

## UP AROUND THE BEND

Issue 29 (Second Belt-Tightener Issue) of a postal Diplomacy zine October 1994  
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deadline: THURSDAY October 29 1994 (all games)

Waiting lists Outside GM David Oya, 24 Kingsway, Banbury, Oxon OX16 9NY  
DIPLOMACY Ainsworth, Head, Cockayne, Palm? need 3-4  
BREAKING AWAY Cockayne, Cullender, need 4  
SOPWITH Richardson, Cullender, need 4  
BUS BOSS Cockayne, need 3-5  
RAILWAY RIVALS Ritchie, need 3-5ish (Anyone for the new Hokkaido map?)

Others closed until the boom time starts once more, though a Dippy variant is still not out of the question maybe STAB? or another DELUGE?

This issue is dedicated to Nick Kinzett, Iain Bowen, Kay Dekker, Dave Tant, Stephen Agar and Simon Else six of the good guys

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Dear Diary, today I received notification that my subliminals worked (Issue 27) -- David Oya is launching a zine at last, order your first issue from 24 Kingsway, Banbury, Oxon OX16 9NY *Where Is My Mind?* offers RR, Breaking Away, Crossword Game, Golden Strider, Middleman, Tribute and others, and Fiona Campbell as Dip GM

Fiona is also theoretically Dippy GM for *The Laughing Roundhead*, but that hasn't been seen since Duncan Adams dropped his computer downstairs in an inspired attempt at claiming this year's non-existent Mike Benyon Rusty Bolt award for Lateness or Most Implausible Excuse Apertaining. At the moment I think she's the only woman GM in the hobby not attached to a male counterpart, and I reckon she deserves some company (Kim?)

Ed Morgan, I hear, has admitted at last that *Born Losers* is a goner (what about 'Biosphere', Ed?)

Paul Cockayne's first issue of *On The Game* emerged at Manorcon to general approval Address was given last issue The subsequent issue was every bit as good, too Support that man

Kris Morris, following an upturn in health, has not only reversed the decision to fold *Arfle Barfle Gloop* but waiting lists have reopened, and Tom Tweedy taken on as a subzine following the fold of *Electric Monk* He also offered me space, but I'd rather stay independent if I can, tempting though it is to snuggle down alongside Mr Reactionary of Amersham (10 The Poplars, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 2JA)

Pete Birks has folded and revived *Greatest Hits* since last issue Never a dull moment at 181 Friern Road, London SE22 0BP

Nick Kinzett's *Outbreak of Heresy*, like *GH*, runs no games, but talks about them a lot in KoalaNik's dry, immutable style. Required reading for all rules tinkerers for a nonnull sum from 11 Daleway Road, Green Lane, Coventry CV3 6JF

James Hardy's *SNOT*, title despite, is fast making its way towards the top of the heap in the Dippyzine stakes, with the current third issue being chockablock with good stuff, much of it from the Scouse git's own typewriter (though he loses a brownie point for making Beavis and Butt-head jokes -- why, son, *everyone* knows they went out of fashion last Tuesday) Can't find a price on this issue, so there goes a second b p; James lives at 21 Gourley Road, Liverpool L13 4AY

Bill Turner is about to become a father and *Odardle* may suffer as a result So at least I hear, I haven't been sent a copy for ages, which may just prove something

And of course Stephen Agar and Esme are due to produce soon (by which I mean a baby, natch, not another kitten or another ish of *SpOJf*) so that zine too must be expected to change some, though I expect nothing less than fully responsible behaviour from Our Greatest Living Editor

Finally *Realpolitik* is now revealed to be aiming for issue 100 before it folds -- six more issues As a player in one of his last games I'm damned if I'm stopping then, down with centenarianism! Are you with me in this endeavour, Peter Dunctit?

Credits I'm still not too sure who is owed what, but I'm pretty certain that the following are on the low side *Mark Wightman, Alan Coulthard, Gary Lyon, Rob Cullender, John/Sue Breakwell* (any cheques sent after #27 never made it to my a/c, tho' if Joy cashed them subsequently I'll obviously credit 'em), *John Wilman* too, I think Of the 129 people ever to have been on my mailing list, 68 are still there, still over half despite everything A vague guess is scribbled in this space where relevant

T

Dear Diary, what a heartening response from my subscribers following issue 28! I believe I am finding out what Richard Sharp learnt in 1979 -- that there are some damned good people playing postal Diplomacy Not one person wanted

- 1 - Any moment now, I presume, is the biggie!  
Very best to both of you.

their money back, an equal number desired their games rehousing. Almost all, on the contrary, sent best wishes, food parcels, improving books, and moral support. I love this hobby, I really do.

## OUR GAMES

As mentioned last issue, these will for the foreseeable future be sent to players only and tagged on the back. Any interested spectators who were following things need only ask and they too can be sent one, and of course relevant statisticians will get everything too. A few individual cases require special announcements here.

Lift Off 'Armstrong' is hereby abandoned, with apologies to all concerned, not least to Geoff Brown who made a valiant attempt as second GM to move things along. It ought to work postally, but in this case it simply didn't do. Anyone who fancies a postal game should try Backstabber's United Monthly or, I believe, Pigbutton.

Breaking Away 'Broken Face', 'Debaser' and Railway Rivals 'Cactus' were run separately for one turn by GM David Oya in a minuzine called My Name Is Not Duncan. Copies available on request for completists, I assume. They will henceforward be back with the main zine, if a thing this size can be called 'main'.

Nuclear Holocaust 'Alekhhine', Atlantic Airlines 'Luton' and Railway Rivals 'Yavilland'. Unsurprisingly, Joy Hibbert is not to take over Paul Slade's positions after all, so a standby position is available in the first (rules etc. on request), and the latter two will be run by me under civil disorder rules.

Chaos II Dip 'Ximenez' is held over for a further issue as Alex Richardson failed to receive issue 27. We will therefore continue as from next go.

Chess. If people are still interested in the all-versus-me games they should inform me in order to be sent the details, I thought at first these would have to go, but on reflection I don't see why they can't continue.

Beat The Black Ball 'Duz-Chotumurski'. Of course this is the most important game of the lot, and any suggestion that it be forgotten about will be laughed to scorn.

Sopwith 'Capablanca'. Despite being forgotten in issue 27 (which was why the Chess was printed twice) this is still running and viable.

Beeching. But I really don't see how this can continue until the relaunch.

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## Manorcon: bits and pieces

the first Diplomacy game, complete mayhem and without doubt the best FTF Dippy in which I have ever participated. This appears to be the only recorded instance of three Frenchmen on one board failing to form a concrete alliance to wipe out all comers instantly; instead, they, three Britons and a Scandinavian changed alliances every season (if not more often) and before long had the whole board in complete mayhem. Frankly, if Pascal Montagna played like that all weekend I'm not surprised he won the tourney -- and if Shaun Derrick had, I think he would have. Result (as Austria) moderate draw.

and the second one, where as France I opened to ENG in S'01, spurred on by England's threats to go A(Lpl)-Lon (yes, he did too, and followed this up by absconding in 1903). Here the French contingent were more in keeping with the generally accepted view, and how a dullard such as Sammy Malki became their National Champion I cannot conceive, he was boorish, threatening and half the time refused to negotiate with me or my compatriots on sheer principle ("No, we are at war") Result: decent draw.

and the third one, drawn as Russia next to Shaun Derrick *again* (this meant that Shaun has now been a player in half my games of FTF Dip). Soon overrun by Dane Maslen's Austria and Shaun's Germany, the northern fleets sailed off in search of scatter theory and found gold, by 1907 my three centres were War, Lpl and Por. I had hopes of playing the scoring system by inducing Dane and Jim Mills (I) to support my last army in Sev against each other, but it was not to be, and the Springboard team which I'd been roped into scored another zero.

buying a pack of cigarettes for the first time in my life (for busy tournament director Ian Bowen) and finding myself literally paralysed with fear at this new departure from the straight and narrow path.

being accosted by a badgeless bod in the Gents "Yer fink I 'ate you but I don't, yer a good guy," he said effusively. I should have guessed from the accent that it was Pete Birks, but didn't.

the traditional late-night German game dependent on William Whyte to explain the rules (thus, Auf Heller und Pfennig, is reviewed in the latest SpOff, Agar liked it as much as I did).

the wildly fluctuating prices charged by the bar for a pint of lager shandy.

three games of World Cup Football, three winning finalists, *plus* the remarkable feat of getting Iran into the quarters (I drew Argentina, Germany and Iran -- "the last three people we've been at war with" as I remarked *sotto voce* to Denis Jones).

the incredible game of Charades with Steve Guest and the VT crew, where strenuous effort got across to them "book, two words, second word car-hen-in-a" and they *still* didn't guess Anna Karenina.

Duncan Adams insisting on all involved roleplaying The Sherlock Holmes Card Game.

a drunken Neil Rowlands (is there any other sort?) refusing to believe the stretch marks on my fat body weren't scars inflicted by Joy Hibbert in a sadistic moment  
correctly guessing *No More Heroes* by the Stranglers in Mick Haytack's pop quiz *before he'd even turned the tape on for that round* .  
*Once Upon A Time*, instantly addictive storytelling card game  
a good convention, all in all

## WHOOOOO... ARE YOU?

a self-test quiz that shows which Hobby Character you most resemble

- 1 An amateur publication running games by post is ?  
a zine = you are Pete Sullivan    a syn = you are Malc Smith  
Dolchstoß is the only important one = you are Richard Sharp    a zine = go to question 2
- 2 A player unknown to you sends you a subscription cheque and an article on the Unwanted Convoy Do you ?  
a) Return the cheque and send him free issues for a year in gratitude = you are Danny or Kath Collman (but hopefully not both)  
b) Tear both up in a frenzy -- you don't want any striking Springboarders = you are Iain Bowen  
c) Add him to your mailing list, but forget to cash the cheque, lose the article, and don't publish another issue for several months anyway = you are Edmund Morgan  
d) Cash the cheque and print the article in an issue when you need a page filled = go to question 3
- 3 You are asked to join an invitational Diplomacy game with several big names Do you ?  
a) Join the list, fail to write to anyone and go out in 1903 = you are Kris Morris  
b) Laugh with scorn cos only losers play Diplomacy = you are David Oya  
c) Refuse regretfully because running your large, frequent zine takes up too much time = you are Andy Bate  
d) Drop out of the hobby in disgust that the likes of you were considered worthy of invitation = you are Mike Allaway  
e) Sign up and try the hardest you can in the game, but get squashed by Toby Harris anyway = go to question 4  
(unless you are Toby, in which case, you are a stabbing sod and I'll get you for Megalomania 'Armagnac')
- 4 You are attacked by Mark Boyle in a ten-page vicious diatribe that accuses you of fixing the Zine Poll, belonging to the Old Hard Core, saying nasty things about Postal Curling and rustling cattle Do you ..?  
a) print his letter in full and follow it with a ten-page reply accusing him in turn of molesting Boy Scouts, embezzling subscribers' money and impersonating the rector of Glasgow University = you are Mark Boyle and are seeking treatment for schizophrenia  
b) ignore him = go to question 5
- 5 Your photocopier explodes and all the copy-shops in your town have closed down Do you ?  
a) Laugh knowingly because you use a stencil duplicator anyway = you are Haz Bond (bad luck)  
b) Give thanks to heaven that you've got an excuse to fold = you are Mike Clark  
c) Drive fifty miles and pay exorbitant prices to avoid being so much as a day late = you are Alan Parr  
d) Handwrite every issue individually until your arm falls off, then continue with the bloody stump = you are Steve Howe  
e) Wait till it's fixed = go to question 6
- 6 You decide to go out and buy some falling-over juice Do you purchase ?  
a) A bottle of very expensive vintage wine = you are Robin ap Cynan  
b) A bottle of very expensive vintage wine, but drop it on the pavement outside the off license = you are Duncan Adams  
c) A bottle of methylated spirits = you are Denis Jones  
d) Every can of beer in the place = you are Steve Guest  
e) You don't need to, a star like you has people queuing up to buy you a Pils = you are R J Walkerdine  
f) Anything else = go to question 7
- 7 Your average sentence contains how many words?  
a) 2 = you are Andrew Moss  
b) 8, 7 of which are nusspelt = you are Mark Nelson

- c) 150 = you are Nick Kinzett
- d) other = go to question 8

8 What postal game is the most difficult you would consider running?

- a) Drang Nach Osten = you are Steve Doubleday
- b) Rather Silly Diplomacy = you are William Whyte
- c) 134 games of regular Dip at once and a few variants to add spice = you are Stephen Agar
- d) Postal Tiddlywinks = you are Neil Duncan
- e) other = go to question 9

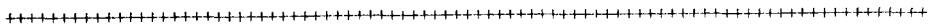
9 Your waistline measurement is .?

- a) 50" = you are James Hardy
- b) 20" = you are a Rwandan refugee, what are you doing reading this?
- c) between the two = go to question 10

10 At a games convention, do you ?

- a) Play in all the Diplomacy tournaments you can, any other Dippy games going, and complain bitterly when you can't find six other loonies at three in the morning = you are Nicholas Parish
- b) Play Kingmaker exclusively and complain bitterly when the Manorcon committee won't let you run a tournament = you are Paul S. Richards
- c) Play one game of Hols der Geier and retire exhausted = you are Chris Tringham
- d) Play any game so long as it has railways in = you are Geoff Hardingham
- e) Play poker when you can't afford to lose, win convincingly, and blow your profits on a hugely expensive meal = you are Pete Birks
- f) Play with your ego in public by going BING BONG YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE THIS IS THE DEADLINE on the loudhailer at every possible juncture = you are almost certainly on the Manorcon committee, or if not, you ought to be
- g) other = what, haven't I pinned you down yet? You must be an exceedingly dull, dreary, practically faceless person like Alex Zbyslaw Go get a life

All complaints should be addressed to anyone except me, fevvens sake



This issue is later than planned (oh, you noticed). However, future ones will be far less likely to suffer from Bateishness, cos I've got cheap copying again. Hurrah. This also means that I can get the zine rather more the size that I enjoy it being, though games will still have to ride separately for a wee while

Some of the news elsewhere in this is rather old, but the below is up to date as of 4-10-94

Departing the shores of Middle-Earth Shock folds for Steve Doubleday's *Gallimaufry* and Pete Sullivan's *Cest Magnifique* add to the planned ones of Toby Harris's *Smadnoc* and Andy and Madi Key's *Electric Monk* and the imminent one of Guy Thomas's *Realpolitik* to make the Diplomacy hobby look very sparsely populated indeed. *CMag* was a long-time favourite, but Pete apparently believes that it never really survived its temporary fold into *YDdG* during his exant period, and is winding it up to concentrate on Manorcon (question for discussion, children are conventions an essential part of the postal Diplomacy hobby or a blight living on it parasitically?) As for DayDay, it seems he just got fed up with running the Hobby's classically underrated zine and intermittent illness plus a job away from home just felt like too much one day. Sorry to see you both go (especially as Steve's a player in 'Quincy' -- I hope you're planning to continue, Steve?)

With *Realpolitik* comes the announcement of the Zine Poll from Ryk Downes. I'd better pull my socks up, since the eligibility criterion is four issues in a year, and I only achieve that by getting this out and strictly defining #28 as 'an issue'. Any zine that runs or has run Dip this year is eligible, as are *Greatest Hits* and *Take That You Fiend* (Ryk also mentions *Megalomania* as a special case, which it's not, as witness the game where Toby bloody Harris has wiped the floor with me, and fails to make allowance for former winner *Hopscotch*, which if it isn't allowed in damn well should be). Service zines aren't, and to make the final cut you must be a member of Pink Floyd score 12 votes or 8% of votes cast, whichever is the greater. Why am I retyping this when it's all on the enclosed form? Dunno, guv, but I do know that the Zine Poll is an institution worthy of support, and so

even though I expect to be propping up the table again this year I'm gonna tell you all to vote, vote. Get it in by the end of the year, youse lot, and make Downies sweat. No bets will be taken on anything but *SpOff* winning.

*Ode* arrives with rear cover and inside front transposed, which oddly enough looks quite suitable. So maybe John Marsden did it deliberately. Apart from this John is Orphan Games Relouser, and has proved (to me) his suitability for this post by bombarding me with worried messages over my games. Thanks, John, and thanks still more for trusting me.

More bad news this issue, concerning games. It seems that some of the orders have been lost since Merrivale Road and at this remove I can't tell which were NMRs and which are genuinely misplaced except in a few cases. So some games have to be held over yet again (I'm sorry, everyone, I'm *sorry*) while I sort it all out.



What's the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning?

Try to remember my dreams. They fascinate me.

What was the first fanzine you received?

A local music one called Utterance. In this hobby all of John's ones. I recall first seeing YdG and NERTZ most.

What zine do you most wish you had produced?

Nertz, although I'd make it look better.

What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?

I didn't like being 13 to 17 years old, I fought against futile things. The best advice came from my Computer Studies teacher who I feel I would be good friends with now if he still lived in the area. He said "Don't fight the system, you won't win, it will, every time. You have to work up to the top to change it". It helped at the time but now I'm too cynical to believe that I could change anything.

What is your most treasured material possession?

Used to be photos of my first love. Also, a piece of artwork I did for GCSE which was the best thing I've ever done. Unfortunately, the school lost it, or somebody stole it (pretending it was theirs) so I never got it home to treasure it. I feel really cut up that the art teacher never cared that I loved it. She didn't even apologise. I'd like to trash her best-ever piece of work to make her realise what it did to me! (I only have to threaten chucking out John's zines and he gets very very nasty, even though he should know by now I would never do it)

What do you think of the weather?

I love snow. I hate big heavy raindrops. And sun without shades is hell.

When did you last cry and why?

18th February. It was in a pub, a friend of a friend is living with a guy I had a one night stand with 8 years ago. He admits to sleeping with hundreds of women. I don't think he's changed. I don't want her to get hurt again. This guy makes me cringe whenever I think about it: "Ugh, how could I sleep with him. I must have been out of my head."

What characteristics do you think you've inherited from your parents? Stubbornness, selfishness, crap metabolism, sensitivity.

What are you like when you're drunk?

I can't drink pints. I drink less than I should anyway - not even two pints of liquid a day. It has to be spirits. I love Peach Schnapps but I think I'm immune to it. I find it hard to get drunk because I stop when I feel waterlogged with liquid. For me, being drunk is a rare thing. I don't embarrass myself though. I just say things I shouldn't. The last time I got pissed was the best. It was at Microsoft's Christmas party (a dinner jacket do) and I puked on the floor, the first time I've ever puked from drinking.

Pick five words to describe yourself.

Intelligent, unfulfilled potential, cynical, sensitive.

Is there one piece of criticism that sticks in your mind?

I was accused of being racist by a teacher who couldn't even be bothered to find out why I wrote 'pakiland'. (I was bored and wanted to see if he would notice - I didn't actually think he'd read what he had dictated in Religious Studies. Looking back I must have been deliberately trying to wind him up). He never asked me what I really felt, just jumped on being Politically Correct. A few enquiries would have shown him I had more than one asian friend at school. As punishment, I had to copy two sides of text from a book on Pakistan. If it hadn't been forced I would happily have read the whole book. I wrote at the bottom "As the book says on p2, 'istan' means land anyway". That really fucked him off.

What's your most unpleasant characteristic?

Selfishness. If I can get away with it I am definitely selfish.

What is your greatest fear?

Lightning and anything which is truly unpredictable. My nightmares are of lightning when I'm unsure about something in my life. Lately I have come to fear that if I am classed as intelligent, the masses must be as thick as pigshit. I fear that level of ignorance.

What ambitions do you still have to fulfil?

To get a degree. To have a decent career. To write better and draw something that I'm proud of when I'm older.

Are you afraid of failure?

Yes. But I don't let it stop me trying. I'm probably more afraid of criticism than failure.

I don't leave home without?

My personal stereo & a couple of tapes. And I check for my key. I lost a key at school and my mum wouldn't give me another for months. I used to have to sit on the doorstep for ages waiting for her to come home. Probably why I didn't mind being on detention...

My best male friend? John, and my ex John Warner.

Best female friend?

Gabrielle, a school friend who called me pizza-face when she met me (I have acne) and who I thought made up her sex'n'drugs exploits in New Zealand and told her so.

Who would I most like to meet?

In general, just people in my past. I'd like to see how my first love is aging. My favourite teachers at school and college to thank for helping me get good results.

Last three books I read?

Women on Top by Nancy Friday (women's sexual fantasies). The Making of Memory by Steven Rose (big name memory psychologist). Listen to your child by David Crystal (speech development from babies to adults)

Last three records I listened to?

Benefit by Jethro Tull. Troublegum by Therapy? The Whole Story Kate Bush hits compilation.

At my funeral I would like played:

I don't know really. Something like Don't Fear the Reaper.

When you look in the mirror what do you see?

A fat young human female looking at me.

*HAZ: Thanks, Sue. All readers are invited to contribute to this bit, and I promise not to laugh at them*

*I knew '-stan' meant 'land' because the SF author Charles Platt, in the days when he did a fanzine, called it (or one of them, he did several) 'Garbistan'. 1960s SF fandom mythologised some most extraordinary icons, such as Oxo cubes, pork pies -- and wardrobes*

*Incredibly enough I've never puked from drinking, ever. This isn't a macho boast, just that I get drunk enough to be physically capable of refilling my glass or opening a new can before reverse peristalsis comes anywhere near setting in. The closest was at a student party in Tottenham where I had to sit down on the stairs and not move very quickly for a while (I ended up going*

*to sleep there, which seemed most amusing at the time) I have no plans to find out what it's like to vomit alcohol, and they may call me priggish who will*

*Having a degree and having a decent career, as I'm sure you're intelligent enough to know, don't necessarily go together. Just look at me (if you can bear to), a fine example of what three years' hard slog can leave you with. A degree is just, in the final analysis, a piece of paper*

*Next issue another intrepid reader bares all (oooooh )*

## STICHOMYTHIA

THE LETTER COLUMN

Having plenty of fonts to mess around with nowadays, I hereby declare this Gill Sans my property, and I don't care how much it makes me sound like Iain Bowen. You lot have your say in this font, MS Serif. These letters are truly ancient but I'm publishing anyway. So there

Rob Moore Bit of an under result for you in the Zine Poll in my opinion, but Leeds obviously a hang over from the vote low campaign you ran last year! for slagging you off in TLR, came out worse than I thought!

Oh, apologies

Having said that, anyone who calls me Bobby deserves the worst. There's a guy at work who insists on calling me Brian, no matter how many times I tell him...

The most shocking thing in my life at the moment is a developing taste for 5 a side football. I follow football and enjoy watching it (Manchester United) but for a committed non-athlete like myself to don shorts and start playing it, well, wonders will never cease... I picture myself as a sort of Cantona figure really, ½ hour late at the tackle and only good for 20 minutes each game. I'm sure I cut quite a dashing figure in sports gear actually (ha!)

Watching Penn & Teller reminds me of that report that's just been floated about video nasties. Conclusive proof that the sort of thing that a lot of us enjoy can have an influence on the behaviour of kids. Well, perhaps not conclusive although it doesn't take a particularly immense leap of logic to see that it could be true! I love arguments like these, when the freedom lobby stands up and starts telling us that censorship is worse than any abuse of media communication. Like on InterNet where, in theory, you can download anything from anywhere. Expect a big moral crusade on that one sooner or later, the laws to date have virtually no effect at all. It's the "Rock'n'roll is bad for you" debate all over again. The nanny state gets its petticoats flustered. Confirms my opinions on morality and ethical opinions. John Major can duck & dive from taking the moral high ground but people want leadership on these things, and if the church fails and the government fails, then some other public figure will do it. Rather ironic really, John could wield tremendous political clout if he did run a political campaign based on personal and social ethics because a huge chunk of this country wants to be led by the nose.

I talked to a staunch atheist on this, and she was adamant that if somebody rejected religious ethics then it was still possible for them to formulate a moral code that worked for the benefit of society. No, no, no. If people are led to reject religion because it's two faced or whatever, then they'll seek moral leadership elsewhere, and if it isn't forthcoming then we get crime epidemics and a society that thinks watching people get torn to bits on tv is entertaining.

Waah! How did I get here? A quick disclaimer, I'm as much a part of this society as anyone so that wasn't a holier than thou exercise, just a comment. I think you only have to look at how the papers shift public opinion to see some justification for my point. See? Graduates can be pseudo-intellectuals too.

In the days when I rejected religion utterly I formulated just such a code I called it a religion then, though since it had no god save the individual's idealised image of themself, it could just as easily be called a philosophy, I suppose. Only the weak seek moral or other leadership elsewhere (note that I do not claim not to be weak)

Steve Howe The King is dead, long live the King I pass on the mantle (scruffy, Hadleigh threadbare and ill-regarded though it is) of Hobby Poet to a younger and more talented person. Congratulations, Haz. Wear it with pride (or failing that, the same sort of self-depreciating gormlessness that I sported), follow your muse and don't forget to pass the title on when the time is right.

In other words, six months ago, eh? Never mind

The point about that ancient rhyme which I dedicated to Peter Berlin should have been reasonably obvious to those who read the issue of NMR in which it appeared, but I'll summarise it anyway. Many moons ago I played American Football. Peter, who had some experience of the colonies, was verbose in lecturing me on why I shouldn't, citing the certainty of me receiving a crippling injury (I didn't) and maintaining that over in America nobody played the game for fun. All rather silly, really.

I shan't be entering the Hobby Old Pharts Quiz. It would only serve to remind me how damn long I've been in the Hobby. Not that I'm really in it these days - I only see three zines and I'm not playing anything. It must be middle age. I'm going grey, you know. Mind you, I could be tempted by a really first class zine brimming over with wonderfulness. Such as the one David Oya is bound to produce any time now. Otherwise I'll just have to take refuge in nostalgia...

Some talk of Birks and Turnbull  
And some of Howes and Creese;  
Of Haven, Booth and Hucknall  
And other names like these.  
But of all the greats that there have been  
Not one was half so fine  
At editing a Dippy zine  
As Richard Walkerdine.

Funny how rhyme dictates content from time to time.

And lo, the Guru did speak, and young Oya did produce With a poem in, as well We poets are everywhere Congratulations on correctly rhyming 'been/zine' and 'fine/Walkerdine'; Richard Egan would get the latter wrong, Richard Sharp the former

Alan Parr There was a time when I thought quite seriously about the idea of  
Tring postal games for children and young people, but there were so many  
problems that nothing ever came of it. U-Bend readers have spotted a few, and I'd add the difficulty of maintaining interest over the timespan of even a relatively short game is pretty formidable. (My



own son did sign up for a Railway Rivals games at the age of 8 or 9, but after a few rounds I was doing the ordering and he's never repeated the experiment) And not all postal games are greatly appealing to kids, are they?

If you are determined to have a go, I'd reckon the best bets are Sopwith and Railway Rivals. Sopwith is fun, easy to grasp and easy to order. If you've concerns about the war and violence theme, then turn it into a custard-pie format, which might also make it a bit more likely to appeal to girls. RR was designed as a classroom simulation game, and I've used it extensively with children from 10 upwards, so I've no doubt about its appeal. But you come back again to the timescale - if you're 12 years old you'll likely be 14 by the time a game finishes, and possibly a whole new person.

So perhaps the vital issue to think about is what games are there that are interesting and suitable and which last half a dozen turns at most? To which my answer has to be 'Er, I can't think of any, guv'. To which your response to anyone interested in the idea has to be 'Well, go ahead and invent some then'.

I think I read your - to use your own term (it saves me having to raid my own wordstore) - more outre material in the spirit you intend. In other words, because it raises a corner of a curtain upon an area which isn't part of my experience, and because it causes me to reflect upon the position of minority groups. As a classically conventional example of a white ablebodied middleclass middleaged heterosexual male married for 28 years that's no bad thing - you can get just so far musing on the iniquities of a world which discriminates against those who are bald and left handed (And I'm not being unduly flippant here, because there are areas of my life that have brought tragedy that's with us every day, but all the same I'm glad to acknowledge that the fates have been pretty kind to me).

But while I do try to read your stuff in the right spirit, it does give me another problem. Am I right to be interested in finding out a bit more about your lifestyle when I'm not interested in reading about other editors' writings about their politics, religious beliefs, dress sense or musical taste, or recipe collections? I can't answer that one, but I know I feel (a bit) guilty. Perhaps it'll save you having to give an answer, and save my conscience, if I claim that the real reason I read U-Bend editorials is because they're so much better written than anyone else's.

[[Later letter:]] I'm not at all convinced about the London boardgames clubs judging by the Independent report: Twister, Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, Cluedo - it's not exactly a celebration of the cutting edge of thinking board games is it?

I'm disturbed to see that my performance a year or two back in RLBD doesn't seem to entitle me to a rating.

Flattery will get you everywhere, Alan. I have no qualms about people being nosy; if I did I wouldn't write editorial stuff at all. Allan Gordon and his ilk despite, I am firmly convinced that much bigotry and unpleasantness around people who espouse alternative causes and lifestyles is based around nothing more than sheer ignorance, and maybe if even a few people see that I am normal and write and walk and talk like everyone else despite the characteristics that make me 'different', a little unpleasantness will be wiped from the world. I'm a complete idealist, y'know?

Peter Dunnett I don't propose to comment on politics or sex, better people than Clacton on Sea. I can write far more interestingly, but I could comment on Sunday trading etc. Running a village shop we have to open to help us survive, with ever increasing competition

times become more difficult. So I am against allowing anything that takes away our trade. With a bypass being built around our village taking us off the main road to Clacton and the threat of a shopping centre being built when the bypass is complete things will get worse. In a while, as people get older and unable to perhaps jump in the car for their trip to the supermarket to save a few pence they'll look round and wonder where their village shop disappeared to.

A Reader's Complaint about Issue 27: I haven't got the urge to start a zine, but now I think my name is David.

Hi, Peter. Can I have an alliance in Realpolitik 'Waterloo'?

Kim Head Well, since Joy has noticed my grand plan to play in every game in Plymouth the hobby, you had better put me down for Bus Boss - I have to live up to my reputation.

Like you, I've never been a Christian, so I cannot argue that the idea of post-menopausal pregnancy is 'against God', but it is certainly against nature or something.

If a woman wants a baby that much, she should at least try to adopt - yes, I know it is not always easy or even possible, but perhaps we should relax some of the restrictions. It does make my blood boil to think of the people I know who grew up in care - usually being abused while they were there. They were unwanted then and I guess kids in care still are. Mind you, I start from the premise of never trusting a scientist, even though I live with one - or more precisely an ex-scientist.

Rob Moore's argument that it will be ok as long as the parents have to pay through the nose for it, is quite the conclusion I would expect society to come up with these days. Next it will be only those who can afford to make adequate provision will be permitted to have children naturally.

The future can be scary if you think about it too much, or maybe I'm just getting old.

Still, whilst we mess about with procreation, we can't possibly allow the shops to open on a Sunday, can we? SHOCK HORROR. I don't see it as a matter of helping the economy but of just making life easier. Whatever did happen to the increased leisure time that new technology was going to provide?

If I'm working all week and busy on a Saturday (travelling to watch Argyle, for example) it would make my life a lot easier to be able to shop on a Sunday if I wish.

Personally, I think women are in favour of less restrictions, because it is women who have to trudge around with a trolley after work, before going home to cook and clean etc. Obviously it is a problem for the workers involved, again mostly women, but they are practically all part timers so they do get other free time.

I was disappointed that there was no response from zine editors about family members playing on one sub. I did get one personal response - predictably from Mr Nice Guy, Alan Parr. Also, predictably, he considers it no problem.

Since this letter Kim has been generally outed as a woman, so I'd just like to cock a snook at Those Who Assumed, which as far as I can tell is everyone else except Paul Bennett and maybe Steve Doubleday

This, of course, adds quite a large layer of slant to the above comments  
I'm not adding my own thoughts because I've already said them once, and because it's  
1am on the day before I have to finish this to get it printed

John Wilman Careful with that axe Eugene. I expected U-Bend to be in the top  
Blairgowrie 5. I voted it 3rd, and with no disrespect to Vick Hall, ALOS is not  
in the same league. Still, if you don't vote yourself, what can you expect?

Actually I did, and did I say I didn't? I'm confused

I've got a bike, you can ride it if you like.. At chess I would get beaten 9 times out of 10 by Graham Lee,  
who was in turn chopped up by all the titled players in the last British Championships. The winners,  
Kumaran and Hennigam, would not even get into Lunares I just don't understand Alan Parr's lengthy  
diatribe against the game. It's one on one, though there is a great variant for four (exchange chess). And  
there is no sexism - Judit Polgar is there on merit, and my wife Carey plays two teams above me for our  
local club. You have to learn some theory to play well, but then in tennis, it helps to get your first serve in.  
Chess has infinite variety and real beauty. Only Go is more profound, but it's even harder for ordinary  
mortals to play reasonably well.

Every night I turn the light out I've given a dreamlike reply to your questionnaire, without going to the  
extreme lengths of baring my soul. Can I suggest a better alternative to "who was the last person you slept  
with?" Surely, in line with your philosophy, who is the craziest/most notorious person you have fucked  
would be more appropriate. In my case, it would be a 3 way tie, but I'm naming no names, because one of  
them will be famous one day. Oh dear, out of space already.

Your responses will appear in a future number Craziest person I've fucked? Most hobby  
members could probably guess my response to that, even if it's not the objective truth. As  
you know, I know one of the participants in your 3-way tie (no, she's not in the hobby --  
she happens to be a close friend through quite different channels) Nice how you  
sometimes know people in more than one context. Recently in a Brum gothic nightclub I  
met someone who used to play D&D with Iain Bowen, and another close friend lives  
almost next door to Mark Strangward, who edited the notoriously short-lived *Casus Belli*

Ian Harris One thing that puzzles me about the Diplomacy player ratings --  
Chester le Street why do some people have 'II' between their first and last names?  
Duncan II Adams? John II Todd? I suspect it's got something to do with the way Richard Sharp's WP sorts  
names into alphabetical order, and that these control codes have crept in accidentally. It's odd to see these  
slavishly copied throughout the hobby!

The Grand Hobby Quiz was dead hard, and not made any easier by those wacky section headings. Was  
everybody's double printed or just mine?

And talking of quizzes, the answer to number 3 in David Oya's quiz is me. Me, me, me! Do I get a prize?

Answering in reverse order Yes, because nobody else entered Yes, I don't know why the  
printer did that -- answers should be in next issue once I've sorted out the entries No,  
Sharp's abbreviations are to distinguish between two players with the same name, though

in John Todd's case I think Sharp has it wrong and both are the same John R Todd from U-Bend, Ode, Mopsy etc (I don't think the John Todd who used to outside GM things for Bloodstock played Dip) If there were an Ian Harris who dropped out of 8 games in 1975, you'd be Ian II Harris to Sharp in order to save your name being unjustly blackened  
End of letters, more next time

## THE BACK PAGE

(obvious, I know)

answers to oya's quiz thing in case anyone's still interested which I very much doubt

1. 'Bond/Oya : (SWEAT) : Colour - Purple/Black'
2. 'the electorate is even more stupid than most people think'
3. 'I stand by my decision to separate Wylie Coyote and Roadrunner'
4. 'When a friend is pregnant, it's 'having a baby.' When a poor person you don't know is pregnant, it's 'breeding.''
5. 'hijacking someone else's point for the purposes of making your own is Editor's Prerogative under my houserules'
6. 'You can't treat me like this, you know. I'm famous. I'm a star, I make appearances on television.'
7. 'I have never intended to imply that youths from Banbury indulge, or would want to indulge, in practices with Scottish bank managers more perverse than the odd game of RR'
8. ''Fuck' isn't a term of abuse in Norway'
9. 'I shall deal with Oya at a later date, he will keep...'
10. 'Most people are not strangers to logic. But most logicians are strange people.'

Answers:

1. Richard Jackson, Lies 12-15
2. Iain Bowen, Y Ddraig Goch 71
3. Ian Harris, Borealis 14
4. Pete Gaughan, Perelandra 106
5. William Whyte, Nertz 499.99999
6. Steve Howe, Die Grosse Dampfmaschine 21
7. Haz Bond, U-Bend 19
8. Laurence Cox, A Vision of Nertz
9. Mark Boyle, Scorpio 66/Eggbert's Zine 55/56 (I'm still waiting)
10. Conor Kostick, A Little Original Sin 16

=====  
Stap me, we're up and running again I can't believe it, but we are As anyone who's ever run a zine will tell you, getting into the habit is half the battle inertia makes it harder to fold than to keep running after a while

So here I come bursting out of that cake, bunny costume and all, into your faces, Haz Bond, large as life and twice as deviant, four days short of twenty-five years old, toting a gun in one hand and a plastic sex toy in the other, shooting down the wimps and no-lifers as if there were no tomorrow.

Hellfire, people, I feel like an editor again for the first time in half a year There is no feeling quite like that appertaining to being an editor. Not even being tied face down over a large barrel smelling of old fish and soundly thrashed with a leather belt gives exactly the same stimuli, though I grant you it comes closer than most things I am tired, and I feel more than a little hyper, and can't you just tell, pussycats, can't you just tell