

# THE MOUTH OF SAURON VOLUME VIII: I (September 1992)

Welcome to The Mouth of Sauron. WARNING: This is not a feud-free zine.

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The Mouth of Sauron is a proud purest diplomacy zine which prints diplomacy articles<sup>1</sup>, diplomacy variants<sup>2</sup> and hobby news. I also try to fit in some bridge and SF along the way. If you don't like the content, don't get the zine.

Game-only issues trundle along infrequently. Issues such as this one come out *whenever I have the time, money and inclination to produce them*. About four times a year.<sup>3</sup>

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UK You send me money and I tell you when it's run out. Simple. eh?

Some of the artwork this issue comes from Ian Gunn, (PO Box 567, Blackburn, 31 Victoria, AUSTRALIA) and first appeared in ANZAPA 13.<sup>4</sup>

This is West Riding Press Publications 217

## EDITORIAL

The weeks after Easter and onto late May are one of my favourite times of the year. Undergraduate classes have either finished for the year, or are closing down, and the University is a sea of tranquillity. The computers run quicker, there's no disturbance from undergraduates asking for help with their question sheets and, on the whole, there are less people around the University making for quicker service in the Bars and the Refec. You almost feel that it is a privilege to be a member of the University at such times, both enjoying the atmosphere and your work.

Leeds is not an architectural masterpiece, unlike Cambridge and Oxford. No canals for the finalists to punt down and no grass meadows to lay back upon and reflect over the previous twelve months. Still, it isn't a bad University. Unlike many other City Universities almost all (about 99%) of the departments and student facilities are located in one rolling campus which stretches as far as the eye can see.

<sup>1</sup> although not very often these days

<sup>2</sup> Err, well I have done in the past

<sup>3</sup> which is more often than the game only issues appear...

<sup>4</sup> Assuming I can be bothered to put any artwork into the zine

And in the, usually, hot weather which comes after Easter there is the refreshing smell of freshly cut-grass. Although the University is a combination of red-brick and solid 1960's concrete (including the longest corridor in Europe) there are places of greenery, such as outside the library and behind the Earth Science department where undergraduates are to be found stretched out, soaking up the sun, in minimal clothing. There they hold court and many are those that come to pay their respects, engaging in conversation with these bright young things.

One of the favourite places for the lemmings to congregate are the Parkinson steps, on the main road into the city from Headingley — soaking up those heady petrol fumes as well as the Sun — and it was opposite this mecca of scantily dressed young women that I had arranged to meet a certain Ryk Downes, or rather it was Ryk who suggested that we met there. (The Parkinson Steps seemingly being the only part of the University Campus that Ryk knows.)

And there he was, car-window down, eyes glazed over and with a smile of quite satisfaction on his face. "Ryk? Ryk?" I asked, trying to nudge him out of his meditation. "Ryk!" I finally got through to him and he passed me the magazines I had ordered in a nondescript brown paper bag. And do you know what he said, what his words to me were on this peaceful day of clear blue sky and fierce yellow sun?

He leered at me in a manner most unbecoming and said: "*This reminds me of the days when I worked in Brighton. Everyday I'd go down to eat my sandwiches overlooking the nudist beach. All those nubile young bodys...*" The conversation continued in a similar vein as Ryk continued to provide a relentless wave of anecdotes about those far off says at Brighton Rock.

I have now spent five of the last six years here in Leeds. The seasons merge into each other and the years roll by but the broad outline of the academic year remains the same.

Towards the end of September and into the beginning of October we have Fresher's week when the starry eyed freshers make their first appearance. Hesitant at first, they slowly become attuned to the pulse of University life; their cloths becoming shabbier and shabbier, awaiting a first washing when they return to their parents for Christmas, they no longer move around the University as if they were a heard of prime, red, meat and their enthusiasm for nine o'clock lectures soon becomes a tarnished shock of indignation at the thought of getting up before 11 am, scientists, or 3 pm, arts students. Doesn't the world know that they are young, free and wild?

After the shocks and tribulations of the freshers come the interviewees. A strange form of life, they walk stiffly and awkwardly as if unused to the bright lights of the city and the speed of life in the fast lane. They come to the University in search of knowledge, a temporary state of affairs, and walk aimlessly around the campus until they are put out of their misery. Who dares approach this lower form of life and help them out, should they not be left to sink or swim?

And at the end of their first term the transition is complete. No longer are the the freshers the pleasant young things that had arrived at the University in the declining Summer, towards the end of their first term away from Home they commiserate their friends at the prospect of returning to the boring, dull, town that spawned them by partying through the last week of term.

Season begats season. Rag week has been and gone, rag mags have been sold up and town the country with hardly a protest at their content, and soon it is hustings time. Time when the Arts students emerge from their burrows after hibernating through the long dark cold winter months to look at a brave new world. And for a time they are busy and flirt from student to student, hall of residence to hall of residence, union meeting to union meeting in an attempt to persuade the apathetic mass of studentdom that they represent a new dynamic driving force, full of youthful enthusiasm and brave new ideas; ready to represent YOU, Joe Student and your best interests.

Latter on the hustings are over, the vote counted, the election posters taken down. A set of new faces occupy the old chairs, performing the same meaningless activities as if they were an archaic ritual whose meaning has been long lost to the collective folk memory. Then Summer comes, and examination beckons.

The library fills in an act of spontaneous germination, as chairs which had been vacant through long month after long month germinate to produce a student, eager in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding; or at least those parts of knowledge which are relevant to the forthcoming exam. Understanding may come later, but for now knowledge is all.

And as suddenly as the library germinated, it is empty. It is silent. As we walk through row upon row of books we catch only a glimpse of some wild folk, a pale bodied people to whom the shining of the yellow sun is but a rumour, who spend their time wondering through this forest of knowledge. For the life expectancy of the studious student is short, and after a brief moment of intense study it dies, falling to the waste-side. But all is not lost for from its shell emerges a new life-form, from its ashes arises a new animal.

For now is the time of celebration, the year has ended and before this mass of studentship is dispersed by the four winds there is time for one last ritual, one last party before all goes quiet as the lights go out and one by one the University population, its life-force sucked away.

But not for long does the University remain empty. For now is the season of conference. A new animal rears its head and looks slowly round the University, cautiously moving in case its predator should catch it in the open. But before long the academic year has ended, yet the end of one year marks the beginning of a new.

The old hands return, they have seen it all before. They are blasé about the coming new year, and look down upon the newly emerging student life-forms; life, but not as they knew it. Within this endless reputation of student life they can be almost countless variation. Each year there are a new set of players, we can guess in advance the form of the picture that they will paint; the techniques used to draw their year, but can we marvel at the variations and their attention to detail?

And so we ask ourselves, do fanzines repeat themselves? Is there not countless variation within their finite space? Or is each new fanzine editor unaware of the tradition that he has entered? Of previous zines, previous writers and previous articles?

"I'm afraid I find it rather hard to get inspiration from most of the zines which pop through the post-box these days. Most are very worthy, have an entertaining letter column and I am glad that I trade with the zine, but, but. Well, any 'news' content (e.g., Vick Hall is postponing his Stage III until the end of 1993, although Stage III of what he doesn't say!) hardly strikes me as scintillating 'Grab the reader by the balls' stuff. The letters stuff really deserves comment in that editor's own zine (although yet another debate on capital punishment, or standbys, or capital punishment for standbys, or how to spell 'standbys', is hardly likely to get me reaching for my letter disk.) The games are, well, games. All that's left is to print the address and the frequency and the price and what it runs, and Mission From God does that."

"Well, it does that when it appears." Pete Birks in *Greatest Hits* 171 (*May 1992*)

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"Pournelle was playing postal Diplomacy, in Graustark and other zines, at the time this serial originated ((1967)). Pournelle later became notorious as the man who talked President Regan into supporting the preposterously expensive and unworkable 'Star Wars' scheme, which has now fallen apart so spectacularly that even Dan Quayle has come out against it. I first meet Pournelle over 35 years ago, and every thing I have heard from him, then or since, convinces me that this man's highest ambition is to become a war criminal." John Boardman in *Graustark* 573, *January 1990*.

## Do They Know It's Christmas Time?

There are a number of stock editorials which a desperate editor can use to fill out a page, a well-known example is the 'let's describe the room that I am typing this in' — perhaps first used by John Piggott and used many times since. Another popular example is the editorial complaining about England's poor performance in the latest cricket/rugby/ football/tennis/...event. Pete Birks has mastered this style.

Xmas comes but once a year, but offers the hard-pressed editor an easy opportunity to expound upon a subject that not only comes flowing, without any thought, through the fingers and onto the keyboard but is also a good little earner in the lettercolumn department.

Of course you'd never find an experienced operator such as myself using any of these cheap tricks, so here's a couple of examples I prepared earlier:

A LITTLE ORIGINAL SIN 5 (*November 1991*)<sup>5</sup> Vic Hall: "Meanwhile, Christmas seems to be rapidly approaching. One of my favourite periods of the year, so I look forward to it massively. There's a certain romance about it, with all the festivities, decorations, the occasional bit of snow and even Christmas shopping can be fun if you go out with the intention of it being so. Round about now, with the long dark evenings, crispy winter air and leaves falling from the trees, Christmas enthusiasm begins to well. Except this year I already feel it dampened. The reason being the number of homeless and penniless people in London (& elsewhere too)."

"It really depresses me. The other night I past this young girl (16?) begging on the stairs of the tube station at Manor House. It was not especially cold, but it was windy and drizzling and she looked very bedraggled. I didn't have any money on me, so I just apologised. She smiled and I passed on to catch my bus. I could have cried, I felt so sad and I still feel depressed about it two days later."

"...I also hope that when Christmas does arrive that particular girl manages to enjoy it, but she'll probably be on the streets begging for a few coins to get some food."

BOREALIS 4 (*December 1991*) Ian Harris "But it's so commercialised, everyone cries, nothing more than an orgy of eating, drinking and spending. Dead right, I reply. For thousands of years before the missionaries arrived to tack their religious rituals onto the native festivals, people had been having one last mind-blowing bash each year, before settling down to the grim realities of Winter. The 'ideal' Christmas, as epitomised by the lantern wielding carollers and horse drawn coaches never actually existed; it was invented, though never quite obtained by the Victorians and we've been slipping further away from it, while yearning ever stronger for it, ever since."

"So, says I, strike up a merry jig, slap a pig's carcass on your spit, and pass me a flagon of your finest ale. It's Christmas time, and I intend to do some serious revealing."

Moving to Christmas Day, well known email editor Daniel Loeb told me that his Christmas Day Meal, a few hot dogs, took 15 minutes to prepare and didn't cause many problems in the washing-up department. A return to simpler values at Christmas? Santa may not have brought him anything, but he must have been last because he's bringing him a free copy of this zine.

Back to paper<sup>6</sup> fanzines.

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<sup>5</sup>We see here that a particularly desperate editor doesn't bother waiting for the festive season to near before writing his special Xmas editorial, but this is a new zine and Vic and yet to master the basic tricks of the trade.

<sup>6</sup>And note as I first typed, proper

**NORTHERN FALAME 34** (*January 1992*) Cal White: "We were able to celebrate Christmas a total of *three* times this year. First came a December 15th Christmas designed to get ALL of Lorie's nine brothers and sisters together at one time. The second Christmas came the morning of December 24th. when we had Lorie's two kids down with us. Their father was picking them up that night so we did the opening of presents a day early. After they had left, we drove the 100 miles to MY parents house on the Reserve and did the morning of the 25th up there. It was fun, but I am always glad when it's over. I'm not a Christmas person, but Lorie is and that's usually enough their to get me into a semblance of holiday spirit."

**GALLIMAUFRY 116** (*January 1992*) Steve Doubleday: "...we were a little late departing, but it was still a useful way of clearing the decks ready for the massive overindulgence of Christmas Dinner. An excellent Turkey with roast potatoes, brussel sprouts and peas. Christmas pudding and an abysmal performance (at least by me) categories wound up the evening. Special mention must be given to the wine, the claret and the Sauternes making up for what is probably the meal I am least keen on. Bron does brilliantly with these gargantuan monsters which require redesigns of the oven, but I think they're overrated... and Boxing day was more boring old smoked salmon, scotch broth and stilton, which required a certain strategic withdrawal of one editor to the annexe."

I am definitely a Xmas person. I look forward to next year's event as soon as the last one is finished. Not out of any feeling of a Christian duty to celebrate the birth of Christ, and not out of any enjoyment from the festive atmosphere of the occasion (mostly arranged by people trying to sell you things you don't want). The joyful celebrations of Xmas that we are presented with each year seem to be contrived. Nothing more than an exercise in marketing.

Do I see this contrivance of a festive festive season because I am now older and more cynical or is it the case, as it appears, that Xmas has become more exploited. A time when you can shift more stock, as people blindly give cards and presents to all and sundry without a thought as to why they are doing it. except that it is considered The Right Thing to do.

I am not arguing for a return to 'religious' values at Christmas, it's clear enough that with each new Xmas Christmas becomes ever more dereligiousified and presented ever more as merely an extended holiday — albeit with more economic overtones than the rest.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps Christmas is just the first sign of the Orwellian world of the 21st century where Big Brother, in the form of mega-cooperations, dictates when we will have fun, how we will have fun and what we really need to buy to have fun.

Those that do not fit into this 'economic miracle' (you know it makes sense) will be outsiders who are ridiculed by the press as people who refuse to enjoy themselves and spoil the festive season for all the rest. And as subversives the secret services will keep an eye on them, making sure that they don't try and spread their subversive ideas on how to enjoy Xmas without spending the regulated amount of money on presents, cards and food.

That may be the Xmas of the future, but there are two reasons why I enjoy my Christmas of today.

Maybe I'm just an old-fashion pagan at heart, but I like to celebrate the ending of one year and the start of a new. It's a time to reflect on the past and to look forward to the future. Whether the last year was good, bad or plain indifferent we can put it behind ourselves and concentrate on the new year — a piece of paper which has yet to be written on.

Christmas is also a time for a family gathering. This year one of our Uncle's came down with with his family for Christmas Day. Our niece brought her boyfriend with her (we have meet him before) and told us all that they had decided on Christmas Eve to marry. What better news could you hope for on Christmas day? (Well, I guess snow would please Calvin...) All told there was eleven of us over for Christmas day —

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<sup>7</sup>See the comics article for a nice take-of on this theme

Christmas is very much a family occasion for me.

Of course I shouldn't forget the Christmas meal, something worth looking forward to in its own right. The cook has to get up at 5.00am to start the preparation, and by 2.00pm it's ready. Eating at a leisurely pace, with copious amounts of wine to drink it's 6.00/7.00pm by the time we finish (or even later!). Then it's time to volunteer to do the washing up<sup>8</sup>, before slumping down in front of the TV for the rest of the evening or, alternatively, rounding up enough relatives for a game of Topple, Pass The Pigs or even Scrabble.<sup>9</sup>

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### Hobby Quotes

"What Paul does not understand yet is that Boardman has an Enemies list. All people with fannish mentalities maintain an Enemies List, and Boardman is more fannish than most people. Once the list is established, no malediction is too awful, no lie too monstrous for an Enemy. Boardman fills the pages of Graustark with the most incredible fabrications and half-truths about his Enemies. These individuals are of course not sent copies of these calumnies, nor are they given any right of response in the pages of Graustark. In other words, the accused is neither given the right to be faced by his accusers nor is he given the right to answer the accusations. This is a cowardly and despicable violation of their rights as individuals. In fact, John Boardman's philosophies and actions are directly antiethical to any decent standard of individual freedom or right. Charles Wells once observed, John Boardman is not opposed to concentration camps, so long as the right people are in them." Rod Walker in *The Voice Of Doom* 54 (October 27th 1981).

Well...y'all know what this mean doncha? It confirms what we always suspected; Iain Bowen is the most fannish person in the diplomacy hobby.

"A month or so ago Harry Bond ran an associated Poll, the Gladrags awards, which seemed for a moment to be a replacement for the Rusty Bolts, and then seemed for the space between issues like they were actually just meant to be a one-issue joke, and then confused me a lot by actually having their results in the following issue. They have the advantages over the Rusties of not even making a stab at such old-fashioned things as wit or subtlety, preferring to go for unashamed venom. I'm not sure they're the kind of thing that should be encouraged." William Whyte in *NERTZ* 76 (June 1992).

"I can truthfully say that I have never left a pub when I didn't want to in order to work on Dolchstoß. Or anything else, come to that." Richard Sharp in *Dolchstoß* 163 (June 1992).

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<sup>8</sup>Exception: If your names is James you sneak upstairs for a little 'nap'

<sup>9</sup>By which time James will have awoken from the dead, refreshed and ready to take part in the evening's events. Wonderful what a nice little sleep can do to you isn't it?

## FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

Michael Norrish (*3 Waipapa Terrace, Wellington 3, NEW ZEALAND*) 22/9/91

"I liked the editorial but can't really claim to have followed much of the discussion in the lettercolumn. Of course there is often mention of people and 'zines that I've never heard of so that's why it seems a bit foreign at the moment. Unfortunately, I still feel a bit like this when I read the letters column of *Victoriana*: much of it seems to be completely cryptic. Perhaps the more international a letter column the more user-friendly it will seem; an international presence should ensure that local stuff might not appear quite so much, and the writers might be more inclined to make it clear what they are discussing. I dislike the closed-shop idea, where people have to go through phases of complete bewilderment before they can understand anything that's going on."

"I am not sure I was entirely convinced by your dismissal of zines as doomed to repetition, (entitled 'A space'). One might as well say that *Scientific American* is repetitive because it doesn't do anything but present the same old things. No, actually SA is a bad example, science tends to turn up new things all the time and you can convince yourself that progress is being made. But at the same time, with new people continually coming onto the scene, surely they are not doomed to simply repeat what has already been done by their 'elders'? Perhaps a better comparison might be with *Bridge*; are the *Bridge* magazines I assume you get doomed to inelegant repetition, or do they manage to keep things fresh?"

**CRAZY MARKIE** *It's inevitable that fanzines will contain some material that new readers will not understand, especially a fanzine like this one which is very much concerned with fanzines and personalities. The only solution is for new readers to wade in, and if they are in danger of sinking to shout!*

Rob Douglas (*School of Mathematics, The University, Claverton Down, BATH. BA2 7JX*) 30-10-91

"Here is a reply to your editorial that giving medical aid to the developing world creates unacceptable overpopulation."

"Firstly I wish to explode a few myths. The developing world are our creditors, not the other way round — interest repayments have greatly exceeded the original loans, and this includes countries with acute famine problems. Another falsehood is the idea that aid is a free lunch — it is invariably given with strings attached, sometimes it is in the form of defective medical equipment outlawed in the developed world. Finally AIDS is not the most worrying disease for African Nations — simple diseases such as measles can be fatal, and inoculation programs have not yet been sufficiently extensive (this is not to say that AIDS is not a terrible killer, but merely to note there are many such in Africa)."

"Can you blame people for trying to stay alive? This is effectively what you are doing when you are blaming developing world practices of large families for population explosions. In countries menaced by famine, wars and disease would you have plenty of kids — I bet you would."

"It is important to try and understand why the developing world is in such a crisis. In my opinion the following are vital factors:-"

1. **The Arms Trade.** Almost without exception Developed World countries produce an excess of military hardware. Where do they sell it? — Developing World countries, who have to buy it to have military parity with their neighbours. Africa has become a 'testing-ground' for our latest weapons of mass destruction, and the situation is similar in Central America.
2. **Multinational Companies.** These profiteering giants delight in dumping defective products with dangerous side-effects on unsuspecting developing world people. This is especially true of the pharmaceutical industry. Nestle are an example from a different field.

3. Developed World countries. As I mentioned earlier, aid packages often come with conditions such as 'and you must use 50% of the cash on US goods', etc. Often buying defective products no longer used in the developed world is part of the deal. Often the recipients don't want to spend the money on a massive irrigation scheme favoured by the aid givers (for example). — they would prefer many smaller local schemes. However, with our brash 'We know everything' attitude, we tend to ignore such views.

"This last point highlights what I resented about your editorial — the idea that it is the duty of the developing world to make sacrifices in order for us to have a better life style. It is everyone's task to make sacrifices for a better lifestyle for the whole world, and the developed world should not shirk its responsibilities. "

**CRAZY MARKIE** *You argue that all too often loans have undesirable strings attached, so they do. You argue that interest repayments on old loans far exceed the value of the original loans, so they do. If are to give the Third World loans then wouldn't the best solution be to wipe of their old debts? Give them a clean sheet and tell them to get on with the job of managing their own countries in the manner they want to? Under such circumstances what would our responsibilities to the Third World be?*

Ben Goodale (3 Devonshire Terrace, GLASGOW G12 0XE) 9/2/92

"I was intrigued by your account of your and Bowen's conversation in York. I would suggest to Iain that passive subscribers may not be the slightest bit interested in the fanzine, but perhaps are merely seeing out their subscription. I sent Iain some money six months ago as a sub to YDDG under the impression I was going to get a blend of gossip, games and interesting articles. I suppose I get the gossip, but that is it. Iain's pre-occupation seems to be with whether he will fold or not, in an almost soap-opera style chain of editorials. It makes for very tedious reading."

"I was intrigued to realise that I actually know one of you new contributors, this Mark Boyle chappie. He runs the Glasgow University record library when he isn't studying history, which as you know is also my subject. Interesting to see his comments on the Glasgow Uni gaming societies, considering I began the number one games soc. on campus. aptly named the G.U. Gaming Society. I must say that I had informed them about ManorCon, as well as other conventions, but that there has never been any real interest. I retired as President about a year ago. You might be interested to know that Dave The Cardboard Box was the first Mascot."

"Although I am occasionally guilty of being one, I agree with you that passive readers are a pain. Granted they help to increase the revenue, and it is nice (I feel) to know that people buy the fanzine merely because they enjoy reading it and do not feel they need to go for the ego-boost of participating, but then again you feel a bit like there is a dead-weight to the readership which you can never galvanise into activity. At best I sold 300 copies of UD, but latterly this was halved, yet the number who wrote in was such a small percentage, and usually only editors. I always felt that this was a shame, and perhaps the eventual killer-blow to the ((RPG)) hobby, that it was apparently perceived that to be important enough to be in the lettercol you have to be an editor. Certainly one of the major reasons I began UD in 1985 was that Nuttall wouldn't print my Riverworld articles!!"

"As to publishing in general, I do have plans to launch a new zine after I graduate this summer. It would be laser printed (for convenience rather than poncyness) and slick, and would focus on interesting thoughts, En Garde!, and perhaps Circuit if Tulk can be traced — do you know what he is doing these days? As you will doubtless raise a wry smile at, plans as always are not certain, as not least I don't know what I will be doing for a living nor where I will be residing. Watch this space, as they say."

**CRAZY MARKIE** *You were unlucky in that your subscription to YDDG coincided with a period when Iain was thinking about running down to a fold. This idea has been discarded and now that he has decided to continue pubbing the zine has improved, there's been a string of amusing articles recently.*



As for Tuik, I hear rumours about him shacking up with some money and living off acting-grants — he has had no contact with the hobby since ManorCon 1988 (?). Design your own Circuit rules — do we believe Pete's claim that he had a set of unpublished rules?

Pete Sullivan (16 Neile Close, Romanby, Northallerton, North Yorkshire. DL7 8NN) 10/2/92

"Springboard'standbys' are not standbys in the sense that you, I, and the entire US Hobby understands them. This is not to say that they are invalid as a concept; if Danny were to allow players an unlimited number of standby calls, this would (and has, if I remember Kris Morris (?) reaction rightly) lead to accusations that /springy was going beyond its 'novice only' remit."

"Given that players have only one shot at a replacement position, it is only fair to make it a worthwhile one. What we need is a new word for Danny's policy to distinguish it from a U.S-style standby system. How about 'secondary player' rather than 'standby player'?" *How about 'crap'?*

"A bit revisionist of Mark Boyle to claim that the United tournament at ManorCon is nothing to do with the committee — although I'd acknowledge the work done by Messers. Norton, Carter and Bass. As I recall, the United has been an 'official' tourny since WDC I, in 1988. Richard Walkerdine very much takes the view of 'let a thousand flowers blossom' with regard to ManorCon tournaments, which can only be right, although we have to ensure that any additions don't damage our 'core' business — the Team & Individual Diplomacy Tournaments."

"By the way, I hope Mark Boyle told the societies he checked on about ManorCon — flyers are available from RJW on request!"

"You overstate your case as regards Richard Sharp and the stats. Yes, he does put in the extra 'notional' year to give the results for rating purposes (eg. a 3-way draw 11-10-10 with a 3 sc survivor becomes a 12-11-11-0) and yes, he does ignore standbys (but not 1901 replacements, else my first game would be rated a win \*moan, whinge\*). But to state this and *then* say that this is tantamount to changing the result of the game would be more accurate and equally argumentatively effective."

"As regards your comments on the A(Mars) controversy, I feel you and Richard Sharp are suffering from deliberate or accidental) cross purposes. When you say Richard 'should allow an appeal', your presumably mean that he should allow the matter to be appealed to a third party for arbitration; Richard apparently takes it to mean that he should himself automatically reverse the decision ('allowing the appeal' as opposed to 'allowing leave to appeal', in a strict legal sense). Ah, the vagueness of the English language!"

"Are recipes fannish? I would have thought not. Although it's true that fans do eat, there must surely be only a very limited number of recipes which involve only Jolt Cola and Peanut M&Ms."

"BtW, I am increasingly moving towards making both rounds at ManorCon open-ended (or 'bop till you drop?'). There really is no justification for making a distinction between the two rounds."

"In response to your (tongue-in-check ?) question, Danny Collman's behaviour at MidCon would not get him disqualified at ManorCon. As GM I would certainly mention it was not on, and would possibly issue a warning if the player gained any advantage by it (not applicable in this case), but expulsion usually only would come if warnings were flagrantly ignored. I don't expect this ever to happen. And it would be expulsion from the tournament, not the game — I wouldn't announce it until the game was completed, to avoid spoiling it for innocent parties."

"I think I said at the time (but not in print, rats!) that U-Bend seemed to be aiming to be a cross between Y Ddraig Goch and Arfle Barfle Gloop, which was a recipe for either the best or worst seen

in the Hobby. This was before U-Bend became a warehouse zine<sup>10</sup>, of course.”

“My ruling would be that if a player writes ‘(illegal)’ after an order, his intent is clear. To avoid the problem you give about an identical order being legal or illegal depending on player intent (which I only see as a problem in the sense that it ruins the player’s diplomacy if he writes an order which the others know is usually legal), I would take ‘(deliberate disorder)’, or whatever, to mean that the player has given me carte blanche as GM to modify his order, if necessary, to make sure it is illegal (not always easy under my houserules...). It’s the same as saying ‘If F(StP)-GoB is illegal I order F(StP)-GOB, else if F(StPwc)-GoB is illegal I order F(StPwc)-GoB, else I order...’”

“The reason for treating players’ and non-players’ subscriptions differently is what the houserules say. You’re not suggesting, are you Mark, that I should ignore my own houserules (\*Shock, Horror, Probe\*)? More practically, whilst I do not operate a formal deposit system, I do regard outstanding credit of players as a de-facto deposit. A non-player is under no obligation; but a player has a responsibility (to the other players, if not the GM/editor) to stick the game out. It’s in the houserules — if they don’t like it they don’t have to play.”

**CRAZY MARKIE** *Danny Collman has to decide between pleasing the hobby (pushing Springboard players out as quickly as possible) and running diplomacy well; his current policy ensures that he achieves neither of these aims. The flow of novices from Springboard into the hobby mainstream is very slow and his games are run in an irregular manner. The 1-game only as a standby rule is absurd.*

*It is clear that you are not aware of how Richard Sharp runs The Finishing Touch. Let me clear this up. Suppose a game finishes a two-way French-German draw and that the French player was a standby. The game will be recorded as a German win, without \*any\* mention of the real result. Similarly an E-F-R-T draw might appear as anything from a R win to a F-R-T draw, in fact it could even appear as a G win! How can I derive statistics from diplomacy finishes when I am not been giving the requisite information by Richard Sharp. As I said last issue, Richard makes up the results of games to suit his own ideas about the game. Why does he bother asking for SC charts, surely he is inventive enough to make these up as well — he doesn’t seem to have any trouble inventing game results.*

**CRAZY MARKIE** *Your view on the ‘misorder’ debate is valid. My view is that if the player wants to misorder he can jolly well write it himself, I’m not going to help him play his position!*

Harry Bond (13 Merrivale Road, STAFFORD. ST17 9EB) 21/2/92

“I must clarify my position on returning subs, since so much flak seems to be flying around concerning the subject (a large amount of it fired off by Mark Boyle, who seems to be understudying you in winding people up).”

“I reiterate that if someone wishes to have their sub returned, and asks for it politely, I will give it to them. If, however, they cause me inconvenience by doing so, for instance by dropping out of one or more games without good reason, I reserve the right to deduct a pint’s worth or so as ‘administrative fees’. I’m not alone in this; I quasiquote Steve DayDay from a recent Gallimaufry; “Mr Beat sends a terse note stating that he will not be able to play. No apologies for inconvenience, no explanation, just a request for his subscription back. Well, he’s not going to get all of it back.” I think this only reasonable.”

“Civility costs nothing. The only person so far to have dropped out of U-Bend was James Thorp, who (even though his sub has gone slightly negative) thoughtfully enclosed the few coppers involved with his resigning note. With such people I have no quarrel, it’s the Richard Beats of this world who would annoy me if they ever tangled with Mr Mean of U-Bend. This may not be moral enough by your standards, Markie, but I’m not going to agonise over it at night.”

<sup>10</sup>Ethnic spelling corrected

“Isn't Danny the Nanny fun when he gets angry? I am glad you thought to check out your pigeonhole at Bath, and that we weren't denied forever this gem. Danny darling, incitement to theft is a charge that would only stick if it were provable that other editors would all follow, sheeplike, your ((Mark's)) lead in not refunding credit. Incitement is not, by definition, a thing that you can do yourself, but a crime you encourage in another. Do you mean to suggest that you think Markie's article's only purpose was to attempt to get other editors to refuse to return subs on demand?”

“On the question of dud cheques, this is not always the player's fault. A while before I left Walthamstow, I sent a sub cheque to NMR!. Approximately four months later, Ken Bain got around to cashing it; unfortunately, in the meantime I'd moved to Stoke and closed the Walthamstow account, hence the rubberiness of the cheque. I wonder what would have happened if that cheque had been to you.” (*I would have mailed it back to you and asked for a new one.*)

“If you want another black mark against Bate (as if there weren't enough) the University College London Games Soc never had any communication on the subject of ManorCon, the hobby, or anything else, from him.”

“What's wrong with Richard Sharp's stats? When you clear away all the misleading bombast you place around the kernel of your complaint, it comes down to the fact that Richard doesn't believe in standbys, and treats a resignation later replaced by one as anarchy for stats purposes. If you want to do it differently, the Sharpleday creature has all the stats going back to the beginning of time (or of postal diplomacy, rather), all you need to do is build on those and insert what corrections you see fit in order to cater for standbys. There's no point whining about the stats unless you're prepared to put your money where your mouth is. Myself, if you do decide to go for it and create your own set of stats, I will lend a hand here and there; I do think that standby players should be taken into account, but I don't feel strongly enough to boycott the vast quantity of work Sharp and Doubleday do with the things and set up my own. And somehow, I suspect that you won't either.”

“The true, correct and real history of ? and ! is in fact that they were printer's shorthand from the days of Caxton. ! is the Latin 'io', an exclamation, with the I placed above the O and shrunk — you can tell once you know. ? is printing shorthand for 'quo', which has evolved rather more but is still just recognizable.”

“Cripes, if Proffitt is a true enemy of the Hobby whilst Harris and Collman aren't, what on earth will you write about Dunky if you devote so much blistering invective to the latter two? This is probably the fourteenth letter to make this point, but your arguments would appear better researched were you able to spell 'Toby' correctly.”

“Also, I don't think it unusual for an editor to decide that he now has enough subbers while only twelve weeks or so before he was after new blood. In U-Bend 3 I was still recruiting furiously, but by issue 5 I was frantically trying to discourage newcomers on the grounds that they wouldn't get many game openings or as much chat as I'd've liked to compensate for this.”

“I await your explanation of why I am able to enlighten you on recipes containing mushrooms, and the fannishness or otherwise thereof. I am, I reiterate, no cook.”

“Also on the question of fannishness, I accept your point (or is it a criticism?) that my subscribers tend to come from the Arfie Barfie Gloop school of fanac. I myself am quite happy to have a finger in every fannish pie, you get a lot more idea of what's going on that way. I do try to cover both 'camps' in my hobby, news, so that readers who are unfamiliar with one can check it out.”

“This thing about the order query in Dolchstoß. In my vast collection of zines, I have found a precedent for disallowing A(Pie)-Mars! In a game in Panzerkreuser, Mike Sharpe broken-underlined as illegal this move by France; mind you, the game had already been twice-orphaned by 1906, all the other players had

dropped out, and all France's other orders that season were obviously facetious, so the point must still remain open to argument..."

"I do agree that it is entirely ethical to forbid editors to write their own reviews, otherwise you do get sorry things like the Smodnoc puff in Springboard and that poor thing which passes as the USA's Mission From God. Editors will either praise themselves to the sky, or occasionally, damn themselves from bonce to boots; never will you get a true appraisal."

**CRAZY MARKIE** *I have never suggested that my position on the return of subscriptions occupys the moral high ground — I have pointed out that certain editors have an inconsistent policy on the matter. As it happens I would normally refund a non-playing readers subscription and some of the subscription of a players who resigned — this is covered in my house rules.*

**CRAZY MARKIE** *As to what is wrong with Richar Sharp's stat service, read my response to Pete Sullivan's letter. As for producing my own stats — I would if I could get the required information! And why can't I get the required information? Because Richard Sharp doesn't print it in The Finishing Touch, which is where this all started... Back in 1987-1988 I did a great deal of work producing stats based on early UK dip games, I just never got around to pubbing them. I haven't produced any stats since then because I need the result for one game and I haven't been able to track it down. I could get it from The Archives but since these are currently being 'run' by Andy Bate I don't have much hope of retriving it.*

William Whyte (200 Iffley Road, OXFORD. OX4 1SD) March 1992

"In reply to Teery Jeeves, and to what you said that apparently sparked it off: the problem with insisting that the Third World stops having babies is that the Northerners have now become so accustomed to the idea of children as a financial loss that they don't realise that having children in the Third World is actually cost-effective. I recommend Marvin Minsky's book Our Kind here. As I remember, though my copy's in Dublin, in (say) India, a child starts being useful at the age of five; by the age of seven the extra income it brings in equals the amount you have to spend on it, and by the age of eleven it has paid back in full the costs of raising it to that age."

"After that you have seven years of benefit from the child before it runs off and gets married and the process starts over again. This income is in the form of increased efficiency in farming, someone to run errands, and so on. In general, in societies with a subsistence farming economy, it always was, it still is, and it will continue for several years to be true that the more children a family has the higher its standard of living. So, whilst 'western people', including such famous westerners as the Chinese and Russians, tend to limit their families to what they can support, so do the third worlders (just 'what they can support' means a different thing to them)."

"The way to bring down the population of the world, or at least to slow its growth is to increase prosperity in the South to the point where children become an economic liability. In the long run, nothing else will work."

"Do you deliberately misspell Toby Harris's name? If not, you should."

Shaun Derrick (313 Woodway Lane, Walsgrave, COVENTRY. CV2 2AP) 10/3/92

"It is heartening to see that the general consensus of opinion seems to be wanting an annual event (WDC)"

"My comments re Singapore, Hong Kong and South Africa were more in terms of the next century, by which time there will be other countries with Diplomacy players all wanting to hold the 'big one' — I am no clairvoyant, but I can see Diplomacy going the way of Monopoly, even exceeding its position as the most popular boardgame — Monopoly is too simple for todays tastes, Diplomacy had yet to be 'discovered'."

"The 'IDF' was a tongue-in-check idea, not a prerequisite for the future of WDC, though if too many arguments rear their ugly heads, the need for a governing body gains momentum — I would not like the idea myself."

"Re the Mike Gibson affair and WDC III, I think it is unfair to blame Mike too much for his apparent lethargy, how many people in the Hobby did not know about WDC III — not many, I doubt whether more than one other person would have gone to Australia if publicity had been more prominent. The major problem with WDC III was that it was held in January — one of the worst times for the majority of working people in the UK."

*CRAZY MARKIE I think that you are too optimistic about diplomacy's future, I find it difficult to believe that substantial FTF and postal communities will be set up in new countries. If diplomacy has an expanding future it is in the field of email, but at the moment there is little indication that email fans are interested in joining in the activities of email's poorer cousin.*

Dave McCrumb (3636 Oldtown Road, Shawsville, Virginia 24162 USA) (10th March 1992)

"Sharyn and I both agree about the ending of '(Paying The Piper)'. She wrote the last 50 wanted him to edit it, she had to have it to him by the following Tuesday (am). She was told this late on Thursday. She did it, but does not write very well that way."

"Several other of Sharyn's books are now becoming available in England. I don't remember which ones right now. The foreign rights to her best two books, 'Pretty Peggy-O' and 'The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter', have not been sold yet. The sequel to 'Bimboes' is now out, but again not yet available in England (or even in paperback yet)."

"Sharyn will be over in July/August. She wants me to come over for a week. Will see if I can swing it, it will be taught because I have very little vacation time."

Richard Walkerdine (13 Offley Road, Hitchin, HERTS. SG5 2AZ) 27/3/92

"With regards to Mark Boyle's comment that flyers weren't appearing in Glasgow the problem is one that we've been battling against for years, lack of feedback."

"What happens is this. I send Andy a couple of hundred flyers for the Polys and Universities. He has a list of all the main establishments in the UK and he sends the flyers to them addressed to 'suitable' clubs and societies — Wargames, Diplomacy, Boardgames etc. There's no doubt they get sent but of course whether they arrive at a destination that will make some use of them is another matter."

"It would, of course, be a lot better if we could be sure that they are being sent to the 'correct' societies and clubs, but as we have no way of knowing what the 'correct' addresses are we can do no more than ask people to tell us. So we ask. Andy asked in Froggy years ago. I asked in Mad Policy years ago. I've asked in ManorCon Progress Reports several times. We've even asked a certain Mark Nelson to tell us who to send them to at Leeds."

**"BUT NOBODY HAS EVER REPLIED — NOT EVEN YOU!"**

"I've now written to Mark and asked him to help in the case of Glasgow and if anyone reading this can tell me who to send flyers to at any other college I'll be delighted to hear from them, and that includes a Leeds address from your old chum. But if all we ever get is a big fat stony silence then all we can continue to do is keep guessing, probably get it wrong, and then get annoyed with the likes of Crazy Markie when he says we're not doing anything."

**"The solution is in your own hands — TALK TO US."**

"As for WDC sites and frequencies I think it's important to remember the purpose behind WDC. As you rightly said it is supposed to boost the host hobby and provide a contact point between local and overseas hobbyists. That means it needs to travel as widely as possible. But it also means it needs to be well run (it won't boost anything if it's a shambles) and it needs to have a clear emphasis on Diplomacy (which is, after all), what the 'D' in WDC stands for."

"To be well run it needs to be well planned and that means you need to know where it is going to be held years in advance in order to get the organization in place. To have a clear Diplomacy emphasis it needs to be associated with a Diplomacy convention, which means not letting it get submerged as part of an Origins or an Essen fair. But as well as all this it needs to travel the world as widely as possible."

"So you need planning years ahead, you need an association with a major Diplomacy event and you need a wide-ranging set of locations. So, what to do?"

"Simple. Retain a basic 6-year rotation but make it an annual event — very much along the lines that Pete Sullivan suggested, which gives plenty of room for 'new' hobbies to get in on the act. Adopt a bidding system whereby bids within the agreed area (UK, USA, Europe etc) are made at least three years in advance and insist that any bid is only acceptable providing it is clearly a Diplomacy event."

"But of course, we're planning to discuss all this at WDC IV in 1994, aren't we?"

*CRAZY MARKIE I've never subbed or traded with Froggy. I can't remember you making any announcement in Mad Policy (was it before I started seeing the zine?), I can't recall ever seeing anything in the ManorCon Progress Reports and I am certain that you have never asked me to supply you with information. Are you trying to wind me up? I will mail you the information that you ask for, but it seems to me that you need to rethink the organization of ManorCon Publicity.*

*Eric Brosius (41 Heyward Street, MILFORD, MA 01757 USA) 6/4/92*

"A comment about fannishness in reply to the last Mouth of Sauron. While it is true that the INTERNET Diplomacy hobby seems unfannish, the CompuServe Diplomacy hobby seems to me extremely fannish. I believe the critical distinction is the presence of a bulletin board type facility where messages of all sorts can be posted, to be answered by any who desire to do so."

"Recently the authorities at CompuServe complained because the bulletin board in the Diplomacy section was filled with messages that seemed to have nothing to do with Diplomacy. You can't get much more fannish than that! (g)"

*Neil Dunan (10 Anstey Close, Basingstoke, HANTS. RG21 3JG)*

"... whilst reading The Mouth of Sauron Vol VII(VI) (February 1992) I was getting engrossed in a fantastic article 'Enemies of The Hobby' on pages 18-21. You said there were three and seemed to be only half way through a piece on Danny Collman when I turned the page to be confronted with 'Around Fandom in 80 days!' I enjoyed this, but wondered if there was any more to the 'Enemies of The Hobby' bit?"

"For what it is worth I agreed with your views on the legality/illegality of orders in the Pied/mars affair. I did wonder why Steve Doubleday wrote (joke) in the first place though."

*CRAZY MARKIE Well the bit on Danny Collman was a space-filler and when I reached the end of the page there was little reason to continue it, it had done its job. Of course, if you're saying that you like me to continue the article... As for Steve Doubleday, the suggestion has been made that, despite protest to the contrary, Steve and Richard planned the whole event as a means of starting a letter column debate — there is circumstantial evidence to support this view. And it's a popular view at the Yorkmeet — need I say more?*

Tom J. Fülöpp (*Šrobárova 33, 05801 Poprad, Czechoslovakia, EUROPE.*) (1/5/92)

"Well, I received some dipzines since I wrote you last time and every editor wrote me he saw my letter and your request to send zines to me. I was very surprised with it. Now, finally, I can read my LoC in *The Mouth Of Sauron* and I can tell you, that I am very happy what you did for me. Mark. Many of the editors were so kind, they offered me rules of their games, and I always had to refuse it because I don't feel to be able to have time enough to play postal games besides my study, reading, etc. And — in all their zines are many of your LoCs and items, as well as works of your brother James. You both are very known among gaming fandom, I think! Just now I've got a copy of *Diplomacy World* from Dave Hood. Pretty good zine, where you are even 'International Editor'! Thanks also for the ManorCon booklets which I enjoyed, mainly because of descriptions of the editors I know!"

"Languages here: we're federation of two republics — Bohemia and Slovakia (where I live). Our languages are different in fact, but very very similar. One can learn any of them and he'll understand every speech in Czechoslovakia. There are ten million Czechs and five million Slovaks in my country. That's why Czech language is more widen."

"By the way, the relations between our two nations aren't so good these days, because there are a lot of nationalists fighting for independent Slovakia. No doubt they grew up from former communists — anarchy, that's their real aim, I mean. I think there are more important problems than breaking of a state — rebuild the private sector, economy... It would break our development for a long time. Whole Europe is going together and Czechoslovakia is breaking? Though they say that the overwhelming majority of our citizens is still for united state. I am scared mark. There will be elections in June, so we'll see."

**CRAZY MARKIE** *I'm sure that Thomas would be interested in reading any zines that are sent him to, even back issues so if you've any that you don't want please, please, mail them to him!*

Andrew York (*P.O.Box 2307, Universal City, TX 78148-1307, USA*) (3/5/92)

"Yes, I'm a Who fan as well as a QUANTUM LEAP fan. I agree it is somewhat like Who; however, I feel it deals with more social issues than being an adventure series. From what I know, most of the episodes (only two outside of US — Egypt and Vietnam) are US based as that's cheaper to make. However, some more are going to be set elsewhere."

"I do sub to one QUANTUM LEAP newsletter (QUANTUM QUARTERLY). It is more of a fan club newsletter, instead of a story 'zine. I'm not into the amateur fiction; more news, so QQ is my 'zine of choice."

"I do have my TV on quite a bit; however, it is mostly for the noise. I like to keep my mind occupied and just reading/writing doesn't do that. Oh well..."

"My primary shows are: Star Trek:TNG, Quantum Leap, Law and Order (a cop/DA show), The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles (adventure), Dr. Who, Mystery, and In Living Color (comedy)."

"I absolutely HATE commercials. Often times, I'll just video tape the shows I want to watch and see them at a different time — so I can fast forward through the commercials."

**CRAZY MARKIE** *I enjoy commercials, some of them are very clever and sophisticated. Exception: almost all car and perfume adverts are rubbish. It's no longer enough to show a picture of your product and exclaim its virtues, you've got to have more. And it's just how the advertisers add this 'more' that makes commercials so interesting. It's probable important to state that there are more commercials in the States than over here, where two of the four channels carry no commercials. And on the two channels that commercials occur they are separated by at least 15 minutes of programme. I've often thought about compiling a video tape or two of commercials to watch when there was nothing on the TV...*

Thomas Franke (*Haarenufer 12, D-2900 Oldenburg, GERMANY*) 25/5/1992

"I'm in heavy dispute with Ferdinand de Cassan, editor of the Austrian zine *Win*. As you probably know I'm Boardman Number Custodian for Germanic speaking Europe, which includes the whole of Germany, Austria and German speaking Switzerland."

"De Cassan has been using a computer program for adjudicating his games in *Win*, which issues orders *itself* for cd-nations. Allan Calhamer, only allows *persons/players* to issue orders for vacant powers, he told me: "That these are only the face-to-face rules and we should argue over pbm-rules." I have never received a copy of his pbm-rules despite asking him and sending him *Diplomat* and *Omnibus 3*. So he obviously doesn't accept the AH-rules. Silly isn't it?"

"More over, many of his games contain *more* than two players from Vienna. Those games wouldn't get a BN from me, because games containing three, or more, players from the city are considered as telephone games. Correct?"

((CRAZY MARKIE In the US the answer would be yes, but in the UK the answer is no. For games in Europe I think you should ignore the 'telephone game' rule. Give these games a BN and make a note that you consider them slightly irregular. As for the computer ordering for cd powers, it's what Mick Bullock would have called slightly irregular but I believe that the US BNC had ruled that such a practice is allowed; certainly there have been GMs in the states who have had similar houserules and their games were not declared irregular.))

"Also he claims to have appointed 'his own BNC' using his own numbers. (ÜA... ÄA... ÖA...), but I don't accept this usurpation as it is not authorised by the French and British BNC (and maybe not the North American BNC). Laughable..."

"So just to make it short: I have encouraged him and his wife to change the system, accept a more international standard and give up this silly computer-program issuing order for standby positions on its own. In my opinion those games are clearly variants — don't you think so?"

"De Cassan refused to give it up and get a stance to a more international orientated adjudication system not reducing the game to a true variant hopefully very soon!"

"Therefore I ask to confirm and support my position or correct me, please. I also seek for confirmation that Austria belongs to my Custodianship."

((CRAZY MARKIE Are these games variants? If you follow the US line then the answer is no. Has De Cassan usurped you as BNC for Austria games? Yes, if he wants to issue numbers to Austrian games then let him; you can always issue numbers to them as well. If he wants to become Austrian BNC then that's fine, provided he is willing to co-operate and work within the existing structures.))

"Also, the committee, players, subbers and anyone else interested in discussing a system for distributing 'World DipCon' after 1994 is requested to *deny* De Cassan to run WDC in 1996 *as long as he doesn't assure, provide and confirm international standards* running regular pbm-Diplomacy games in his zine and the tournament planned in Vienna in 1996!"

"I'm totally against giving WDC to De Cassan in 1996 as long as he doesn't change his attitude."

((CRAZY MARKIE As it happens, I'm against an Austrian WDC in 1996; but for rather different reasons. As there is no almost no contact between the Austrian hobby and the rest of the world I see no reason why they should WDC. Can you name an Austrian who contributes to zines outside Austria? It's looking like 1994 (ManorCon), 1995 (USA), 1996 (France), 1997 (???).))

"I'm intensively considering attending MANORCON, but it's getting rather expensive for me, even if I



come by car and ferry. Do you see any chance to spend the nights in Birmingham in a sleeping bag at one of (your ?) local friends or get a cheap bed & breakfast?"

((CRAZY MARKIE You won't find anywhere cheaper than ManorCon in Birmingham unless you find somewhere free, and the only people I know in Birmingham are Danny Collman and family...))

**WAHF:** Harold Reynolds (*Toronto, Canada*) April 92 "I was stuck in a seminar on a topic I didn't understand, but there was beer and pizza afterwards... There's nothing like food and intoxicating beverages to make an incomprehensible theoretical oceanography lecture palatable. The sad part is, I don't drink much and I can get quite a buzz from 1 beer." CM *Why can't we have piza and beer after seminars in the Maths department, so much nicer than coffee and biscuits...*

Vic Hall (*London*) (17/4/92) "Found **The Mouth of Sauron** engrossing. I wish I'd seen your zine before" CM *Yea, yea, yea. Praise is OK, but if it was so engrossing where's the loc...*

Andrew York (*Universal City, Texas*) (28.4.92) "I'd love to trade - I don't know if you noticed it, but I'm trying to get an international following through my subzines and through readers/players (I just opened an International game - if you're interested)".

"Currently, I have subzines from England, Italy and Japan; with readers in Canada, Mexico, Germany, Russia and New Zealand... I'm always looking for overseas Dip players - and your name popped up on some mailing list (I sub to 40-45 Dip 'zines, including trades)." CM *Andrew's address is in the loc column above, and his zine is worth a look. Unlike many American dip zines it isn't insular, it has a loc column and several subzines (including one by MoS reader John Breakwell) as well as the games. A good zine for someone wanting to dip their feet into the American scene.*

((from a latter letter dated 25/5/92)) "Your comment in response to Michael Norrish regarding the EMail hobby is very true. I played a few games via EMail; but I found them lacking in substance and in the friendships. I'm not into a mass-produced games mill." ((the last loc was a postcard and comes from...))

Thomas J.Fülöpp (*Bournemouth, England*) (22/7/92) "I'm here, in your country. Everything is new for me - English meals, traditions, strange dialect here and - yes - people driving on the left ... People are very nice here, they know my country and the problems of splitting. I live with a host family, so I practise English daily."

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## Quote, Unquote

DANNY COLLMAN "I am a teacher, and it is in my nature to help others in difficulty. I run a novice zine in order to help novices, not to monopolise them."

"Why be tactful when you can be honest? I discovered that tact is somewhat overrated... Plain speaking is often desirable, but greater and better results can more often be obtained by being less bluntly spoken on carefully chosen occasions." *Springboard 59 (July 1992)*

((Reprinted from Thing 42. January 1986))

## Opera Televerismo with Cilla Black By Pete Doubleday

There are times in a zine editor's life when he realises that, for reasons to do with pride, intellectual rigour and that gaping space in front of his golfball, he is going to have to do the business on a subject considered tabu by the gurus. Subjects fit for discussion in a zine include: games, sex, sex games, booze, politics, sexual politics, political games, political sex games with a smidgeon of volichnaya, and so on. Two subjects guaranteed to bring splutterings of rage the editor's way and a mouthful of supererogatory cornflakes the zines's way are T.V. and Opera. The intellectuals will point out T.V. is an "instant" medium and hence not suited to a zine, which perforce has turnarounds of days, weeks or whatever. The proles will point out that they know nothing about Opera, that the editor knows nothing about opera, and that it has nothing to do with games. (For some reason it is always the Hobby prole, Richard Sharp as it might be, who tends to complain "Well, it's got nothing to do with games, has it?") Nevertheless, I am going to have to do the business, so why not offend both groups at once by mixing the two subjects in one article?

Though actually this is nothing to do with Opera at all. I shall, make brave but doomed attempts to camouflage this major lacuna, but we'd better put the record straight up front. The fons et origins of "televerismo" is the recently ended series of 'Blind Date' on ITV Saturdays, and the reason I claim it's like Opera is that they both deal in the same tawdry commodity — not Love, but the People's skewed perspective on love. (Actually a lot of Opera deals in blood 'n' guts, but I'm leaving that bit until I've seen Rocky IV and Deathwish III).

The astute reader will notice that I am desperately trying to pump the subject of a TV show into something serious when everybody knows that the show in question is a slice of schlock pitched at the mentality of a four year old. This, of course, is the time-hallowed way of reviewing T.V. A 'quality' review consists of half a para on some zero-rated dance theatre programme shown at 3.30 on Channel 4, extended musing on the significance of one of those gloriously tedious TV filler sports such as snooker, tennis and badger wrestling, and, most importantly of all, a pyramid lead on the topic of the fashionable halfwit soap 'n' lipgloss series of the moment. As a genuine TV critic one is not allowed to discuss the mass of programmes in the middle. Current affairs get thrown a cursory bone (or a badly seasoned metaphor) and what the public actually watches is relegated to the occasional one liner. This is precisely because TV reviewers are anxious to appear 'quality'. You can't make out a case for sitcoms, because they are mere entertainment. You can make out a case for modern dance, because nobody watches it and it must therefore be misunderstood. And you can always make out a case for soap operas and real lowbrow dross, because nobody of any distinction could possibly take them seriously, my dear, and oh my, what simply *egregious* bad taste...

If you think I am trying to make TV reviewers sound like old queens camping it up to the max, then you are correct. This is how their attitude to 'Dallas' and the rest has always struck me; much like Quentin Crisp and his mob with their affection for Judy Garland. If you think I am about to come out of that particular closet myself and cut a fiendishly overweight lead back at last, you are also correct:

The format of 'Blind Date' is classically simple. In the original American version, which I have watched many a time in seedy motel rooms and barfed over, there is the usual half-baked radium-toothed compere who encourages audience participation at the basest level. Wheel on the first contestant, and you're away. He or she sits on one side of a screen with three members of the opposite sex on the other side, and asks them three questions to do with nothing very much except innuendo and low-class fashion. On the basis of the responses to these questions, he or she picks one of them for a 'blind date'. Where the programme scores over conventional game show is that this blind date is not just the prize — it's an integral part of the actual game. The enjoyable bit for the viewer comes in the next section, where last week's 'winners' come

back after their date and reveal all. This gives the extrovert contestants two bites at the cherry of making a fool of themselves on camera, a major modern preoccupation. What follows is an instant revelation that the process of true love is strained by greed, arrogance and the most amazing incompatibility. One half of the date accuses the other of being a tart. The other barks back that the gentleman in question is a sleaze. By the end of the confrontation the contestants are at each other's throats, the audience is in stitches and the compere would be locked up by Mary Whitehouse if she could get away from irrelevance's and tackle the *real* sex and violence on TV. If you ever wanted confirmation of the supposition that 99% of contacts in single bars end in tears (Fave line of the moment — "Didn't I meet you down at the clinic?") then this is it.

The American show, however, palls into insignificance besides the British one. An American audience is held by the unspoken sexual contact between the two instant celebs: American proles have a seemingly unending interest in the contents of other people's vaginas. The British Show, however, is infinitely *subtler*. Since we haven't quite got around to steam on screen as a matter of course, yet, you just *know* that the British pair haven't progressed past the holding hands stage — most of them haven't got that far yet. Indeed, to make sure that this is a family show, as opposed to a show that starts them, we have two major factors which are missing from the original. First of all the 'date' is shadowed all the way through by a camera... now, Desmond Wilcox and 'The Marriage' notwithstanding, there are very few British males astute enough to make their move with the one-eyed oracle in hot pursuit (in America they don't seem to have grasped this fact and the couple are unchaperoned). Just as important, we have exchewed the professionally lewd host in favour of Cilla Black, the doyenne of sexual continence. Now, I have always hated Cilla, but I have to confess that she has found her niche here. From the opening cascade down the stairs in this week's hideously fascinating tent-like purple chiffon monstrosity, Cilla dominates the show with an overpowering air of total innocence — she's everybody's grandmother. As the show progresses, with her relentless barrage of Scouse slop — "You're gonna have a lorra fun" — she insists on seeing the unlucky couples as one step away from matrimony, in fragrant disregard of their evident loathing for each other (everybody's Jewish grandmother). As she droois over every hunky male and coos over the immaculately turned out bits of fluff she's trying to pair off, you get the feeling that the audience is watching it for her and not for the suggestion of good, honest filth (I think that the TV schedulers have recognised this by their timing of the show at dinner viewing; in America, as I recall, it's on the edge of the evening).

The true professionalism of the show is clear from the direction of the post-holiday interviews. These are cunningly interwoven so that you get both sides of the debacle in a totally even-handed way that leaves you with just the suspicion that the pair of victims had two entirely separate dates that just happened to coincide at the same place and time. For instance, we have one disgruntled male saying "*She was an hour late — I can't blame her, it's the TV crew's fault I'm told, but it seemed symptomatic of her total lack of interest in the whole thing.*" Cut to the young woman, who says "*I arrived chewing gum, and when I saw him I felt like carrying on with the gum and ignoring him for the rest of the day. However, to make an effort I took out my cigarettes and offered him one.*" Cut to the bloke, who says "*She was chewing gum — ecch — and as the gum flew out of the window she started on the fags immediately.*" This meeting was not a success, as was clear from the TV aftermath when they sat with a pile of cushions separating them on the sofa.

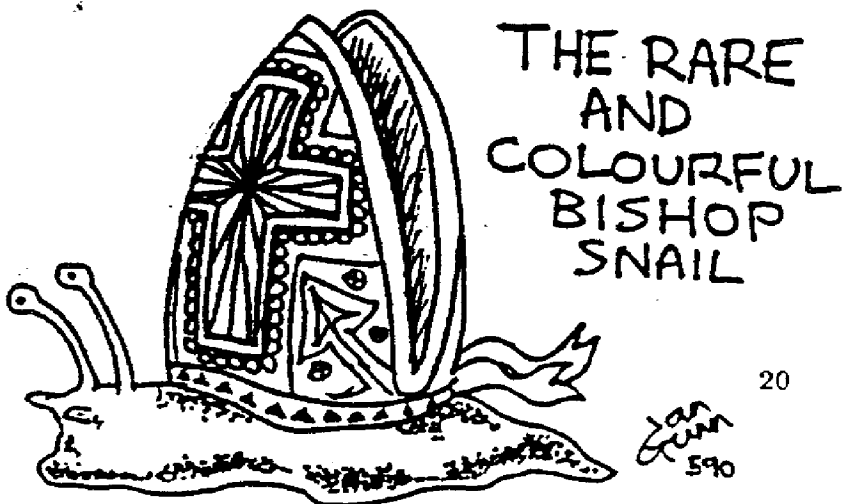
In the most ludicrous mismatch of the series, we had the dapper Yorkshire lass and the Geordie slob: "*He arrived with bags under his eyes — I thought he could have made the effort to get an early train the day before, but no — and he talked incessantly all the way on the train. Mind you, when we got to the Romany caravan, it was quite idyllic. The horse was super.*" Cut. "*We got to the caravan, and, I'm not kidding, the horse looked like something out of a cartoon. It had a sagging back, buck teeth and huge, clumsy hooves. It appeared to have spent most of its life asleep.*" "*Actually, the horse looked quite like him.*"

Only the presence of Ms Black prevented these two from scratching each other's eyes out on screen

... The intercutting of clips like this is marvellously done, and leaves you wondering quite how much of it is discreetly prompted by the director on site. Apart from Celia's ceaseless line in duff patter, this is the only skillful part of the show. The actual decision of where the lucky pair are to go, for instance, verges on the intentionally farcical. Lines such as "A trip on the Orient Express... (audience cheers fatuously)... to Leeds Castle" leave you wondering about the show's sanity. I mean, low budget I can stand, but does it have to flaunt it so obviously? One lucky fellow from Ruislip got "an evening out in London", which I rather doubt excited him as much as it might have done, and I suspect that the series' entire budget was blown when the first pair of the week got "A trip to New York on Concorde" and Cilla managed to forget to take the card out of the pack, with the result that the second pair got one as well...

OK, so where does the opera come in? Deep breath. Now, as I understand it, which isn't very far, opera is supposed to appeal because of the emotional impact on the audience. In other words, it involves them. They really care which poor sap gets the hand of the 20 stone heroine, who ends up with the weedy tenor in the porcupine wig, or whether the wicked baron's schemes triumph. And so it is with 'Blind Date'. Most of the fun is in being in the audience and cheering on your preferred innocent, with the added bonus that you haven't read the libretto yet and don't know what's going to happen. Thrill to the emotional impact of questions central to modern life such as "What would you do if I crashed your new Porsche?" or "Would you describe the eyes of the person on your left?" Tense as, in the final scene, the veil is removed and the lucky pair meet for the first time. Listen to your mother screaming "He should have taken the one in the navy dress", or doubt your sanity as you pine for the one in the synthetic pearl necklace who was turned down by the slob on the screen. This is genuine fun. Even here the show usually lapses into burlesque as Cilla announced "he's a stockbroker with a mansion in the country, and in his spare time he's a racing driver", and a paragon of sloane-hood steps onto the screen. (Needless to say he turned out to be such an arrogant slob that the sloane he picked couldn't stand the sight of him, despite Cilla's valiant attempts to make them kiss and make up afterwards.)

I think this is genuinely one of those shows which has a two-tiered audience of the sort that Geoff Challenger tries to convince us is the best bet for a true great of the dotted screen. I'm sure the initial intention of the British producers was to have a grannie-grabbing show (if you see what I mean) which would follow on nicely from the wrestling on ITV Saturdays. As a result the contestants are all white, employed, reasonable presentable and definitely middle-class (apart from the odd racing driver here and there, and they're not always a success). I could wish for the occasional brown face to even things out a bit, and Brian Dolton would probably like one in ten of the shows to be a gay special. However, good as these diversions would be, they would undoubtedly lose the mass appeal and probably embarrass Cilla Black to high heaven, so I'm afraid we're unlikely to see them. (The only shows I've seen in America with one black contestant invariably give them a choice of three black blind mates, which is probably even more offensive than eschewing blacks altogether.) For the lazy middlebrow, it's great show. Don't miss the next series.



MARK BOYLE'S SUMMER VACATION — 1991  
BY MARK BOYRLE

I was working at the New White House Hotel in Paisley, a seedy joint on the corner of 52nd and 49 which was famous for changing ownership and name frequently. My cover was as a barman and drinks waiter, all for the stunning sum of two pounds and sixty pence an hour. It was okay, not great. After only two days in their employment, I phoned to ask for my hours for the next week to be told that I had been sacked along with over half the staff due to "lack of work available." (two days later they were advertising for staff!)

This brassed me off, I'd invested some time into this operation, but this was nothing compared to the fiasco over my wages. First of all they claimed that they had no N.I details from me, then they were phoning me up and offering wages paid at the rate of two pounds an hour with no N.I deductions and after I told them that this was not on it was "you'll have to wait until the book keeper comes back before you get your wages". When I finally received my pay, they had still deducted Income Tax despite me filling in a "Student Exemption From P.A.Y.E Tax" form and giving it to them, and no P-45. I'll not go into the threats levelled at me for my "attitude".

But to everyone passes Raguel, to every villan his comeuppance. For I'd been taping the face-to-face and telephone exchanges between me and the New White House Hotel regarding my wages using a dictating machine. I'd been suspicious about them the moment I'd seen the ad for new staff appear; in my game suspicion means taking precautions.

Now add to the story a claim to the Inland Revenue for my lost Income Tax, coupled with a complaint about my employers refusing to give me a P-45 and the query why they calimed I'd gave them no N/I details when I had on tape two conversations with two different receptionists on two different days giving them just that. Add a reply that they are round at the new White House Hotel, and you have a very interesting scenario. Like Medea, the story has not turned my condition to a fair one.

The only remaining worry is that the scum might try and get their revenge upon me if, as seems likely, they end up in deep trouble with H.M Inspector Of Taxes (ie have me mugged to ensure my silence) but even then I have another hidden ace. I'd better not elaborate: You would be pretty shocked. Let's just hope they aren't that stupid as to get themselves even more problems than they've already got on their hands.

As it happens I discovered in my next job, at Carnegie's Bar in Paisley, that they've enough problems on their hands. The owners are in accute financial trouble. They are Asian Muslims (though the manager and staff are all white), who had all their money in B.C.C.I. So they have more than just the Inland Revenue to worry about!

I can't say that I feel particularly sorry for those who lost their life's savings in this affair, as anyone who puts their eggs in one basket is asking for trouble, especially a high interest (and therefore high risk) investement like B.C.C.I). What gets on my wick is the abjagation of responsibility by Hon Major. As Chancellor of the Exchequor, he was receiving warnings about the bank's health and dodgy financial dealings; yet won't even admit it, let alone resign.

Despite being brassed off with the pub trade after my expiernce with the New White House Hotel, I entered employment as a drinks waiter for Carnegies Bar in Paisley. Carnegies is a very chi-chi place, with bouncers everywhere to prevent trouble - hence its popularity; the scum of the locality don't get in. Whilst all the other bars are experiencing a crash in trade due to the recession Carnegies is increasing and, as always, are short staffed.

## MARK BOYLE'S SUMMER VACATION (2) - 1991

The uniform is a black top emblazoned with the Carnegies logo, black shorts, white socks and trainers. Now I do not like wearing shorts, they make me feel awkward, so resigned to my fate I went for the jugular and bought a pair of skin tight cycling shorts. Actually this uniform was crucial in a place so hot condensation dripped from the ceiling when it was packed.

Every night was extremely busy, I couldn't notice any difference between Saturday (the big night) and Wednesday (the quite night). Still the punters were, by and large, good although you'd get pinched rotten because of your uniform (which was irritating) or the elastic of your shorts twanged (which was funny!). Often I served tables full of stowed females on a 'goyls night out' (spelt as pronounced!) which was running risks let me say! Still they were preferable to a table of males only - some could be total space cadets. One time serving a bunch of vodka vixens, I got the twangy treatment whilst trying to write down their orders. My attempts to ignore it were dashed when one asked "D'ya mind us doing that?"; a dumb question to ask someone whose face is bright scarlet!

Yet I replied, "Not at all!", a fatal mistake... no sooner said than half a dozen hands were fondling my legs and twanging merrily away like I was an organic banjo! Of course, none of the others came to my rescue once they had seen what was going on... cowards.

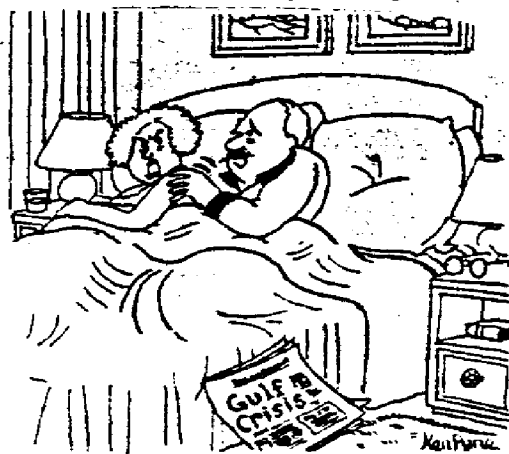
The wages were fair enough at two pounds and seventy-four pence an hour. But often I could only get four hours work and after the bus fare in and the taxi fare home (the late buses back to Johnstone were cancelled last year after they were attacked by gangs wielding baseball bats) this left me with little.

The next job, at Loganair, flew in out of the blue. I had registered with a number of temp agencies, with little expectation of them finding me anything: I was lacking qualifications in the 36-24-36 and typing departments.

Nevertheless they found me a job with a busy little airline (part of British Midland, along with Manx Airlines) needing a Temporary Temporary Technical Librarian: the T.L was on Maternity Leave whilst the T.T.L was about to go on a week's holiday. I had three days of paid training before being left to my own devices.

The job entailed receiving documents, newsletters and manual updates affecting our aircraft; ensuring the right people on the base saw the right stuff. Also the T.L for Loganair Glasgow has to ensure documents are sent to all the other Loganair/Manx bases: from Manchester to Lerwick, in the Orkneys. If this fails to illicit excitement then there is the fun of filing... seeing what goes where being 90% of the battle; whilst the remaining 10% consists of fighting with straining volumes to incorporate another chunk of the Amazon rainforest and transferring any documents wrongly filed by a lazy apprentice engineer more concerned with his "fag break" than how to alter a TC-64 compressor.

Still the work was enjoyable and relaxed. Pen pushing is definitely for me, especially at three pounds an hour!



"The last time it was because of the Cuban missile crisis."

## MARK BOYLE'S SUMMER VACATION (3) - 100'

My first day did not get off to an auspicious start. Going to the main office to collect the key to my own, they couldn't find mine and so give me a bunch of loose unlabelled keys - telling me to see which one fitted. Tried one, didn't work; tried another, no joy. I then noticed that it seemed that the door had not been shut properly. Grabbing the handle and giving it a good tug, there was a creak (it was right). There was also the sound of the key which I had left in the lock falling inside the hollow metal door!!!

The engineers had to open up the disused side door from the Technical Library into my office, obliging me to go clambering over a desk pushed against it once this was done. Then they spent the rest of the day taking the door or its hinges. (having failed to retrieve the key by removing the lock and using a magnet) turning it upside down and bashing or snaking it to get the key out. In the end it turned out that not one of the keys I had been given was the correct one: the Quality Manager had forgotten to put it back in the drawer the previous Friday!

Anyroad, my first day was spent in the best ventilated office in the hanger: people came in to congratulate me on wrecking the place after only 30 seconds into the job. Eventually I took the excuse of a "call of nature" to lock myself in a toilet cubicle and laugh myself silly (something I considered not polite to do in public - even though everyone else was in stitches). When I'd got this out of my system I made to leave: only to find the lock jammed tight and that I was locked in! The only way I could get out was by twisting my body round and kicking the lock open (which took several tries!).

Also working at Loganair was Suzanne Mullarney, whom I knew from my High School days. The dame and I had been in the same class for 'Higher' Chemistry - she was in fact in the yeargroup above me, trying to upgrade. She told me that she'd had a crush on our 50 year old teacher! Ironic that she told me this, for back then I had had a crush on her, all we would have needed was for our teacher to have fancied me and there would have been an interesting eternal love triagnie!

Incidentally, you'll never believe the names of some of the Technical Librarians at other stations. Belfast: Billy Scott (apt!). The Glasgow contact was Dick Emery whilst the Castle Donnington British Midland contact was Rowland A. Polley, yes Rolly Polly!

The planes we flew were BAe ATP's, Jetstreams (awaiting delivery), Britten Norman Islanders (a museum piece, but oh so reliable), Shorts Twin Otters and Skyraas. We got stuff for them plus stuff from the Civil Aviation Authority listing any accidents that occurred in all sorts of aircraft. I would read these out of interest and there are two stories are worth retelling.

The first concerns a young Cessna pilot on his solo test flight to gain his licence. He was to take a bearing of 016 from Nottingham and after adjustments (and at York (if I remember correctly)). Unfortunately he took a bearing of 160, by his own error, and landed at Stanstead! Would you believe it, he still got his licence?! The reason was that he had followed all the correct procedures throughout and was never in any danger, nor a danger to other aircraft. So the next time, you take a flight to New York and end up in Bombay, you'll know who us flying your plane!

The second concerned the fall of a block of ice the size of a football through the ceiling and loft of a two storey house. The C.A.A investigated, but discovered that no civil or military aircraft had been within a mile radius of the house upto 15 minutes before the incident, let alone one minute, so it could not have been falling from an aircraft. Thus the case was closed, though unsolved. Creepy. I remember years ago reading a book called "Phenomena" which dealt with such things. It's creepier encountering it in the flesh than in some SHOCK! HORROR!! book.

MARK BOYLE'S SUMMER VACCAATION (4)

You can bet that the householders would have got zero for their misfortune from their Insurane Company since the incioent was "An Act of God".

But the story of Loganair had one final twist. A few weeks after leaving I had a phonecall from Allstaff saying that Loganair wanted me back as the Temporary Technical Librarian had left and they had no-one else. Due to the urgency of their situation, I said yes. However upon arriving at the hanger I discovered that the situation was not quite as they'd made out; something had been scrambled in the translation...

What had happened was that Isobel Robertson had been looking for more permanent employment than being T.T.L. They wanted to keep her, so when a vaccancy in Fersonnel Accounts' occured the Personnel Department decided to shift here there and to get me in to train a new Temporary Technical Librarian. The first isobel knew what was happenng was when she was told in the morning!

On my first day I went to see the acting manager to find him bawling out the Personnel Officer over the phone. That first day was horrendous, trying to find my way about again; on top of that Allstaff sent that afternoon the trainee, a Karioke Machine Engineer by trade at night. So that was a trial, finding decent things for him to do whilst readjusting to the job.

At the end of the day I went to see the acting Manager and said that I would work tomorrow but after that they would have to find someone else as this was not going to work out. He was really nice about it, saying that they couldn't force me to stay and thanking me for helping them out but I had the feeling that this was far from the end.

You bet!

No sooner was I back at my office when I got a visit from the Personnel Officer to try and talk me into staying another week! No way. No sooner had she gone then Allstaff phoned to ask why I was going and to talk me into staying. I felt a louse but refused to back down. They had been economical with the truth, so stuff them. Grief, when the Organ Grinder retires you don't ask the monkey to train his replacement!

The next day the acting Manager again asked me was I leaving as did the Personnel Officer. I'd a feeling something was coming up. Then at 11 the phonecall came: come up to the Manager's Office.

Whistling "Do Not Forsake Me Oh My Darling" en route, I arrived to find all the chiefs gathered for a pow-pow with yours truly. They said that I had them over a barrel, couldn't I stay? I stated the sheer ludicrousness of what they were asking me to do. However, as the trainee had not returned today they needed a new one I offered to work the next day (a Friday) for them but as of Monday they would have to get Isobel to come down from Accounts to properly train someone up to replace her.

Thus all was well, that ended well. I worked right through to Friday as Temporary Temporary Technical Librarian again, with Isobel having her accounts job guaranteed after she had completed training the new TC.

Incidentally it was lucky the guy I was training up never reappeared. As a Karioke Engineer the twilight hours he worked made it illegal, by Civil Aviation Rules, for him to be employed as a Technial Librarian! Tht was a lucky escape for Loganair, who could have got into real trouble had the C.A.A found out.





## MARK BOYLE'S SUMMER VACATION (5) -1991-

Going back had one advantage, seeing my friend Angus again. Angus is a monster sized ginger tom who has one purpose for being with Loganair, to keep folk from working! No kidding, there are no mice near the place as the ultrasonics of the jet engines drives them mad. Angus was acquired to wander around the base and give people an excuse to stop work for a few minutes to pat him. Great job! If he walks into the middle of the hanger all that is heard is a multitude of voices from various directions calling for him - the poor wee thing gets all confused and his head zips around in all directions!

His salary is two meals a day: milk, tin of Whiskas (of course) and biscuits (cat crunchies!). Apparently he gets fish at the weekend, as well as whatever else he scrounges off those on the hanger floor. What a hard life!!!

Recently when down at Prestos I was asked by the checkout girl to kill a wasp on the window behind her - quite a distance away from her; just having the knowledge that it was in the vicinity was bothersome enough, especially when she was forced to have her back to the little devil. Knight gallant that I am I obliged, even though I ain't exactly the bravest thing on two legs where wasps are concerned. Most insects and arachnids hold no terror for me. Bees are cute, especially bumble bees (except when they land on my legs and start licking the pollen stuck to 'em, refusing to budge as if it is some sort of Pollen Pick 'n' Mix). Jennys (or Daddy Long Legs) are amusing, especially 'disco dancing' round a light bulb. Spiders I used to have a phobia for, now I adore them! It comes from viewing them in a different light. Ever noticed how gently and graceful they tread or spin? There is also something amusing about them when you discover one on the wall of your home, invariably stationary, legs spreadeagled, almost as if they've leaped out going 'Ta da'!!! Unlike certain members of my household I never splat them, simply tip them into a matchbox and toss them outside. (Except when it is raining of course!)

But wasps, I have no love for them. Taking my shoe off and sizing up carefully my adversary I realized that I had to shoot forward before it had a chance to escape (obviously it has seen me and was just pretending to go up and down the window, just waiting for the chance to fly and land a perfect sting right on a main artery that would ensure a lingering death) and splat it first time.

First time it had to be, and first time it was: using a force not seen since Hiroshima upon the window, nearly breaking two thousand pounds worth of glass! Everyone in the store was in hysterics and I felt a right idiot. Going back, the girl said "And could you get the one down the bottom as well?"...

Recently I discovered a shop which sells Occult stuff; books, beads, incense, rings etc. Although I've no time for Alestair Crowley I've been interested in the pre-Christian religion of Wicca (Witchcraft) (Celtic/Nordic/Saxon "Nature's Cycle" based religion) which comes in a variety of guises. From a theological and anthropological viewpoint it is interesting - not least as I can see where the Catholic Church got some of its ideas from!

The woman and daughter who run the shop are both Wiccans and were able to answer my questions. It is a harmless religion - very pacifist in outlook (not to mention green!) and pretty altruistic. Nothing about curses or orgies for the sensation merchants. They're pretty broad minded on other religions; but they've no time for Evangelical Christians (whom they see as intolerant) or Satanists (self centred).

They've had some hassle from Evangelicals coming in and calling them Devil worshippers, threats to end their "promoting evil practices" by means unspecified but with nothing forthcoming to worry them into leaving. And they seem to be doing a good trade. Not in their books, but in their jewellery, popular with the 'Alternative' Set, incense and josticks, popular with Yuppies, and Tarrot cards, popular with spotty pubescents.

## MARK BOYLE'S SUMMER VACATION (6) 1991

In early July I became a guinea pig for an experiment at Glasgow University into the effects of alcohol on co-ordination and reaction time. This began with playing a series of computer games, then taking a randomly selected amount of alcohol in a pint of orange juice. Ugh! What a vile taste. Then it was back to the games over a four hour period to measure the effects. My "steering" ability remained relatively good, but my "breaking" time doubled, indeed on occasions tripled. Now you know why so many people believe that they can drive and drink, their steering (which is what they are doing for most of the time) is relatively unaffected.

I was shocked to learn that whilst I was intoxicated, the first two hours, my reaction time doubled but I was well inside the legal limit; although I was in no fit condition to drive. One measure less and I would have been legal throughout the test. Would you allow yourself to be driven by someone who had drunk four vodka and oranges? My intoxication count was 84 mgs.

The purpose of this study is to try and get the present legal limit for using machinery or driving revised downwards. They have my backing after this.

The experimenter told me that they had had some problems with adverse media coverage. The Evening Times screamed "sexist" because they wouldn't test women (because 95% of drunk drivers are male and women's resistance to alcohol varies with the menstrual cycle) whilst the Sun bellowed "Free Booze From The Boffins" leaving them besieged with the city's wine population.

For my sins, I was paid five pounds for taking part. You didn't think I would do it for free did you?!

Over the holidays I had plans for nights out to Strathclyde University Union with some friends. However my plans were consistently cocked up by events outside my control. On the first two occasions people dropped out so in the end I went along with one other (thankfully female, meaning we didn't get bothered by S.A.D.'s all night).

But on the third, things really turned sour. I was to go to a 21st before meeting the rest. Having spent all that day searching for a pressie, then hurriedly wolfing down a badly burnt dinner and cutting myself to ribbons shaving I went to the party: which I couldn't get away from quick enough. I left to meet my friends at the University, not knowing that after I had left one of them had phoned to say that they were not going out for various reasons such as glandular fever. Just to crown it, on my way back home I was mugged. Socialising? Humbug!

Darling brother David has finally persuaded me to start using weights, gym and other pieces of torture equipment that he has set up in our house. He has to show me what to do and to check that I'm doing it right. To call him a difficult taskmaster is an understatement, one he's got me between those weights you'd get more humility from an imperial Japanese P.O.W Camp commander. On occasions, as he has been shouting "Come on, come on, you can do at least two more". I have been pushed past my limit and ended up screaming "HAAAA! For the emperor!" and other things of that ilk. With all the grunts, groans and screams the house sounds like the tower of London dungeon or Madame Cynthia Payne's kinky torture chamber. Lord now what the neighbours must be thinking!

The pick of the books I read over the Summer is Jack Higgins' "The Eagle Has Flown", a sequel to "The Eagle Has Landed". In this we discover that Major Kurt Steiner did not die at the end of "The Eagle Has Landed", but is in prison in London. Liam Devlin is contacted in Portugal by the Germans and persuaded to attempt Steiner's rescue. But British intelligence are watching and waiting, whilst Himmier is going slightly more than he is

## MARK BOYLE'S SUMMER VACCAATION (7) - 1991

The plot moves at a terrific pace, with the author himself appearing as a character. There are a thousand twists to the tale and a superb ending... never mind reading this, go and grab your own copy: the book of 1991.

The Booker prize for silliest novel of all time must go to Iron Maiden vocalist and British No. 4 Fencer Bruce Dickenson with "The Adventures of Lord Iffy Boatrice". The semi-transvestite stone-broke aristocrat of the title attempts to regain his fortune by starting Grouse Shooting using mechanical birds disguised as the real thing with on-board computers to render them impossible to shoot down. He invites some old acquaintances to try their luck: along with their peculiar wives... The butler John Autler has his own plans to aid recovery, through his brainchild Pelvotron and all goes well until it goes haywire...

Add to all this secrets of buried treasure, murders, mysterious dissapearences and deaths, hook in a hilarious dialogue and you have the recipe for a book you are not likely to forget in a hurry. Whether this book will be a one-off for Bruce remains to be seen; though fellow Iron Maiden member Shaun Harris is already launching his third novel.

The things I'll do for people! Recently in order to go to a concert I ended up helping someone with a thesis on a subject I knew nothing about! So she could goto a concert, with a group she nothing about! Confused?

I have been dying to enjoy a good night out, especially after a really naff bottle wine & wine run by the History club at the start of term. I wanted to see the Saw Doctors, a band that used to support the Waterboys, who had the biggest ever selling record in Ireland last Christmas with "I Useta lover" which spent eight weeks at the top. Bumping into an old friend, Sofia Coia (she was in the yeargroup three years below mine in St 'Berts) I told her about the gig and asked her to come along. Fine, so I got two tickets.

Then, on the day before the gig, she phoned to say that she couldn't come as she had this piece of work to finish. No sooner said then she added "Oh, it's all history stuff, could you come up and help as you're good at it." Muggins agreed.

Next day, a Sunday, it was off to Bearsden. This involved a bus and train ride to and inside Glasgow, then a half hour walk up every hill in north Glasgow to reach St Andrews College of Education (a teaching college) and its Halls of Residence, themselves perched upon a hill that makes Watership Down look like Hiroshima after the Enoia Gay's visit. I was nearly dead upon arrival.

Sofia's essay was on Italian culture, which I know damn all about. But I do know about essay techniques and I was of some help. Then, when Sofia went to dinner (I couldn't go, as the canteen is for residents only) I took the liberty of getting her course books and getting down "everything you wanted to know about Rome and Vatican City but were afraid to ask" in 15 minutes to add the cherries to the cake.

My reward was several "oh you saved my life"'s and a bowl of noodles. Now spaghetti I can handle, indeed I consider myself an expert at the art of the "fork twirl". But spaghetti with a perm I can't handle. I've never felt such a tube eating it, half hanging out of my mouth bouncing like a slinky-spring. You can't even slurp it in as if you try it smacks your face over and over again. Then of course, it swells in your stomach.

So it was off to see the Saw Doctors at Strathclyde Uni, telling Sofia en route all about them. Whilst waiting for the start, I saw the band's lead guitarist Leo Moran crossing the floor so I snouted him over. That was fun, talking with the famous! Made Sofia's night! The gig was brill, have you ever seen someone playing a 12-str

## MARK BOYLE'S SUMMER VACCAATION (8)

We started at the front, but there was a firebell and everyone was evacuated. When we got back we were at the back, sanding on stools: A little ticky to pogo to!

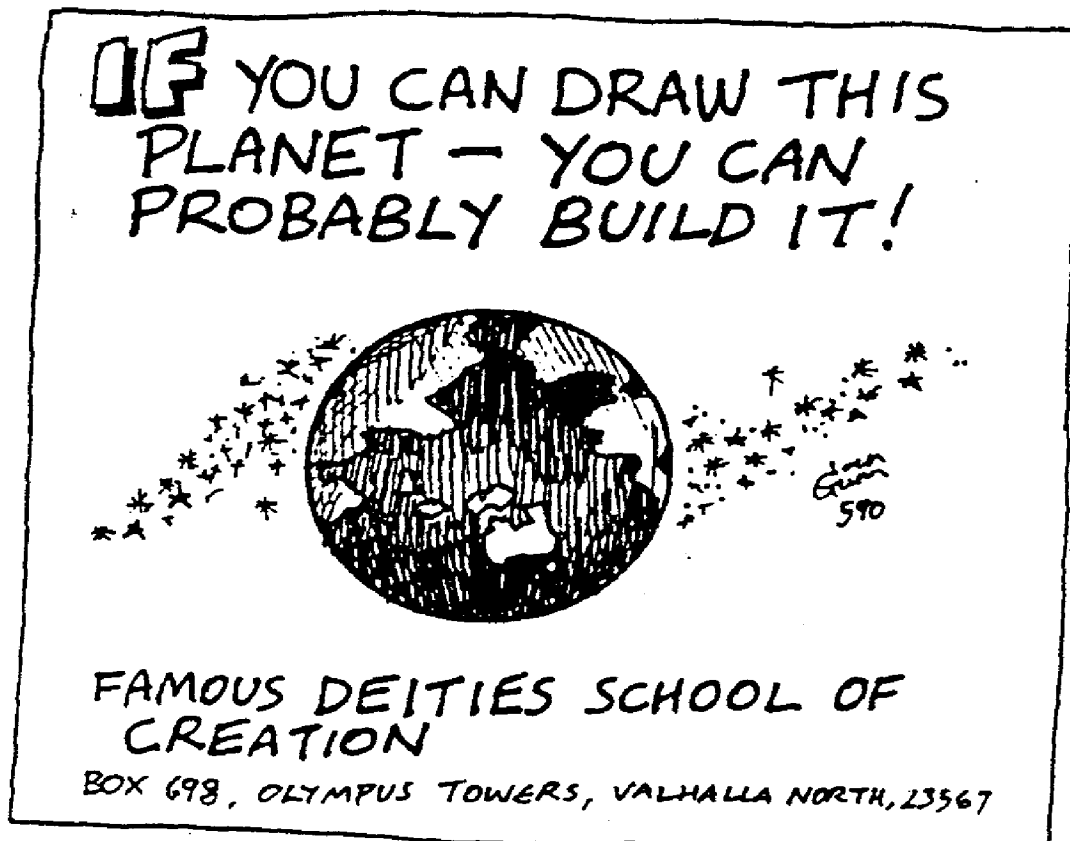
A couple of Saturday's latter I was collecting for Amnesty International: freezing to death on a cold morning in Paisley's Pizza Shopping Centre. One of our number, an old lady, had some clown accusing her of collecting money for the IRA. Where do these folk come from? The clinically brain dead, who think shouting at fund collectors somehow changes the world. And at little old ladies, how brave. One clown, built like a tank, started doing something similiar to me, but his speech was so slurred (it is a miracle if you can find a native that speaks English up here) I burst out laughing and he went off in a huff.

At present I'm involved in a running war of words in the local rag, the "Gazette". It's over the SNP's new log which if you turn it upside down looks vaguely like the symbol the neo-Nazis use in Germany. Thus folk were accusing the SNP of Nazi-tendencies. Have you ever heard of anything so ridiculous? Spare us from a Scottish proletariat!

The symbol was variated to look "more aggressive". Equating that with Nazi tendencies could only happen in thick-as-shit Scotland. It actually looks like a Celtic "Ng" rune.

Anyway, despite being a neutral, one stupid cow had accused me of being a Nazi sympathiser and of being a Poll Tax Refusenik just because I pointed out that the SNP were left wing and Celtic nationalists, hardly Nazi! Off went another letter, again printed, and another five ponds to me. I could get used to this regular income.

But, that's were I entered...



## THE COMIX COLUMN: THE TEAM UP

The team-up must have been one of the earliest ideas comic companies had for money-spinning. You've got two popular comic characters, both of which have their own comic. Simply produce a one-issue story featuring both in comic A. This sells to the normal readers of comic A and brings over some of comic's B readers for a month, boosting sales.

Even today this is a common approach. For the "true" fan of a particular comic character wants to own every story that character appears in and will track them down. Thus 'guest appearances' in other comics are a sure way of boosting short-term revenues up.

And when done properly, this one-off interaction can add to the enjoyment of your favourite character. If you're in the DC or Marvel world, where action across all the respective companies comics occurs in the same world, then you will be interested to know how two particular characters will interact. Will they be able to work as a team or will they view each other as a threat to their own popularity? Do their styles of action complement each other enabling them to take on bigger operators or do they distract from each other? And if we are to believe that the comics are all set in one friendly world then interaction between comic characters must be expected to occur.

My own favourite cross-overs in this category are those involving **Swamp Thing** and **John Constantine**, who started off as a bit-player in Swamp Thing. Here we have two characters who are often thrown together by events, but who have a tense relationship at the best of times. This strained relationship, with suspicion and contempt on one side and dislike on the other, is a wonderful tonic to the standard 'goddie-goddie' teamup. (A standard problem with super-heroes is that they are too emotionless, have too wonderful a life. They are indeed 'super-human'.) It's not only the interaction between these characters that makes their teaming-up so interesting, in the past they have teamed up and different parts of the team-up have been told in the two comics so that to get the wider picture you need to read both comics.

Taking this idea further we reach the limited series, a special comic which lasts for a limited number of issues and brings together two or more characters. As well as producing comics A & B you bring out comic C featuring characters A & B and thus appealing to both sets of fans. The ultimate extension of this, only to be used in times of dire financial straits, is to produce a story line that moves across all of your comics. As well as buying the special comic which follows the plot, the dedicated fan will have to buy comics that they would not normally buy to understand every nuance of the story. This allows for extravagant plots with many details, but unfortunately, appears rather more transparent as a money grabber.

Finally, there is the cameo role. A character glimpsed in one comic going about his normal activities, but who has no central role to the narrative of the main character. Often these events are not sign-posted, you might notice them on careful reading. Again these small roles, not team-ups, add to the enjoyment of the comic world, adding to the illusion of a world popularity by 'heroes'.

It may be my imagination, but more team-ups seem to have appeared in recent times than is otherwise the norm; are the comic companies feeling the pinch of the recession?

## THE COMIX COLUMN: THE TEAM UP (2)

**BATMAN versus PREDATOR** is an unusual team-up in that the two main characters are owned by different companies, making production more difficult as twice the usual set of people have to be pleased with the final product. And there is the obvious problem that by introducing your fans to the product of another company, you may lose them to that company. This isn't so much of a problem for a product which is a spin-off from a film as potential fans of the spin-off are likely to already know about it. In this case production problems are even more taxing as Dark Horse (who produce the Predator comics) have to have everything Ok'd by Twenty Century Fox who own the rights to Predator.

This is a three-issue mini-series, and both DC (Batman) and Dark Horse (Predator) are releasing their own comic to cover the story. Not as I first thought telling different aspects of the plot, but carrying the same artwork and plot and differing only in the quality of the reproduction; DC being the better. This is disappointing, having the two versions contain subtly differences (or even making them radically different by having them put different slants on the same plot) would have added to the enjoyment; as it did in one of the Hellblazer/Swamp Thing cross-overs I mentioned before.

I'll leave a full review until the series is finished. I like what I have seen. The dark and empty streets of Gotham provide a perfect hunting ground for a Predator.

Not owning the license to a particular character doesn't prevent you from producing a 'team-up', it just means that you need to exercise care and discretion. Fleetway's **THE JUDGE DREDD MAGAZINE** has been running a "Judge Dredd meets ALIEN" strip for some time, although the word ALIEN can't be mentioned and a few attributes need to be changed, the art is rather a give away.

Although in recent times Judge Dredd has become more satirical, the less said about this the better; it's far too 'straight'. I'm suprised that the Judge Dredd team didn't take the chance to poke gentle fun at Alien fans.

DC currently produce two Star Trek comics, one based on the original series and the other on The Next Generation (TNG). There is an obvious attraction in producing a plot that links them. However a story linking characters that differ in time rather than space is difficult to pull-off without becoming too contrived.

DC have managed to avoid this trap and have produced a 'team-up' which is only loosely sub. The structure of the 'team-up' is two separate four-issue miniseries. The idea is simple, have the original crew fail in a mission and then have TNG crew attempt to succeed where no-one has succeeded before and in the process compare the differing attitudes of the two captains of the Enterprise; the action and bluster of Kirk against Picard's more restraint style.

A simple expedition to see if a peaceful planet, Mondala, is ready for Federation membership is suprised to discover that in the ten years since the last Federation visit a totalitarian regime has usurped power by gaining advanced weaponry from an unknown source. By the time this archetypian Trek plot is resolved, the rebellion that will eventually restore democracy has been prodded into action, even if the source of the weaponry remains a mystery.

100 years latter another Enterprise arrives at Mondala, for the centenary celebration of the rebellion. The whereabouts and activities of most of the original Star Trek characters in the TNG future has been kept secret, no doubt the producers don't want to impose any restrictions on the continuing series of



## THE COMIX COLUMN: THE TEAM UP (3)

Still, the son of Sarek whose wedding Captain Picard attends is Spock's and as Admiral McCoy appeared in "Encounter at Farpoint" we know that both Spock and McCoy survive through to the 24th century. Not suprisingly these are the two characters which team-up from one series to the next, along with the leader of the rebellion who has become head of the native government.

The second miniseries resolves the mystery of the origin of the advanced weaponry and throws in an old cliché about the one popular overthrowers of a totalitarian regime losing contact with the people they govern. The rebels of yesterday becomes the government of today, ignoring popular protest and misusing force to put down protests against their own regime.

This is not particularly inspiring, not particularly exciting, not particularly interesting. But there is the glimmer of an idea, the glimmer of a good comic here which manages to overcome the lachrymose of the plot. That is the interplay between TNG crew and Admiral McCoy and then the interplay between Spock and McCoy meeting after many years apart. This is excellently written, even if on the last page of the 'first' issue (or the second miniseries) when Spock makes his dramatic entry he reminds me of a Jedi Knight! Cross-linking or what? A final point of contrast is that between Data and Spock, it's often stated that Data fulfills the same role on the new Enterprise as Spock did on the original ship but is that the case?

Finally, the story contains an enormous flaw in that the essential point of the story is the existence of high-tech weaponry. Surely this would have been investigated when the planet joined the Federation?

Conclusions? Some good material, especially on comparisons between crews but ultimately lacking. Average, the plot could be better.

When Dark Horse secured the comic rights to the ALIEN, PREDATOR and TERMINATOR films (to name but three of their film-based comix) they secured a financial lifeline. And these comic lines are good enough to stand up on their own (Predator being the weak link). And what could be more attractive than teaming up two of these three killing-machines in a battle to find the toughest, meanest creature in the known universe!

ALIENS vs PREDATOR, a four-issue miniseries, has undeniable commercial appeal. In fact you could hardly go wrong with it, but aside from appealing to the blood and gore phreaks can you produce such a comic in a way that will appeal to the more discerning comic fan?

And the answer is yes, yes you can avoid 4x 24 pages of mindless slugfests and have something more challenging. The action is set on a desert world, with a small human colony of 115. The colony is mainly made up of ranchers, producing food for the home market, and a handful of operation employees. The head of the base (a woman) treats the ranchers as irritants.

The Predators, not knowing that the planet has been colonized, seed it with alien eggs. This is 'a rite of passage' mission for a group of 'young' Predators, tracking down and killing their most deadly foes. And as a rite-of-passage they are expected to survive without their most high-tech weaponry. (In any case, Aliens don't have eyes so the Predators camouflage wouldn't help them in any case.) But when a human discovers and destroys their snip, stranding them on the planet, they temporarily become leaderless and losing sight of their mission track down the settlers. But back at headquarters the humans have problems of their own, the cattle they have just put on the shuttle is infected...

## THE COMIX COLUMN: THE TEAM UP (4)

It's the new revelations about Predators/Aliens that I enjoy, the subtle linking to the the first Aliens comic. The Predator's code of honour, seeing the human leader and Predator leader teaming up to fight their common foe. The reaction of the Predator's leader when he discovers that his inexperienced troops have been butchering women and children. Are the Predator's really an alien race, or are they just a cynical look at the human race? The addition of the third party humans to what might have been a straight-forward two-party comic is a neat way to illustrate how human-like the Predators are. After all, aliens attack and kill for the survival and continuance of their race whilst Predators do their hunting solely for the sport and challenge.

And who wins? Well, that would be spoiling your fun...

The headline screams "THE ULTIMATE LAWMAN VERSES THE DARK KNIGHT DETECTIVE". What can it mean?

It means more than a team-up between two comic heroes, more than a team-up of two comic companies and more than can be expressed in the English language.

For JUDGEMENT ON GOTHAM is the long awaited Batman-Judge Dredd team-up, an illustration of the double distribution possibilities of a team-up. For despite a brief spell of popularity in the 1960's 2000AD has not managed to establish itself in the States. Whilst DC will be known by many comic fans, amongst the readers of 2000AD there are considerable numbers that are yet to have the 'fortune' to read DC. Thus the team-up serves to introduce each company to the readers of the other company. And as both companies are primarily concerned with different markets there is little chance of either company losing readers to the other company.

This is fortuitous for Fleetway's, with the long-promised Judge Dredd movie apparently making headway, casting as you read this (!), and another attempt being made to establish themselves in North America via a special American edition of the monthly Judge Dredd Magazine. Regardless of the success of the various aims that propelled DC and Fleetwood into this team-up, the teaming up of top crime-fighters on both sides of the Atlantic has guaranteed a best seller. Never mind if attempts to increase overseas circulation fail, just sit back and count as the good red gold pours into the company coffers!

Whilst Judge Dredd, and British comic in general, may not perform well in the States British writers and illustrators are in demand. All three of the people involved in this production (authors Alan Grant, John Wagner and artist Simon Bisley) are established contributors to a number of DC comics, which doubtless figured in their selection for this production.

But what of the story?

Escaping Mega City One after Necropolis Judge Death teams-up with Mean Machine Angel and stealing a dimension belt makes his getaway to Gotham City. Batman comes onto the scene and goes on an unexpected trip to Mega City One.

Despite the long-awaited Batman-Dredd show down and excellent dialogue throughout, this is a disappointment.

A wasted opportunity to capitalise on the full possibilities of a Gotham-Mega City team-up. My main concern is that the plot is resolved far too quickly, on first reading I worried how the writers would resolve the plot in the remaining pages. With 15 pages remaining I was concerned, with 10 pages left I was worried and with zero pages to go I reit let-down.



## THE COMIX COLUMN: THE TEAM UP (5)

The show down \*IS\* good and contrasts Dredd's and Batman's differing approaches to crime prevention and casts Judge Anderson in the role of peace-maker. The shady legality of the vigilante protecting the public from crime is contrasted against the protection offered to the citizen by the police-state, a protection that at times seems more towards protection of the Judge's right to rule rather than to any connection to the rights of the population. Are the public safer in the corrupt streets of Gotham or those of Mega-City One? It seems that there is just as much crime in either City, and at least the public are freer in Gotham; could it be that the world of Gotham is more desirable? I would have liked this aspect of the plot to have been more detailed.

The structure of the book provides interest, being built around threesomes. The Mean Machine-Judge Death-Batman triangle resolves into a Anderson-Batman-Dredd triangle whilst at Gotham we find a Death-Benjamin-Scarecrow triangle and at the end the surviving parts of each triangle met up in an orgy of violence.

There is too much attempt at extracting humour from the different situations, especially towards the end when Judge Death starts a new career as heavy metal singer. He provides an excellent show, but ultimately this just reflects the weakness of the novel: great scenes but weak linking.

This is a pity as the dialogue is exquisite in places, and there some something in Angel's comment that "*That's Dreddy for ya - bastich makes us criminals!*"

Doubtless this will be success, but it could have been better. Indeed the 2000AD Judge Dredd strip continues to improve, exploring the contrast between the rule-of-law and Justice. And given recent events in our own courts, this is a theme that deserves more attention outside the pages of a comic.

We finish with **THE LOBO PARAMILITARY SPECIAL**. A comic whose cover contains the warning that it "*Contains Bad Taste In The Form of Ultra-Violence, Icon-Bashing, And 'The Finger'*. *More Offensive Than Christmas Usually is.*"

And for those of us who don't really like the commercialisation of Christmas this is a great read, a comic that seriously pokes fun at Xmas. Simon Bisley and Alan Grant (remember those names?) were involved in this team-up between the Main Man Lobo and Santa, a combination that you just know is going to produce blood and gore and change how you think about the Festive Season.

The Main Man is hired to pull a hit on Santa by the Easter Bunny and colleagues. Santa's been getting bolshy, overstepping the mark. Christmas is becoming \*THE\* holiday and other holidays have been forgotten. The brutal dictator's stronghold, repeatedly slammed by Amnesty International for poor working conditions (24 hours a day, every day), is taken out in a flurry in which the Elvish population is decimated in graphic detail as Lobo sings revised Xmas songs to the numbing of his seriously big guns.

Lobo tracks down the old man to his cushy penthouse suite, built on the profits creamed from his fan club. Santa is mean, Santa is lean and Santa is tough. Santa tries to take Lobo out.

Don't cry kiddies, but Fats is dead and Lobo has retrained the remaining Elves to manufacture weapons of destruction. There will be no more nappy Christmas' for good little children. No more Christmas' come to that. No more Christmas carols. No more fun.

Fraggin' good. I love it.



**THE WRONG ENDPLAY  
BY PAUL COCKAYNE**

S	Axx	KJxxx
H	ATxxx	Q
D	KTx	AJx
C	xx	AKQx

After North opened 2H (weak), my partner and I swiftly arrived in the sensible contract of 3NT. One bid later we were in the silly contract of 6NT, and North led the 7 of clubs, suggesting a shortage.

I watched partner win the lead, cross to the AS and take the spade finesse. When this held, he ran the Spades (discarding 2 hearts) and cashed 2 more clubs, with West showing out on the 3rd round:-

S	---	---
H	ATx	Q
D	KT	AJx
S	---	9

Now North was known to have started with 3-?-?-2 shape; most likely 3-6-2-2. Partner cashed the K and A of Diamonds, and I saw his face drop when West's Q of diamonds dropped, giving us 12 easy tricks. Partner was quick to point out that if the QD hasn't appeared, he would have ran the QH to endplay North in hearts for the 12th trick.

At the time, no-one realized that North can simply duck the QH to leave partner stranded in dummy with 2 losers! I rang partner to groat over this, and point out now he should have played the hand. In this position:-

S	---	x
H	ATx	Q
D	KT	AJx
C	---	9

partner should not cash the 5th spade, but exit with the QH immediately. North cannot now duck (declarer still has an entry to AH), but when he wins he is endplayed in both red suits.

Very neat, partner admitted, but unfortunately he never held the ten of diamonds, but the 9. In the absence of this card, South should in fact be endplaying East, not West!

One the spade finesse succeeds:-

S	x	Kxx	South can cross to the AH,
H	ATxxx	Q	run the spades and cash the two
D	K9x	AJx	top clubs to leave:
C	x	KQ9	
S	---	---	
H	T	---	
D	K9x	AJx	
C	---	9	

if East has 3 diamonds he can be endplayed with a club. if he has only two diamonds, the QD is now certain to drop.

S	Ax	Kxx	Contract 3NT.
H	KJxxx	Qx	North leads the Q of Spades.
D	Axxx	xxx	Plan the play.
C	Ax	KJ9x	Solution next time!

((Reprinted from The New York Times. Monday August 24th.))

## COMPUTER FOURSOMES: CHAOS, BUT NO YELLING BY Alan Truscott

Imagine a game of bridge in which a dozen or so players, cutting in and out randomly, are scattered about a continent. Not only can they not see each other, but there are no playing cards. If players fall asleep, there is no way to awaken them.

This might sound like a vision of hell to the average player, but it may offer a clue to the future of the game. It is Okbridge, in which 250 students and professors with access to an academic electronic network use their computers to play bridge with one another. After each deal, a post-mortem conversation takes place.

The originator is Matthew Clegg, a graduate student at the University of California at San Diego, who will provide information to those interested, at (619) 558-3408. In New York, Gwenn Kalow, (212) 249-5436, will answer questions. Many of the games being played are quietly chaotic, but it is possible to play a match with foursomes of equal strength. Eventually we can expect international matches played by computer.

### NORTH (D)

♠ A K Q S 4  
♥ K 8  
♦ 3  
♣ 9 8 7 3 2

### WEST

♠ S J 5 3  
♥ H —  
♦ D K 9 7 6 2  
♣ C J 10 6 5 4

### EAST

♠ S 10 9 7  
♥ H Q 10 7 4 3  
♦ D Q 10 5 4  
♣ C K

### SOUTH

♠ S 6 2  
♥ H A J 9 6 5 2  
♦ D A J 8  
♣ C A Q

North and South were vulnerable. The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1 ♠	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
6 ♣	Pass	6 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

West led the club five.

The diagramed deal was provided by Alan Jaffray of Santa Rosa, Calif., who held the North cards in an Okbridge team match. His partner was Bill Chen of Berkeley, Calif., and they reached the reasonable contract of six hearts by a somewhat confused route. After making a strong jump shift to three hearts, South should no doubt have been content to bid three no-trump. His four-club bid was intended to be a cue-bid, but his partner thought the bid was natural and raised to six clubs.

Against six hearts West led a club to the king and ace. South led a heart to the king and digested the bad news heralded by West's diamond discard. Jaffray expected his partner to lead to the club queen, play spade winners, and cash the diamond ace. Then a diamond ruff and a club ruff would prepare the ground for an endplay.

As it happens that plan would have failed immediately, for East would have ruffed the club lead. Instead Chen chose a line that kept him in the hunt for 12 tricks by playing spades at once, discarding a diamond on the third round. He played a fourth spade, which was ruffed by East with the heart four and overruffed with the six to leave this position:

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NORTH		
♠ 4		
♥ H 8		
♦ D 3		
♣ 9 8 7 3		
WEST	EAST	
♠ —	♠ —	
♥ —	♥ Q 10 7	
♦ K 9 7	♦ Q 10 5 4	
♣ J 10 6 4	♣ —	
SOUTH		
♠ —		
♥ A J 9 5		
♦ A J		
♣ Q		

---

South would now have succeeded if he had cashed the diamond ace, ruffed a diamond, and led a spade. If East refused to ruff, South would throw the club queen. Alas, South tried to cash the club queen in the diagramed position and went down to defeat.

There must have been an interesting OK post-mortem. Such occasions are more civilized than usual: it is impossible to scream at your partner electronically.

# THE MISSING LINK: CHRISTIANITY AND VEGETARIANISM

BY *Ferrell Wheeler*

Here is the biblical argument about Christianity and vegetarianism in a nutshell (as I see it). Like a classic game of chess. I know the counter-arguments and the counter-counter-arguments, but I intend to be brief.

God created humans and animals, i.e. Spirit-filled creatures (the breath of life, Gen. 2), as vegetarians (Gen. 1:29). Vegetarianism is God's original intent for the diet of humans and no knowledgeable Christians or Jews will argue this point. All the biblical heroes (all that 'begetting') before Gen. 9 are vegetarians, I believe they are the first nine generations after Adam and Eve.

After the fall humanity doesn't make God too proud, seeing as humans are supposed to bare the divine image, this is not a good thing. So God wipes everything out with the flood. In the post-delugian period things change. In Gen. 9, God makes a new covenant (both with humans and with other animals — this is an important point since animals are subjects, not objects or 'natural resources'). The flood wipes everything out ... devastation is complete, so God gives permission for humans to eat other animals (there is not much else to eat). It is also interesting to note that the first thing that Noah did when he left the ark was to go slicing up a lamb as an animal sacrifice (most Christian congregations wouldn't support a minister that does this, things change). Many Rabbis state that kosher laws are Jews' compromise with the vegetarian ideal (compromise needed because of difficulty in obtaining food and will power once out of Eden, but note it is now rather trivial to become a vegetarian, we have a stunning availability of non-animal foods, so we are back to God's intent).

The kosher laws made an attempt at forbidding some of the more atrocious acts, such as eating the limb of an animal while it was still alive (remember there was no refrigeration, so one way to keep flesh fresh was to keep the animal alive and dismember him/her as needed, or as customers came. I have heard that this practice still occurs very rarely in some countries.), and boiling an infant animal in it's mother's milk.

Now we jump to the prophets. Many of them railed against animal sacrifice which was then intimately connected with flesh eating, some in the priestly caste would eat a great deal of meat (guess how they got it). And we have Isaiah's wonderful vision of the messianic age (again vegetarian) were the lion and lamb lay down together and a child will lead them (Is. 11, I think).

To sum up to this point: (1) Animals are Spirit-filled beings, subjects of God; (2) God's original intent was for humanity to be vegetarian; (3) The vision of the peaceable kingdom is vegetarian; (4) Permission to eat meat is a compromise with the ideal of vegetarianism; (5) Now it is easy to attain this ideal (it is also healthier and better for all of God's Creation on Earth). (IMHO, it is hard for me to believe that a sincere, compassionate, peace-loving Christian is not vegetarian, but for most, social customs have far more power than religious ideals).

In 70 AD, the temple of Jerusalem fell for the second (and last) time. The Rabbinical question and response at this time is quite fascinating. Animal sacrifice became forbidden and it was suggested that Jews should get back to the ideal of vegetarianism, but they thought that it was unhealthy and the laity wouldn't go for it. So the links between animal sacrifice and killing for food were severed.

Into the middle ages... Maimonides writes the 'Guide for the Perplexed' which is very influential. He states that the only possible justification for killing animals for food comes from the 'fact' that humans cannot live healthily without it. We now know this 'fact' is false. But if we start getting into the Kabbalah things become pretty bad for the animals.

As for Christians, Jesus ate a couple of fish (according to the current canon). Lewis Regenstein's book 'Replenish the Earth' does a good job of giving the history of the Christian/Vegetarian links. So I will just

say a few words about the wonderful sub-culture of Christian literature that says Jesus was a vegetarian.

There is a group called the Essene Christians who sell books with titles like 'Jesus was a Vegetarian Why aren't You?'. Much of this literature hinges on Jesus being an Essene Jew (who were vegetarian) and the Dead Sea Scrolls are supposed to booster this claim. There are (at least) two other books that delve into this issue at length. One entitled 'The Vegetarianism of Jesus Christ' and another by a German author. I cannot think of the names of the authors or the second book, but they both can be ordered from the American Vegan Society and possibly the Vegetarian Resource Group. I highly recommend them as they are both very interesting reading. But, I think it is more difficult to change peoples beliefs on the accuracy of the Bible than it is to change them to vegetarianism. It is probably better to say that it might have been necessary for Jesus to eat a couple of fish to survive in Palestine 2000 years ago, it is not necessary for us. Also, what would Jesus think about battery cages for chickens, confinement houses for pigs, etc.? Do these things glorify God? Is this a good way of showing the divine image? How can one who professes to image God abuse and kill other Spirit-filled creatures wantonly (devoid of moral justification, "its tastes good" is not a moral justification)?

There are many other issues that I did not touch on. For example, I am well versed in the writings of Paul, but unlike many Christians I am well versed in the writings of Clement, etc.

Please do not construe any of the above in away that would imply offence to anyone or any religion.

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## Quote, Unquote

Andrew Moss: "When I cut trades with U-Bend I informed Haz that I was trimming down my trades because I hadn't the heart to tell him I thought his zine was full of crap. Maybe I shouldn't have bothered... being tactful I mean? *Age of Reason 9 (July 1992)*

Harry Bond: "As for Andrew Moss. If someone writes and tells me his zine is cutting all trades due to financial difficulties I assume that they are being honest with me. It appears that Mr Moss was not, but simply didn't have the balls to tell me he wanted to cut trades with me alone. Gosh, I wonder if that had anything to do with the fact that I thought AoR wasn't the best thing since sliced bread and printed a review saying so. If you must be dishonest, though, it's not a wise move to print the details of your dishonesty and then leave piles of the issue it's in lying round at ManorCon for the person involved to read." *U-Bend 13 (August 92)*

Harry Bond: "[...] I have received a letter from Andrew Moss disputing the events of the semi-recent past, as detailed about here on last issue's back cover. Well, I don't think I can lay hands on his original letter even if I still have it, but I certainly got the impression (whether stated in so many words or not) that the trade cut was universal, and I bloody well do remember the reason stated as being financial. Oh, sod it. I don't like *Age of Reason*. Andrew Moss doesn't like *U-Bend*. neither of us is going to change. subject therefore closed." *U-Bend 14 (Septmeber 1992)*.

Or is it? Harry has made several references to a mythical letter which he has, so far, been unable to produce. I wouldn't dare suggest that the letter doesn't exist, but I would be interested to learn why Harry didn't print this letter when he received it and made his original comments. With all due respect to Harry, isn't it about time that this letter was found and printed?

## The Importance of Safe Fax

Q: *Do I have to be married to have safe fax?*

A: Although married people fax quite often, there are many single people who fax complete strangers every day.

Q: *My parents say they never had fax when they were young and were only allowed to write memos to each other until they were 21. How old do you think someone should be before they can fax?*

A: Faxing can be performed at any age, once you learn the correct procedures.

Q: *If I fax something to myself, will I go blind?*

A: Certainly not, as far as we can see.

Q: *There's a place on our street where you can go and pay to fax. Is this legal?*

A: Yes, many people have no other outlet for their fax drives and must pay a 'professional' when their need to fax becomes too great.

Q: *What happens when I incorrectly do the procedures and I fax prematurely?*

A: Don't panic. Many people prematurely fax when they haven't faxed in a long time. Just start over, most people won't mind if you try again.

Q: *Should a cover always be used for faxing?*

A: Unless you are really sure of the one you are faxing, a cover should be used to ensure safe fax.

Q: *I have a personal and a business fax. Can transmissions become mixed up?*

A: Being bi-faxual can be confusing, but as long as you use a cover with each one, you won't transmit anything you're not supposed to.

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## Quote, Unquote

"You call a week a fast turnaround? Last time I took a week half of my subbers phoned up to ask where Smodnoc had got to! I suppose it is just a case of what the editor and subbers are used to; if you normally turn around with 10 days then a week is something to be commended for. If I told my subbers that Smodnoc would take a week to turn around in future there would probable be cries of "Slacker", etc. As they say, you can please some of the people..." Toby Harris in *Dolchstoß*163 (June 1992).

"Of course I could take umbrage (just a small one, thanks, and no sugar) and point out that your much-vaunted twenty-minute turnaround is really 10 days, because all those subzines run to a four-week deadline and it's only Slacker Harris who has to have an extra week." Richard Sharp replying to the above.

And now for something completely different.

"Incidentally, do you ever print waiting lists in *Dolchstoß*? It Sunderland would be nice to see who one's potential opponents are." Toby Harris in *Dolchstoß*164 (July 1992).

"I only print waiting lists once an issue. Should I do it more frequently, do you think?" Richard Sharp responding to the above.

((This is a slightly expanded version of an article I wrote, at short notice, for one of this year's NovaCon PR booklets. The person who was supposed to be writing the reviews, a certain Mr Harry Bond, let the side down by not getting off his arse and writing them, despite multiple promises to the contrary. Or at least that's the story I heard...))

## SF FANDOM: THE LAST 12 MONTHS, or so

Even the recluses living in the Fannish backwaters of the BSFA<sup>11</sup> are aware of The Great Argument. We annoy Jenny Glover by rarely contributing to *Matrix*<sup>12</sup> and it's an even rarer moment when one of us leaves our shallow pool for the strong currents and eddys of Fandom proper. Who needs walk to the Fan critics, when they are willing to walk to us?

Joseph Nicholas exclaims that 'The Day of the Fanzine Is Over!' to which Michael Ashley retorts that 'There are plenty of fanzines around; but they're almost all rubbish'. As ever the truth of the matter won't be found at either of these two lofty peaks of criticism, but in the green pastures filling the valleys below.

Yet... If the collection of fanzines in front of me are the fruits of twelve months pubbing then there is nothing to say except agree with Nigel Richardson's comment in *Slubberdegullion 3* that "*The mouldy old sponge pudding that is (or was) 'fannish fandom' has long since passed its sell-by date. But... (cue spooky organ chord) it refuses to die... it looks as if 'fannish fandom' has sunk down to being nothing more than a sleepy club for people who want to belong to something, but don't want to do anything too strenuous and don't want to put a clean shirt on first...*"

Is Fandom slowly wilting away as fans become more interested in other forms of fanac (conventions, pubmeets, net-hacking), is it because potentials fans find nothing to attract them into Fandom or is it simply that fans can't be bothered to provide any input?

*The Light Stuff 1* was not the start of a brave new movement in Fandom. It did not contain any great insights into fandom, nor fan writing of outstanding quality. Yet it was quite readable and there was material to comment on. The editor is a con-runner with an interest in filking who isn't sure if fanzines are interesting, but he is willing to \*make the effort\*.

"I've often wondered just what it is people see in fanzines. I mean I can see the point in newszines such as *Ansible*, of blessed memory, or serious discussion zines like *Reading Matters*, but the rest seem to be exercises in ego-inflation that just leave me cold... it seems that someone whose major hobbies seem to be conrunning and (oh horror!) filk singing cannot possibly be interested in real fannish activities and fanzines." Rhodri James in *The Light Stuff 2*.

Yet what response was there to this fanzine? One loc. Only one fan could be bothered send in a comment.

"This is the sort of thing that kills fanzines stone dead. I am not interested in slogging my guts out through several late evenings for such a total non-reaction. There is a chance I will anyway because I'm stupid like that, but this is not the way to encourage the growth of fanzines. If you plant out some bulbs in the garden and then ignore them, there is a decent chance that you will end up with dead bulbs. Likewise it's no sodding good telling people that they ought to write fanzines if you then pay no attention to the results. You just end up with dead fanzines, and people claiming that the art of fanwriting has gone the way of the dodo." Rhodri James

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<sup>11</sup>British Science Fiction Association

<sup>12</sup>and she annoys us by always complaining about our apathy



And fans wonder where the next generation of 'big' fanzines will come from? Rhodri has persevered with his fanzine, and manages eight pages of letters in his current issue, and has been producing issues at an almost staggering rate of knots — five issues in just over a year! They're small, sixteen pages or so, and contain a quite readable mix of filking news and comment, discussion on bulletin boards, fanzine reviews and general chit-chat (recently including the place of Christianity in Fandom, or more accurately how should an individual's Christianity shine through their fanac, and people's reactions to mental illness). Perhaps there is too much emphasis on the filk scene for the general fan, but the zine is building bridges between filkdom and 'fanzine fandom'.

In *Slubberdegullion 3* Nigel Richardson takes on and demolishes the concept that Fannish Fandom is, somehow, a 'special' Fandom that is intrinsically better than small-press publications and fanzines produced by other folk<sup>13</sup>. At the most basic level the only difference between Fannish zines and other publications is that Fannish zines contain references to other fannish zines. Or do they? Working my way through the pile of zines in front of me I've become convinced that not only are most fans not interested in loccing new zines but most editors aren't particularly interested in other zines. Or maybe it's just that people aren't pubbing their ish.

Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas continue to plough every onwards with FTT, a zine indifferent to the Fandom that spawned it and that supplies most of the fans who loc it. Young Harry reviewed it, and Joseph's contention of the imminent death of Fannish Fandom, in *Pulp 18* and makes a good job of it, even if Young Harry is another who believes that Fannish Fandom is the pinnacle of small-press evolution, the thing that every publisher should be aiming at.

FTT is always an interesting read, yet despite it's close links to Fandom you will look long and hard for any mention of Fandom, for any mention of other fanzines. Is this because Joseph does not consider the present crop of fanzines to be worthy of comment? Or that a small nod towards Fandom does not fit in with the more serious topics discussed in FTT? It is seemingly impossible to pick up a fanzine without a letter from Joseph discussing why Fanzine Fandom is in terminal decline; condemned to decay into nothing as the remaining fen sail westwards. Joseph's obsession with the End Of Fandom seems to date back three years, despite the never-ending stream of letters on the topic as he tried to do anything about it?

One conclusion that I've drawn from all the publications I've recently read is that 'Fandom' is splintering at an ever increasing rate. Whilst one particular part of 'Fandom', traditional fanzine-fandom, may be undergoing decline you only have to take one step back to see the wider picture: filkers are producing fanzines and many people are producing perzines aimed at a restricted audience.

The exclusion of any mention of Fandom is not specific to FTT but is found in many current zines — in fact common to almost all the zines I was given. This experimental observation fits in nicely with Joseph Nicholas' comment in *Matrix 97* (January 1992) that "*Unlike the fanzine fandom of the fifties, seventies and early eighties, the fanzines published today manifest no awareness that they are part of a shared community, or demonstrate any sense of collective endeavour.*"

*Shipyard Blues* has almost every ingredient you can think of to cook a rich fanzine. Rub together the intelligent use of fonts (less is more), excellent printing quality and good artwork to create a base that's a joy to look at. Mix in a collection of articles covering a range of topics (Cathedrals, money and dreams in issue 7) and the distillation of sixty or so loccers into a 20 page loc-column and you have a zine to enjoy, a zine to read and a zine to loc.

Yet there is something missing from the mixing bowel. There is little mention of other fanzines (well, none actually) and very little mention of Fandom.

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<sup>13</sup>or even filk

Conrunner continues on its mission to find the Perfect Convention by distributing articles on how to run conventions, issue 16 also contains the startling information that it isn't *really* a fanzine; fanzines being something else. The editorial in issue 17 speculates that the recent glut of conventions, which has seen several making loses and/or being cancelled due to poor support, has ended; perhaps convention fans are becoming more discerning in their drug of choice? Issue 17 also contains interesting, and maybe even useful, articles on running committee meetings, using microphones and the design of convention badges and the letter column is a mine of useful information on the ins and outs of con running.

In addition to Conrunner Ian Sorensen also pubs Bob?, a small friendly (if not furry) fanzine. This must be one of the few fanzines not to have printed a Joseph 'end of Fandom as we know it' Nicholas letter. But if Fandom's future is more fanzines like Bob? then it is on strong ground. The zine unfolds at a gentle pace with D West's 'Famous Fannish Moments In Literature' neatly separating the zine into two distinct sections; the fannish section and the political section. Ian writes about about Fandom has influenced his life, and the positive feedback from Fandom into the real-world. Instead of Fandom being full of people with no social-skills, it was a way for Ian to develop his social skills; a neat twist.

With Ian's links with con-running people Bob? may act as a link between Fandom and the con-runners, just as The Light Stuff may act as a link between filkdom and Fandom — reason enough why both these zines should receive your support. Vinc Clark comments in Bob's lettercolumn that conrunners seem to have lost sight of any purpose in running a con aside from the joy they gain from running it: Con-running for con-running sake. And many of the contributors to Conrunner seem to view Fandom, and fans, with distaste, a necessary (?) evil of the job?

Perhaps they mean Michael Ashley. A man so evil, sooo cynical that he was allowed to join the Leeds Group when the milk stains were still present and where he has honed his skills to ruthless perfection. He's even rumoured to eat three conrunners a day for breakfast.

The object of derision in Saliromania<sup>14</sup> 6 is ... The Enchanted Convention, the long awaited sequel to the fannish classic The Enchanted Duplicator.

Michael considers the writing style to be pedestrian and the humour strained, even at it's best. He dislikes the idealisation of fans as polite superbeings, always eager to help each other and interested only in seeking for bland, cosy comfort. He dislikes the lack of real emotions in this story which he describes as a is a vision of bland decency. Michael believes most fans live such pathetic nondescript lives that they will want to read this and try to act it out in their real lives.

Well this is bad enough, but Mike believes that this portrayal of fandom is so idealised it will put-off any nonfan who accidentally comes across it. Mike writes "*If I'd seen this Willis and Whyte effort though, I'd have thought that fans were brain-dead, styleless nerds and got out quick.*" In short Ashley considers it to be a waste of time and wonders why Walt Willis ever achieved a reputation as the fan-writer of the 1950's and early 1960's.

Hard hitting stuff. With it's hard hitting, no punches pulled letter-column I supposed this is a real-fans fanzine. Despite this it happens to be one of the best zines that I've been given to review. It's not bland, it's not polite. It's full of the emotion that Ashley believes is an integral part of fandom. This cynical look at fans and conventions is also found in Slubberdegullion 3, is it something in the water?

If Michael Ashley is the young man's old man then perhaps Ken Cheslin is an old man's young man. I think. Out House 3 comes back-to-back with A Child's Garen Of Olaf 11. Out House is full of people complaining about the good ol'e days, when fanzines were fanzines and they all carried the secret missing ingredient that is now only known to one or two old timer's. It's all a rather sickly "things ain't what they

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<sup>14</sup>Which folded as quickly as it started upon winning the Nova last year

used to be', even if Ken does print a list of all the fanzines he's received since the last issue: significantly it appears that most of the ones he enjoyed are pubbed overseas. It even contains the mandatory letter by Joseph Nicholas.

Turn to the other half of the zine, what do you find? A parody of old time fans lamenting the end of the good ol'e days by Ted Tubb. These zines aren't much to look at and have little in the way of presentation. Yet where Ashley shouts and screams and denounces, Ted Tubb manages to make the same points by gentle satire and most significantly of all, Ken would rather pub his issue then goto a con.

Erg is published by another old-timer, and goes on and on and on. With the page count kept down to 24 pages every issue and regular 'departments' on new books (5 pages), artwork in the pulps (2 pages) and 'weird & wonderful aircraft' (2 pages) there is little room for an editorial, letters and extras to be fitted in. The highlight of the zine is Terry's autobiography 'Carry On Jeeves', currently covering Terry's 1980 trip to North America; it only seems a few issues ago that he was writing about his war-time activity. Although far from the mainstream, and too 'departmentalised' for many people's tastes I always find something of interest in Erg. Issue 116 contains a short piece on the UK's Shortest lived SF magazine, Future Times and Terry's role in it whilst # 118 contains a pro-nuclear power editorial, is there any alternative to increasing nuclear power's share of the electricity market up towards 100% ?

Walt Willis writes that Götterdämmerung contains some high class material and there are letters from other oldsters (Ken Cheslin, Terry Jeeves and Ethel Lindsay) making favourable comparisons to previous zines from Northern Ireland such as Slant and Hyphen. Yet I agree more with Pamela Boal that: *"Well, you certainly are making good use of your equipment, computer programme and laser printer that is. However, beauty is only skin deep, I'm not too sure that you are yet fully using your mental equipment"*.

In the immortal words of Iain Bowen this zine, like most of the others reviewed here, could be described as worthy. It's interesting, it's readable, it's loccable... but with better editing and control it could be much better. Still, two of the three editors had their places of employment destroyed by the IRA in the preparation of this issue and their comments on this provide the best material in this issue.

Filklore is "The magazine of filk, music and science fiction" and is confirmation, as if it were needed, that a brave new fandom is splintering off from sfdom. We may sneer at the pages filled with new, exciting, filk songs and the fan-fiction. But can we claim that we are a superior life-form? The filk fans are, at least, out there, pubbing their ish, and enjoying themselves.

How can we reconcile the existence of publications such as Conrunner and Filklore with Joseph Nicholas' claim in Matrix 97 (January 1992) that "... there's no reason why why filkers et al can't produce fanzines... — but the fact is that they don't." Or is it simply the case that these publications 'are not really fanzines, you know'. Not Fandom as we know it.

Songs hails from the small press side of fandom and covers a variety of topics: reviews, news, a couple of poems, a letter or two and general chit-chat. Peter Presford writes:-

"Because there are some naughty editor's who get rather swollen heads, really believing that their magazine is the 'ONE'. When it is obvious to all and sundry that it's pretty crappy. And it is an even bigger pity that some reviewers don't be honest in their reviews and damn well say so."

An argument that I have heard before! Still Songs is a very informal, and most enjoyable, perzine. Most will ignore it because it has links with the small press people, and hence 'isn't really a fanzine': yet is all that different from the 'recognised' fanzines?

**Moving Finger** is a two-page production from David Bell, a perzine covering such things as the poor state of British farming (Dave's a farmer), a couple of film reviews, a con report and comments on the use of his modem (an increasingly popular topic for discussion in fanzines, see recent issues of *The Light Stuff*).

We conclude this short survey of fanzines with the thoughts of Nigel Richardson: "*Whatever may once have been worth saying about 'fandom' has been said, and said a million times. 'Our' fandom is all used up, exhausted, drained of life. All that remains is to say this... There's nothing left to argue about.*"

**A Child's Garden Of Olaf:** Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, WEST MIDLANDS. DYS 1LA  
Issue Seen: 11 (November 1991)

**Bob:** Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodsay Walk, HAMILTON. ML3 7HY Issue Seen: 2 (October 1991)

**Conrunner:** Ian Sorensen, 7 Wooside Walk, HAMILTON. ML3 7HY Issues seen: 16 (November 1991), 17 (April 1992)

**Erg:** Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scare Drive, SCARBOROUGH YO12 5RQ Issues Seen: 115 (October 1991)-116 (January 1992), 118 (July 1992)

**Filklore:** LAPF Publications, 45 Clarendon Villas, Hove, Sussex. BN3 3RE (send a large SAE) Volume 1 #2 (November 1991)

**Götterdämmerung:** James McKee, Flat 1, 26 Elaine Street, Stranmillis Road, Belfast. Bt9 5AR. N.IRELAND. Issue Seen: Volume 2 #1 (Spring 1992).

**The Light Stuff:** Rhodri James, 25 Wycliffe Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 3DJ. Issues seen: 1 (July 1991)-5 (August 1991)

**Moving Finger:** David Bell, Church Farm, North Kelsey, LINCOLN. Issue seen: 6 (undated).

**Out House:** Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, WEST MIDLANDS. DYS 1LA Issue seen: 3 (November 1991)

**Saliromania:** Michael Ashly, 9 Blakeley House, Kelmore Grove, Woodside, BRADFORD. BD6 2RF Issue seen 6 (undated)

**Shipyard Blues;** David D. Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, BUCKS. MK16 9AZ Issues seen: 6 (April 1991)-7 (March 1992)

**Slubberdegullion:** Nigel E. Richardson, 9 Windsor Green, East Garforth, LEEDS LS25 2LG Issue seen: 3 (February 1992).

**Songs;** Peter E. Presford, 'Rose Cottage', 3 Tram Lane, Buckley, Clewyd, UK. CH7 3LB. Issue Seen: 16 (August/Winter 1991).

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## Quote, Unquote

"Reality is simply a crutch for those that can't deal with fanzine publishing." Bill Bowers in *Stet* 5 (March 1992) quoting from his speech at ConFusion in 1992.

((Reprinted from the American zine ARENA #40 (February 1974).))

## THE HOBBY TO A NOVICE BY EDI BIRSAN

It all started in Brooklyn, like most things of value, when John Boardman, a mild mannered physics and science fiction fan started to publish *Graustark*, a zine to run a postal section of diplomacy between several science fiction people who wanted to play.

As in science fiction fandom the publishing habit is a highly developed form of expression, it is only natural that they would initiate the first major zines and start press releases: seeing that 99% of the people then involved in the fandom were bent towards writing anyway. With *Graustark* came the idea of a GM who adjudicates the moves and charges a flat fee for his costs.

From 1963-1965 the hobby spread through the normal channels of Science Fiction Fandom and pulled in many of their publishers into the production of Diplomacy zines. Starting in the winter of 1965-66 John McCallum began to make the bridge between the then existing Diplomacy world and the large untapped group of Avalon Hill wargamers. This brought in a flood of players that tripled the size of the hobby.

Meanwhile the hobby had also made contact with the Bridge groups and along with Science Fiction fans and Wargamers they formed the third group, by background, to enter the hobby.

In 1968 the hobby was introduced by England through the publishing of *Albion* by Don Turnbull. Unlike the North American experience the British zines started by first going through the Wargamers and then around 1970-72 making modest contacts with the Science Fiction groups.

In 1970, Games Research (the people who manufacture Diplomacy) started to place a flyer in the game listing the various zines that were available around the world. The first response to that flyer was none other than Walter Buchanan who was fascinated by the hobby and determined to form up an archive of all zines with the hope of an eventual book publication on moves etc along the lines of chess development... which he was acquainted with being a chess player for some time before he started Diplomacy.

From 1970 on the Hobby began to be subjected to a new kind of novice which came from all walks of life and was not distinguished by any set background such as the wargamers, Bridge and Science Fiction fans. This explosion of people also brought more zines on the scene, to satisfy everyone's desire to play and publish.

Unfortunately the explosion also brought a burst of games folding due to publishers dropping out and games ruined or hurt because players dropped out. The size of the hobby was such that the whole structure threatened to come down in chaos if the past methods were left to the individual anarchistic or existential systems. So after numerous failures at forming an organization the IDA: International Diplomacy Association was formed to help provide the needed services and news medium so as to keep the hobby together.

And that is about as brief a review of the past as you are going to find. It should be also noted that not a single publication has ever been known to make a profit and at best the attempt with game fees and subscription rates is to break even.

## Comments:

- I believe that Don's first issue was in 1969, *not* 1968.
- Take the second to last paragraph with a pinch of salt, Edi was President of the IDA for several years and his views are coloured by this! The IDA did not save the hobby! Did the hobby *need* saving? I think not. Still, the person who started the IDA reads *The Mouth Of Sauron*; perhaps Larry Peery will care to comment?

## Hobby Quotes

*Stan — Italy* "Your win doesn't hurt my feelings at all; you played well and deserve victory. The bonehead play of O'Brien mars your victory, however. He, through duplicity or sheer stupidity, obviously threw the game to you. Why did he choose to fight me over Kiel, when Denmark was wide open to him? All he achieved was to deprive us both of badly needed builds. He did it not once but twice, claiming the first time it was an error! After the second error I decided to attack him. his response was to attack Russia and further help your cause. On your victory trophy he should be mentioned as supporting character. I honestly do not understand play like Mr. O'Brien's. I have to believe he is getting something else from you or that he's just plain stupid."

"You can't derive much satisfaction from beating me either; according to the Marco Poll<sup>15</sup> no one in the hobby thinks I play worth a damn. I am beginning to believe I've wasted a lot of time in this hobby and should move on." Stan Johnson (France, 13 centers) to Italy (17 centers) in DIPLOMACY 5 (1990HB) in *Maniac's Paradise* 41 (July 1992).

*France-Italy* "You are one to talk about having a life, when the highlights of your week are your Saturday night bath and self abuse. Winning this game will probably be the most exciting thing ever to happen to you. You'll probably be pounding your chest for a month." (Stan Johnson, France, to Bruce McClung, Italy). 1990HB *Maniac's Paradise* 42 (August 1992).

Stan Johnson: "In reply to McClung's statements I say: being so disorganized that you don't have five or ten minutes to write orders, and being so undependable that you can't keep a commitment that you made voluntarily, and being so selfish that you ruin a game for the other six people, doesn't necessarily mean you have a life. More likely you're a selfcentered airhead. I don't condemn people who once in a great while NMR; I'm referring to people who NMR every second or third turn. I have never seen people of that stripe beat anyone [...] I have more of a life than McClung could ever dream of; but I don't use that as an excuse to duck commitments I make. It's a quality called maturity, Bruce, you ought to try it. It only looks hard." *Maniac's Paradise* 42 (August 1992)

*Russia — Germany*: "Quintessential huh? What. is your mother writing press for you now? I know a pinhead like you could never use such a big word on his own. If you're so smart and I'm a jerk, why am I prospering in a position you the Gutless Boy Wonder had to bail out of? I'll admit I did do poorly here<sup>16</sup>. I made the quintessential mistake of trying to work with you — that's been the source of all my troubles. But I have seen the light and expect things to start turning around. So you admit you're not man enough to fight me, you have to let a girl do it.<sup>17</sup> You know that despite the disparity in our forces I'd kick your no-talent ass, and if Turkey and England stop holding me back I'll do just that." Stan Johnson in DIPLOMACY 12 (1991AW) in *Maniac's Paradise* 41 (July 1992).

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<sup>15</sup> which includes a best player section...

<sup>16</sup> 2 centers, Germany has 6 in Winter 1904

<sup>17</sup> Cathy Ozog is England

((Reprinted from 1901 and all That... 77 (Summer 1977).))

## EDITORIAL

By Mick Bullock

I HAVE SEEN THE LIGHT — I have been wrong all along: Soccerdross is a fantastic game after all (Phil Stutt: “A much better game than some people think,” which doesn’t necessarily mean much if some people think it is absolutely pathetic in the first place. Not that I’m one of them anyway. (Will is though.) Well, I’m not anymore.) Therefore I am going to run down all my dip games (crap game of pure skill) and convert 1901 to a soccerdross zine (note, zine). Next issue will include 416 pages of rules (including one or two new concepts such as ‘5% chance of jock-strap chafing — down one level’ and more realistic training incidents: ‘Center half slips goalie one in shower — 1 goal start for greater team spirit.’ The important thing to remember about Soccerdross and most of the other dice games is that the more you dress up the trimmings, the less people will notice that the meat is off) — all for only ten pence!

Why has enlightenment taken so long? After all, Clive Booth has repeatedly urged us to “Remember Colchester beating Leeds?” in order to impress upon us the realism that the lucky throw of the dice can simulate; but I have always put it down to the mindless ramblings of a Derby (pronounced Duh by) County supporter. But the evidence is too strongly against me. For now I read in no less an organ than the mighty Jigsaw — “But should Southampton have beaten Man Utd?” Should they indeed?

Can one ever forget that picture of young Stokes racing down the lush green sward of Wembley’s page 14, a dice (I use the more logical G&P system of dice=1, die = plural — who got it wrong in the first place I often wonder?) at his feet, beats the half-center (NMR), rounds the fullback (dropped F03) and shoots — EUREKA! It’s a goal! The dice landed with a 6 face-up! A one or two would have been ‘Goalkeeper save’, a three or four ‘Shoots wide, goal kick’, a five ‘Boot flies off, hits referee in face, throw again for one, two, or three match suspensions.’ But it was a six! Goal! Against all the odds, Southampton have won. We’ve simulated reality with just one dice, try it for yourself (No, not that, Pete). Take two dice, sorry, die, one red for Liverpool, one blue for Everton; throw both and add three to each red throw (better stadium, better players and better watch it in a couple of day’s time). You’ll find that Everton win approximately one game in twelve and draws a similar number. See, realistic simulation rules supreme.) Should Southampton have beaten Man Utd? Of course, cos they threw the dice higher.

The world’s our oyster. Take any sport (or situation) you can imagine, tart it up with a mind-bending array of rules and tinsel, confuse fate and chance and throw upmteen dice, sorry dice, to get REAL-LIFE results. What’s that? Levithan has done it with everything already? Horse-racing? Gladiators? Cowboys and Indians? (they haven’t done darts yet, hah!) Oh well, not to worry, we can always stick to Dross & Dross; we can even simulate the ‘laws of magic’ at that (qv Lew Pulsipher, Chimera. Quite so, Lew, pat pat (on head), quite so).

Soccerdross players (and GMs especially) (and all other postal dicegames players who take the simulated results seriously, ie. anyone who argues “But didn’t Colchester/Southampton beat Leeds/Man Utd” — I weep for you. But don’t cry for me, Argentina, who needs to travel 6000 miles to the World Cup when you can stimulate it right here? And now be quiet — I’ve got to roll 5 sixes in a row to prove that Richard Dunn should have k-o’d Joe Bugner after all. Maybe I’ll market this one — in a blood-red box for added realism? Or something softer — to suit all those soft in the head enough to play it.

# Diplomacy Test #1

By Harold Reynolds

Test your knowledge of the Diplomacy game board by filling each blank with one of the places listed below.

1. There's .....I can do 100 geography questions for tomorrow.
2. The boy cried so much he was called the Prince of .....
3. First mark all these Geography tests, ..... the labs.
4. You failed the Geography exam? You ....., it was so easy!
5. Fred is ten minutes late! ..... he going to show up?
6. "....." Not at all! Bud's the nicest guy I know!"
7. Geographical opposite of Lowerland. ....
8. When you run the race I'll stand at the side and ..... on to victory.
9. "That ball is a bomb!" "Yes, I hear the ..... too."
10. It is generally not a good idea to ..... boat until the engine is turned off.
11. "That map of Belgium belongs to Russel?" "Yes, it's ..... map."
12. I don't want to ....., but your essay is due tomorrow.
13. Bovine sculpture made from entirely from moss. ....
14. The "Greek Cement Swindle" soon became known as the "con-.....".
15. Did you manage to..... your Geography homework?
16. When people go nuts about rowing, it's called .....
17. Israeli government's policy: one..... two/too serious.
18. My downtown apartment is great! I..... few minutes from work!
19. My sister wants to balance an atlas on her nose while juggling three globes? Boy, is.....!
20. "Where does Fred hurt?" "Fred's..... is in his lower back."

- |             |            |            |           |
|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| a) Algeria  | f) Crete   | k) Moscow  | p) Spain  |
| b) Ankara   | g) Denmark | l) Norway  | q) Syria  |
| c) Baltic   | h) Finnish | m) Romania | r) Turkey |
| d) Brussels | i) Ireland | n) Russia  | s) Venice |
| e) Budapest | j) Livonia | o) Sicily  | t) Wales  |





## Diplomacy Test #2

By *Harold Reynolds*

Test your knowledge of the Diplomacy game board by filling each blank with one of the places listed below.

1. Sugar is added to ..... your coffee.
2. A nice city for wandering around .....
3. Sign at the salad bar: "...self." 4. I don't want an argument. I'll be much happier if he a-... with me.
5. The..... tree can be found in the swamps of Florida.
6. I don't know how to..... piano. I'll get a pro to do it.
7. When finished a lecture, Professor Lund says "....."
8. It is difficult to keep a-..... of all the new developments in Geography.
9. A good city to buy gerbils, mice and guinea pigs is.....
10. The situation went from badda to .....
11. .... you going to finish this Geography test?
12. When selecting Charles and Nick, the prof said, "You, Charies and ....."
13. The preferred perfume of oceanographers is ..... No. 5.
14. Can a general become world-famous? Of .....
15. Where to find the best sardines .....
16. We are the Soviet Maniac Society ..... for today is puna
17. The ..... keeps a sailing ship from tipping ove
18. A downpour of ukeleles could only occur in.....
19. In poker, a ..... two of a kind
20. Geography meets baseball: "Hey, you!..... next at bat!"

- |              |           |             |            |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| a) Amsterdam | f) Cyprus | k) Munich   | p) Sweden  |
| b) Armenia   | g) Europe | l) Paris    | q) Tunis   |
| c) Brest     | h) Greece | m) Rome     | r) Ukraine |
| d) Channel   | i) Kiel   | n) Sardinia | s) Vienna  |
| e) Corsican  | j) London | o) Serbia   | t) Warsaw  |

## FLEET QUIZ

By Jamie Dreier

Here is a little quiz about the topology of fleet moves. Try to answer the questions without looking at a map. They range from very easy to quite difficult.

### Knights on the Rim

DIPLOMACY's inventor tried to set up the size of the board, its 'saturation' with pieces, and the move-power of individual pieces, so that the game would approximate chess in these features. The pieces move more like kings than like any other piece but fleets have a strange sort of move-power, so one might think of them (*very roughly*) as knights. All woodpushers know that a knight on the 'rim' (edge of the board) loses a great deal of its power, since the number of squares it controls from there is small. There are spots on the Diplomacy board from which fleets control very little territory.

1. Which spaces have the fewest 'fleet-like' neighbors? A space has  $n$  fleet-like neighbors if it can be occupied by a fleet and that fleet has a choice of  $n$  spaces to (try to) occupy on its move. (I will count the space it occupies as one of the spaces to which it can move, since it can hold.)
2. Define a 'second order fleet-like neighbor' as a space to which a fleet can move in *two* moves. Thus, Mar is a second order fleet-like neighbor of West Med.

Which spaces have the fewest second order fleet-like neighbors? (Again, include hold orders in your calculations.)

3. Which spaces share the dubious second place distinction for fewest second order fleet-like neighbors?

### Air Lift

4. Suppose at the start of the game, all players cooperated to move some given army anywhere it wanted to go. Which army/destination would take the largest number of moves? (This looks like an army question, but of course it's at least as much a fleet question.)

### Unanswerable Fire

5. An army occupies space X, and a fleet occupies Y (count different coasts as different Y's). The army can attack the fleet, but for the fleet to attack the army would require  $n$  moves. For which X and Y is  $n$  largest?



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## TOP PLAYERS ON CALHAMER POINT COUNT RATING LIST COMMENTS BY FRED C. DAVIS JNR

Randolph Smyth presented the complete list of over 1500 names of the players who have won or who participated in a share of the draw in a Regular Postal Diplomacy game run in North America in *Diplomacy World #51 (Summer 1988)*. This included every Regular game ever played to completion and reported to the BNC. It also includes the names of those Overseas players who participated in an International game in an American or Canadian zine, but not, of course, their total ratings. As such, it is complete to about June 1988. Many of the people listed have long since departed from the Postal hobby, but it is an amazing historical document. I thought you might like to have the names of the Top Players. An "\*" indicates a retired player.

Rank	Player	Calhamer Pts	Total No of Wins (1)
1.	Ron Kelly*	40.86	24
2.	Doug Beyerlein	19.90	16
3.	Edi Birsan	18.31	15
4.	Eric Verheiden	18.15	9
5.	Kathy B. Caruso	16.32	8
6.	Lee Kendter, Sr	15.86	11
7.	Randolph Smyth	15.78	14
8.	Andy Phillips*	14.88	12
9.	Blair Cusack*	12.36	9
10.	Dan Stafford	12.00	8
11.	Dave Ditter	11.28	6
12.	Dave Carter	10.90	3
13.	Tom Ripper*	10.28	9
14.	Steve McLendon*	10.11	8
15.	Dick Martin	9.35	7

### (1) Including Wins as a Replacement Player

(Points are awarded only for Wins and Draws. A Rulebook Victory gives you 1.00 point. A Draw divides the single point among the Drawees. No points are awarded for Second Place, etc. Therefore, the only listings shown are those for Wins & Draws. Many people may have completed more recent games without getting a win or draw, but those finishes are not included on the CPCL.)

I've taken Randolph Smythe's figures and worked out who are the Top Players based on Starting positions only. Randolph included the "Starting Only" Calhamer ratings in his report, but did not break them down separately. This may be a more valid rating of the better players, but note that seven of the first ten names are the same.

TOP TWELVE PLAYERS BASED ON STARTING POSITIONS ONLY

Rank	Player	Ratings	Wins	.....Overall.....	
				Calhauer Rating	Rank
1.	Ron Kelly*	20.20	24	40.86	1.
2.	Lee Kendter, Sr.	15.03	11	15.86	6.
3.	Randolph Smyth	14.33	14	15.78	7.
4.	Kathy B. Caruso	13.68	8	16.32	5.
5.	Edi Birsan	12.28	15	18.31	3.
6.	Blair Cusack*	11.20	9	12.36	9.
7.	Tom Ripper*	10.28	9	10.28	13. (2)
8.	Steve McLendon*	10.11	8	10.11	14. (2)
9.	Dan Stafford	10.00	8	12.00	10.
10.	Dave Ditter	9.41	6	11.28	11.
11.	Don Ditter*	9.26	6	9.26	16. (2)
12.	Brenton ver Ploeg*	8.50	8	8.50	18. (2)

(2) Player whose Wins were \*ALL\* as a Starting Player.

These are the figures for the most wins for \*starting\* players in Regular Diplomacy games (ignoring Standby positions):

Ron Kelly* 14	Brenton Ver Ploeg* 8
Randolph Smyth 13	Steve McLendon* 8
Edi Birsan 11	Dave Crockett* 8
Lee Kendter, Sr. 10	John Smythe* 8
Blair Cusack* 9	Kathy Byrne Caruso 7
Tom Ripper* 9	Doug Beyerlein 7

(\*) Retired player.

Using only people who are still around, my dream game would consist of Edi Birsan, Doug Beyerlein, Kathy Caruso, Lee Kendter Sr, Dave Ditter, Dan Stafford and Randolph Smyth. And, if we could get Walt Buchanan come out of retirement, I'd ask him to be either the GM or first standby. I'd also ask Dave McCrumb to standby. (Stafford, Smyth and McCrumb have won the first three Koning Awards as Best Hobby Player.)

It would be interesting to read a UK ratings league based upon Calhauer Point Count, and to compare it to the American one. Unfortunately this is not possible since there has not been a British Statsman since 1984 and it would be virtually impossible to find the details for all games that have finished in the last decade. Even reading through the more important zines to determine game-end results would be a major feat.

Some of you will have noticed that there isn't much art-work in this issue, there may be none in it. There is a simple explanation, I am pressed for time. Ryk Downes goes on holiday on Friday, it is now Tuesday evening. The originals *must* be in the post on Wednesday, but first of all I must print them out.