my other two gripes. OTHER new magazines form in this hobby, and they need just as much new blood as Danny. The hobby needs new zines... why should this novice magazine get any preferential treatment? (I hear Nick Kinzett may hand the CGS over to Danny.) The only other gripe is Danny's attitude. He says:-

"I have felt strongly for some time that novices get rather a raw deal from the Hobby, without much help or advice at their level."

This is ridiculous. To say that novices get no help 'at their level' is patronising, to say the least. I joined the hobby, and 'was chucked in at the deep end' and I enjoyed every minute of it learning the ropes. I shall be watching with interest the growth of this new magazine, and I'll be trading. If you're a novice or merely interested give the magazine a try. Write to Danny Collman, 14 Westover Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham, B20 1JG.

Obsidian is a new mag which recently dropped on my doormat asking for a plug. It's normally A5 and 12 pages long, but the copy I received, issue 6, looked VERY nice, and was produced exactly how I'd like to present Dib: A4 corner stapled photocopy or litho - apart from Home, VVV and Dolchstoss I hate lithoed centre stapled booklets. My copy also came printed in a nice flashy blue ink colour - very refreshing. It has waiting lists open for Diplomacy, Goblin, Scrabble, and Sopwith - and features something called 'The Midgard Campaign', whatever that is. The only gripe I can find with it is it features a sub-zine, called 'Warm Sporrán' from Dom de Bechi, which I think is unnecessary in such a small zine - dual editorship is bad enough but is certainly better. Why some people can't be content as regular guest contributors, beats me. I'll trade. If anyone is interested in seeing a copy, write to Alex Richardson, 2 Hopewell Road, Baldock, Herts, SG7 5AA. The cost is only 26p.

JOTTO Turn 5

MICHELE ORRIS: 5TH 322000

KATH COLLMAN : 5TH 221022

MIKE CLOSE : 5TH 122000

ROSIE ROBERTS : 5TH 311343

STEVE THOMAS : 5TH 111322

EMAIL DIPLOMACY, AND OTHER GAMES - CHEAPLY?

As quite a lot of home computers are being bought nowadays, and, as a high proportion of hobby members are contributing to the trend, it occurred to me that the natural extension for our postal hobby would be a move into playing games via Electronic Mail (EMAIL). This being the case, I decided to find out,

- (a) How easy it would be for games to be run in this way, and
- (b) If it was cheap enough to compete favourably with our beloved postal method.

For the record, I do NOT mean EMAIL to be a breakaway part of our hobby, but expand and compliment it. i.e. I'm advertising EMAIL postally, and I'll be putting adverts on the EMAIL board detailing the CGS, Zine Bank, Novice Package, and certain Cons. There's no need for the two sectors to stay separate - I'll even be publishing my EMAIL games in Dib to get them rated.

Anyway, what have I found out? The problem was simple enough to sort out, and I got straight to the heart of the matter - COST. Whatever system has to be used, had to compete with the old pencil, paper and stamp way of doing things. Assuming from the start enough interest in computers and Electronic Mail to invest in a modem (e.g. my WS4000 modem came to £140 with public domain software), how do telephone costs and related bills, compare against paper, pens, typewriters and the Postal Service.

For an evaluation, I tried two popular public EMAIL systems to begin - BT GOLD's 'MicroLink', and PRESTEL's 'Micronet 800'. Sometimes 3 months 'free' subscription is given to these systems when you buy your modem. A generous offer you might think, but BEWARE - I tried to log into PRESTEL with my free subscription and found MY software wouldn't support it. All I got on the screen was unrecognisable garbage, not only that but the very fact that I logged on, tripped the PRESTEL computer to start charging me! One month after that first try I received a bill of £30, and all I had tried to do was change my password! - the bill was sent back with an explanation. Take notice - to subscribe one has to pay, for registration, a month's usage, plus one month's usage in ADVANCE, and on top of all that the telephone bill!

BT GOLD's MicroLink was much the same - the first month I paid £16.50; not too bad considering I had to fumble my way about. Last month I hardly used it at all (a couple of minutes, twice). I was charged £10 for the system's accessibility to me (remember the telephone charges are on top of this). These charges are outrageous - at least if you use EMAIL purely for games.

This left the bulletin boards. These are the boards for hobby members. Americans have these boards by the thousands, one for every conceivable subject - even porno boards. The trend however is spreading very slowly over here, in line with home and hobby computing. But, no matter how slow, I think it has to come. One day I think we'll have games-only EMAIL boards cropping up all over the place (one I've heard of may well be starting in the summer).

I've had time to try a few bulletin boards, most of which are public domain software related boards - some are scrappy and horribly slow. However I've found one that is FAST, very neat and which seems to fit Diplomacy needs. There's no cost for using the board for games and mail, apart from the cost of a phone call. And as one only needs to be on the board for a short length of time to upload/download mail, even from as far as Scotland it shouldn't cost that much more than playing by post. There's no paper, stamps or magazines to pay for, and no gamefees.

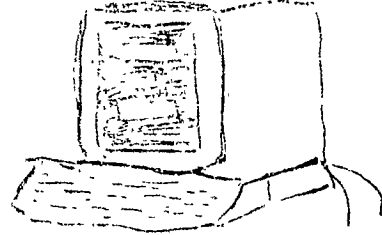
Anyway, if you're interested I've already got a waiting list open on the 'West London TBBS' (one game has started), Tel. 0895-52685 (1200/75 or 300/300 baud - No parity, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit), where all orders, articles and whatever can see sent to me on the public message board or the private mailing setion. What you will be greeted with, as a newcomer, is continued over the page:

"V21/V22/V22bis/V23 Auto Service

<<Welcome to TBBS Version 2.05>>  
Serving the World 24 hrs, 7 days

First Name?  
Last Name?  
Where are you calling from?

TBBS Welcomes TOM TWEEDY  
Calling From AMERSHAM,BUCKS  
Is this correct? Y  
Terminal Width (10-132)? 80



<A>VIDTEX            <B>TRS-80 1/3    <C>VT-52            <D>ATARI            <E>H19/H89/Z19  
<F>IBM PC            <G>Televid 925    <H>VT-100           <I>Ams PCW           <J>Ams PC1512

Enter letter of your terminal, <CR> if not listed: F

Upper/Lower Case  
Line Feeds Needed  
00 Nulls after each <CR>

Do you wish to modify this? N  
Do you wish to have a pause after each display page (Y/N)? N

"Please Enter a 1-8 character Password to be used for future logons. This password may have any printable characters you wish. Lower case is considered different from upper case and imbedded blanks are legal. REMEMBER THIS PASSWORD. You will need it to log on again.

Your password? PASSWORD  
You have read through message 0  
Current last message is 16906  
You are caller number 14560  
You are authorized 30 mins this call

"You are not a current registered user on this BB.

If you think there has been a mistake, please leave a message for the Sysop when you log off. ((Etc. there's a few notes on the PDSig board itself here - and which goes on...))

"This Board is one of the very few BIG systems with an extremely FAST access time to all areas of the Board. Currently the active memory size is about 24 Megabytes and will be increased with time when required.

Rules of this board:-

You must use your real name (under certain circumstances you may use a different name from your real one e.g. circumstances of work etc.).

No offensive or obscene messages.

Don't ask for and don't leave non public domain files.

Do nothing illegal.

"HACKING" is an illegal occupation.

Please do not just hang up on TBBS. This is most insulting behaviour. It is JUST as easy to log-off by typing "G" for Goodbye!

I hope you will not find these too draconian.

Iain Philipps, Sysop..."

((Continued over.....))

\*\*\* Main Menu \*\*\*

T.....Time      G.....Goodbye

R.....Repeat New User Information  
 E.....Editorial - Latest news from PD Sig  
 W.....What's the time NOW ?  
 X.....Public Domain Software Exchange Area  
 L.....Library - things to read  
 M.....Mail - PRIVATE User to User Mail  
 P.....Public Board  
 \$.....Tiger's Trivia  
 S.....SIGS Menu  
 U.....Utilities Area  
 \*.....See the Change of Address stuff again

((From here you would select the Public section, or Private Mail section.))

Command: P

T.....Time      E.....Exit      G.....Goodbye

R.....Read PUBLIC Messages  
 Q.....Quickscan PUBLIC Messages  
 L.....Leave PUBLIC Messages  
 M.....Mail - PRIVATE User to User Mail  
 S.....SIGS Menu

Command: R

Type P to pause, S to stop, N to skip to next msg

<F>orward or <R>everse Multiple  
 <N>ew Messages  
 <M>arked Messages  
 <S>elective Retrieval  
 <I>ndividual Message(s)  
 <A>bort Retrieve

((On the Private Mail section the system doesn't allow you to spell someone's name wrong. If you do get it wrong it will tell you, and ask for another name - not all boards do this and it's a handy feature. It allows you to get a name wrong on the Public board, but then everyone gets to see it automatically anyway.))

Which One? S

Select <F>rom, <T>o, or <S>ubject? S  
 Enter text to select by: DIP

((This feature allows you to search all Diplomacy related stuff by inputting 'DIP'.))

Pause after each msg(Y/N)? Y

Section has 394 Msgs, 15028 to 16901  
 Starting number, <CR>=First:

\*\* Private Mail Menu \*\*

T.....Time      E.....Exit      G.....Goodbye

R.....Read your Mail  
 Q.....Quickscan your Mail  
 L.....Leave Mail for others  
 K.....Kill your Mail

((After you've logged on ALL Public mail will be downloaded to you, even choosing <N>ew mail (because it's all new to you). If you just want to look at all Diplomacy related topics select it under subject 'DIP' - this will read 'DIPLOMACY WAITING LIST'; 'DIPLOMACY'; 'DIPLOMACY <gamename>'; DIPPY; etc. Why

not give the board a try? Also I'd appreciate it if everybody could spread the word, friends, foes, mums and dads - even editors can give it a plug if they wish. The number to ring is on the bottom of the first page of this article, and in the colophon at the front of this mag.))



DIPLOMACY RATINGS

These are the latest Diplomacy Ratings thankfully received from Richard Sharp. Richard points out there may be a few errors in the list as it's the first run off his computer. The ratings are as close as any, but I'm not sure which formula he uses to work them out; his own or Wink Thompson's. Anyway, the list you asked for is as follows:-

1. Peter Tassell	304	56. Geoff Chase	216.4
2. Bob Kendrick	301.8	57. Simon Dally	215.8
3. John Norris	289	58. Tom Kirby	215.3
4. Martin Feather	287.5	59. Chris Rick	214.5
5. Rob Chapman	282.8	60. Thomas Franke	214.3
6. Steve Jones	270.8	61. Dave Anderson	213.3
7. David Phillips	270.2	62. Ross Baird	213
8. Any Holborn	268.3	63. Bruce Little	212.2
9. Ken Bain	264	64. Ray Evans	212
10. Chris Noerthcott	257.8	65. Niall Litton	211.9
11. Tom Tweedy	255.1	66. Dave Lambert	211.7
12. Graham Tunncliffe	253.8	=67. Terry Quested	209
13. Tony Ball	252.9	. Andrew Malcolm	209
14. Roland Prevot	249.6	69. Chris Farmer	208.5
15. John Sandell	248.3	70. Steve Gregory	208
16. John Keight	247.2	71. Paul Oakes	207.7
17. Mike Brocklehurst	246.3	72. Dave Thorby	207
18. Keith Shapley	244.8	73. Edward Morgan	206.7
19. Nigel Quinn	244.6	74. Norman Nathan	206.6
=20. Harry Turner	242.5	75. Phil Bass	206.4
. James O'Fee	242.5	76. Alan Sharples	205
22. Gary Silk	241.8	77. Frank Dashwood	204.9
23. Mike Close	241.4	78. Richard Scott	204.8
24. Ken Haywood	240.7	79. Richard Sargent	204
25. Les Tassell	240.3	80. Brian Creese	203.3
26. Robert Lozynskyj	238.3	81. Dennis Love	202.2
27. John Lee	237.6	82. Tony Whitfield	201.8
28. Richard Walkerdine	237.1	83. Stuart Dagger	201.4
29. Cliff Kennedy	235.8	84. Frank Dunn	201
30. Steve Hillyard	235.7	85. Peter Croft	200.8
31. Mike Nicholas	235.6	86. Malcolm Sharrock	200.5
32. Peter Northcott	232.3	87. Peter Scholey	200.3
33. Tim Roberts	231.1	=88. Paul McGivern	200.1
34. Dave Browne	229.5	. Andy Evans	200.1
35. John Smart	229.3	90. Bob Larter	199.2
36. John Balson	227.4	91. Tom Corden	196.8
37. Richard Bairstow	226.5	92. Alan Edwards	196.7
38. Steve Pratt	226.1	93. Pat Jones	196.5
39. Richard Hucknall	224	94. Graham Buckell	196.3
40. Paul Reeves	223.7	=95. Graham MacLennan	196
41. Ian Maclean	223	. Mick Bullock	196
42. Nicholas Clifton	222.8	97. Matthew Judah	195.8
=43. Neil, McDonald	221.8	98. Keith Walter	195.5
. Martin Clifford-King	221.8	=99. Nick Kinzett	195.4
45. Roger Blewitt	221.3	. Allen Ovens	195.4
46. Chris Harvey	221.2	101. Bill Brakes	195.3
47. Doug Wakefield	220.9	102. Duncan Hector	195
48. Jeff Edmunds	220.7	=103. Miles Cowling	194.5
49. David Barnes	220.5	. John Todd	194.5
50. Ron Fisher	219.3	105. Pete Scott	194.3
51. Gareth Lodge	219	106. Richard Savage	193.3
=52. Timothy Sharrock	218.8	107. Mike Lean	193.2
. Richard Brockington	218.8	108. Andrew Smith	193
54. Tony Wheatley	217.3	109. Martyn Hathaway	192.5
55. John Marsden	216.8	110. Colin Bruce	192.3