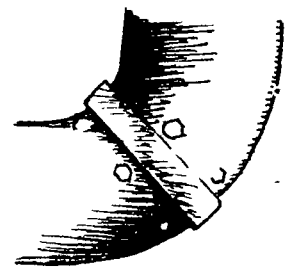
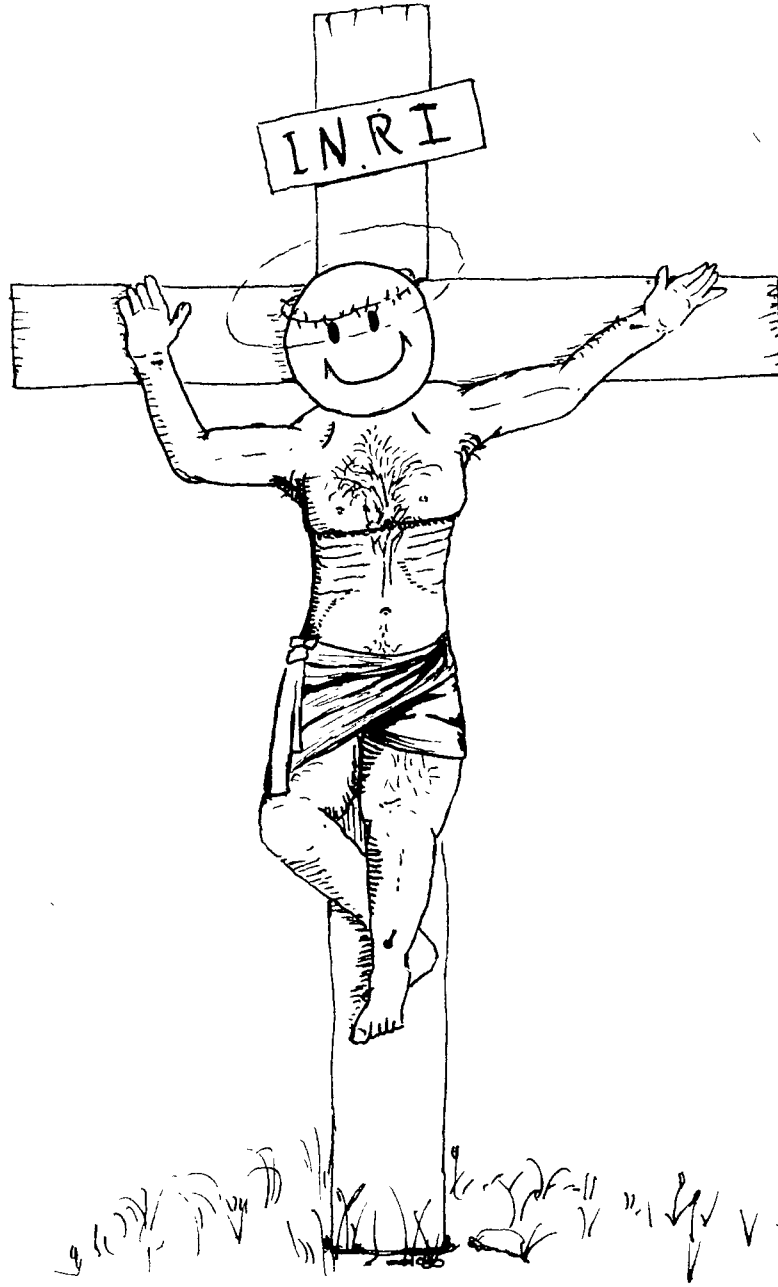


AROUND THE BENCH

DEAD



ISSUE 2

MAY 1991

A postal games zine
Cost: 50p an issue

UP AROUND THE BEND...
UP AROUND THE BEND...

UP AROUND THE BEND...

UP AROUND THE BEND...

UP AROUND THE BEND...

UP AROUND THE BEND...

April 1991
2nd Issue

U-Bend is edited by Harry Bond of 6 Wolsey Avenue, Walthamstow, London E17 6RE

The cover is an original illustration by Pete Strover; so much for Easter.

Free this issue, #1 in the series of U-Bend Linear Separators; cut out and collect the set;

~~~~~

Sweet Thames, run softly while I type my zine  
Sweet Thames, run softly, help me type no words obscene.

Well, bugger me backwards with a bent banana. (Thanks for nothing, Sweet Thames). I did it, I actually did it; too late to stop now, no time for wiser council to divert my path from the Threefold Way of the zine editor. (And if you want to know about three folds, ask Geoff Challenger. Boom, boom, bloody boom).

Not only did I get the first issue of U-Bend out with a worrying lack of technical hitches, but I also achieved my aim to be the first zine to start up in the new decade. (Complaints that the new decade began with 1990 should be addressed to Steve Howe, 1 Castle Court, Castle Lane, Hadleigh, Essex). Though this fact came to mind before I typed up the inaugural ish, my firm belief in Sod's Law held me back from advertising myself as such in it; had I proclaimed myself First New Zine Of The Decade I guarantee that some other bugger would have started a zine a week before me and made me a liar.

(What? Oh, you see, Challenger is about the only editor in Britain who's started up and folded three times. Or is it four? Anyway...)

"It won't be at all timely when you go to print," declares Doktor Piet Strover of the front cover. I'm not sure whether he merely refers to Easter, or if he means that the picture satirizes those chocolate Jesuses which some enterprising Australian firm had started producing, to the horror of upright Quaker chocolate manufacturers such as Cadbury's and Terry's. Apparently, when you bit into them, they were filler with strawberry fondue which oozed out like blood. Rather a shame they were unavailable in England, I think.

(What? Oh, right. Steve Howe was getting all pedantic recently and claiming that people who said the new decade began with the year 1990 were foolish and deluded. Anyway...)

The response to the initial issue of the zine has been nothing but overwhelming, and I thank all fifty-five of you. In fact, I'm gonna display my thanks to you publicly by listing your names; three cheers to...

Dave Rowley/Joy Hibbert, Iain Bowen, Kate n'ha Ysabet, Kay Dekker, Kris/Michele Morris, Gareth Davies, Pete Strover/Alex Zbyslaw, Paul Norris, John Marsden, William Whyte, Keir Hodgson, Toby Harris, James Thorp, Mike Siggins, Steve Howe, Alan Parr, Allan Doodles, Danny/Kath Collman, Tom Tweedy, Paul Dunnett, John Webley, John Breakwell, Nicholas Parish, Vick Hall, Keith Morton, Denis Jones, David Oya, Damien Cosgrove, Bill O'Neill, Allan Gordon, Guy Thomas, Andy Key/Madi Smith, Dave Lomas, Mark Giles, John Miller, Mark Nelson, Adam Sharr, Marc Cole, James Nelson, Peter Ritchie, Dave Tant, John Wilman, Tim Lomas, Stuart Dagger, Edward Ainsworth, Simon Cutforth, Eddy Richards, Peter Charles, Mike Sharpe, Gordon McDonald, Paul Bennett, David Watts, Mark Wightman, Pete Birks and Mick Haytack. You are all utterly splendid people. Rave on.

EGOLAND

--Oy, you, yes, you, the fat git, Bond. What the Merry Thump are you doing sitting there typing at this time of night? Do you not know you have a Big Day tomorrow?

--Ah, hello there. Yes, I suppose I do have a big day tomorrow insofar as it involves me getting up before midday, which is contrary to my usual custom, but I never let that sort of thing worry me. My sleep patterns are weird enough anyway; why shouldn't I type through till three in the morning if I want to?

As a matter of fact my sleep patterns are so weird that they appear to have persuaded my parents that I'm some kind of junkie hophead dope addict. (This is complete bollocks, of course; even had I the inclination to employ naughty substances I wouldn't have the money to buy any, and you'd think my parents would know that much, since that's a direct result of them never giving me any. But common sense and my father are non-intersecting sets in Venn Diagram terms).

If there isn't a lot else to do, I go to sleep. I can sleep at any time, in any bed, chair, or bean bag. I love sleeping, me. I think I'd even love it if I didn't dream so well and so lucidly. I've never yet tried going to sleep on a clothes line, as in the hackneyed cliché uttered by people who feel a little exhausted, but I'm getting into training for my attempt on that record.

(Incidentally, did you know that people really did sleep on clothes lines once upon a time? Straight up, would I lie, no kitties. They did. Apparently they used to have in the Middle Ages or whenever, instead of or as well as private rooms in pubs, a big public room which was cheaper (and so presumably occupied by plebs like me) where they stretched a line across from one wall to the other and all the occupants leant up against it to sleep. Thank heavens for modern technology, that's what I say).

But (to get back to the point), since I have sod all to do here in the middle of the Easter vacation (except revise, which is a non-starter; I never met a student yet who revised and I'm not going to be the first) and sunny Walthamstow boasts few amenities which call me out of the house. So I slept for sixteen hours yesterday; unintentionally, mind you, but sixteen hours. ("Sixteen hours and what do you get?") My parents, having presumably read the handy little leaflet which the government sends round to every house in the nation free of charge telling you the symptoms to watch for which show your child to be an evil ravering A-D-D-I-C-T, and seen the words "Irregular Sleep Patterns" leap out at them from the page, added two and two together, made sixteen, and panicked. I spend money faster than I should — this 'should' is based on my father's cost analysis, which is based on the government's, which says that students can live on thin air, so my Unexplained Purchases are actually of food rather than cocaine, but never mind -- I share a house with two hippies, who are doubtless P-U-S-H-E-R-S, because we all know that that's what hippies, do, don't we; I display Erratic Temper and Behaviour towards my parents (this is not due to drug highs but rather because I cannot stand my father, and prolonged close proximity to him is guaranteed to send me half loopy); and most telling of all, I own a kaftan, symbol of all that is countercultural and dropoutish and alternative. I'm almost surprised that dear papa hasn't already called the doctors, or the police, out to me. Then again, maybe I'm not; after all, what would the neighbours think?

As you can tell, my relationship with my parents and especially my father is at an all-time low. So much so, in fact, that I was tempted to buy some joss-sticks or some such drug-oriented but legal item and leave them lying about just before the next time he came round to my house (knowing full well that he would attempt to sneak in and search my room); but wiser counsel prevailed. This, ladies and gents, is what you get for being an only child.

I was, however, talking about sleep, and the pleasures in indulging therein. (Apart from the fact that my father can't hassle me then, of course). I am tremendously lucky in that, not only do I dream in colour, vividly and frequently (allvery enjoyable) but I can stock up on sleep, or overdraw on it, as people with more sensible banks than I can do with bank accounts. Thus, after sixteen hours yeaterday, I could probably type straight through till morning (and type sensibly, too, not just half-alseep nonsense)without too much difficulty. Conversely, I could go to an all-night party, having not stocked up beforehand, and once more remain chirpy all night, provided that I catch up on my kip afterwards; either in one big extra dose or in several little ones.

Obviously this knack is of extreme usefulness when it comes to University work, and to typing up zines. If I find that rather than work on a Vastly Important Essay I've been living it up on the pinball machines at the Union (my major vice), I merely give it an all-night blitz the day before the deadline, go in to College to hard the thing in, and go back home to the land of nod. All the books on How To Study wave their metaphorical fingers at you and tell you what a heinous and unwise practise this is, but my marks have never differed significantly from work done in a more orthodox way for all-nighter pieces, so I wilfully ignore the manuals and do it my own sweet way. And whilst I've never yet tried typing up a zine on an all-righter, I suspect that I may end up faced with it soonerson later. When I do, I shan't tell you, and I'll leave it to you to see whether you can spot any difference. The challenge is on, gentlemen. (I don't have any female subbers yet).

Excuse me, now. I'm going to shoot up my hourly dose of heroin and go back to bed. See you after a linear separator.



No, of course not, I was being facetious. Why should I stop typing when I have the bit firmly clerched between my canines?

I do admit that whilst this late night Egoland may be coherent enough, it does rather resemble what Richard Walkerdine would call an Autoramble. This may mean that I'll do a second dose of editorial at another point when I've actually thought up a subject that stards a chance of taking up more than two-thirds of a page without the usual cheating such as diverging madly in the middle and hoping people won't notice.

I have a dreadful feeling that the second issue of U-Bend is going to come off the presses looking like a totally uncorrected ragtag and hotchpotch of utterly unrelated material, whose only link is the staple at the top right securing it all behind the Pete Stover cover (Fundamental Christian; Driving Away for the Purpose Of, One). And whilst in this respect it's not too different from several other gameszines; I had hoped for something a little more internally coherent. Well, it will either come with practise, in which case I need merely to sit back and wait, or it won't come at all — but in this latter case we shall never be able to tell, of course, as there will always be the false, fleeting, perjured hope that it will all come together. Why, I might even be able to keep everyone hanging on for several years waiting for it to happen. Imagine it; the forty year old Bowen going down to the Silver Threads Rest Home hotfocot. "Great news!", he exclaims as he bursts through the door and gives several residents heart attacks; "Wake up, Walkerdine, wake up!"

"zzzz... snk, snk... wazzat?"

"He's done it at last, RJW. Bord's produced a totally coherent issue of U-Bend. I always said he had it in him. Watch out for the Zine Polk now!"

"zzz... er, yeah, you're right... someone else might be bottom this time..."

STICHOMYTHIA  
a lettercolumn

And what a nice pretentious title that is to head it up with. It's such a specialised technical term that it might not even be in your dictionary, but I assure you, hand on heart, that it is wholly appropriate for this section.

For the next few pages I go underground, and emerge only concealed in the cloaking disguise of indentation and ((double brackets)).

((If you remember, U-Bend is available not only for money but for barter of old zines and Interesting Things. Some have already taken me up on that, but I would prefer it if people wrote to check first -- the feeling of getting a big wodge of old zines in the morning is great, but I suspect that the annoyance elicited when you find you've already got them all is the utter opposite.))

Dave Lomas           The bones that you wish to barter are being sent by parcel post  
The Potteries       and may well arrive later than this letter. These were not easy  
                          to come by since my dog was very reluctant to relinquish them  
and I feel that I should warn you that he has the name 'Harry Bond' indelibly  
etched on his mind as someone who is well overdue a good biting.

I was going to forward some rags but I thought I would not waste the postage money sending all of them. If you can let me have your collar and inside leg sizes, I will just post the ones that will fit you. I hadn't realised that students were quite this poor. I just thought they liked wearing stuff that made them look stupid.

((I think that one of us is taking this matter less than seriously.))

Edward Ainsworth    If I forward enough old zines will I be eligible for an  
Bedford               entire toilet and not just the U-Bend?

((Yes, if you promise to flush your head down it before insulting my choice of zine title again.))

Pete Strover        I fully approve of the barter system re zines. Well I remember  
Edinburgh           young Mr Birks foolishly trying to trade with Trout In The Milk.  
                          He may have managed to get a couple of issues out of me, but I  
filled in several large gaps with compilation tapes. Whether or not these were  
welcome I couldn't say, but they staved off being thrown in the sin bin.

Oh Harry, if only you'd started your zine two months ago. I've just thrown out 90% of my old zines.

Eddy Richards        You're lucky I just did a mega post-Kenyan guilt-laden clearout  
The Wirral           of all my old 10 Lime Avenues, Realpolitiks and Froggies (down  
                          to issue 1 in each case) or I could have had free U-Bends till  
approximately issue 237½.

John Webley           I did like the idea of New Zines for Old, but I got rid of  
Salzgitter, Germany   most of my zines when I moved here.

John Breakwell       Pity I found out about your zine addiction after I sent Bowen a  
Reading               pile of Cut and Thrusts. I will look through the box I bought  
                          off Bryan Betts to see if there's anything I don't want.

((Woe, woe is me. Thanks, anyway, to Messrs Ainsworth and Wightman for feeding my addiction, and to the others who've offered -- let's talk terms.))

((I never dreamt that my pagefiller about the state of the toilet roll at 6 Wolsey Avenue would garner any response; the life of a zine editor is full of such surprises as this.))

Damien Cosgrove    In my student house, we also managed to pilfer some loo-roll, Durham  
but in the 18" diameter version. That's what the colleges up here seem to be using, and with an Allen key, you can quite easily appropriate the necessary. The Business School has a more 'comfortable' variety, and quite considerably leaves rolls lying around (unlocked up) in the toilets, so that's where I grab mine.

((UCL has 18" rolls too, but the thought of walking out of the Gents with one stuck under my jacket does not appeal; what would you say if somebody stopped you in such a position?))

James Thorp        In our house toilet roll is kept in one's room and taken when The Potteries needed; 21 other people using a roll rather decreases its life expectancy. Also, I've got to admit to eating roll-holders. They're never in a good place -- either too near, so forcing you to cramp your arms at funny angles to reach, or too far away and so stretching (etc, etc). All in all, the roll on floor/in hand method is much superior.

((Sod's Law also dictates that whether you're left or right handed, the holder will always be on the wrong wall for you.))

Denis Jones        My main household complaint is the rubbish bag in the kitchen. Ilford  
"Well, yes, I do put it out on Tuesday mornings on my way to work, but when it's full up on Friday and you have done it, how about tying it up and chucking it out the front, rather than leaving it to overflow and then letting me sort it out on Monday morning?" I ignored it for a week and action occurred. One of the other guys is hot on washing up, although my reply of "Listen you dumb bastard, I have just cooked some food and I will not wash anything up till I have eaten it, anyway you are not going to use that fucking saucepan whether it's on the side or stuck up your arse, so shut up," seems to have gotten him off my back on that."

((Rubbish bag? You were lucky. When I were a lad we had to ~~get up at~~ ~~four/ten/whatever~~ chuck all the rubbish into one bin about the size of a bucket, which overflowed instantly. Of course this initiated a vicious circle, as it soon became so noisome that nobody could face clearing it up into a bin bag.))

Dave Lomas        By the way, I am sorry to read that you cannot hear what people say in pubs. I presume this is when they are saying to you "It's your round, come on, get them in you tightwad!""??

((I deny it. The mark of a good diplomat is to be able to tactfully fail to hear indiscretions.))

It is interesting that you mention muzak tapes. I have often looked in record-shops for a muzak tape but have never seen one yet! I suppose it's because the pub owners buy them all as soon as they arrive on the shelves. If ever I do manage to buy one, I shall send you a copy so that you can play it at home whenever there is something on your TV that you don't want to listen to.

David Oya        Pub muzak. Now there's a thing. There's one particular establishment Banbury near my abode that plays some really horrible tape loops of the crappiest songs you could wish to hear (or not) from the seventies; the New Seekers, Peters and Lee, Boney M and others which bring back truly appalling memories of my yoof. Well, I'm stiff yoof-full but I mean of my very yoof, you know, when I was very yoof-full. But anyway, some of those songs are so obscure and appalling that I have to ask a growd up to explain them to me. The best thing to do, though, is to get stoned and go in when it's crowded, and try to get everybody to sing along to 'Tie a yellow ribbon round the old oak tree'. Yes indeed, we're all intellectuals up here in Orxfordshire, you know.

((I presume that's a result of your not going to sleep in ditches.))

Allan Gordon Thank you for the compliments re my doodles and if you can use any  
 Chibford you have only to say the word. I notice that you say that although  
 U-Bend is currently photocopied, there is a slight possibility  
 that it may go mimeo. This of course makes a difference to graphics as far as  
 origination is concerned -- stencils require a much more simplified treatment  
 for the stylus to copy. Perhaps you'd let me know on this point... I'm thinking  
 particularly in terms of front covers and especially a masthead (or logo, if you  
 prefer) although you haven't mentioned it and indeed, may not feel so inclined.

((Consider the word said. Photocopying will continue for the foreseeable  
 future; but even if I do go mimeo, a) one thing I'm good at is tracing  
 out illos and b) should all else fail, I know someone with an electro-  
 stencil cutter. A masthead/logo would be perfect -- indeed, the one  
 slightly reduced could easily serve as the other. Toby Harris did do  
 a logo, but it's extremely unflattering to the zine and I'm damned if  
 I'm bringing it into disrepute, especially when the zine hasn't got  
 much reputation to be thus rendered disreputable.

I've found the old art file with leftovers from my SF zine days,  
 so there are several covers in there from American Jon Bush which may  
 see the light at last.))

Tom Tweedy It was interesting to read 'Egoland' and how you entered the hobby  
 Amersham and the world of publishing. Did you charge subscription for the SF  
 zines you published? I could see no reason why anyone would want to  
 stay in touch with SF news. I assume SF news is what you'd go in for? What sort  
 of role would such a zine fill? I'll admit I'm curious (I've never seen one), but  
 I don't think I'd actually pay for one.

((Actually, no; there were and are almost as many kinds of SF zine as  
 there are gameszines now. The most common sort, which I published,  
 tend to have their closest parallel in the modern Greatest Hits or  
 Mark Nelson's Mouth of Sauron; chat about anything the editor or con-  
 tributors want to chat about. SF newszines do exist; so do critical  
 journals of SF, amateur fiction zines (often looked down on, though  
 some are quite good; my first zine was fiction, but not good), and so  
 on. It wasn't the done thing to insist on money for your zines -- the  
 usual asking price was a letter of comment or contribution -- but I  
 never refused hard cash (I even got a couple of dollar bills once,  
 quite a wow for callow seventeen-year-old Haz). This is the only  
 reason why I'm not still producing them -- I haven't the money. With  
 a gameszine I can at least charge a sub and cut my losses, as 'twere.))

John Webley The Dip history article is excellent. The three-season game is not,  
 however, dead... unfortunately, quite a large number of German  
 players insist on playing this way. This probably accounts for the great popular-  
 ity of Unitedin German gameszines.

John Breakwell Asteroid Dogfight -- Crap, Crap, Crap, etc. I've seen this lud-  
 icrous variant a couple of times now and think it stupid. How  
 can you have a planar game of a 3D environment? Sopwith as 2D I can appreciate,  
 as it is in a 'plane' due to gravity. Dogfights only occur when the aircraft close  
 so altitude is not a problem; I suppose you could expand Sopwith to 3 layers, but  
 I digress. Asteroids would have to be played on a football-shaped construct with  
 many layers within it. The concept is unplayable. The only way to improve Sopwith's  
 image is to change the genre but keep it ground-based. I myself went for laser-  
 firing land speeders in the variants I ran in Gingwatzim, 'Death on Tatooine' and  
 'Starbird'. Rant over.

((Well, my counter-rant's starting. Most of your comments only hold water  
 if the object of the design is taken as the faithful recreation of  
 whatever an asteroid dogfight would be like (and who knows what that  
 would be?) -- which it isn't: it's a game, and as such, sacrifices  
 realism for playability. Who would criticise Railway Rivals because in  
 real life trains don't race between towns? I think it's quite playable,  
 and half my readership seem to agree, the way they flock to play.))

## RIGHT IS ONLY HALF OF WHAT'S WRONG

a review of TELL ME WHY: A BEATLES COMMENTARY, by Tim Riley (Penguin, £9.99)

One of the troubles with writing a book about someone who has effectively been canonised (and the Beatles have, at least in the eyes of those people likely to read this book; what price Pete Sullivan's "Saint Ringo"?) is disentangling fact from myth. Another is keeping personal opinion out of the way and attempting to obtain objectivity. Tim Riley, by and large, manages the first but not the second of these.

This is not a history of the Beatles, except in a secondary sense; it is an analysis of their music and lyrics, and as such it succeeds by and large. Certainly it is an approach often shunned in favour of digging up as much dirt on the Fab Four's personal lives in an attempt to reach the best-seller lists (and Riley prints a Beatles bibliography with many a sarcastic comment on such "biographers" at the close of the book). But this approach, while it avoids the first pitfall detailed above, lays itself wide open to the second.

Tim Riley's personal preferences and prejudices shine through the book. He prefers rock and roll to the kind of psychedelic rock espoused by the Beatles in their later years. He does not like George Harrison as a songwriter, and thinks little more of him as a singer. He also manages to deliver so many sideways knocks to Bob Dylan that one must suspect that he too lacks the Riley seal of approval. And although he does seem to like Ringo, you might not think so on reading some of the terms of appreciation he employs to praise the hapless drummer.

It is undeniable that John and Paul were the two major songwriting talents in the Beatles, but as Riley actually states explicitly, in any other company George would shine brightly; and while it is also probably true that Ringo was the least talented of the four, better surely that than having him as the most untalented. His drumming ranges from unexceptionable to excellent, and Riley has no quarrels with him for that; but statements such as "'Yellow Submarine' sounds as though enough of Ringo's dopey simplicity had rubbed off on Paul..." or "(his singing in 'Octopus's Garden') sounds like he was talked out of the village-idiot goofiness that made 'Act Naturally' so disarming", apparently made in all good meaning and intended as praise, make the reader's eyebrows raise (well, mine did). As for George, far too many of his songs are passed over with a brief mention in a neutral tone or a sneer, where a Lennon song which Riley adjudges a failure, such as 'We Can Work It Out', is given much more space — even Lennon's album tracks and McCartney's B sides get more examination than poor old George's stuff, even the better later songs such as 'Blue Jay Way' or 'Savoy Truffle' being dismissed in a paragraph. Riley is noticeably reticent to declare a final verdict on Lennon/McCartney songs, awed perhaps by their reputation, but he feels no such qualms with Harrison.

Of course it's impossible to analyse the Beatles' lyrics without at least a passing examination of the events in their personal lives which influenced that music, and the current events and trends in pop music at the time; but Riley sails close to the wind, especially as time passes, up till their split (after which he covers each of their solo careers in less detail but nonetheless with skill and insight).

But the positive qualities of Riley's scholarship outweigh these faults. He actually knows what he is talking about as regards music, and is able to discuss it from a musician's viewpoint. In the words of Elvis Costello (which he uses as an epigraph), "writing about music is like dancing about architecture"; but Riley overcomes this to provide analyses of the Beatles' music and lyrics which are never less than cogent and occasionally provide sparks of genius and insight. For anyone interested in either the Beatles or in rock as a whole, this book is nothing but essential.



HOBBY GOSSIP

A couple of zines have semi-folded. First Moonlighting, the official zine of the UK Variant Bank, officially went "three-parts folded"; subs have been returned and regular schedules are off, but the team of Jacko/Bate/Viennamob People say that future issues may be seen now and again, as and when the whim takes them.

Also Paul Bennett's Lobster Quadrille, a very promising new zine, has been forcibly put under wraps for a while due to Paul losing his job. Luckily no games were involved save the continued one from last year's Manorcon tournament -- I don't know what's happening to that one. Paul promises that LobsQuad will return as soon as he can manage it. The zine showed great potential while it was appearing, so let's hope that's soon.

On the other side of the coin, Keith Morton (23 Southcote Road, South Norwood, London SE25 4RG) has just launched a new zine, Outside Right; no prizes for guessing that it's to concentrate on United. Myself, I'm not keen on soccer campaign games, but Keith obviously knows his onions, having prepared some well-thought-out house rules, drawn up order sheets, et cetera. The cost will be £7 a season all in. First issue came this week and looks okay to me. Good luck, Keith, and last one to issue 100's a rotten tomato.

Mark Nelson (21 Cecil Mount, Armley, Leeds LS12 2AP) is to run a variants tournament at Manorcon, as usual; games planned are Deluge, a hybrid Gunboat variant with some other variant, and a third as yet undecided (Five Italies, Cannibalism II and Gesta Danorum II are all suggested). I suspect I'll be too busy, Mark, but good luck to you too.

Speaking of manorcon, the whole world knows that it's moved back a week to July 19th-22nd, but it stands repeating, just in case. The man to contact is ~~Colin~~ RJWalkerline, 13 Offley Road, Mitchin SG5 2AZ. See you there?

As a matter of fact, if sufficient interest is shown, I would quite like to get a U-Bend team in the Manorcon Diplomacy tournament. I realise that (a) I've left it rather late, and (b) U-Bend is rather young and may have problems scraping six more players up (I'm in, natch) -- but I suppose it can't hurt to try. Failing this I shall probably tag along with some team that finds itself short on the day, and hope to do better than last year (when I played for a combined Eclipsor/10 Line Avenue team which came a very distant last). Peter Sullivan (16 Neile Close, Romanby, Northallerton, N Yorkshire DL7 3NN) is in charge of the tournament this year, and in his zine C'est Magnifique is conducting a discussion of scoring systems and the like. CMag is well worth a look, as it's also a good games zine, and is about to hit issue 100; assuming you can stand the 3-weekly deadlines and his idiosyncratic spelling of 'zine', that is. (40p/issue).

Brian Creese is handing the Gladys Awards back to, would you believe, John Miller, who started them off back in nineteenhundredandfrozentodeath. He'll report on them in special issues of a revived Mr Gladgrind. Hmm, isn't that the way Walkerline relaunched Mad Policy in nineteenhundredandslightlylesschilly?

The confusion over the Sopwith Stats is covered elsewhere. The Diplomacy Stats truck on apace under Sharp and Doubleday, S; they still need info on some old games, tho', especially those run in Neil Parkin's A Subtle Powder. Anyone able to help with them, or who has details of a game they think may have slipped by them, should contact the statsmen at Norton House, Whielden Street, Amersham, Bucks HP7 0HU.

Hroom, hum, count up the pages, do they come out even? Yes, they do. One page of hobbynews is all you get this time, in that case. Have some game rules.

FIVE ITALIES DIPLOMACY  
(The Kathy Byrne Variant)

Original version by Mike Lee, 1985 -- first printed in NOT NEW YORK 4/5

Map redrawn & rules updated for the NAVB by Fred Davis, 1986

These rules copied from VIENNA 66, April 1990 (ed. Rich Egan)

Catalogue number -- ug12/05

Introduction: Named for Kathy Byrne, this variant is designed for a group of five players, who, like Kathy or Toby Harris, are only happy when they can play Italy. I ((Mike Lee)) find Italy by far the most interesting country to play, and so do many others; so, when too many of us Italy First players appear at a con, we can all play happily by playing this variant.

The Rules 1) There are five countries, all of which are named Italy. To avoid confusion, these are labelled 'Italy A', 'Italy B', etc. Their positions are absolutely equal; the GM will assign the countries by lot. To distinguish each country, all of the spaces within a country are labelled 'A', 'B', 'C', etc; the sea spaces and Tunis are similarly labelled. Therefore, it was felt unnecessary to write 'Italy A', 'Italy B' etc on the map, although that is what the countries will be called.

2) Each Italy will start with an A Venice and an F Naples: players will have the choice of either an A or F in Rome, which choice need not be disclosed until the Spring 1901 moves are announced

3) There are 15 home and 6 neutral supply centres, of which a player must own 11 at the end of an Autumn turn to win.

4) Switzerland is passable and a neutral supply centre.

5) Sicily and Sardinia are passable; there is a Direct Passage between each Sicily and its respective Naples for all units.

6) When writing orders, players must specify the letter of the province they are moving/convoying/supporting to, except for Switzerland; e.g. Italy-B: "A(Pie B)-Ven C, F(ADR C) S A(Pie B)-Ven C."

7) Note that some provinces touch two other spaces with the same name, making the use of letters essential; for instance, every Ionian Sea touches two Tunises and two Tyrrhenians, every Venice touches two Piedmonts, every Piedmont touches two Venices.

8) Players are strictly forbidden to choose any one of the five Italies as their favourite.

9) Switzerland is defended by a Garrison, equivalent to an army in civil disorder, which must be dislodged before Swi may be entered. If dislodged the garrison disbands; it may be supported.

Comments by Fred Davis  
(rules reviser):

I decided to add Sardinia to the map and to make Sicily passable, just to add a few more possibilities to the game. There are now 46 land spaces -- 21 SCs and 25 ordinary ones. This may be slightly too many ordinary ones; I was thinking of adding another set of supply centres in Sardinia to make things more interesting, but decided to leave things as they are for now. I also added Rule 9.

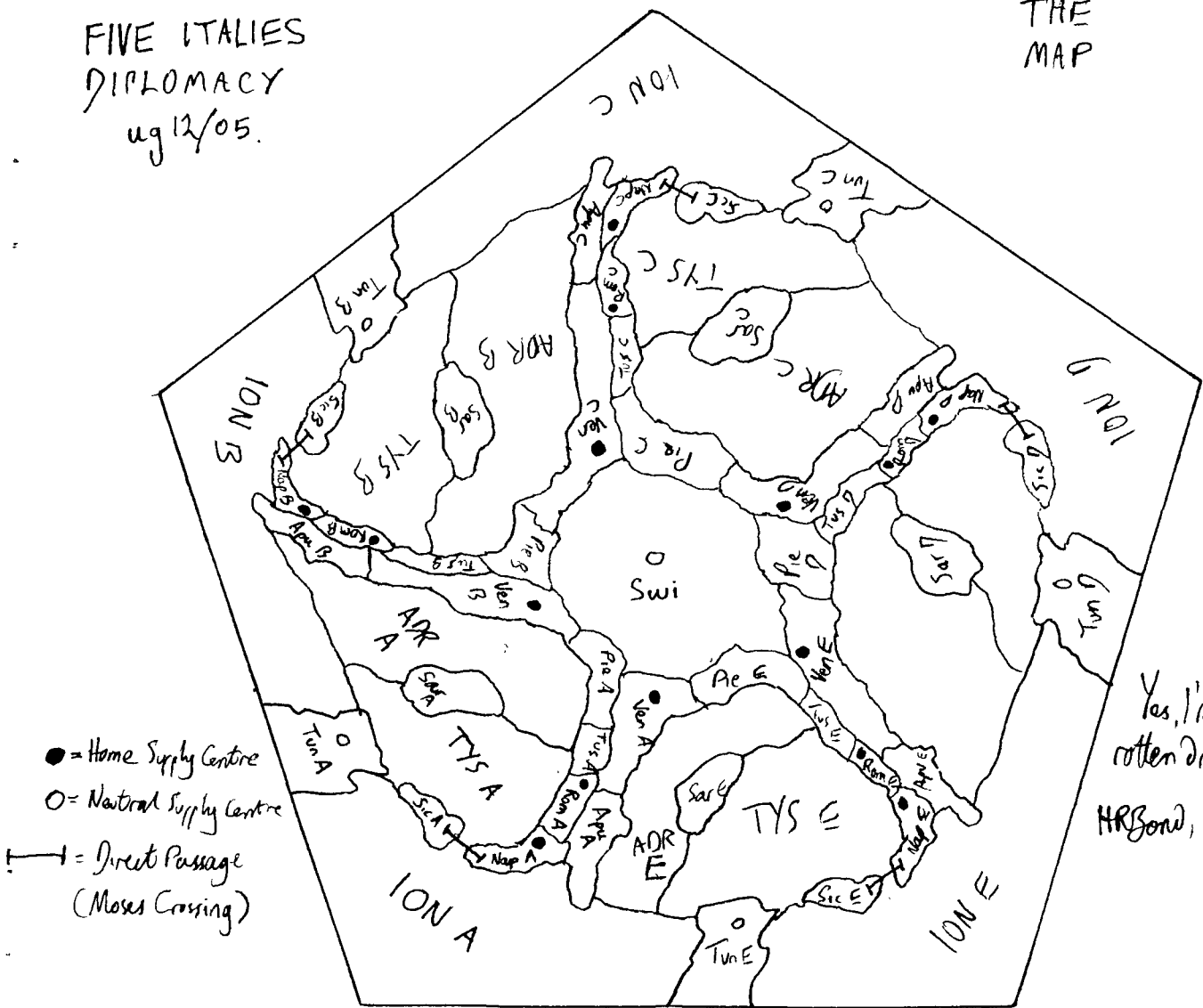
An interesting point is that Italy can try several different openings in the same game!

Comments by Haz  
(prospective GM):

Well, this is one variant where the equality of all starting positions is utterly undeniable -- the problem with symmetrical-board variants is usually that the position becomes static very quickly, but in this case the board looks too wide open for that to occur. We shall see what happens if and when five people stick their names down for it, I suppose. List open to all comers.

FIVE ITALIES  
DIPLOMACY  
ug 12/05.

THE  
MAP



Yes, I'm still a  
rotten draftsman.  
HRBond, 1991.

MAN IS AN OBSTACLE SAD AS THE CLOWN OH BY JINGO SO HOLD ONTO NOTHING HE WONT LET

ASTEROID DOGFIGHT THE RULES AT LAST

Said rules being written by Neil Hopkins and supplied by Thane Duffield.  
First published: GROUND ZERO, 1984

- 1) ASTEROID DOGFIGHT is played on a Sopwith map without the runways, positions being given in the usual form of letter-number coordinates. The six ships start one each at the six corners of the board. These starting hexes have no effect on there game; there are no spaceports of any kind.
- 2) Movement: a ship has a speed between 0 and 5 hexes per turn, which can be adjusted by the use of its engines at the start of a turn. Ships move this number of hexes in a straight line, or may turn through 60° either left or right before moving with no effect on speed; this is ordered as L, R or A. Each turn is divided into five phases for the purposes of firing; ships move in phases according to their speed on this table —

| Speed | Phase 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------|---------|---|---|---|---|
| 1     |         |   | X |   |   |
| 2     |         | X |   | X |   |
| 3     | X       |   | X |   | X |
| 4     | X       | X |   | X | X |
| 5     | X       | X | X | X | X |

A ship moves one hex for each X in the row of the table for its speed, during the phases under which the X occurs.  
Note that a ship may still turn left or right if it is stationary.

3) ENERGY: each turn the power plant of a ship produces 3 energy points (EPs); a player does not have to use all the energy available at once, but may store up to 5 points in a capacitor for reserve. If a player tries to use more energy points than are available, the power plant and capacitor shut down automatically to prevent an overload; in this case the ship continues on its present course and speed, and none of the ship's sub-systems may be used that turn.

Power may be used in the following ways:

Acceleration/deceleration A ship may alter its speed by up to 2, using 1EP per point of acceleration/deceleration.

Laser A laser may be fired up to 3 times per turn (though only once per phase), using 1EP per shot.

Shield A ship may reinforce its armour with an energy shield, by up to 3 armour points, which costs 1EP per point of protection. Damage is taken off the shield first, should any be incurred while it is switched on.

Capacitor A ship's capacitor may be recharged by up to 3EP/turn to its limit of 5EPs.

4) Laser fire: if a ship fires its laser the player must specify which phase he is firing in and which direction. Lasers may fire either left, right or ahead of the ship — designated by F-A, F-L or F-R. Damage is inversely proportional to range, which is 7 hexes max; thus 7 hexes range scores 1dp, 6 hexes scores 2, up to 1 hex range scoring 7 damage. Damage is removed from the shield, if it was powered this turn, then from the ship's physical armour.

5) Armour: each ship begins with 16 points, and if reduced to 0 by laser fire or asteroid damage, the ship is destroyed (surprise, surprise).

6) Asteroids: all asteroids move in a straight line at a steady speed, in a direction randomly determined at the start of the game, until destroyed by laser fire, leaving the board, or destruction by colliding with another asteroid. Asteroids move at the end of a turn, and any leaving the board are replaced by another appearing at the opposite edge. In effect, they 'wrap around' just like the old video game (now who remembers that one...?) There are two types of asteroid;

Large asteroids are triangular, 3 hexes large, move 1 hex per turn, and are destroyed by 4 points of damage. When destroyed, they are replaced by 3 fragments which move outwards from the centre of the large asteroid. If a ship collides with a large asteroid it suffers 8 points of damage (so don't do it). Large asteroids destroy fragments if they collide with them.

Fragments of asteroids move 2 hexes per turn, and are destroyed by 2 points of damage; if a ship collides with one it suffers 6 points of damage (so don't do this either).

So the sequence of events is:

1) Players plot speed, direction of movement, and in which phases (if any) they wish to fire, and in which direction. Remember to calculate your energy.

2) Execute any changes of direction faced for ships.

3) Execute phase 1 movement.

4) Execute phase 1 laser fire.

5) Repeat 3 and 4 for phases 2-5.

6) If there are less than 6 large asteroids on the map, a new one appears on the trailing edge. For this purpose 3 fragments count as 1 large, rounded down.

7) Asteroids move.

In the event of an NMR the ship continues on its present course at its present speed; two consecutive NMRs cause the power plant to self-destruct due to neglect. And the last player alive wins, as if you couldn't guess.

## DODGE THE FLAK: A SOPWITH VARIANT

Players; Tom Tweedy, Dave Tant. Standby; Kris Morris. GM; Haz.

## Gamestart

The brief mention I made last time of the long-term lack of publication for the Sopwith Stats has received more feedback than is proportionate to its brief length by a considerable amount. The reason for this is that, coincidentally, Tom Tweedy decided that the situation could best be resolved by retrieving the stats and administering them himself, as he did when Sopwith first became a postal game. This would have probably been a perfectly acceptable and simple solution, if it weren't for the fact that Dave Tant, the current statsman, feels that the delay in the stats is as much others' faults as his, and is not going to hand them over to Tom or anybody. He has, in fact, published the stats for the first time in two years and declared his intention to resume regularity.

What Tom, or others unsatisfied with Dave's performance as statsman, have to say to this is yet to be seen. In an attempt to sort this grisly mess out (and avoid the ludicrous situation of having two rival statisticians each publishing a different version of the stats — what price Sopwith Statsman Under the Covenant?) I'm publishing letters from both Tom and Dave which set forth their positions and intentions, and also taking the chance to deliver a few thoughts of my own on the subject of hobby stats in general. Excuse me while I step aside for a moment. Tom has this to say:

Tom Tweedy      "Ah, the Sopwith Stats... Well, you've probably seen Arfle and Monk  
Amersham      by now so you'll know that I'm thinking of taking the stats back.  
Whether this will be the cause of any dispute in the hobby I cannot  
as yet say. I'll do my best to keep all the trouble smoothed down. I've yet to  
get all the information up on to a database. It shouldn't take long, though. And  
once I'm up and running, I can extract the relevant information, lists, etc, for  
editors in a matter of seconds.

"I'll produce the first stats soon after inputting the data (Kris and Michele Morris will be printing it) then I'll send it to the various editors I have listed who run Sopwith or who might be interested. I could print it myself of course — I have a litho machine — but it's easier if I send the lot to Kris and Michele to photocopy. Of course some of the initial data might need adjusting to bring it up to date. But all I really need from editors is the names of who's playing in what games, their scores, kills made, and when the game starts and finishes. Editors send me a sheet at the beginning of the game, and one at the end of the game. It's as simple as that."

Dave Tant      "The publication of (the most recent stats) was, of course, unfor-  
Bexleyheath      giveably late, and I owe apologies to a few people. Those people  
are the very few editors who have generously continued to send me  
their zines as trades (although one or two I do sub to) even though they don't  
get much back. Those zines are The Ring, Scorpio, Ac-Morg, Coyote, Tweed. (and its  
variously named occasional associates) and, until recently, Froggy. There are also  
Mica, Gazzinc and The Grey Hare, which I have received VERY occasionally (about 1  
a year, but appreciated for all that).

"I don't, however, feel I owe apologies to anyone else, and perhaps here I could explain a couple of points which are probably not clear to you... You ask "Does anyone have any contact with Dave Tant?" and the straight answer is "Yes, anyone who writes to him does!" You have received a reply within a week (a week, incidentally, which included my birthday and the funeral of my son-in-law, so not the easiest in which to find time to write) and with hand on heart I can honestly declare that I don't believe I've ever kept anyone waiting more than a month for

a reply. This, despite the fact that, with the honourable exceptions of the zine editors mentioned above and Dave Messenger, my only actual subscriber, many zine editors send me only the briefest details, without the courtesy of an SAE, and when I reply with game numbers and Ace details asking for further details do not themselves reply to my queries, never send me a copy of the zine, and usually don't even send me the results. (Or if they do, often only the point scores).

"Secondly, you say '...or at the very least, being kept up to date'".

Well, they are up to date and they have always been up to date. As I said above, all anyone has to do is write to me and ask for what information they require. If they send me an SAE I'll reply more or less by return, and even if not, within 2 or 3 weeks.

"However, my problem is that I can only keep 'up to date' the statistics that are sent to me. So far 168 games have started THAT I KNOW ABOUT (probably more than I've never heard of), but I only have finishing results for 83. I'm reasonably sure 10 at least were abandoned, and have myself had to declare several more as such where zines have folded or several years have passed, but I reckon there are 40-50 games finished but not reported to me.

"Now, I am a sort of zine editor, and you have just become one. Which do you reckon provides the greater incentive to get your zine out, and which a feeling of 'am I wasting my time'?"

- a) a full set of orders from cheerful, enthusiastic correspondants.
- b) NMs all over the place and players who don't reply to your letters.

"Well, anyway, I realise how unfair the obvious answer is to the few 'good' correspondants, so issue 17 should be out in August."

This is me, Haz, again, determined to shove my oar in.

The trouble with the stats recently is that a vicious circle has engulfed them to such an extent that only a mixed metaphor seems strong enough to describe the affair. Because nobody sends in their game details, Dave gets hacked off and loses the energy to produce the stats. Because the stats don't get produced, nobody sends in the game details, since they either believe the stats have 'folded' or haven't heard of them at all.

The real killer, though, is the basic reason why I feel Tom Tweedy is better suited to being the Statsman. Every previous Sopwith Statistician has also been a zine editor and the stats have been attached to that zine to some extent -- Tom Tweedy's stats to DIB DIB DIB, Richard Morris's to Eoojum, Andy Murby's to The Ring. This meant that if there was any delay with the stats, the continued production of the gameszine showed that the statsman hadn't just vanished, and indeed the gameszine could carry interim stats news. When the current delay occurred, though, Dave had no gameszine to print any stats reports in, and his profile in the hobby could hardly be called high (playing in Minstrel isn't really the way to get noticed). Can anyone be blamed for thinking the Stats had collapsed?

I fully realise that to take on any position such as hobby statistician is to invite more kicks than ha'pence, and cannot hope to break even. But that's one of the things that the Hobby Development Fund is there to offset -- indeed, the Diplomacy stats, which have themselves just got back online after a layoff, have received £40 for just this purpose.

But were Tom to retake the position of statsman, the connection to ABG -- which is without a doubt the leading Sopwith zine at the moment -- would ensure that the stats would continue even if publication were delayed for some reason. In addition to this, Tom's access to sufficient technology to set the Stats up on a database is a real plus. So overall, Tom seems to me to be the most suited guy. If I were you, editors, I'd send both of them details for the time being, though.

## BIRTH OF SEVEN NATIONS: PART 2

Since the response to the article last issue on a very early postal Dippy zine has been generally favourable, more of the same follows.

The first article was based mainly on issues 8-16 of Brobdingnag, edited by Dick Schultz of Detroit. The copies available to me then skip to #s 72 and 73, now edited by J.A. McCallum -- and that's all there is, I'm afraid.

In those fifty-six missing issues and three odd years the postal Diplomacy hobby had taken a great leap forwards, from being merely an offshoot of science-fiction fandom to becoming a hobby in its own right. Games were starting right, left and centre, and a good deal of the structure of today's hobby can be detected in that of 1967 without using a microscope.

Bro 72 handily prints a list of current zines, which numbers twenty-two (all American/Canadian -- the first British zine was still two years in the future) and of these the first, Graustark, was already up to 141 issues, lord help us. Specialist zines were in evidence; Glockorla for variant games, for example, A Droite A Gauche for orphans (of its editor Hal Maus says "I wonder if we will ever have an annual award for those who have aided the game. (What will we call it? 'The Allan'?) If we do, Hal should be one of its first recipients."), and Miskatonic University for five-player games.

Also by this point some familiar names are emerging from the mists of time. Conrad von Metzke had already folded Costaguana once and, a la Birks, found himself suffering withdrawal symptoms very shortly, so decided to unfold; Larry Peery is featuring in letter-column and editorial jokes, too. Christ, they've been playing postal Diplomacy for longer than I've been alive!

No longer (so far as I know) involved with the hobby nowadays, but nonetheless familiar to most science fiction fans, should be Jerry Pournelle (one of the most successful players of the era, it seems from the ratings list) and Jack Chalker, editor of Barad-Dur.

Did I say 'ratings list'? Oh, yes; anyone who's had contact with the Two-Headed Monster of Norton House (otherwise, more prosaically, known as Steve Doubleday and Richard Sharp) will know what utter fascination this seemingly dry subject can hold over some people in the hobby. Different ratings systems fly round the letter column like crazed wasps, each championed by someone different; chess-based, wargames-based, and just insanity-based. Brob also prints a chart comparing the prowess of the seven powers; Germany props up the table, adrift by over 11%, which is surprising until one finds that then-accepted opening theory held that Germany's prime target in S'01 is Russia.

Oddly enough, the question of draws was particularly contentious, since they were still rare (no stalemate line theory yet, you see) and McCallum agonises terrifically over what to do with them before adopting the obvious solution of equal ratings for all participants surviving; well, obvious with hindsight, I suppose.

Bro 73 was an all-letter interim issue, and the stats question flies even more hotly aloft there; Larry Peery even suggests dumping pure statistics and rating players instead on a survey by their peers, i.e., every Dippy player writing a report on their game opponents. The refutation of this proposal is left as an exercise for the reader (quite apart from the logistics involved, I mean); can't you just see the train of thought? "The bastard stabbed me last spring, I'm bloody well marking him down". On second thoughts, on this basis the best players would be marked down the most, so it might have been a workable system once the ratings were inverted.

I wonder whether it ever got off the drawing-board...

THE GAMES SECTION

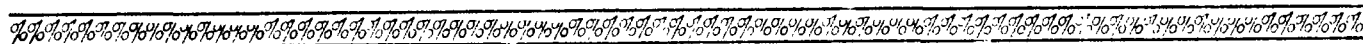
(bloody hell, what have I let myself in for)

As I commented earlier, the faith you lot have shown in me is almost touching. Four countem four gamestarts! So much for the theory that the lists wouldn't fill until after my finals were out of the way. Well, that's the way it goes, I suppose; but if there does come a conflict between my zine and my exams, I hope you'll understand that the most important of them has to take priority.

Yes, the games, of course. Oh, well, I've never revised properly for an exam in my life, why should I start now? I'm too old to change my ways (yes, at 21. Such an old head on such young shoulders; no wonder my posture's so bad. Give me a few generations to evolve and you won't be able to tell me from the Mekon).

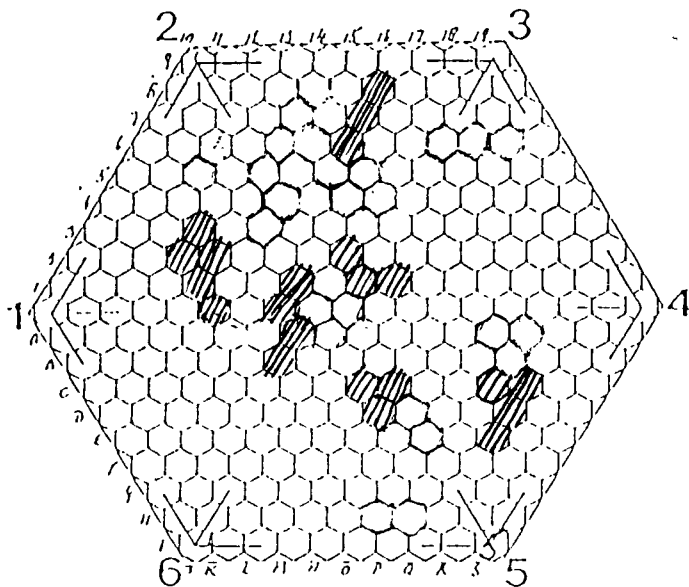
Seriously, I do (grudgingly) admit that the real world does have to force its way into my attention at some point, so (contrary to my usual custom) I'm setting a seven-week deadline, which takes me two days past my last exam. After that things should get back to five-weekly, though as I still don't know what I'm gonna do or what part of the country I'll be doing it in once I graduate, further vicissitudes may be on the horizon. I'll make sure you know about them in plenty of time, though; assuming of course that I get to hear about them in plenty of time myself.

Slave, bring me a glass of sherbet. Slave, bring me my peacock-feather fan. Slave, bring me the head of Eoghan Barry. Slave, bring me my Sopwith gamestart.



SOPWITH 'ANDERSON' Gamestart

- Start A1: Kris Morris, 293 Barn Mead, Harlow, Essex CM18 6SY.
- Start A10: James Thorp, 4 Kendal Green, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 5PN (home); 1 The Villas, West End, Stoke on Trent ST4 5AH (term).
- Start J19: John Webley, Zahnarzt, Töpferreihe 4, 3320 Salzgitter 51, GERMANY.
- Start S19: David Oya, 24 Kingsway, Banbury, Oxon OX16 9NY.
- Start S10: Tim Lomas, 211a Amesbury Avenue, London SW2 3BJ.
- Start J1: Dave Lomas, 6 Ramshaw Grove, Adderley Green, Longton, Stoke on Trent ST3 5TD.



Clouds start at: (D6,D7,E6,E7,F6); (G13,G14,G15); (H8,H9,I7,I8); (I11,J11,K12); (L9,M9,M10); (P13,Q12,Q13,Q14).

Can I have pseudonyms for your pilots along with your first set of orders, okay? Deadline is on the back page. No skulking behind clouds now -- I wanna see lead fly and blood flow, and may the first place go to he who does most of the former and least of the latter. No Aces yet, but this may change as the Sopwith Stats are brought more up to date and recent results are published.

No, U-Bend games are not going to be named after air raid shelters -- to the back of the class with whoever said that. You'll soon find out the real source.



On now to the land of steam, coal, men sweating so much they can't wear shirts and tea so strong the teaspoon stands up in the middle of the mug... yes, it has to be a Railway Rivals Gamestart!

RAILWAY RIVALS: YORKSHIRE

'BARRETT'

Gamestart

Our would-be Isembard Kingdom Brumhels are:

James Thorp (for address -- or addresses -- see 'Anderson')

John Webley (see 'Anderson')

Nicholas Parish, "Monkmoor", 10 Beechwood Avenue, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9TE

David Oya (see 'Anderson' -- bloody hell, hope no cross-gaming goes on here)

Damien Cosgrove, 9 Mavin Street, Durham DH1 3AU

Players should find enclosed a copy of the map. Yes, it is rather hilly, isn't it (tee hee). Note a few numbering errors thereon -- C45 is a misprint for C46, C41 for C42, and J58 for J57; this is one of the experimental sort of maps.

Preferences for colours and starting positions next time, s.v.p., and also a silly company name. Two will start from Leeds, and the other three will be split between Castleford and Doncaster (no, not split evenly, stupid).

There are enough other applicants for a second gamestart, but that won't be till next issue as I'll need to sort out a map; a possibility is the bootleg (=non-Rostherne produced) map of Birmingham, which appeared in the zine Move Out a while ago and, as far as I know, hasn't been playtested. This, however, depends on whether I can find the relevant issue of Move Out.

No, the games aren't named after building firms either. Honestly. I don't know why I bother with you lot sometimes. Okay, correct, that Dave Rowley over there; the source of game names for Up Around The Bend is the Judge Dredd comic strip (and if you haven't heard of that I'm at a loss as to how to educate you; you must have had a very deprived childhood). Complaints about how this strip encourages teenage violence and uses the language of fascism should be addressed to: Iain Bowen, 5 Wigginton Terrace, York YO3 7JD. No, he's nothing to do with it at all, but he's got a better line in being rude to people than me.

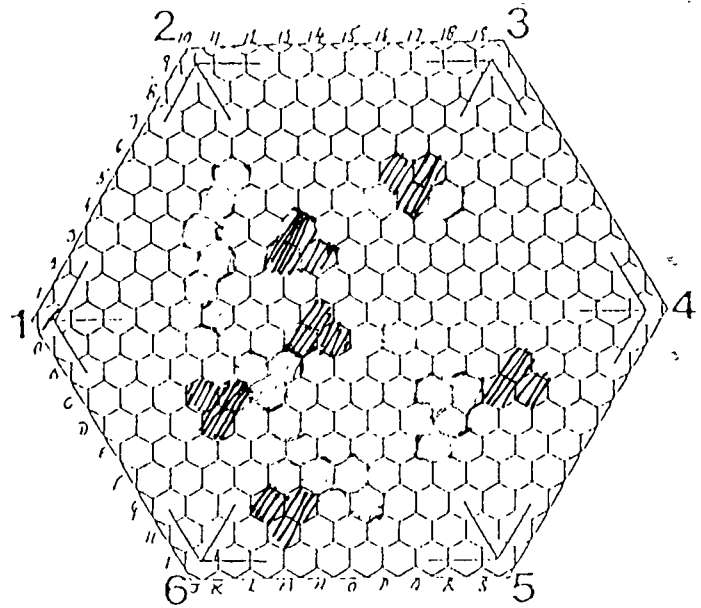
For the record, then, Anderson is the psionic-powered female Judge who is probably the only inhabitant of Mega City One who can be flippant with Judge Dredd and get away with it, while Judge Barrett was behind the ill-conceived plan to renumber the administrative districts of the city. Judge Corey is (or rather was) another telepath whose tragic demise still brings a sniffle to the nose... but I get ahead of myself; have a linear separator while I go and find a handkerchief;

\*\*\*\*\*

ASTEROID DOGFIGHT 'COREY' Gamestart

...yes. This is the place where your trust in me shows the most; no less than eight names flocked lemming-like to the list for this game despite the fact that the rules were as yet unprinted. Well, you'll find them in this issue; if you have second thoughts, prepare to shed them now, and I can replace you with one of the 'spares'.

Since this is very much a playtest (I believe the zine folded from under the first game before long) comments on the rules are welcomed, and they may be altered if enough people want them altered.



Players for 'Corey':

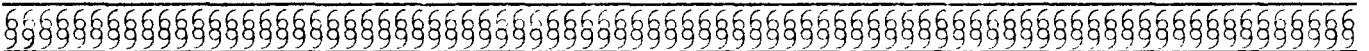
- Start A1: Dave Lomas, for address see 'Anderson'.
- Start A10: Mark Giles, 57 Sparrow Farm Road, Epsom, Surrey KT17 2LR
- Start J19: Kris Morris, see 'Anderson'.
- Start S19: Marc Cole, 21 Farmlees, Charfield, Glos. GL12 8JA
- Start S10: James Thorp, see 'Anderson'.
- Start J1: David Oya, see 'Anderson'.

Asteroids start at: (G4,H4,H5); (G9,G10,H10); (I8,I9,J9);(I14,J14,J15) (K4,L4,L5): (P13,P14,Q14). They move in the same direction throughout the game -- this will be (rolls die) towards J19.

Standbys for this game are Simon Cutforth and Eddy Richards.

First moves and names for your astronauts by the deadline, please. Oh, and ignore the runways printed on the map; whoever heard of runways in the middle of the asteroid belt?

If the standbys aren't called on to, er, stand by, they will of course head the list for the next game.



A double-width linear separator for the price of a normal one! What other zine offers you such chances to save on your weekly shopping bill?

Still, such an extravagant free gift seems only fit to usher in the first game of Diplomacy in U-Bend; cue trumpets, ta-ran-ta-rah;

DIPLOMACY 'DREDD' (91??) Gamestart

Tempting though it was to ignore the obvious name and commemorate a Buddy by christening the game 'Dekker', Ol' Stony Face Dredd gets the honour in the end. Right, here are the players, with a few comments following their names after the fashion of Electric Monk;

AUSTRIA: Allan Gordon, 3 Forest Avenue, Chingford E4 6AR.

((Experienced and successful player, and also accomplished artist and cartoonist whose work has graced many a Zeeby and Arfle Barfle Gloop. Steps are being taken to have him here too, right Allan? Other players should beware of floods of letters in a horrid square typeface.))

ENGLAND: Adam Sharr, 54 Kingsdown Road, Cheam, Surrey SM3 8NY.

((One of the honourable crowd who subbed to U-Bend without having been a recipient of the initial mailing (Mark Giles told him about it). Says "I don't suppose I can write 'England, England, England' etc for my preference list:" No prizes for guessing his favourite country.))

FRANCE: Peter Dunnett, 328 Old Road, Clacton on Sea CO15 3NU.

((33 year old all-round sportsperson -- apart from Dippy, he plays darts and is a football referee. Runs "a typical village shop" along with "three children, two rabbits and two bugies", which makes him a bad speller or a fan of the music of Humble Pie.))

GERMANY: Peter Ritchie, 241 Days Lane, Sidcup, Kent DA15 3JX.

((22 year old environmental consultant specialising in asbestos problems, it says here, and gets a free company van out of it, complete with hi fi system. Envy, envy. Writes letters in window envelopes addressed to "Mr H Bond" that make me afraid to open them 'cos they look like bills.))

ITALY: Toby Harris, 6 Durham Terrace, Silksworth, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear SR3 1BW.

((Claims to have been playing diplomacy since age 10. Now 23 and a production co-ordinator -- whatever that is -- "earning more money than

I can convert to alcohol". Only editor in the game -- his zine S'MODNOC runs all kinds of games; ask nicely and he may send you one.))

RUSSIA: Vick Hall, 49 Vartry Road, Stamford Hill, London N15.

((Had a friend staying with him 3 weeks ago who'd spent the last 3½ months in Mombassa. Don't know anything else about you yet, Vick, except that you play Dip in Y Ddraig Goch (an excellent character reference.))

TURKEY: Peter Charles, 16 Bosbury Road, Catford, London SE6 2SJ.

((When Jan Niechwiadowicz produced his survey of the postal Diplomacy hobby 'The Fat Lady Sings' last year, Peter was the most active player we'd got; goodness only knows how many zines he's playing in now. Of the rest of his life I know naught.))

And there we have it. Reserve (shouldn't be needed, but you never know) is Paul Bennett. Since you've got a seven-week deadline you shouldn't need a double one (a practice at which I disapprove, anyway); so for that seven-week deadline, can I have Spring 01 orders and provisional Autumn 01 orders (these last are purely precautionary against inadvertent NMRs and can -- indeed, should probably -- be changed after the Spr 01 adjudication).

Best of luck to you all (though you shouldn't need it -- it is a game of skill, you know).

Maps should appear with future game reports if I can manage it.

+++++

Half a page to talk some more about games. Almost all met with a vast and clamorous response, as I've noted, with the partial exception of the Diplomacy variants: this may well be due to the fact that people don't know the rules, so I shall probably print a variant from the list of those I want to run every issue for the foreseeable future. Variants are a rather underexposed facet of the hobby these days, and one that could do with more publicity.

One variant you won't see here, though, is Gunboat. Now, I don't like the variant personally -- as Andy Key put it, "As a simple wargame, Diplomacy is feeble" -- but not only that sways my judgement. They do say that ~~when/the/wind~~ ~~be/will/letly~~ the American hobby has been taken over by the wretched thing to such an extent that it's quite hard to get a game of regular dippy nowadays. This does not strike me as a state of affairs to be encouraged, and I'm not about to help the British hobby go the same way.

I do, however, approve of most variants, not only of Diplomacy but of other games too -- witness Asteroid Dogfight, and yes, John Breakwell, I'd love a copy of the rules for those variants you were mentioning. David Oya kindly sent in the rules for a Railway Rivals variant, 'Dynamite', which are reprinted for your perusal on the next page. I'd like to try this out if there's any interest; the next game of RR will be regular, to accommodate those who missed the first game-start, but the third game may be this variant. If so, I'd prefer to play it on a map that's better known, so its effects can be better gauged.

Talking of John Breakwell, he's offered to GM for me a game of Downfall, the Tolkien dippy variant (which I personally can never get the hang of, but which is ever so popular). Names to me if anyone's interested. Which mark would you think was best, John?

GOVERNMENT HEALTH WARNING: Doing a zine on a manual typer can make your finger ends very sore. (I do have an electric one available; actually -- thanks, Kate -- but it uses up expensive carbon ribbon at a rate of knots, and dislikes cheap carbon ribbon inasmuch as it won't type legibly with it).

Dynamite (v1.0) by Brian Douglas

1. The standard rules of Railway Rivals apply except as altered below.
2. Each round, every player must order one or more of the following: (D)ynamite, (R)epair, (I)nvestigate, (G)uard. A player may order up to four different actions, that is only one of each type. These orders may not be conditional.
3. As the last adjudication of a round (ie after builds) the GM will execute the actions, the results of which will appear in the game report as normal, except that it will not be disclosed who did what.
- 4.1. Dynamite: The ordering player selects a hex containing another player's track (from the centre of one hex to the centre of an adjacent hex) that he wants to destroy. If successfully dynamited, this portion of track remains impassable until Repaired (qv). Where more than one track exists, only the colour specified by the attacker is affected.
- 4.2. Repair: Track may be repaired by the owning player, but note that under rule 2, only one portion per round may be repaired. Players may find that they have more damaged track than they can keep up with.
- 4.3. Investigate: The ordering player will be told by the GM the identity of the attacker on a particular hex during a particular round. The investigating player need not own the track enquired about. Players are at liberty to pass this information around if they so desire.
- 4.4. Guard: The ordering player's track is placed under guard, and is immune from attack during that round. However, this only applies to track passing through open country. Any track starting and/or ending in a hex containing a hill, town, river, marsh, forest or any other geographical feature is still vulnerable to a dynamite attack.
5. Costs: The cost for each action is the same, and is equal to the round number in which the action is ordered, ie it costs more as the game progresses.
6. There are no limitations as to how many times during the game that one player may attack another player.
- 7.1. There are no restrictions (except as stated in rule 7.3) on how many times a section of track may be attacked or repaired.
- 7.2. Multiple attacks on the same section of track by different players in the same round are treated as if there is only one attack.
- 7.3. A dynamite attack may not be ordered on a section of track that is currently destroyed. Similarly, a repair attack may not be ordered on a section of track that is currently repaired or has not yet been attacked.
8. Dynamite attacks may be made on a hex that is empty at the start of the round, in anticipation of a build. For example, if A3-A4 is empty but a player believes that GWR will build (A1)-A5 that round, a player may order "Dynamite GWR A3-A4". If GWR does build to that

hex, the attack succeeds. If not, it fails and the attacking player is charged at the normal rate for the attack.

9. Players may not attempt to get round the Repair charges by bridging gaps in their track during the normal building phases. Dynamited track may only be repaired by a Repair action. However, broken ends may be joined by a loop. For example, if A8-A9 of a player's track has been dynamited, and if he/she does not wish to order "Repair A8-A9", he/she might build (A8)-B8-A9 during a normal building phase, if this is a valid build order.
10. The presence of dynamited track does not affect the operations of other players who also own track in that hex.

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Anyone interested in that variant should let me know in the normal way, of course.

Other games have been suggested for postal play too. Gareth Davies asks whether I'm prepared to run City and Suburban; well, as a Rostherne game it's bound to be good, but I don't know it at all. Will have to look into it and get back to you, Gareth.

Peter Dunnnett suggests a Scrabble game, which I'm not too keen on for reasons similar to those detailed by Guy Thomas in the current Realpolitik -- to run Scrabble would bring home to me the knowledge of how pitiful my range of vocabulary is, and I don't think I want to know. Besides, I don't have a dictionary handy, nor a library.

David Oya has also sent me the rules for "The Maze Game", by Jez Stone, which he found in a copy of the zine Lies Inc. The rules seem a little murky to me, and the numbering system used in the mazes could definitely do with revision, I think. Still, I'll keep the rules, and print them next time I have 2½pp to spare in the zine; this may not be for a while yet, tho', as the printing of Diplomacy variants takes priority here.

There is one game, though, that nobody suggested but which I'm going to run anyway, and the hell with it; Alan Parr's 'Tring Central', with which any reader of Hopscotch or Electric Monk (where it's known as 'Swindon Old Town') will be familiar. I haven't actually asked Alan for permission, so I suppose I ought to; is that okay, Alan?

For those unfamiliar with the game, the disgustingly simple rules run somewhat thus:

- 1) Each player submits, every turn, a single positive integer.
- 2) Come the deadline, the GM puts them together, and the player who has nominated the lowest number not duplicated by somebody else wins a free issue, or equivalent in spams for traders.
- 3) No standing orders are allowed.
- 4) Yes, it really is as simple as that.
- 5) Honest.

Look, here's a sample round. Assume that the result goes like this:

- 1: Don Turnbull, John Piggott, Craig Nye, Allan Ovens.
- 2: Greg Hawes, Jeremy Maiden.
- 3: Steve Agar, Mick Bullock, Mike Sherrad.
- 4: Jon Lovibond.
- 5: Pete Mearns, Brian Yare.
- 6: Pete Swanson.
- 9: Hartley Patterson.

Jon Lovibond would get the prize here.

Orders to me -- no need to put them on a separate sheet; game name is Halwill Junction. I'll explain why next issue.

U-Bend 2...Page the last

"Put me on an island where the girls are few,  
Put me among the most ferocious lions in the zoo;  
You can put me on a treadmill and I'll never, never fret,  
But for pity's sake, don't put me near a suffragette."

This has been the second issue of Up Around The Bend, and now you've read it you may, I suppose, go and make paper aeroplanes of it or whatever. This postal games zine is available for 50p an issue cash, trade for new zines, trade for old zines (but ask first, okay Ainsworth?) or whatever. (NB: I use the new metric whatever, worth 2.66 of the Imperial Whatever.)

Waiting Lists (No game fees -- how generous of me):

DIPLOMACY Gamestart inside. New list: Paul Bennett -- 6 wanted.

SOPWITH Gamestart inside. New list: Mark Giles, Marc Cole, Peter Ritchie -- 3 wanted.

ASTEROID DOGFIGHT Gamestart inside. New list: Simon Cutforth, Edward Richards, 4 wanted.

RAILWAY RIVALS Gamestart inside, what a surprise. New list also full; Dave Lomas, Denis Jones, Mark Giles, Mark Nelson, Peter Charles, Peter Ritchie. I'll sort you out a map a.s.a.p. Next list after that will probably be the variant 'Dynamite', as printed inside.

ATLANTIC AIRLINES James Thorp, John Webley, David Oya, Dave Lomas. 1 wanted.

DELUGE (Dip vt): Paul Norris, Allan Gordon. 5 wanted.

INTIMATE 1a (Dip vt): Edward Richards. 1 wanted.

SEISMIC (Dip vt): Nicholas Parish. 6 wanted.

FIVE ITALIES (Dip vt) -- rules inside: Paul Bennett, James Nelson? 3-4 wanted.

No interest yet shown in other variants, so I'll probably forget them.

STEALING Y DDRAIG GOCH'S BACK PAGE LAYOUT AND ARFLE BARFLE GLOOP'S SOPWITH MAPS (not a Dip vt): Harry Bond. List closed.

BIG SPACE FOR PERSONAL MESSAGES

*Wal - THANKS!!! You'll probably be getting free issues of U-Bend till Doomday...*

Gamestart % %  
Box % %

This zine is from  
HARRY BOND, 6 Wolsey Avenue, London E17 6RE (phone 081 521 4212 before 11pm)

U-Bend 2 is being completed at an ungodly hour in the morning of 26 April 1991. 55 copies are being sent to subscribers, and probably some more to odd people, such as editors who don't trade but kindly plugged me anyway (hi, Ken Bain) or people in Dip games with me who mention it but don't sub with their letters (hi, Chris Sutton -- and it's not Hanoi Rocks, but Creedence Clearwater Revival, dammit!)

DEADLINE: Wednesday June 12th... (how forgetful I am)

DEADLINE: Wednesday June 12th... (how forgetful I am)

From: 6 Wolsey Avenue  
London E17 6RE

TO:

WALLACE NICOLL  
48 BROUGHTON RD  
BROUGHTON  
EDINBURGH

