



- 'B' Aug/Sept 1917 p.5
- 'C' Spring 1914 p.4
- 'E' Spring 1912 p.5
- 'H' 1 Sulime 3019 p.6
- 'I' 2 Nemine 3019 p.7
- 'J' Spring 1905 p.5
- 'K' Autumn 1902 p.3
- 'L' Spring 1902 p.4
- 'M' Spring 1902 p.2
- 'N' Spring 1902 p.2

DEADLINE: WED. 26 SEPTEMBER

It's that anarchist again, bringing you that hodgepodge of irrelevant info and irreverent insults from John Piggott, 17 Monmouth Rd, Oxford, OX1 4TD, U.K, (Tel: 0865-45045) and duplicated by Ian Maule. Ethil the Frog costs 60p for ten issues, £1.01 for seventeen; overseas rates are unchanged at 4/\$1 airmail, 8/\$1 third class. This is Tapeworm Publication No. 41 and the circulation as I type this is 87! Beat that, Bullock!

Postal rates rise

The GPO is increasing its charges as from September 10. Below are the old and new charges for inland first class mail:

	2oz	4oz	6oz	8oz	10oz	12oz	14oz	16oz
Old rate:	3	4	6	8	10	13	15	17
New rate:	3½	5	8	10	12	14	16	18

Inland second-class mail will also cost more; a letter under 2oz will now cost 3p instead of the present 2½p. Slight increases are being levied on overseas surface letters (which I don't use); airmail rates are being untouched, I believe.

All this means that, in common with all other British Diplomacy publications, Ethil the Frog must raise its subscription rates to accommodate the change. The new cost will be 10 issues for 60p, or 17 for £1.01, as intimated in the colophon. Existing subscriptions will be honoured at the old rate.

Editorial burlblings

Those of you who read the zine starting at the back will already know that this issue of Ethil the Frog contains only six pages of games. Partly this is due to the editorial feltpen - of which more anon - but it may also be due to the diminishing number of games being run in this rag. The loss of four games has probably cut a good two pages out of the game section of Ethil, and it leaves a hole.

To be quite honest, I had planned for more space to be taken up with games in the new-look split Ethil. But equally I don't mind the thought of having less work to do - the adjudicating and stencilling of games is what takes the time when I produce this thing. (In fact, I was at one time toying with the idea of phasing out the games, eventually keeping Ethil on as a genzine like Hoosier Archives).

To get to the point, anyway, I am toying with the idea of starting a couple more games in these pages. One, at least, would be an international game - I have had several declarations of interest from overseas readers - and this would probably have deadlines and reports in alternate game issues of Ethil, six weeks or so apart.

((Continued on page 8))

1973EB ('N'): Spring 1902

ENGLISH WAR EFFORT RECOVERS!
TURKS IN GREECE!

ENGLAND (Davies): a wal-pic c by f eng; f nth-nwy.

GERMANY (I.Lawson): a kie-hol; a ber-sil; f den-swe; a hol-ruh;
a mun-tyr.

RUSSIA (Herd): a stp-fin; f gob-swe; a rum-ser; a gal-rum s by f sev.

TURKEY (Davidson): a bul-gre s by f aeg; a con-bul; f smy-ems.

AUSTRIA (R.Sharp): f tri wishes it was an army; a vie s f tri;
a bud-gal; a ser s f gre; f gre s (russian) a rum-bul*.

ITALY (Ferguson): f tun-ion; f nap-apu; a ven-tri s by a tyr.

FRANCE (Feintuck): a par-bur s by a gas; f bre-eng; a spa-por.

*Retreat: Austrian f gre-alb.

Vienna to Berlin: Danke vielmals.

Trieste, Greece: ~~Minister Dolchstoss von Hinten is spending a few days~~
aboard the city of Trieste, now morred in Greek waters, amid much Turkish
delight. Turkish and Italian forces are expected to rendezvous here shortly
to discuss the partition of Russia, and Sultan Andi Baba has kidnapped Mitzi
Knödlbrust as a gift for his lickspittle ally. Minister Dolchstoss, informed
of this, said he didn't want her back, though her front was a different matter.

Vienna to Constantinople, Rome & St Petersburg: Europe needs no more martyrs.
A struggle against insuperable odds is both foolish and undignified. Further
resistance is hopeless; you are surrounded.

1973DE ('M'): Spring 1902

PIMLEY SENDS TWO PRESS RELEASES
(YET ANOTHER DOLCHSTOSS RECORD)

ENGLAND (60746185 Ovens, A.J.): f lon-eng; a edi-nwy c by f nth;
f nwy-bar; a bel-pic.

GERMANY (Charlton): a ruh-bur s by a mun; a ber-pru; a hol stands;
f den stands.

RUSSIA (Pringle): f gob-stp(sc); a war s a gal; a gal & a sev s f rum;
f rum stands.

TURKEY (Mellish): a con ms a bul; f smy-aeg; f bla stands.

AUSTRIA (Lowe): f gre-ion; a ser-gre; a bud-ser; a vie-tyr s by a tri.

ITALY (Pimley): a ven s (german) a mun-tyr; f rom-tys; f nap-ion;
f tun-naf; a mar-bur*.

FRANCE (Shaw): a par-bur; f spa(s)-mar s by a gas; a por-spa.

*Retreats: Italian a mar flees in terror to pie.

Gibbon Press: The High Court today approved an order evicting the pimply
Italian squatters from the public convenience in Marseilles in which they had
set up a 'Mister Tripee' shop. The Italian government are reported to have
said that such an action could lead to war.

Apparently the French government "doesn't give a damn" since the Mister
Tripee shop "couldn't even deliver a fourpenny one".

Dear Aunt Ethil: Thank you for the suggestion that I take Urdu lessons. I
will show you how I'm progressing later on.

Dear Brown Cow: Do the instructors at your school greet each other by saying,
"Urdu, Urdu?"

Rhone Valley: The Italian zeroth army hastily quit the smelly flshing-village
of Marseilles when it was rumoured that there was good wine to be had in the
north.

Ethil the Frog: That's why they went east, eh, Les?

Ankara: The Minister for Transport, Mr Martin Marsh-Mellish, has announced
the introduction of free cruises to Cyprus for old-age pensioners.

Ethil the Frog: Shawly this last joke rates as the lowest of the Lowe...

1973DC ('K'): Autumn 1902

GERMANY DESCENDS INTO MARSEILLES
BOLSHEVIK STAR TREASURY GAINS £1.00

BRITAIN (Waldie): f nwy s (german) f swe; f wal-eng s by f nth;
a lon stands.

GERMANY (Sherrad): a sil-war; a pru-lvn; f bal-gob; a bur-mar;
a ruh-bel; f swe unordered.

RUSSIA (Holt): f gob-stp; a lvn-war s by a ukr; a bud s f rum*;
f rum stands.

TURKEY (Connolly): f aeg-gre s by a bul & a ser; f bla stands.

AUSTRIA (Lettice): f gre* refers jeering cretins to 'H' game.

ITALY (Bullock): a vie-bud s by a tri; f ion-gre; f nap-ion;
a tyr-vie.

FRANCE (Pratt): f eng-bel s-by a pic; a par-bur; a por unordered.

*Retreats: Austrian f gre & Russian a bud both annihilated.

B: 4 bases: lon, lpl, edi, nwy. No change.

G: 7 bases: ber, mun, kie, hol, den, swe, mar. No build requested - 1 short.

R: 5 bases: stp, mos, war, sev, rum. Builds a mos.

T: 6 bases: con, ank, smy, ser, gre, bul. Builds f con, a ank.

A: Eliminated!

I: 7 bases: ven, rom, nap, tun, tri, vie, bud. Builds a ven, a rom.

F: 5 bases: bre, par, por, spa, bel. Builds a bre.

Athens: Lefty Took lowered his pistol and watched the Italian soldiers sink to the ground. He took a large book, entitled "I'll get you for this you bastards, Vol.III" from Fatso Bolger, and entered the names 'Connolly' and 'Holt'. Fatso gunned (what else?) the engine and, machine-guns cutting a swathe through the Italian ranks, they careered down the road to Piraeus.

Dear Ethil the Frog: Non-readers of Ethil the Frog would probably agree that sarcasm is the lowest form of wit.

-- Hobbiton (Caustic Comments Dept.)

Dear Hobbiton: My, my. Your caustic comments really burn me up.

-- Ethil the Frog.

Munich: The Kaiser had just returned from a flying trip to Austria, where he had been invited to a huge Lettice shredding festival. He stormed into the Court room gasping.

"It's horrible, horrible!" he shouted. "Green things, magled up - everywhere!"

"You mean... Bollochius? He's invaded the lettuce plantations?"

"No, no, not the lettuces. But I told him not to leave those damned plastic soldiers out in the sun too long!"

St Petersburg: Are the Italian armies supplied by the Leaning Tower of Pizza?

Captain's Log (Star date 1902.9): "Uhura - hail that vessel!"

"She answers 'Enterprise', Captain."

"Open hailing frequency. -- Who do you think you are? We are the Enterprise; you're supposed to be impersonating us in BDC22!"

"No - we're the real Enterprise; you're supposed to be in BDC22!"

"But if we're both here, who the hell is it in BDC22?"

"I don't know... Mr Sulu, lay in a course for Amersham!"

St Petersburg: Is it a coincidence that the answer to one of the word problems in G&P is 'CARDSHARPER'? Now who writes that bridge column?

Ethil the Frog: A spokesman for G&P told us: "Your allegations hardly cause us to shuffle our feet in dismay, but if you don't cease we'll have to pull some aces out of our sleeve. In a court of law the cards would be stacked high against you."

Berlin to ~~Vizcaya~~ Athens? I've got more bits of plastic than you, so nyaah, nyaah!!!

An unknown room in an unknown house belonging to an unknown person..... in an unknown land: Damn! Here's the last post and I haven't thought up any press for this game! What can I write? Be like John Piggott and parody Foundation? Be like the O.N.S. and insult Mick Bullock? Be like John Lettice and insult everybody? I know - I'll be like Andy Davidson and write nothing at all!!

1973DD ('L'): Spring 1902

TURKEY GETS CLOBBERED
GERMANY ENTERS NORTH SEA!

ENGLAND (R.Sharp): f eng-mac; a bel-pic; f nwy s (german) a den-swe

GERMANY (Durrheim): a bur-gas; a mun-bur; a den-swe; f hol-nth;
a kie-hol.

RUSSIA (Harris): a arm-ank; s by f bla; a rum s (austrian) a ser-bul;
a sev-ukr; a stp-nwy s by f swe.

TURKEY (Bott): a bul stands*; ~~A/loph/stry~~ s by a ank*; f smy-aeg;
f aeg-ion.

AUSTRIA (B.Sharp): a ser-bul; a bud-ser; a vie-bud; a tri & f gre stand.

ITALY (Davidson): f ion-ems; f nap-ion; a ven & a tun stand.

FRANCE (Oliver): a pic-par; f por-mao; a spa-gas; f bre-eng;
f mar stands.

((SEE PAGE 8 FOR NEW PLAYER!))

There never was a Turkish a con, Gil - are you sure your board's set up correctly?

*Retreats: Turkish a bul & a ank overwhelmed to die at their posts...

Constantinople: Having arrived in Turkey on his way to Jerusalem, Super Crusader had to follow the ancient Crusading tradition of sacking Constantinople. And so, as he thundered through the market-place on his horse he impaled a loaf of bread on the end of his lance. The Turkish shopkeepers shouted abuse after him, but Super Crusader merely looked back to give them a contemptuous sneer - and rode straight into a brick wall.

When he awoke, he found the local urchins had stolen his horse, so he proceeded on foot to the ferry. When he arrived, however, the boat was already under way to the east coast. Super Crusader, an expert swimmer, thought nothing of the distance between himself and the boat, but plunged straight into the waters of the Bosphorus. As he was wearing about six tons of armour, he immediately sank.

Liverpool: Tap ... tap ... tap ... LASH! Tap-tap-tap. "Come on, Piggott, I want that army ready for the summer builds." LASH!! Taptaptap....

St-Juire: Poor sport again today. Bagged another kraut this afternoon - feller was peein' in a ditch! Crept up behind him and got him with the 12-bore. Teach him to foul the countryside! Poor specimen, only a hundred pounds or so, ridiculous little moustache, hardly worth the shot. Carried him back and hung him with the others - they're gettin' good and high, but with no ghillies to gralloch 'em what's the use? Bloody awful country, Turkey.

Lincoln's Inn: Dear Sir, Further to ours of Ethil ult, we feel it right to inform you that Mr Sharp now admits that Irritating Jeff Oliver has now been drawn to his attention, and that Mr Oliver is or was or could be Irritating. Should it be found necessary now or at any future time to confine Mr Oliver to an institute as you suggested our client would have no objection. Yours faithfully, Davidson, Davidson, Pimley, Davidson, Bedbug, Frog & Sherrad.

St-Juire: The McStag female very sportive again tonight. Must be on heat. Have to have her put down if this goes on - chap can't sleep.

Ankara: Come back Kemal Ataturk, all is forgiven. It was a bad joke anyway.

1972EK ('C'): Spring 1914

ENGLISH FORCES PARALYSED AS FRENCH SWEEP
BACK INTO MUNICH

ENGLAND (Elsmore): nmr // f edi, f lpl, f lon, f eng, f ber, a hol,
a ruh, a mun*, a den, a sil; a war, a lvn, a mos & a sev stand.

RUSSIA (Oliver): a rum-bul.

TURKEY (Jeffery): a bud-ser; a tri-ser; f adr-tri s by a vie;
f ion stands s by f alb & f aeg; a con-bul; a ank-arm.

FRANCE (Haven): f mao-bre; a bel s a bur; a tyr-mun s by a bur;
a pie-mar; a apu ms a ven; f wms-tys s by f nap & f tun.

*Retreats: English a mun annihilated.

GREGORY WARD, Lindisfarne, St Nicholas Hill, Leatherhead, Surrey, is asked to submit standby orders for England. Thank you.

1972CI ('E'): Spring 1912

FRENCH FLEET STEAMS TOWARDS LIVERPOOL!
ENGLAND GETS WARSAW AT LAST

ENGLAND (Feintuck): a stp-mos; a lvn-war s by a sil & a pru;
a ber s a sil; f kie, f hol, f nth, f nwy & f bal all stand.

RUSSIA (Elsmore): nmr // a mos, a war*, a ukr, a sev & f aeg stand.

AUSTRIA (R.Lawson): a bud & a ser s a tri; f gre s f alb;
f alb s (russian) f aeg-ion; a gal s (russian) a war; a vie s a gal*;
a tri s a vie.

ITALY (I.Lawson): f ems s (russian) f aeg-ion.

FRANCE (Walkerdine): f mao-iri; a bur-ruh s by a bel; f tys-wms;
a boh-vie s by a tyr; f ion stands s by f tun, f apu & f adr;
a ven-tri.

*Retreats: Austrian a vie & Russian a war both annihilated.

Ian Lawson was the only one who wanted a draw, so the game continues. Actually, I think the next few moves should be quite interesting...

Will HOWELL DAVIES, 86 Glebelands Rd, Knutsford, WA16 9EA, please send Russian standby orders? Thanks, Taff...

1972Kco ('B'): August/September 1917

IS ENGLAND'S ATTACK PAYING OFF
AT LAST?

ENGLAND (Stuart): a lor-par; a eng-bel s by a ruh; a kie s a mun;
a mun s a ruh; a mao-bre s by f mao & f eng; a por stands;
f sao s a por; f azo s f sao; f iri s f mao; f ber-bal;
f stp-cou.

TURKEY (Corker): f mas-lib; f sic-nap*; f aeg-cms;
a ser stands s by a alb, a mac & a bul; a cau-ode s by f wbs.

AUSTRIA (Walkerdine): a sil-dre s by a boh; a ode-cau s by a vol;
a ukr-ode s by a rum; a tra s a rum; a pec-ser s by a zar.

FRANCE (Davidson): a swa-mun s by a tyr; a bur-ruh; a bel-hol;
a par-lor; a gas-lyo; f bre-mao*; a leo-cas; f and-wms;
a mor-and; f tun-mas; f tys-sic s by f nap.

*Retreats: French f bre disbanded. Turkish f sic annihilated.

E: 15 bases: lon, lpl, edi, ply, ire, bel, kie, ber, den, nwy, swe, stp,
bre, por, mun. Builds a lon.

T: 8 bases: con, sin, smy, dam, egy, gre, ser, bul. No change.

A: 10 bases: zar, vie, bud, pec, ode, mos, war, ark, rum, dre. Builds a vie.

F: 13 bases: par, lyo, mar, cas, and, mor, tun, sic, nap, rom, ven, zur, hol.
Builds a mar.

1973Uda ('J'): Press for Spring 1905!

Daily Mirror (again)!

Dear Marge,

I'm a gangling six-foot-five divorcee with a big nose, buck teeth and flat feet. I'm so worried that I daren't go out on the street, I feel so stupid. What can I do?

C.v.M., San Diego.

**** Try a cosmetic surgeon, an orthodontist and a pediatrician. Change your name and your address. You'll still be stupid, I'm afraid.

Dear Marge,

Since I retired from the Navy I've done nothing but put on weight. I now weigh 43 stone and can't put my shoes on in the morning. What on earth can I do?

Rear-Admiral-Sir O.J., (Ret'd), Manchester.

**** Look, I'm sick to death of fat slobs like you always writing to me with the same stupid questions. Go barefoot, you cretin.

Dear Marge,

I'm very upset. I produce my own little magazine and try to keep it very happy, but two of my readers seem to do nothing but insult one another. What do you suggest?

R.W., Surrey

**** Just be patient, dear - I'm sure they're very nice boys really and will come to love each other in time.

1972ACde ('H'): 1 Sulime 3019

MORDOR FORCES TURN TOWARDS ERIADOR -
UMBAR UNPERTURBED!!!

ERIADOR (Lettice): a iro-rhn s by a car; a smi-dg; =a rau-nin;
a mir-smi s by a run; a wem-eas s by a edo & a lam*; a lhu-eve;
a sdo-rhd; f dmr s a lam; a fnt-wea; a fan-wol; a eve-shi;
a min-dun; a gwy-hol; a riv-mm; a rhd-and; a shi-bra;
a wol stands unordered.

MORDOR (Ward): =3a mmo-bar; a rhn-nur; 2a sit-sgo s by a msh;
a eas-lam s by 2a mti & a cai; 2a bro-nin; a wil-bro.

UMBAR (Harris): a sgo stands s by f tol, f bel, a hrd & a kha!

*Retreat: Eriador a lam-isn.

South Gondor: "What I don't understand," said Professor Tolkien, "is where Frodo 'The Enforcer' Baggins is getting the money to support all these armies."

"Have you seen the game fees he's charging in the Bolshevik Star?" exclaimed Ar Phasixpence.

"Of course - the cunning fiend!" They both turned towards the Thing From Beyond Space, who had apparently finished constructing the weapon with which he hoped to halt Mauron's advance.

"What is it?" inquired Ar Phasixpence.

"It's a laser cannon," cackled the Thing. "With a weapon like this I could take over Mordor, Eriador, and the IDA!"

Their attention was suddenly diverted by a host of orcs rushing towards them, which suddenly appeared on the horizon. "Quick!" ordered the Thing.

"Where's the mains so I can plug in the machine?"

"Mains? Plug in?" said the general, blankly.

"Yes. The machine requires electricity to make it work.

"Electricity? What's that?"

The Thing let out a despairing squawk and turned a paler shade of blue as the first orkish arrows began to land among them.

Hobbiton: Dear Mr Chad, you surely see
That saying you like poetry
'S like saying that your rag is free!
So don't come whining here to me -
I'll put you in the STAR with glee!

Hobbiton: I'm an advert for Bolshevik Star
To whose excellence there is no bar.
Though Piggott may laugh
(Drunken Russian riff-raff),
Read STAR, and you will go far.

Ethil the Frog: You didn't know I accepted advertising, did you, readers? Well, I do - and the rates are very reasonable, 10p per line. It's a good thing, though, that Lettice has been eliminated from 'K' game, otherwise he wouldn't have had enough credit to pay for his plugs!

Barad-Dur: Frodo sat in his cell once more; he knew he should have watched 'Casablanca' one more time before leaving for Mordor. But he had one secret weapon left - he was writing the press release!

He took out his pencil, and began to write: "It was a dark and stormy night... the door flew open! ... Hannibal, Sherlock Holmes, Danny la Rue and the Dagenham Girl Pipers rushed in ... they ran towards the throne room and--SNAP!" Frodo stared sadly at the stub of his broken pencil, and cried all the way back to his cell.

Ethil the Frog: At this happy juncture I will report to the readers of a strange agreement which Gregory Ward suggested between himself and Lettice. Gregory would write anti-Mauron press, and John anti-Frodo. Of course, Gregory then did a very Mordor-like thing - he elected not to submit any press for this season... the cunning fiend!

Scrabble: The incredible postal Scrabble game between Ethil the Frog and Mad Policy is now under way! One word each has been played, and here are the scores and words:

Claire Walkerdine: HOVEL = 28 (the 'E' is a blank!!!)
John Piggott: VIVDA = 22

1972ADde ('I'): 2 Nemine 3019

MORDOR ALLIES WITH UMBAR
GONDOR ELIMINATED

ERIADOR (Waldie): a hol-mor; a ene ms a min; a isn s f lam;
f lam stands; a dun s a isn; a bra-gwy; a shi-bra; a eve-shi;
a lhu-eve; a wem-eas s by a edo; a gap-wem s by a igd.

GONDOR (Elsmore): nmr // a eas* & a me stand.

MORDOR (Durrheim): =3a sit-mmo; 2a rau-nin; a nin-nit; a nit-sit;
a mmo-msh s by a kha; 2a cai s (umbar) a dmr-lam.

RHOVANION (Pijohn): a eem s (eriador) a wem-eas; a wol s a eem;
a fan-lor; =a cel & a smi s a bro; a dag-nin s by a bro;
a udu-nit; a nur-mmo; a ash-bar s by a rhn; a wil-ash;
a run-wil.

UMBAR (Morrison): a dmr-lam s by =a mti & f tol; f bel-sgo.

*Retreats: Gondor a eas & Eriador f lam both disbanded.

E: 14 bases: shi, eve, lhu, bra, riv, ang, hol, arn, mor, isn, igd, wem,
edo, eas. Builds a lhu.

G: Eliminated. All units removed.

M: 7 bases: mmo, msh, kha, sit, nit, cai, rau. No change.

R: 14 bases: and, smi, gm, ere, car, run, gf, dg, cel, lor, rhd, wol, bar,
udu. Builds a ere.

U: 6 bases: kha, hdw, hum, sgo, mti, lam. Builds a hrd & a hum.

The Khand Radio News: The proposed chocolate factory at Nurn has now been given the go-ahead by Sauron, and an army of dwarf-workmen began work today on this ten million maggot project. It is thought that this factory has been planned to meet fantastic new demands for 'SECRETS' chocolates. The main reason for this increased demand is the emergence of a fictional world called 'Germany', whose leader has a passion for this particular brand of confectionery. Sauron wishes to discuss plans for introducing German armies into the fray and hence increasing his power. By making Germany dependent on Nurn for chocolates, Sauron will enforce her co-operation by threatening to cut off supplies. This is yet another victory for our handsome young leader.

Ethil the Frog: For the benefit of foreigners, I'll explain the chocolate references. 'Secrets' chocolates appeared in a show on BBC2 recently; the story concerned the problems of the management when three maintenance workers accidentally fell into a vat, were mashed up and incorporated into a batch of the new chocolates... and the taste caught on... See what you miss by living in America?

Ministry for Middle-Earth ~~ditto/songs~~ ballads:

There once was old Frodo who sat on a rock,
a-ranting and waving his great hairy
fist at the hobbit who sat on his walls,
teaching his children to play with their
long-swords and short-swords and weapons of yore,
when along came a princess who looked like a
very nice princess, who walked like a duck;
she said she'd discovered a new way to
ed-ucate hobbits to read and to write,
while down in Moria they were shovelling the
contents of Moria from the back to the front
while the Entwives sat counting the hairs on their
spiders and orclings and things of the night;
if you think this song's dirty, you're bloody well right!

Standby Players

Only one player, Jeremy Elsmore, missed his orders this time, though David Pratt got his in by the skin of his teeth - his letter was posted on time with a 5p (!) stamp, but it only received second-class treatment. Be warned... (Also see announcement on page 8).

- 'B' Jeremy Elsmore, Bob Harris
- 'C' Gregory Ward
- 'E' Howell Davies, Bob Harris
- 'H' Jeremy Elsmore
- 'I' Allan Doodes, Colin Hobley
- 'K' Jeremy Elsmore, John Morrison
- 'L' Allan Doodes, John Lettice
- 'M' Gordon Neilson, Gregory Ward
- 'N' Allan Doodes, John Lettice

Burblings ((from page 1))

As to the other game, I think it's about time I opened up another variant. I'm getting a little tired of regular games, even though they are very much easier to GM. Familiarity breeding contempt, I suppose. In Ethil 34, assuming I write the article, I shall have some pretty scathing remarks to make about variants in general, and my choice of variant to run in this publication is limited as a result of my opinions. I am prepared to try games of two sorts of variants.

First, a well-trying and reliable variant such as Youngstown or Abstraction. The problem with these is that they are in general fairly well catered for by other zines, and I really want to introduce a new one that hasn't been tried before in this country.

That limits us to my second alternative, which is what I call 'fun' variants - not really to be taken seriously. I thought Black Hole looked good when I first saw it; so, apparently, did everybody else, and three or four zines are now running (or aspiring to run) games of this one. One that I considered in a much earlier issue of Ethil is also a possible candidate. This is Chaos, the variant for 34 players, each taking one of the centres on the regular board, and it rather takes my fancy. Naturally, a game of this would be played for laughs, and the game fee would be something ridiculous like a 1/2p stamp per move; I might sneak a deposit in as well, though - after all, one wants to avoid dropouts always.

Mind, I'm only speculating - if the present games increase in volume (or maybe even if they don't) I might not open any further games; and in any case anyone who tries to sign up now, before I formally open lists, will be ignored. However, I've flung out a few ideas, and I would welcome any comments or suggestions which you may wish to make.

A few words about press releases

Some players may be chagrined to find that I have not printed their press releases this issue. This is a consequence of the new get-tough policy I am adopting towards propaganda. Now, I rate myself as something of an authority on press, with some cause, since I am sure I write at least twice as much of it as any other single Englishman (or Scotsman, Gus) in this god-damned hobby. And lately I have become increasingly annoyed at the standard of some of the stuff I have received for publication in Ethil. It really isn't good enough to spout ungrammatical nonsense in the guise of press and expect readers to decipher the phrases and figure out what the hell's going on. In the past I have sometimes taken the trouble to tidy up press releases into some resemblance of the English as she is spoke; but I'm no longer prepared to do this to such an extent. The effects of this policy you see before you.

Okay, so Richard Sharp makes money sitting at his typewriter, and I have dreams... but it surely isn't that difficult to get the full stops in the right place - is it? If most of Ethil's contributors can manage it, surely the rest of you can...

Other bump

Jeff Cliver has decided that he does not wish to continue playing in his games. Allan Doodles takes over France in 1973DD, therefore, immediately. The position isn't a bad one, so you see standby players don't always get the one-unit remnants of once-proud civilisations... I don't think there's any need to bother with a standby in 'C' game, since it seems certain that Russia will be eliminated pretty quickly anyway. The single Russian army in that game will stand in anarchy till it is destroyed.

Phil Shaw is now at 69 St Philips St, London, w.8.

Martin Mellish is back in Northwich.

Howell Davies - can I please have your game fee for 'N' game? If I don't get it this time... mutter, mutter...

This issue of Ethil is late, for which the management tenders its abject apologies. Ian has been on holiday in the West Country, and ~~for~~ elected not to take his duplicator with him. Any of you got any complaints, you can all come down here and help produce this bloody thing...!

B O O K S

THE STEAM-DRIVEN BOY by John Sladek (Panther, 35p): An uneven book. Much of it is new-waveish, which means I'm not that likely to enjoy it; but I did enjoy several pieces in this volume of short stories, particularly the very funny 'Is there Death on Other Planets?'. The best part of the book, however, is reserved for the last quarter, where Sladek provides a series of parodies of the work of several better-known SF writers - writers such as Hitler I.E. Bonner (it's an anagram), Hugogre N. Backs, and of course Iclick As-i-move - "Even though the figures--" "--add up--" "the whole may be--" "--greater than--" "--the sum of its parts!" "Is this me talking, or you?" I didn't experience a new high in outrage, as the blurb fatuously promised I would, but I did have a bit of a giggle. There are worse ways of spending seven bob than this book.

CONAN THE ADVENTURER and CONAN THE WARRIOR by Robert E. Howard & L. Sprague de Camp (Sphere, 30p each): Now we all know who Conan is, don't we? Well, just in case you don't, Walkerdine, he's a sword-and-sorcery hero who towers over such comparative weeds as Elric, Thongor, Kothar and all the rest in much the same way as Howard, in his short life, proved himself a better hack S&S writer than just about all the modern exponents of the craft. That's a rather depressing fact in a way, since all these stories are about 40 years old... Anyway, together these two books contain seven novellas, all containing the usual S&S elements - beautiful though unbelievable women, sorcery, blood, and so on. In the U.S., Conan is somewhat of a cult figure; this is his first papernack publication in Great Britain, to my knowledge. It will certainly not be his last.

The Frazetta covers on these editions I find ridiculously over-rated. Most consider them excellent, however, so perhaps it's just me. Buy the books anyway - yes, this means you, Walkerdine!

THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION No. 6 edited by Harry Harrison & Brian Aldiss (Sphere, 35p): There are in the U.S. at least five or six 'best of the year' anthologies, and, unsurprisingly, they're all pretty good value for money. The present volume is no exception. Easily the best story is Joe W. Haldeman's 'Hero', which might well be described as a sort of STARSHIP TROOPERS from another viewpoint. When first published in Analog this story drew a certain amount of flak from the readership owing to Haldeman's use of profanity. Big deal - and full marks to editor Ben Bova for publishing this story. Other notable stories in this collection include 'The Old Folks' by James Gunn, a short excursion into an geriatric town of the near future; and 'The Head and The Hand' by our own Christopher Priest, which is an elaborate sick joke. The only dog in the book is Victor Sabah's 'An Imaginary Journey to the Moon' -- it was written by a kid with a limited command of English, and unfortunately shows it. Harrison may have been thrilled at the circumstances of its writing, which even I found mildly interesting, but it would have been better in this case had he kept his fascination to himself. There's also a little SF poetry and Brian Aldiss' customary afterword. Yeah -- this book is highly recommended, as if you haven't guessed.

THE WINDS OF GATH, DERA! & TOYMAN, by E.C. Tubb (Arrow, 35p each): Ted Tubb is not one of my favourite writers, I'm afraid, and I didn't enjoy these as much as I'd hoped. Still... These introduce Earl Dumarest, a sort of interstellar hobo, who goes around visiting planets rather indiscriminately whilst searching for information which will lead him to the world of his birth. Since he never seems to succeed in getting his info, the series need never end. There are some nice details given, such as the cheap method of transport favoured by the interstellar hoboes which unfortunately bears a 15% mortality rate, and the economics are reasonably well worked out. But, regrettably, Ted Tubb isn't quite equal to the task; his characters are wooden, his narration sometimes dreadfully disjointed. These are by far the worst books Lionel Trippett has so far published in his Arrow SF line; hopefully he'll find some more worthy choices to bring us in future.

Just room to mention a couple of books by David Gerrold which may be of interest to the Star Trek fans among you - The World of Star Trek and Trouble with Tribbles. They're both published by Ballantine at \$1.50, which means about 70p at ye import shoppes, and contain several interesting details about the Star Trek characters and the show itself, with the people who make

Here Is the News

Grafeti, now safely back with Brain Yare after the three pseudo-issues produced by Jeremy Elsmore and Howell Davies, is to split up. The seven regular games will stay with Grafeti, but the five variant games are to be transferred to a new zine, Tales from the Black Forest, edited by Geoff Corker, 92 Lancaster St, Barnsley, Yorks. S70 6EW. Lists in TFTBF are open for regular games and variants - I gather three further variants will be run. Game fees will be 40p regular, 60p variant, 80p monster, and the zine will cost 5½p per issue. Anyone who subscribes to ten or more issues before the first publication date (17 September) will receive one issue free, says Geoff.

Variety is the name of a new zine from John Robertson, Upper Dunglass, Arbroath Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 1QN. It is published on the same revolting hectograph as the Bolshevik Star. It is to be devoted entirely to variants, and the first blurred issue consists of a description of various variants developed by the editor; and what seems to be a list of all the variants available in this country. He doesn't mention the Variant Bank, oddly; nor does he give any indication of subscription rates or game fees. One must presumably assume that everything is free.

Both myself and Andy Davidson are working, which means we're much shorter of time now than while we're 'studying'. It also means that the incredible bankruptcy trial which threatened to bring the whole of British Diplomacy to its knees is postponed for a further few months. Andy says he's spending his time loading and unloading lavatory pans (press writers please note) which sounds a real drag. My own occupation is somewhat more esoteric; I've done it before, so some of you will know what it is. As for the rest, how does looking at bubble-chamber film for three-prong and four-prong interactions between deuterons and positive kayons at an energy of 5.46 GeV grab you? I may expand on this at a later date, if I can figure out how to explain it in less than thirty thousand words...

Diplomacy conventions seem to be proliferating lately. Trouble is, they all seem to be north of Birmingham, which is rather too far into the Pictish wastelands for pampered products of civilisation like me to venture. Anyone in the region is recommended to drop a line to Les Pimley, 345 Livesey Branch Road, Blackburn, BB2 4QJ, who seems to organise a meet about once a fortnight. Meanwhile, I suppose we southerners will just have to wait for the NGC meeting place to re-open...

Next issue will contain lots of goodies - a bunch of letters, a trenchant article on variants, maybe an imported U.S. article, reports on 'A' and 'D' games, and (if there's room) a feature specially requested by Richard Sharp - 'How I dismembered Andy Davidson in a bath of formaldehyde!' Hmmm, must be another Dolchstoss record.

ETHIL THE FROG 33

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