

A postal games zine

Cost: 50p per issue

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Issue 3
June 91

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Harry Bond, editor and general dogsbody
Note new address:

11 Rutland Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent, Staffs ST1 5JG

~~~~~  
UPON MY HONOUR, I SAW A MADONNA  
editorial

Get that! Dig that cra-a-azy new address. (It takes effect from June 28th, by the way). It may not last more than a couple of issues, since a further move to Stafford is already in motion, so don't write it in too heavily in your address books.

Phone is (0782) 271070. Unlike my Walthamstow speak-by-wire machine, there is an answerphone, into which phoned orders may be read; transcription errors are, however, incontrovertibly your fault for not speaking clearly enough, and to leave a message asking me to call back for your orders is an excellent way to ensure that you NMR; phone bills are expensive when you're out of work.

Which I am, at the time of writing. There just doesn't seem to be any call for us intellectuals with degrees any more; so far, out of seventy-three job applications, I have attended a number of interviews which can be counted on the fingers of a hand without any fingers. Oh, okay, to be fair, I have secured one, but that isn't till July (Civil Service Fast Stream Administrator, whatever they are. I suppose I ought to make some effort to find out before I go off for the interview). All the firms who were advertising in Graduate Post and such like publications six months ago have either gone bust, been taken over by Japanese consortiums (consortia?), or have been so knackered by the recession that they aren't taking on any graduates, or anyone else for that matter. The remainder haven't even bothered to reply, a practise which I find irritating in the extreme.

Even setting my sights lower has got me nowhere, since menial labouring posts and dead end jobs such as that also reject me with monotonous regularity, doubtless on the grounds that I'm over-qualified. Laugh? I nearly did.

Well, we shall see. Obviously, the less time I have to spend at work, the more I have to dedicate to U-Bend, and since the zine's budget is balanced enough not to cause me any serious pain in the front left pocket area (where I keep my wallet; yes, I know you're supposed to put it in your hip pocket, but that way it's more easily lifted by a light-fingered criminal), you don't need to worry on that front; which, I suppose, means that the audience for which I am currently writing doesn't need to worry at all. It would be nice to think, though, that some of you shed a few tears at the tragic fate of a Classics graduate. And if any of you know of a good job going begging anywhere in the Midlands, do not on any grounds omit to forget to fail to inform me of it.

-- HAZ SEZ IT, 14-6-91

## 'OBBINOOZE

Some shuffling about on the zine front this month. Having bravely bested a broken leg and a broken computer, Tony Huddle has been defeated by a broken photocopier and POWER PLAY is late, but steps are being taken. NERTZ is also very late, but will doubtless turn up for Manorcon if not before, assuming the Irish post hasn't eaten my copy again. FROGGY is... (sigh) you guessed it. Pete Sullivan has cleared the WILtT?! backlog and is now reported to be attempting to either wrinkle some of the games off Andy Bate to get the zine to manageable size, or else to get the lot, I dunno which. ELECTRIC MONK is not late, so its editors tell us in hurt tones; it just has a larger turnaround-to-diplomacy time ratio than most zines, or something like that, which is allowed for in its schedule.

EXCIDIO reaches double figures and Bill O'Neill looks at his brainchild with some misgivings; looks okay to me, Bill. ARFLE BARFLE GLOOP is on time despite fire, floods and holidays, for which all credit to Kris and Michele Morris. C'EST MAGNIFIQUE reaches its hundredth issue with nary a sign of celebrations; TAKE THAT YOU FIEND is on 99 and looks like a party is planned, whilst VARIABLE TITLE too chalks up the big five-oh with a typically alcohol-laden celebratory issue. Congratulations all round.

No genuine, solid, tangible new zines, but promises of several; EXCIDIO reports that Paul Norris may be taking the plunge and is picking the Viennamob's brains (ugh! foul habit), whilst other rumours mention the name of Stephen Prosser as a potential editor. One step nearer reality is GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT, which not only has a name but has shown up as a flyer, courtesy of Duncan Proffit (which should be encouraged if only to give the lie to Iain Bowen's rash statement that No Springboarder Will Ever Edit A Mainstream Zine). Dunx envisages GIGO! as a fairly huge affair, to judge by the number of games he promises to run (5-7 Dippy, 7-10 Sopwith, and several others) and will cost a quid, which is a lot of money for a zine in my opinion (which is, admittedly, worth very little). Duncan, incidentally, is taking this step after buying a computer and printer with the insurance money from a chip pan fire, which seems to indicate that somebody's insurance company is more generous than most. Dunx is at 33 Barnes Street, Clayton-le-Moors, Accrington, Lancs BB5 5PF. GIGO! will be five-weekly, deadline for first issue July 5th.

The latest SPRINGBOARD once more proves that Danny Collman is either a much meeker and milder man than is usual for a zine editor, or else feels that his novitiates should be protected from the excesses of feuding in the hobby. Several other editors -- Toby Harris, James Nelson, Steve Doubleday and Richard Sharp -- all come the prima donna over real or imagined slights (Sharp even managing to score a sideswipe at BELLICUS; old habits die hard, eh?), and rather than bitch back Danny makes with the blandishments and orchids, admitting the blame in every case. If that's what he really wants to do, fair enough, but I can't help feeling that he thinks it incumbent upon him to be the Acceptable Face of the Hobby, lest his little lambs be scared off us nasty hulking brutes. Danny; if this is so, for goodness' sake feel free to defend your statements at will; better that any shrinking violets who will be scared off (and I suspect that there are few indeed so milksoppish, since none of the supposed statements are particularly controversial or rude) go whilst still in SPRINGBOARD rather than going on to the wider hobby before taking offence and dropping out, which will have a worse effect. Meanwhile the editors writing to Danny seem equally concerned to preserve their image from his supposed slights, and defend themselves with a ferocity

U-Bend 3...Page 4

which suggests they think a bad word for their zines in SPRINGBOARD is equivalent to Billy Bones' 'black spot', an attitude equally as dubious as Danny's. If everyone concerned would just drop the ploys and plays and act naturally everything would be a lot simpler and more above-board. SPRINGBOARD, at any rate, continues as the invaluable novice zine service, and anyone reading this who's never played a game of postal Diplomacy should, if they want to remedy this, head for Kath and Danny; addresses in the Useful List below.

The Sopwith Stats, following the heated debate last issue, seem to have been straightened out, or at least eased; Dave Tant will continue to be statistician, whilst Tom Tweedy will act as back-up man and issuer of Tweedy Numbers, and keep the full stats on a database (Dave's stats are file cards). Not sure who'll actually publish the stats now; Dave swears four-monthly publication from hereon in, whilst Tom's stats may still be scheduled to come out in conjunction with ARFLE BARFLE GLOOP -- they weren't with the latest one, but I don't think they were scheduled for it. Dave, meanwhile, is due to show up as Sopwith editor (have subzine, will travel) in Toby Harris's all star games extravaganza SMODNOC; is that eight subzines or nine now, Toby?

North Yorkshire and Bristol hobby-meets truck on apace, but unforeseen circumstances (read; I'm incompetent) I haven't the dates to hand. Addresses in the Useful List. Also the Birmingham one, which died when Iain Bowen and Pete Strover both moved up north, has been revamped by Paul S Richards (in the same pub as before, the 'Unspoilt by Progress' at Five Ways); unfortunately, I don't even have an address for him by me. Iain Bowen should know, though.

My exams are now over, thank heavens. Most of them were a pain, though the last one (which was the day after the U-Bend deadline, and for which I prepared by typing out all the gamestarts rather than swotting over texts on palaeography and textual criticism) was a dead doddle, and I even found myself enjoying it. What's that you say? That's hardly hobby news? Well, if the minutely detailed activities of the hobby's brightest young star aren't fit to be hobby news, I don't know what are.

Free issue to the first one who tells me where I got the title for the editorial from.

See elsewhere (page ) for a statement about the state of waiting lists in U-Bend. However, be warned that I may have to put up the price to 60p or 70p if the zine continues to grow as exponentially as seems to be the case currently. Of course, you'll be given due and fair warning before I rip you off any more than I already do. ('Due and fair warning' is for the purposes of this statement designated to be at least half a page).

#### THE USEFUL ADDRESS LIST

Bristol Hobby-meet/EXCIDIO: Bill O'Neill, 80 Fruitlands, Malvern, Worcs  
N Yorks Hobby-meet: Iain Bowen, 5 Wigginton Terrace, York YO3 7JD  
Brum Hobby-meet: Paul S Richards, but Iain Bowen should know when  
Sopwith Stats: Dave Tant, 32 Nursery Ave, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 4JZ  
SPRINGBOARD: Danny & Kath Collman, 14 Westover Rd, Handsworth Wood,  
Birmingham B20 1JG  
SMODNOC: Toby Harris, 6 Durham Terrace, Silksworth, Sunderland SR3 1BW  
VARIABLE TITLE: Steve Guest, 3 Becket St, Oxford OX1 1PP  
C'EST MAGNIFIQUE: Pete Sullivan, 16 Neile Close, Romanby,  
Northallerton, N Yorkshire DL7 8NN  
TAKE THAT YOU FIEND: Kevin Warne, 8 Charles St, Grays, Essex RM17 6DX

STICHOMYTHIA  
a letter column

Where Haz is to be found, delivering lightning ripostes in  
[[double square brackets]]

[[We'll start with exams]]

Dave Lomas            I hope your lack of revision hasn't meant that you've  
The Potteries        flunked your exams and done away with yourself in a  
                         fit of depression. If this is the case, Mr Executor of  
Harry's belongings, I would like to establish a claim for four zine  
credits. In case you are not sure, I think this claim has precedence  
over bank overdrafts and loan sharks.

John Wilman        U-Bend is shaping up nicely -- keep up the good work,  
Cambridge            and don't flunk those finals! (If Pete Doubleday can get  
                         a First, there must be hope for all the other nutters  
out there...)

Dave Hicks        Glad to hear you're revising hard. Not that bloody  
Cardiff              students have any idea what hard work is. I got my degree  
                         and wrote only three essays plus a thesis over the ENTIRE  
THREE YEARS. This was because I did Fine Art. On the other hand, I was  
expected to be in college painting/drawing/hiding from tutors for five  
days a week. Like you, I favour the 'last possible minute' approach. I  
did a 7000+ word thesis on Goya and on the evening before it was due  
in, I still did not know what my conclusion was going to be! But  
deadlines concentrate the mind wonderfully, and they gave me a 2:1 for  
Art History (I got a 2:2 overall).

Mike Sharpe        Hope the exams are going OK -- my girlfriend is in the  
New Haw              middle of hers as I type. That is one experience I am  
                         glad not to have to repeat -- the exams themselves were  
usually OK. I used to find that once the day itself arrived I would  
have developed a fatalistic "if I don't know it now I never will"  
attitude. The bad bit was studying beforehand -- or rather that  
feeling that you shouldn't be doing whatever it was that you were  
doing because you really should have had your nose in a book. I think  
I spent more time in the University bars during my exam weeks than  
during all the rest of my final year put together. Isn't conscience  
such a great spur?

Damien Cosgrove    I think I'm the only finalist I know who hasn't gone  
Raynes Park        out and got completely plastered after their last  
                         exam, but then I don't drink, so it's hardly  
surprising! I did, however, end up being major-domo baggage handler  
all evening, my friends miraculously transforming themselves into  
completely non-sentient piles of clothes after about the 7th pint an'  
chaser, as I had to manage them all home (or at least my conscience  
impelled me to, hell of an achilles heel if you ask me).

[[I'm the second sober finalist for you, Damien; I've been  
spending the five days after my last exam typing up this lot. The  
sacrifices I bloody make, I don't know. Apart from us, however, I  
think we have established that students are a load of lazy, lascivious  
layabouts; but then, everyone knew that anyway.]]

[[To Simon Cutforth's dismay the bogroll debate continues:]]

Dave Lomas        Security: "'Ere, sonny! That wouldn't be an 18" toilet  
                         roll you've got stuffed under your jacket, would it?"

Student: "Yes, I'm going to Wembley and I want to make bloody sure I don't miss Paul Gascoine."

Joy Hibbert           The interesting thing about some of these places with  
The Potteries       the 18" bog roll is that they take the old ones out  
                          when they are quite small, but still more than twice  
the size of a standard bog roll, and leave them around where anyone  
can nick them. So I do.

Damien Cosgrove    I've never actually been challenged when walking out  
                          of a toilet with a large toilet roll under arm, but  
then I have a walkman plugged into mine ears, and so am oblivious to  
pretty much anything really.

[[This is getting silly. Change the subject, Haz. Games:]]

David Oya           Asteroid Dogfight brings brings back memories of the old  
Banbury            Asteroids arcade machines from the dawn of computing  
                          history. For an even better simulation of this, ships (and  
laser fire) should wrap around like the asteroids, donchafink?

David Tittle        I agree that Asteroid Dogfight is ludicrous and stupid.  
Runcorn            I've paid 50p for the right to be ludicrous and stupid,  
                          and I intend to exercise that right. As if proof were  
necessary, here's a bootleg linear separator:

[[Censored, I'm afraid; can't have cheap rubbish like that  
flooding the quality linear separator market. Besides, this keyboard  
doesn't have that symbol on.]]

Nicholas Parish    The point about how stupidly unrealistic Asteroid  
Weybridge           Dogfight is (applies to Sopwith too) is that it is  
                          possible to have a realistic and playable aircraft  
simulation game. Some of the Sopwith ideas are ridiculous -- clouds  
that hurt aeroplanes! A zero move -- I didn't know planes could hover!  
Have you played Squadron Leader (can't remember the manufacturer) or  
even better Air Force (Avalon Hill)? Both very playable yet realistic  
aircraft simulations.

[[No and no, though I'm willing to give both a shot. But  
(and it's a big but) do they play postally in the same way that  
Sopwith does? After all, if realism were the be-all and end-all of a  
game, the hobby would run nothing but Drang Nach Osten.]]

Pete Birks        "City and Suburban" I have played once. It is nowhere  
London            near as good as Railway Rivals, and I feel that with four  
                          players there is a definite advantage to going second.  
The reason for this is that the player who goes first on turn one has  
to go last on turn two, which can result in forced weak plays. The  
player who goes third on turn one can have a forced weak play on turn  
one (but can usually recover a bit on turn two). Player four is pretty  
stiffed, but player two has the advantage of not being restricted on  
turn one, and having the first choice on turn two.

I'm surprised that no-one yet has tried to run either 'Boom-  
town' or "Airlines' by post. I suppose that they have had fairly  
restricted sales, but I wouldn't have thought that that would have  
been a severe problem.

[[Don't know either of them, boss. As for City and Suburban,  
I do hear that it's the latest version of Rentsville/Townmaster  
renamed, in which case I think that it would be complex postally.  
Could probably be done, but it would take more time than I've got.]]

Paul Bennett You may also care to know of some other Dip variants  
 Darlington along the same lines as 5 Italies. As most people know,  
 Austria's record is very poor. This is presumably the  
 reason for the invention of 2 Austrias and 3 Austrias, both of which  
 give Austria a better chance of winning. Another in similar vein is 3  
 Turkeys, thought to be popular around Christmastime. A little-known  
 variant is 1 Ireland, which has not been played for several years, but  
 my own favourite is of my own design. With the single European market  
 in mind, I have designed the ultimate single-country variant, 12  
 Belgiums.

[[I don't think I can take much more of this man. Let's  
 change the subject... Oh no! he's here again.]]

Paul Bennett I can't offer any comment on your review of the Beatles  
 book; I never much cared for the Beatles at all. To my  
 mind they were more influential for their techniques, which were  
 largely the work of George Martin anyway -- and for the fact that they  
 were the first successful pop band, as opposed to jazz or skiffle  
 groups. [[What about the Shadows?]] Though it's likely that pop music  
 and its offshoots would have occurred sooner or later in any case,  
 with or without the Beatles, they can claim to have been the first.  
 Some of their music is marginally interesting, but the overwhelming  
 majority is fairly lightweight. Again, that they were the first to do  
 it is the only recommendation. The lyrics are largely crap. In terms  
 of musicianship, Lennon was a goodish rhythm guitarist, Harrison had a  
 few good ideas but not enough, McCartney was probably no worse than  
 hundreds of other bassists but certainly no better either. The problem  
 with most bassists -- even today -- is that they are failed guitarists  
 not good enough to cut the mustard on guitar, so they "play" bass,  
 "cos we need a bass player". [[Er... I take it that you make this  
 statement as a self-confessed bass player yourself, Paul?]] And as for  
 Starkey, well... The banality of their output, particularly towards  
 the end of their existence, can be seen by comparing it with what else  
 was available at the time. As a pop band they were outclassed by the  
 Herd, Small Faces and Hollies among others; as a psychedelic band,  
 they couldn't hold a candle to the excellent Traffic or the very early  
 Fairport Convention, at that time a sort of English Jefferson  
 Airplane, and as an "underground" or "progressive" band, quite simply  
 they weren't...

[[Paul then fills a page with vast lists of albums by  
 contemporaries of the Beatles whom he considers knocks them into a  
 cocked hat, and concludes:]]

Charitably, one can say that they began pop music in the  
 early sixties -- it hadn't really existed before then -- but that when  
 rock music, as it is now known, began in about 1967, they simply were  
 not equipped for it, compositionally, organisationally or  
 intellectually.

And now, the world's largest democracy -- India. Rubbish! A  
 succession of assassinated dynastic leaders, institutionalised racism  
 and wholesale murder during elections are not the marks of a  
 democracy, but of...

[[Sound of striking match and paper being burnt by exhausted  
 typist.]]

Pete Birks I was interested in your review of "Tell Me Why". I have  
 read "Shout", of course, but this seems to offer an  
 interestingly different perspective.

At 35 years of age, I am the archetypal "Beatles kid" -- too

young for Presley and too old for the Bay City Rollers/Donny Osmond/David Cassidy.

Far from canonising the Beatles, most real fans of the group will happily accept their weaknesses and will argue over who the greatest talent was, what their best album was, and so on.

The "Lennon/McCartney" tag had little relation to reality after Rubber Soul, and in retrospect I saw that it was the Lennon songs which I preferred. I think Lennon's first album remains one of the best albums I have heard. [[What, you don't mean the unlistenable Unfinished Music, do you? Gasp.]]

But I will leave this perpetual argument with a simple observation. One of Lennon's first songs after the split was 'Working Class Hero'. McCartney wrote 'Mary Had A Little Lamb'.

I rest my case.

Chris Sutton Birmingham I found your review of "Tell Me Why" interesting, largely because I've just finished reading it too. I found it suffered from the same malaise as a similar book on David Bowie (can't remember title) in that it totally fails to generate interest in the music. You don't want to rush off and listen to the songs which I think good reviewing should make you feel like doing. The book is yet another example of pretentiously boring "rock" writing.

[[I see what you mean, I suppose, but I'd rather have that style than the other common kind of rock writing, where the music is ignored and all that interests the writer is the musicians' drug habits, who they slept with, all the dirt they can drag up. I was reading another Beatles book, "The Love You Make", credited to Peter Brown but evidently written largely by a journalistic hack for reasons I shall shortly make plain, and that annoyed me so much I took it back to the library with large sections unread. For all their music was mentioned, they could have been another kind of celebrity entirely -- actors, perhaps. For some odd reason the book concentrated on Lennon, doubtless because being dead he couldn't sue, accusing him of everything from rape (when young) to having a homosexual affair with Brian Epstein.

The reason I think it was ghostwritten is that I also read a book about the Beach Boys ("Heroes and Villains" which had the exact same structure; beginning with the now-dead member of the group and describing his current circumstances just before his demise, then telling the story of the group as sordidly as possible, then returning to the first musician to tell of his death. Substitute Lennon and his assassination for Dennis Wilson and his drowning and the two are indistinguishable; and the author of one is named in the small print on the title page of the other. This is rock writing in assembly-kit form, and is worse than useless as well as being distasteful.]]

[[Some letters held over to next issue.]]

Several people are owed apologies for slipups by me in the last issue. I got Peter Dunnett's first name wrong, and for the life of me I can't tell why I keep thinking of him mentally as Paul; conflation with Paul Bennett, perhaps.

John Webley's address as printed last time included the word 'Zahnarzt', which I assumed to be the name of his abode; in fact it means 'Dentist' (you can tell I took Greek at school to the exclusion of German, can't you?), though it does, as he says, give him the advantage of knowing which letters to him concern U-Bend games. I bet there's something else I've forgotten, but it's too late now.

See you.

## CARD SCHOOL

There are very few tyings that I can see wrong with this hobby, but one of them is that it is impractical to play card games by post. Let's face it, if only it were, how many people who now expend their energy on Diplomacy or Railway Rivals would instead be avidly playing Postal Bridge or Postal Poker?

Me for one, I suspect. I cut my teeth on those little cardboard rectangles with red and black blobs thereon, and I have no doubts that it was from this that I developed both my passion for games and my killer instinct (ho-ho). Yes, it's true; I was scarcely out of my cradle before my mother was teaching me to count using a deck of cards, and I was a fluent player of Cribbage by the age of five. Only a few years later I was participating in games of Sevens and Rummy (of a variety, this last, which I have yet to see described in any card rulebook or elsewhere) for penny-a-time (and winning too, sometimes). I still remember getting a birthday card around this time, whose front cover logo read SPRING IS IN THE AIR and featured four sheep sitting round with green eyeshades and cards-gripped firmly in the hoof. Inside, of course, the punchline; YOU CAN TELL BY THE LAMBS GAMBLING IN THE FIELDS.

Bit of a shame my birthday is in October, but you can't have everything.

Somewhere round here I was given a book of card games; not one of those poxy little paperbacks which use two thirds of their page space on games a four year old would find beneath them, but a respectable hardback with semi-colour illustrations -- red cards actually in red -- and rules for things like Poker and Baccarat, even; being of the studious kind, or swotty if you prefer, I devoured the thing till its spine fell off and could quote most of the rules by heart, even those for which I had no actual experience. (I'm still hoping that some day I shall become enough of a bloated plutocrat to have a proper session in a casino). One of the games whose rules I first picked up here was Bridge, and I shall return to that in a while.

When I went to boarding school I took a deck with me, and had a few desultory games which I largely forget, until I passed on to a school where there was a bridge club. I still preferred chess at the time, and played in that club rather more often (they tended to clash) but still had my initiation into duplicate playing, which is one of those things rather like the two-season year in postal Diplomacy; an obvious innovation once somebody's thought of it, but until then...

But my final school, Hampton (Grammar) School, was the one where my card sharpening skills were truly honed, and also (not by coincidence, or not entirely) the only school which I truly enjoyed (though this can mainly be put down to the fact that I didn't have to board; boarding schools are one of the very few things in any category whatsoever to which I am implacably opposed, all the more so for having personal experience... but I digress). Hence the title of this article (which, for the hard of thinking, is a pun of sorts). In my two years there, in the Vith form, I played cards incessantly; the bridge club at lunchtimes, and less official games in the common room during free periods, periods enough people skived off, and any other odd moments.

We played no end of games there; Bridge was one, though the standard was hardly as high as in the official club (I vividly remember struggling to a small slam after what I took to be some horrendous bidding from an inexperienced partner, only for him to put his hand down and reveal that we had 39 points between us!); Gin Rummy was another one on the menu; there was one memorable occasion when, on a University Open Day trip to Birmingham on which half the Lower Vith went, the entire coach seemed to be playing what I suspect was a highly irregular game of Canasta with about five packs shuffled up together, no two with the same design on the back, needless to say.



But the mainstay of the common room was Hearts, which is a vastly underrated game, so sez me. It's relatively short and simple, relies more on skill than chance, is viciously brutal, and can be played for money; something for everyone. I remember reading something somewhere by Allan Calhamer saying that one of the major influences on the design of Diplomacy was the way in which, in Hearts, it is good strategy for trailing players to gang up on the leader; and this is indeed the case. The main point of Hearts, for those unlucky enough not to know it, is that points accumulate on a negative basis rather than on a positive one: you don't score (plus) points for winning tricks, you score (minus) points for capturing cards in the heart suit. The other neat idea is that at the start, each player tries to improve their hand by passing on three cards they can do without; and it is not always good tactics to get shot of all your high hearts. The game can accommodate three to five or six with one pack, though there was one glorious occasion when we got a nine player game going by shuffling up two packs and making the ad hoc ruling that in tricks, blue-backed cards beat red-backed cards of similar denomination. It seemed to work -- at least, nobody complained.

If anyone fancies a game of Hearts at Manorcon, for goodness' sake tell me, I'm in. Okay?

We even played Poker for money once, at the end of term, and thought ourselves ever so daring. This one and, so far, only venture into the realms of five card draw netted me around £1.50, of which I think I managed (by dint of much dunning) to collect about 40p. Scoff, Birks, scoff.

Meanwhile, in the Bridge club, I showed enough ability to scrape into the school teams; firstly the D team (Hampton, being mightily strong in Bridge -- second only to rowing (Rupert 'Obby' Obholzer, the Oxford captain in this year's boat race who shot off his mouth at the newspapers and annoyed the stodgier Times readers, was a contemporary of mine at school and I knew him well) -- had four bridge teams going) and later the A team. And then came the disaster; the Surrey Cup.

Traditionally Hampton's property by sheer frequency of winning the thing, this local schools' trophy went to us again in my Lower VIth year, surprising nobody; then it fell to us to defend it in my final year. All the Hampton teams stormed through the qualifying heats with ease, even the C team which was composed more of common-room types than Bridge Club people; came the final (duplicates) and Hampton had three out of the eight teams. Goody.

The first two hands went okay for us, and then we were up against our own C team; Mark Lelliot and Paul Goldsmid. They had the points; up went the bidding to 3H, and I looked at the ace of trumps and outside points in my hand, and performed some cogitation. Yes, yes, I know you should never ever ever double into game; but on the other hand, you have to play the man as well as the cards, and since I had observed Paul Goldsmid (declarer) drink most of a bottle of whiskey that afternoon and spend the hour before the match playing leapfrog with grave-stones in the church across the road, I screwed my courage to the sticking place.

Naturally, they scraped in, scored a huge swing and never looked back. We, demoralised, failed to make another contract (even though one was a rather good sacrifice in the last hand that prevented us finishing bottom). At the end of it all, the points were counted up and the A team were bottom but one, the B team third, and Lel and Smitty had won the trophy. I'm only thankful that none of the other teams called a steward's enquiry over the implausible score on the third board, because if ever there was a cast iron case of a match being thrown, that must have looked like it.

After all that, is it any wonder I started playing postal games instead? At least you can't tell in this hobby how much whiskey Russia gurgled down him before composing his orders.

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DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING?  
Well, where did you see it last?  
(the game~~start~~ section)

As stated elsewhere in the zine, the vast number of gamestarts herein has caused me to slam the brakes on things until I see whether I'm able to accommodate this number of games in U-Bend with ease or not. Hopefully I can, but give me a couple of issues to make sure: if I can, the waiting lists shall surely expand again. Meanwhile, we have to deal with... er, one, two, three... christ, NINE gamestarts. You see what I mean? At this rate, if I didn't close lists, there'd be thirteen in issue 4, and twenty-odd in issue 5, and so on until I became a close approximation of Froggy -- or rather U-Bend did -- or most of my immediate vicinity turned into a black hole, whichever occurred first.

Bring on the dancing gamestarts, then; and remember that new address! And make sure to clean your teeth in the morning, while I'm giving out advice.

ENGLISH (Railway Rivals)

Gamestart

A map should be enclosed or shortly to follow for:

Dave Lomas, 6 Ramshaw Grove, Adderley Green, Longton, Stoke on Trent ST3 5TD.  
Denis Jones, 75 Kingston Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 1PB.  
Mark Giles, 57 Sparrow Farm Road, Epsom, Surrey KT17 2LR.  
Mark Nelson, 21 Cecil Mount, Armley, Leeds LS12 2AP.  
Peter Ritchie, 241 Days Lane, Sidcup, Kent DA15 8JX.  
Peter Charles, 16 Bosbury Road, Catford, London SE6 2SJ.

This map (which is a 36-town one, fret not, Mr Nelson) will set you back fifty shining pennies apiece, so there (yes, I know I said there wasn't a gamefee; this is a charge for the map, not the game, and I did intend to give them out free but times is hard, boss.) Send me start preferences, names and colour preferences as soon as you get the map, which may be immediately. Okay?

FARADAY (Atlantic Airlines)

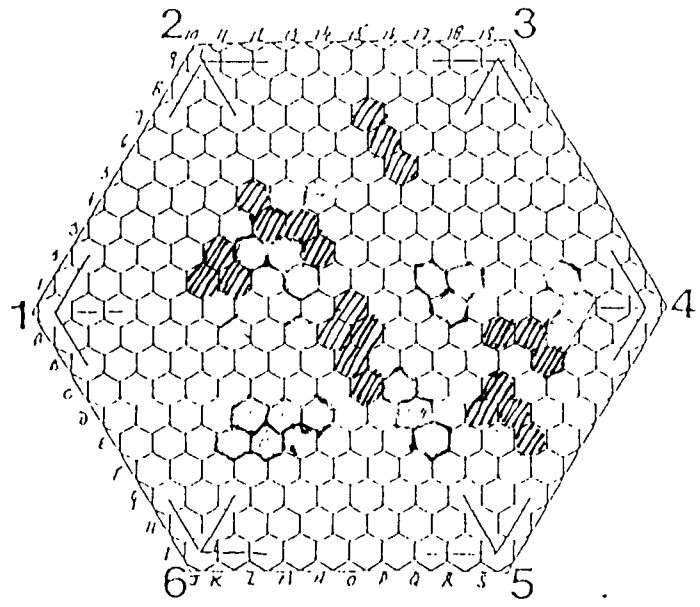
Gamestart

Hopefully you've all sent off for the rules and map off David Watts by now -- if you haven't, fevvens sake get your skates on. A couple of little points; firstly, in the second edition of the rules, there's a misprint -- the location of Gander is L53, not I53, else if you work it out the little planes couldn't cross the Atlantic; L53 is the first edition site, and is correct geologically -- I mean geographically -- too. And the other thing is that we shall be using Dave Rowley's 'Concorde' rules too, which you'll find reproduced elsewhere (on page 19, to be exact). Oh, better say who you are, hadn't I?

James Thorp, 4 Kendal Green, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 5PN (home)  
1 The Villas, West End, Stoke on Trent ST4 5AH (tern)  
John Webley, Töpferreihe 4, 3320 Salzgitter 51, GERMANY.  
David Oya, 24 Kingsway, Banbury, Oxon OX16 9NY.  
Dave Lomas, 6 Ramshaw Grove, Adderley Green, Longton, Stoke on Trent ST3 5TD.  
David Tittle, 5 Pehrbyn Crescent, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4XJ.  
Steve Guest, 3 Becket Street, Oxford OX1 1PP.

Requested for next time are a silly name and a list of preferences for home city; you can start anywhere, but we won't have two from the same place. The first set of passenger loads will appear next issue, along with whatever other bumf is necessary to get the game under way.

Any queries? Yell at me, the sooner the better, but forgive me if I'm less than prompt with my response due to the move.



GRIFFIN (Sopwith) Gamestart

- Start A1: Mark Giles, 57 Sparrow Farm Rd, Epsom, Surrey KT17 2LR.
- Start A10: Marc Cole, 21 Farmlees, Charfield, Gloucestershire GL12 3JA.
- Start J19: Peter Ritchie, 241 Days Lane, Sidcup, Kent DA15 8JX.
- Start S19: John Todd, 70 Alfred Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2DW.
- Start S10: Mark Boyle, 15 Linn Park Gdns, ACE! Johnstone, Renfrewshire PA5 8LH.
- Start J1: Stuart Tweedy, 29 Stanley Hill ACE! Avenue, Amersham, Bucks HP7 9BD.

Clouds start at: (E6,E7,F7); (E9,F9,G10,H10); (G14,H14,I14); (J9,J10,K9,K10,L9); (O14,P15,Q15); (P12,P13,Q13,R13).

Note that Mark B and Stuart begin as Aces, and are thus able to use the Immelmann Turn and inflict extra damage; beware!

First set of orders to me, please, by the next deadline, and a pseudonym for your pilot as well while we're about it.

~~~~~

HERSHEY (Diplomacy 91??)

Gamestart

This one went out separately in the middle of the long deadline to give players a chance to get the letters flowing, though at least one notice went AWOL in the post -- sorry, Dave Hicks, but this has got nothing to do with us. Also note that Ed Morgan's address has changed since the notice went out. For the record, then, this is the formal gamestart announcement;

AUSTRIA: Edmund Morgan, 22 Meadow Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4NF (COA)

((20-year-old student briefly resident in London suburbia in between sojourns in Manchester and France. Designer of variants; sixth gamestart and third Austria, which is what tends to happen if you don't send a preference list. Currently in bed poorly, so be nice to him.))

ENGLAND: Dave Newnham, 80 Prince Edward's Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1BH.

((Started his hobby career whilst living out in Zimbabwe, but has nonetheless managed to keep up a fairly reliable record. Playing style might be described as tenacious, from my experience of him.))

FRANCE: Mark Stretch, 2 Over Mill Drive, Selly Park, Birmingham B29 7JL.

((Graduate of the Collman School of Diplomacy, otherwise known as Springboard. Mathematical genius who is apparently just off to Oxford and, doubtless, a brilliant multi-million pound salary. We played on the same board at Manorcon last year, and were the first two out...))

GERMANY: Simon Cutforth, 49 Deuchar Street, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1DX

((Fairly recent recruit to the hobby who's to be seen in several zines. Has been identified as an avatar of Richard Walkerdine, but denies this strongly. Is not obsequious, not in the least, no.))

ITALY: Dave Hicks, Top Flat, 8 Dyfrig Street, Pontcanna, Cardiff CF1 9LR

((Like me, an SF fan in exile here in the games hobby; unlike me, an artist who may be appearing on the cover of U-Bend. Roped into the hobby through knowing Iain Bowen, has played two or three games of Dip with some moderate success. A self-employed sign-designer.))

RUSSIA: Paul Bennett, 118 High Northgate, Darlington DL1 1UR.

((Sent a biography so vast that this fanzine cannot contain it. In brief; unemployed (temporarily, we hope) computer programmer, systems analyst and general Renaissance Man; bassist and songwriter in local band; footballer; once had a life whilst hitch-hiking with Humphrey Lyttleton; collects copies of Wuthering Heights (book or song, Paul?) All this by the age of 38, and Diplomacy too -- how does he find time to sleep?))

TURKEY: Chris Sutton, 62 Ashbrook Road, Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2XB.

((Knew where the title of the zine came from, which is more than can be said for most of you. Is currently running away with a game I'm in in Arfle Barfle Gloop, so get the sod for me, won't you? Wants to see Judge Anderson on the cover (down, boy!) -- better ask Italy, eh, Chris?))

So Spring 01 orders and provisional Autumn 01 for next deadline, please. (Mark, yours are on file, thanks). Go for it, gentlemen!

KNIGHTS OF THE GREEN FIELD STAMP AND SHOUT KNIGHTS OF THE GREEN FIELD STAMP AND SHO

IZZARD (Railway Rivals 'Dynamite' Variant) Gamestart

A particularly huge demand for this one -- apologies to all those who missed out. (This includes David Oya, who sent me the variant in the first place!)

- David Tittle, 5 Penrhyn Crescent, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4XJ.
- Joy Hibbert, 11 Rutland Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent ST1 5JG.
- Steve Guest, 3 Becket Street, Oxford OX1 1PP.
- Tony Sait, 15 Alphington Green, Frimley, Surrey GU16 5LQ.
- John Colledge, 'Dunorroch', 12 Garten Street, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 3HH.

Map should be enclosed or following directly. Company names, colour and town preferences to me by the next deadline, please, and we can kick off then.

Yes, Joy lives at the same address as me; anyone who knows me well will tell you that my reaction to anyone else opening my mail is not so much bad as violent, but in case of paranoia, sign your envelope or write 'Izzard!' across the flap to ensure your orders' sanctitude.

ME IM JUST A LAWNMOWER YOU CAN TELL ME BY THE WAY I WALK ME IM JUST A LAWNMOWER YO

JACK (Five Italies Diplomacy) 91??ug12 Gamestart

Another one where several latecomers were disappointed; when will you lot learn you gotta' be prompt, eh?

- ITALY A: James Nelson, 112 Huntley Avenue, Spondon, Derby DE2 7DU.
- ITALY B: Toby Harris, 6 Durham Terrace, Silksworth, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR3 1BW
- ITALY C: David Tittle, 5 Penrhyn Crescent, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4XJ.
- ITALY D: Paul Bennett, 118 High Northgate, Darlington DL1 1UR.
- ITALY E: Simon Cutforth, 49 Deuchar Street, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1DX.

A few points about the rules (or rather, the map) as printed in last issue. Yes, two provinces weren't named, but these were of course TYS D and ADR D, so that's what we shall call them despite David's suggestion of a write-in contest for more original names. And to those who say that the Adriatics were labelled out of order, I reply Poot; how do you know which should be what, since sea provinces aren't part of any country? As it happens there's no chance of any ambiguity.

Right, you know what to do now, don't you? That's right; you write to each other as much as you think proper, and then before the next deadline, you take stock of the situation, write out some orders for your units, and send them (the orders, not the units, stoopid) off to me.

There, now you've got no excuse for NMRing.

U-Band 3 .. page 16

No, there're some more gamestarts yet; press on;

KELSO (Intimate 1a Diplomacy)

91??rx03

Pre Gamestart

Rules printed in this issue.

The players are

Edward Richards, 10 Woodley Road, Bebington, The Wirral L63 8PD

Mark Stretch, 2 Over Mill Drive, Selly Park, Birmingham B29 7JL

Preference list needed from Eddy to start the game off; Mark's is on file.

ALONG THE FOREST ROAD ITS THE END OF THE DAY AND THE CROWDS HAVE GONE AWAY ALONG T

LARTER (Asteroid Dogfight)

Guess what...Gamestart

Start A1: Simon Cutforth, 49 Deuchar Street, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1DX.

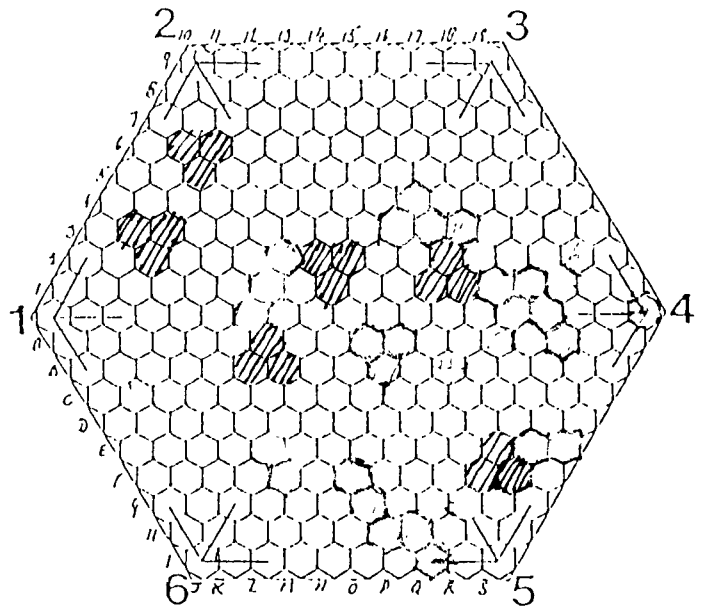
Start A10: Edward Richards, 10 Woodley Road, Bebington, The Wirral L63 8PD.

Start J19: David Tittle, 5 Penrhyn Crescent, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4XJ.

Start S19: Marc Cole, 21 Farmlees, Charfield, Glos GL12 8JA.

Start S10: Nicholas Parish, 'Monkmoor', 10 Beechwood Avenue, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9TE.

Start J1: Edmund Morgan, 22 Meadow Rd, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4NF.



Asteroids start at: (B5,C5,C6); (B8,C8,C9); (H6,H7,I7); (H10,I10,I11); (L13,L14,M14); (Q11,Q12,R12). They move in the same direction throughout the game, viz. towards A10.

First moves and names for your pilots by next deadline, please. You all have the rules from last issue, don't you? Yes. See 'Corey' for a rules point which may be relevant. Good luck, and don't ram the asteroids, it's bad for your health.

SEE THE DEADLY NIGHTSHADE GROW SEE THE DEADLY NIGHTSHADE GROW SEE THE DEADLY NIGH

McGRUDER (Deluge Diplomacy)

91??ru02

Honest it's the last Gamestart

Well, maybe not quite a gamestart just yet, for although I have seven names I have a grand total of zero preference lists. So I suggest that you all go away and make up a list for me, and the countries will be allocated next issue, in which you should also find the rules. The seven players are, or will be, rather:

PAUL NORRIS: ALLAN GORDON: DAVID TITTLE: DAVE HICKS: TONY SAIT:
PETER RITCHIE: NICHOLAS PARISH.

Anyone not sending a list in will, of course, get ~~AAAAA~~ what's left over.

Anyone wishing to know how fast I type should get a copy of Selling England By The Pound (Genesis) and put it on, then identify the interlineations as the album plays. Yes, I do go slowly, don't I.

Incidentally, the third separator is particularly relevant to me, as at the time of typing (though not for much longer, of course) I actually live along the Forest Road!

14
 James Thorp, 4 Kendal Green, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 5PN
 The Aardvarkian Express (TAE); Blue; start LEEDS

David Oya, 24 Kingsway, Banbury, Oxon OX16 9NY
 Locomotives of Unswerving Tenacity and Stability (LUST); Red; start
 LEEDS

Inevitably, four of you wanted to start at Castleford; bad luck to those who missed out. John, if you don't send me a company name with your first orders, I shall make one up myself, and it is unlikely to be flattering. (Unlikely To Be Flattering? UTBF? Nah, never was any good at acronyms).

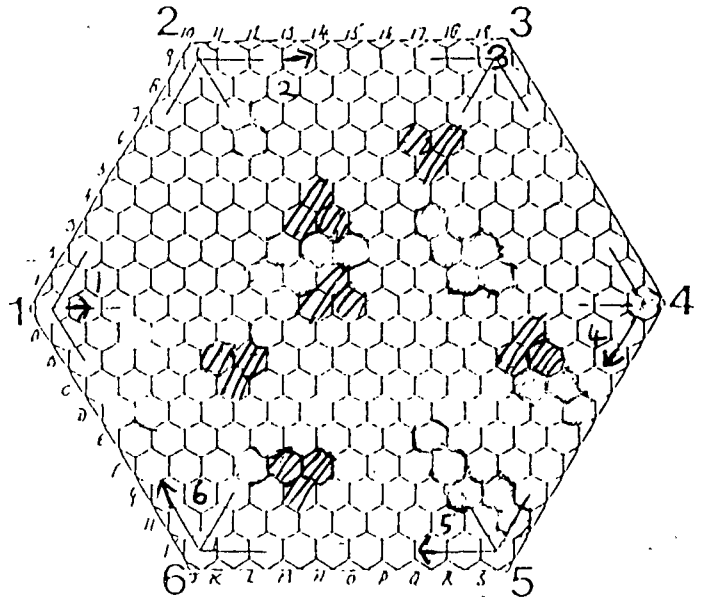
Rolls for Round 1 are: 3 - 3 - 4 (what a miserly sod)

COREY		Asteroid Dogfight				Turn 1	
Pilot	Starts	Speed	Shield	Moves	Ends	Cap	Damage
Tiny Clanger Dave Lomas	A1-B2	0 - 1	0	A	B2-C3	2	16
Baron 'Flash' von Boggles	A10-B11	0 - 3	0	A,A,A	D1 ³ -E1 ⁴	0	16
?????	J19	0	0	0	J19	3	16
	Kris Morris		(NMR!)				
Last American Pitbull	S19-R18	0 - 2	0	A,A	Q17-R16	1	16
	Marc Cole						
Mjr Mirkin II	S10-R9	0 - 2	0	A,A	Q8-P7	1	16
	James Thorp						
Daffy Dodo	J1-I1	0 - 2	0	A,A	H1-G1	1	16
	David Oya						

Asteroids move in a stately procession to: (G5,H5,H6)[4]: (G10, G11,H11)[4]: (I9,I10,J10)[4]: (I15, J15,J16)[4]: (K5,L5,L6)[4]: (P14, P15,Q15)[4]. (Numbers in square brackets are hits needed to fragment the asteroid).

Hope the style in which the report is laid out's clear. A few rules queries, answered below, but most of you seem to have got them off pat; Mark's orders, though, had to be slightly modified -- you only produce 3EP per turn, Mark, which was only enough to accelerate to speed 3, not to charge the capacitor or fire ahead (which is lucky for sleepy Kris, eh?)

Yes, you can start facing any direction of the three possible. Yes, charging the capacitor means saving EPs. Yes, ships are motionless to start with (I think it was this which threw Mark). Yes, press is welcome if there's room.



HALWILL JUNCTION

This, you'll recall, is the simplest of games, or rather, contests; every reader who can be arsed sends in a single positive integer every round, and the lowest number chosen not nominated by anyone else wins a free issue, or equivalent in stamps for traders.

I promised an explanation of the game name last round, so here it is; Halwill Junction was a busy railway interchange in mid-Devon where four lines met until 1963 or so, when Mr Beeching came along with his little axe. Nowadays, there is the rather spectacular case of a village named "Halwill Junction" when there isn't a railway within thirty or forty miles of the place at least. This name keeps up the tradition that games of Tring Central are named after the railway fashion. And note that spelling; many of you attempted to make 'Halwill' a trisyllable by various methods, and Damien Cosgrove called it 'Finchley Central', which is a game that you will not see sully the fair pages of U-Bend; be warned!

And the results.... ARE....

- 1: Dave Lomas, Marc Cole, David Tittle, David Oya, Ed Morgan
- 2: **ALAN PARR**
- 3: Joy Hibbert, Dave Rowley
- 4: Damien Cosgrove
- 5: Mike Sharpe
- 6: Pete Birks
- 7: Simon Cutforth, Mark Nelson, John Webley, John Todd
- 8: Dave Hicks
- 11: Peter Dunnett
- 17: Paul Bennett
- 29: Peter Ritchie

Well, who'd've credited it. Amid cries of 'Fix!' I declare the game's inventor, Alan Parr, the winner; Alan should find 50p in stamps with his trade copy. Obviously the long hours of work he put into the game's design have paid dividends. Let's have your numbers for next issue, please.

ATLANTIC AIRLINES: CONCORDE RULES

Please note that Concorde is now available. As per other aircraft, only 3 are available. It costs 300, carries a load of 3, run costs are 50 per round, and has a range of 26. Moving supersonically is at 1 movement cost per 3(or part of) hexes moved. Movement is still restricted to 25, but supersonic flight can, in practical terms, extend this. Supersonic flight is permitted from a land hex to a sea hex, or from sea hex to sea hex, only. Sea to land and land to land movement is at normal movement cost. Range is actual hexes moved, NOT reduced by the 1/3 movement cost. E.g. Accra to Tunis direct takes 2+14+2=18; supersonically round African coast is 2+(26/3)+1+2=14.

Land areas are as per Atlantic Shipper: A1-A15, B1-B12, C2-C12, D2-D10, E2-E9, F1, F3-F8, K6, L3, L4, M2, M3, A43, B43, C41-C43, D41-D44, E41-E46, F41-F46, G41-G46, H41-H48, I41-I49, I51, J41-J51, K41-K48, K50, L41-L48, M41-M53, N68, N72-end, M68, M69, M71-end, L70-end, K69-end, J69-end, I70, I71, I74, I75, H68-H70, H74, G68-G70, G75, 68, F69, D69-end, C69-end, B68-end, A68-end, N27-end, M27-end, L26-end, K27-end, J27-end, I27-end, H27-end, G28-end, F28-end, E29-end, and D29-end.

CA
"Hello, Mr Radio, your friendly station.
I'm glad of your company, your morning music.
My wife, she ran away, she left her home,
And when your music's gone, I'm on my own."
Electric Light Orchestra, Mr Radio

Caught glances, shared dances... it has to be the back page of

UP AROUND THE BEND: Issue Three

from Haz Bond of 11 Rutland Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent ST1 5JG.

DEADLINE for issue 4 (before I forget again) is:

WEDNESDAY JULY 17 1991
=====

(Next issue out for Manorcon, I hope)

Waiting Lists [no game fees]:

Regular Diplomacy: 7 wanted.

Intimate 1a Diplomacy: Nicholas Parish -- 1 wanted.)

Time Lords Diplomacy II: Steve Doubleday -- 6 wanted.)

) rules within

Sopwith: Mark Wightman, Adam Sharr -- 4 wanted.

Other lists shut down due to overload, as explained inside.

It's worth pointing out once more that the editor and GM has a new address, and a new phone number, and that to send your orders to the old address is to invite an NMR! You have been warned. Editors too take note, especially those running zines I'm playing in.

Not sure whether I'll have time for a letter column this issue; if not all the juicy bits will be saved for next time, assuming I haven't moved again by then (it's actually quite possible).

Why is it always the last page that's the hardest to fill up? And I'm not going to resort to moaning about the difficulties of largely typing a zine on an unfamiliar computer, either. A film has unexpectedly appeared of my fave rave play, Tom Stoppard's ROSENKRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD, which I've yet to see but view with a mixture of trepidation (that they'll have totally cocked it up) and excitement (because if they've done it well it will be bloody superb).

Oh, sod this, I'll do a huge address label. Inspiration fled after only three issues? This is a poor look-out.

=====
From: 11 Rutland Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent ST1 5JG, UK

PRINTED MATTER -- REDUCED RATE

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