

Delayed from  
America...

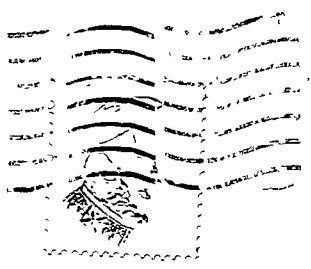
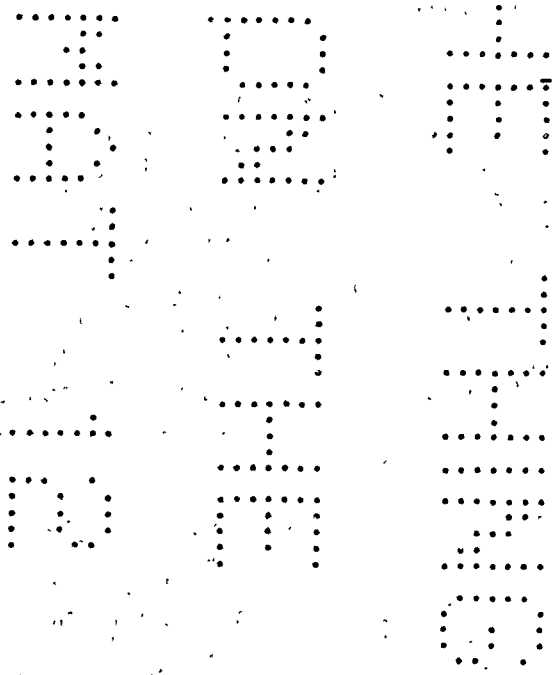
CVS 65F

COVENTRY

GREEN LAKE

11 DREWRY RD

NICK KAZETTI



Welcome, such as it is, to another pathetic issue of Thing, which was provisionally to be entitled "Nunk on the Mat" in honour of the funniest thing I've seen in New Musical Express in ages. In fact, the only funny thing I've seen there at all. However, my brain suffered a minor dysfunction of pattern recognition faculties as I typed out the crucial word above, so there you are.

Excreted by

Peter Doubleday  
Magdalen College  
Oxford OX1 4AU

Phone

From 23rd January on:  
(Oxford) 246929

This is a reminder to remind REMINDER  
to Tom Sweddy to rush to the official  
'Sopwith' map annotated by his horny  
little hand. I have six good men:  
all I need now is the gun ...

Deadline

Friday 11th February.

Price: 25p too much.

Not distributed at Ascot, by appointment  
to the Queen.

Booth

Not so much a title, more a way of filling in space ...

Hi. Hello, and welcome to the first issue of the rest of my life. Not that any of you bastards out there sent me cards, did you? Of course, this might have had something to do with the fact that I didn't inform you in advance. Still, you might have asked.

Yes, I am now legal, or at least I am legal every where but in Northern Ireland. But what am I saying? It may not be an indictable offence any more, but enough prejudice still attaches to ensure that I am liable to lose custom by such casual throwaway implications. Nonetheless, I should be safe; I think I may have couched it in terms sufficiently obscure to pass the likes of David Watts and other men of delicate conscience by, whilst anyone that picks up on it is liable to be broad-minded enough to shrug it off. May I address myself to this latter group? May I, for the sake of their immortal souls, ask them to take a sterner view of such unsavoury antics? Men who indulge in them abominate in the face of the Lord (I wish I hadn't put it that way - it conjures up an unpleasant and blasphemous picture), and deserve to have their nether regions fried in peanut oil. Of which more, as they say, later.

I am now twenty one, and I seem to have strayed off the point. Any peufs out there who may find the above offensive should take heart, because in common with 98% of what I say it has no sincerity behind it whatsoever. This is a product of twenty-one years of manically depressed experience; if I ever mean what I say, it's likely to hurt me more than it hurts anyone else - evryone I know takes my opinions depressingly seriously. Still, I can take heart in the knowledge that from now on all life is downhill; so, anything I say can only have the effect of speeding up the decline.

Put on to more jolly things. You may well think that my relative age or lack of it is of no immediate consequence to you; well, you're wrong. For my twenty-first birthday I could have had anything: wine, women (although I understand that the latter are a seller's market at the moment), 1.5% of a Rolls Royce; *anything*. Did I yield to temptation? Did I consider myself alone? No, after eleven issues of entirely illegible crap I finally decided that you, my faithful subscribers, should take first precedence. In short, I hadn't the wit or imagination to think of anything exciting, so I asked for an electric typewriter instead. I am therefore able to indulge in the luxury of a variety of typefaces; not only that, but I will never need to underline things again. Damn. I mean, I can emphasise any thought, or parenthesise the names of zines and games, without resorting to the clumsy tricks of other editors, because *I possess a light italic golfball*. There, that's better. Useful as this is, I may well have got my priorities wrong, because I presently lack a far more essential element of production - stencil correcting fluid. My apologies if any of this seems messy, therefore.

So, here I sit at my brand-new second-hand typewriter (E. Springsteen, concept, copyright). How can I dispell this gloom and bring a little light into your world? I suppose you could always burn the zine, but that's your affair. Is there a Hobby matter of sufficient importance to rate a mention in what is supposed, after all, to be an editorial? Nope. The world outside is unusually stable, by which I do not mean that it would normally rock gently from side to side; there simply isn't anything much happening. All I can do is to vamp until the bottom of the page is reached.

One of the most obvious changes from zines of yesteryear than one can see in today's crop is that aimless chat is no longer restricted to editorials. For example, here I sit with nothing in particular on my mind other than the inside of my skull, and I feel obliged to write an editorial (or, *not so much a title ...*). As to the content of the rest of the zine, however, I have a fairly clear idea already, even though I haven't roughed it out. There are a bunch of topics best covered in articles, and a few letters, and let us not forget the games (although I am wont to do this, it seems, even in the middle of their typing), and the Hobby News, which is normally so automatic and mindless that I absent my mind enough not to print any. Perhaps I'm heading towards the editorial-less zine? Why not? I already manage a game-less one, a senseless one or, on occasion, an administrationless one ...

... and no sooner do I set a new page into the typewriter than I remember something I meant to cover on the last page. You may have noticed a far more significant point about the format of this issue than the mere legibility of the typeface (which may well not apply after I've stuffed it through the duplicator, anyway). I am now back, for the next six months at least, to using standard duplicating methods; I have enough problems with these, without resorting to fancy hi-tech trash such as electro-stencils. The interesting thing about my experiment with these last issue is that the firm responsible appear to be entirely deranged. An unfortunate by-product of the number of photocopies needed to operate the machine is that the type is very fuzzy indeed; but this is to be expected, since I presume the process wasn't developed for ambitious loonies like me who wish to cut costs of a limited-circulation A5 effort. A more bizarre defect is the inability of a Roneo duplicator to eject the page printed from a Roneo heat stencil; said page merely clings to the drum that makes me suspect I put superglue into the ink inlet rather than ink. Am I doing something wrong, I wonder? I bid a thankful return to plain stencil duplicating, therefore, and if Birks or anyone else wishes to complain that I have made a mess of their files then I can only refer them to my left fist.

The old problem reasserts itself: what do I do to fill out the remainder of this page? I suppose I could start an article, but I'd rather leave these until later. The only other appropriate filler is a quick survey of Hobby news, before, as I say, I forget that it's there. Big topic of the moment seems to be the perennial claim by Richard Walkerdine to have invented the entire hobby and everyone in it as a practical joke (see the lettercolumn of NMR! 35). I can only reply that I am grateful for the increase in the reverse tendency: the recognition that there are more than one Doubleday (or even, *is more than one*). After five years in the Hobby, man and child, I find at last that my independant existence is recognised by editors who have the courtesy to refer to the eponymous Steve as Doubleday (S.) ... you have no idea how ~~xxx~~ irritating it is to stand at the butt end of all this Doubleday confusion. I have lost count of the number of times that I have been asked if I am any relation to Steve. No one, for some peculiar reason, seems to be tempted to ask me whether or not I am a relative of Paul - I suspect that this is because they know it doesn't irritate me enough. *I will not stand for any more of this, d'you hear?* Any more of this irresponsible bandying about of unqualified surnames and I shall resort to calling Birks and other persistent offenders embarrassing names, such as Walter F. Clutterbuck Jr. (and if that's not an embarrassing name, then I don't know what is). It isn't as if 'Doubleday' is a particularly uncommon name; one day, *all* zine editors will be named thus). I give up. There is only one way I can see out of this hellish confusion. Henceforth I shall be known as Prince Mikhail Obolensky, since this is the sort of name that gets you elected to academic posts of note in Oxford University, and if anyone wishes to introduce another Obolensky to the Hobby, I shall not beat about the bush. I shall not dilly dally. I shall merely kill the bastard.

Or, on the other hand, I could try giving you actual information. A new arrival on my editorial desk (well, two bits of corrugated cardboard tacked on to my bed, but it's a desk to me ...) is the appalling 'Certa Citr'. I say this with the best of intentions, because it appals me by its sheer dynamism. Issue one runs to a number of pages which I cannot determine, because they aren't indexed; but which is quite enough to keep the average wonky card-table balanced; and he promises to keep this sort of thing up on a two-weekly basis. I have slight reservations about the number of NMRs this will provoke (apart from anything else, the postal service is not what it was in the early seventies, when this sort of schedule was last attempted), but surely this must be the zine for anyone frustrated by the length of time taken to run an average Diplomacy game. If Chiz can keep the men in white coats unawares for long enough, he may well provide a Hobby service to counterbalance the current trend for slow litho zines.

John Chisholm, 22 Edwins Ave Sth, Forest Hall, Newcastle NE12 9AX. 25p/issue

No space to mention the marvellous *Blackmail 18*, featuring a novel two-sided 'transparent' cover, front and back. Not a lot inside it, though ...

And now we are twenty one ...

*being a list of words which will never again disgrace the pages of this magazine.*

- |  |                                       |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| To quiff                                 | To have a banana with                 | To cattle truck                                      |
| To rake out                              | To do business with                   | To hoch-ma-gandfe with                               |
| To strum                                 | To lone                               | To spade   |
| To pestle                                | To cunt                               | To plough the furrow with                            |
| To give hard for soft                    | To thrum                              | To make it with                                      |
| To have one's cut of                     | To get one's rocks off on             | To surprise  |
| To tickle the minnikin of                | To nail                               | To give a barrel to                                  |
| To take one's medicine from              | To go for gold with                   | To give a meat injection                             |
| To grind                                 | To reach home base with               | To oblige  |
| To root                                  | To tango with                         | To gherkin   |
| To grease a spear with                   | To dip the wick in                    | To toff with   |
| To friar tuck                            | To jump                               | To jazz  |
| To make babies with                      | To play at rabbits with               | To bag of coke                                       |
| To prong                                 | To split the difference with          | To part the hairs of                                 |
| To splice the central reservation of     | To ruck                               | To whomp   |
| To have coffee with                      | To look at one's etchings with        | To have fish with                                    |
| To discuss Ugandan affairs with          | To go down onto                       | To go up and under                                   |
| To bawd                                  | To consume                            | To rount   |
| To show the way to St Dunstons           | To go all the way with                | To score with  |
| To probe                                 | To be naughty with                    | To shank   |
| To score with                            | To stoke                              | To crank it up                                       |
| To get inside the pants of               | To run horizontally with              | To take  |
| To bunk up                               | To plonk                              | To roust   |
| To seven ( <i>thank you, Oriel ...</i> ) | To play at choc-chocs in the ray with | To fettle  |
| To have one's bell-rope pulled by        | To get out the old fork for           | To discharge one's fowling-piece with                |
| To rummage                               | To horse                              | To qualify   |
| To take a turn in the parsley bed with   | To play at prick the garter with      | To make love to                                      |
| To cure the horn with                    | To <del>xxxx</del> fuck               | To hump  |
| To pitch the knob in                     | To screw                              | To shaft   |
| To quim                                  | To rut with                           | To poke  |
| To bang                                  | To bunk                               | To ride  |
| To lay                                   | To cover                              | To knob  |
| To swive                                 | To couple with                        | To mate with   |
| To have congress with                    | To make the beast with two backs with | To roll in the hay                                   |
| To look at leaves upside down with       | To know                               | To shag  |
| To copulate with                         | To tup                                | To get one's end away                                |
| To fornicate with                        | To have sex with                      | To have it away with                                 |
| To sleep with                            | To get one's oats from                | To spoon   |
| To split the bean with                   | To stuff                              | To red   |
| To have intercourse with                 | To knock up                           | To ram   |
| To go with                               | To go beaming with                    | To dong  |
| To have it off with                      | To service                            | To thread the needle                                 |
| To tickle the fancy of                   | To go jig-jig with                    | To go through  |
| To go thrusting with                     | To play three to one with             | To shake   |
| To slip her a length                     | To thump                              | To have carnal knowledge                             |
| To give dick to                          | To tumble                             | To board   |
| To have coition with                     | To do                                 | To take a leap with                                  |
| To get one's leg over                    | To Chaver                             | To man   |
| To give a knee-trembler to               | To drive into                         | To plug  |
| To enjoy                                 | To whack it up                        | To roger   |
| To bounce                                | To have one's way with                | To shoot up the straight with                        |
| To caulk                                 | To stick                              | To shoot in the tail                                 |
| To take a turn in the stubble with       | To pole                               | To tail  |
| To wriggle navels with                   | To shoot up the                       | To splice  |
| To grind one's tool in                   | To shoot in the tail                  | To split   |
| To shoot between wind and water with     | To ball                               | To get in her beef                                   |
| To get into the mutton of                | To ball                               | ... and a note to                                    |
| To do a squeeze and a squirt             | To get in her beef                    | the delicate: a picture's worth a thousand words ... |

Why I am not Prime Minister

Fate has dealt Britain an unkind hand in the last five years. One of Great Britain's most signal talents, veteran of two hard-fought political campaigns both lost for ideological reasons (ie there is no point putting any effort into a political campaign), has been denied the post of destiny that would by Divine Right be his but for the cruel error that the framers of our unwritten ~~xxx~~ constitution made when they decreed that mere lack of years should disqualify a man from standing for election. Indeed, at the time of the last farrago I was not even of an age to vote, so none of it is my fault. Nevertheless I am confident that, had it been possible for a seventeen-year-old of uncommon ability to stand for political office, my irresistible confidence would have earned me the supreme office of the land, but for one or two slight reservations. Is it too much to ask? After all, our founding fathers were liberal enough to extend ~~the~~ the franchise to women, and even to allow our beloved companions of the inferior gender to participate in the Houses themselves - both of which namby-pamby centrist asinities have been revealed for the ill-conceived subversions of good taste that they are ... for without them, there is no doubt that the Conservatives would not be in office, let alone their khanette.

I promised to reveal to you the slight but damaging disqualifications on my hopes for ultimate supremacy, and here they are. Despite my fine start as an Oxford student, I am in the wrong subject; as Tullett has so cogently observed, Historians do no bleeding work. They merely think a lot. This is all very well for predicting the Falklands war from its earliest harbingers, but it doesn't do to run the country - for this, you need an obsessive workaholic, or Chemist for short. I mean, what do you expect when you elect a jumped-up cook with aspirations to be an encyclopaedia of trivia? It is essential, if one is to succeed in politics, to mirror the abilities of the electorate: niggers are black, and therefore not British (see Nationality Bill), Books must be balanced, Foreign Affairs are things the lousy Latins do in the dark (rather germane to my argument, I will concede, or would if it were possible so to qualify the adjective 'germane'), and so on. On no account must the modern politician *think*. This wastes valuable time and allows opponents within and without the party to get one jump ahead in the popularity stakes.

If the woman thought, she would never dream of going to the Falklands. There is no direct electorate, there are no anxious subjects desperately in need of reassurance that Britain really does care, there is no conceivable reason diplomatically to suppose that the visit will be anything but a disaster, there is no need to throw a derisory sum in the face of the islanders and then add insult by flying out to underline quite how ineffectual it will be - there is nothing in the Falklands for Thatcher to visit besides a thousand graves with her name on them, in the same way that plastic toys bear the legend 'Japan'.

And yet, from the moment her visit was initially cancelled, I was absolutely certain that she would make a doughty secret flight in spite of all this. I can see the way her mind works in the same way that I can read the mind of any typical, stupid Oxford woman. Electioneering has nothing to do with it. It is a simple matter of mule-headedness and la Gloire. She was as bound to fly to the Flaklands (Flaklands?) as the hero of a Creek tragedy always gets it in the balls.

I never wanted to be Prime Minister anyway. I always wanted to be the captain of a fighter squadron in Ushuaia ... I would have known what to do.

"Asked whether her visit might not be regarded by the Argentines as unnecessarily provocative, Mrs Thatcher replied, *"It would be very strange if I did not come to the Falklands Islands, very strange indeed"*. Given that she is not of a numismatic bent, it is very difficult to make any sense of this comment at all.

As the hypothetical fighter captain would say, with slightly more penetration, "Give me liberty or give me death". Hers.

Note to all players: I've managed a pretty good hash of games reports this time. In addition to the usual crop of unbelievable errors in several reports, I have managed also to leave all record of last issue behind in Birmingham. It isn't much fun being more mobile than Alabama ... since I shall not be able to work on the zine from 13th to 23rd of this month, when I shall be happily incommunicado, you are going to have to put up with a rush job. I shall type up games reports as I come to them, and probably alter them later - they will therefore be spread at odd points throughout the issue. If your report isn't on this page ... keep searching!

Thing Eight Railway Rivals Map N round 1

One slight comment: as Richard Morris correctly points out, I left him off the waiting list again for no good reason (though the other omissions were due to subscribers expressing interest and then deciding better of it. Well done, those chaps), and in any case the game is going to be imbalanced unless I include another starter from New York. Thanks to the short deadline and the Christmas post I was unable to inform the others, but I shall carry on regardless - if any player wishes to exercise his undoubted right to feel hard-done by at having submitted moves without considering the presence of a phantom fifth player, I shall gladly ask for five new sets of orders for next issue. Any worries?

New England Railway Organisation (Ian Ferguson - Yellow)

1a) (Portland) G54 Dover      b) (Dover) D57 Lowell      c) (D57) Manch; (D57) Lawrence

Slow Tracks Are Right (Brian Moore - Green)

1a) (Boston) Lawrence Manchester      b) (manchester) C55 B54 B53 A53      c) (A53) N13 L12

DEREK (?) (Derek Crumpton - Red)

1a) (Bronx) Bridgeport Newhaven      b) (New Haven) J29 Hartford J26  
c) (J26) Springfield K24

Dave Erridge - Blue: Northern and South Western Junction Railway

1a) (Boston) D60 ~~B61~~ B61 Worcester A63      b) (A63) N23 K23 Springfield  
c) (B61) Fitchberg A60; (D60) Lowell

Black Underground Fancy Fernacular (Occasionally Overland) Network (RM - Black)

1a) (Bronx) Bridgeport New Haven      b) (NH) J29 Hartford J26      c) (J26) Sfield K24

Richard's address is 1, Highlandville, Lightcliffe, Halifax HX3 8AG  
Dave's is actually 22 Morena Street, London, SE6 4JA. This is a correction.

Note to all editors

Is anyone out there prepared to open lists for Rail Baron? (Fools ...) I have had one response from a player in the ~~CRITIC DUEL/PARTIAL THING/ON/THE/RAILS~~ games, viz. Brian Moore, and since I am forced to declare these games dead through lack of interest I feel it only fair that I should try to arrange new ones for him. If any of you out there are even considering opening lists, therefore, I would be delighted to pay the gamefee for Brian's games.

Failing that, Brian, have a free game in Thing, if you dare. EEEK! In case no player objects to round 1 above, throws for round two are: 4, 4, 6

## Letter Column

Introducing the fourth and final type element, I launch into a completely un-thought-out and garbled letter column. I'm sure it would have looked better with a zany heading, or with better organisation, or with a little more time to spare.

You know me better than that by now, dont you?

Don

Del

Crande

Why is everything "continued on page 13" when I only get 12?

(Berkeley)

This tells me three things, not bad for a one-liner. First, that Americans do not find it strange that their papers feature ludicrous extended headlines larger than the lead, and then invite the reader to carry on with the article about thirty pages on, in another section of the paper altogether. And I thought I lacked editorial finesse ... Second, that an American Python freak will not be expected to have heard of *Irrigate Eye* (where everything is continued on page 94, Don), even if he has heard of page seventy three, or whatever it was. Third, that all Americans are paranoid. Thought I'd singled you out for a missing page, did you? Nope, sir, I reserved that pleasure for those expecting their games reports. I'm ranting, and I'm using the wrong typeface ...

John

Wilman  
(Ely)

I think you will find that some of Sharp's more ~~xxxxxxxx~~ outlandish ideas were debunked by Richard Hucknall and others long before I arrived on the scene. I feel I should object to your suggestion of 'Aristotelian devotions-ness', but since I don't have the first idea what you're talking about, I

~~find~~ find it difficult.

If you want to get into some really heavy stuff, look out the articles written by Berch, Lakofka and von Metzke. This may prompt greater appreciation of the relative brevity and clarity of my prose

As for Aristotle, I'm sure I meant something, but I'm equally sure I will never be able to recall the passage of the book in question. Is it worth it? I take your point about Hucknall's articles on trust; I never subscribed. Why someone as ~~egotistical~~ egotistical as Wilman isn't claiming credit for debunking himself I do not know, unless he thinks I was insulting him by accusing him of doing so - was I? I must confess that I find it very difficult to notice when I'm being insulting nowadays. As for the American trio, I think you're being a little unfair to at least two of them, John. From the little I've seen of him, Lakofka is indeed a stunning bore; but Berch can be whimsical, and von Metzke is usually just plain weird.

Tony

I was a bit puzzled to see no games reports, but as long as I get mine when I play, I suppose that's OK! ((That line should read: "Robbins when I play," etc.))  
(Exeter) As printing glitches go, this is incomparably worse than the Guardian, and I think I'm accumulating evidence that my brain is folding up ...))  
What else? Ah yes, how regular is your publishing going to be? Are you back in the country for good? I'm afraid if deadlines start getting irregular, I start forgetting when to send in orders ...

I'm sorry about the games reports as an insert, which didn't quite pan out. I shall be reverting to the boring old standard method for a while, as you can see. As for your other comment, I wonder quite what "back in the country for good" means ... whose good? You may have noticed a certain thread running through these three letters - that of America (well, only vaguely, I know, but there you are. I'm only a vague person.) This is partly explained by the following:

TCC

Reston  
USA

This coming year should be a corker, so you can be sure of securing a place on our staff. If we can do anything to expedite work visas, immigration or whatever, let us know.

Does that answer your question, Tony? No, it doesn't. It looks very much as though,

unless I get a US relative by some obscure means that will fox the US authorities (can you adopt an uncle for purposes of immigration?) I am stuck on the wrong side of a lucrative job. C'est la vie. Come to that, I might even apply for a job in France. I'm afraid I really don't know what happens after about August or so of this year, but whatever it is, it won't hit me with quite the suddenness of last year's fiasco. Oh no ... every year a new fiasco, is my motto,

Nick I think I would consider Schmidt and Pfitzner to be Late Romantic  
Marshall rather than Second Viennese. I'm afraid you can't buy 'Palestrina':  
(Belfast) it was deleted a couple of years ago (I'll tape the whole thing for you  
if you really want it).

Have you heard the recently issued recording of Penderecki's Second? Splendid, and not at all like his earlier stuff. The idiom was described on Radio Three as "post-Brucknerian". Ought to be right up your street. I've liked no new symphony so much since Shostakovich's 15th.

I look forward to hearing the Prokofiev after all these years - being very nasty is not necessarily a disqualification from my musical affections ...

Attached to this was an Oxfam Christmas card supposedly featuring Brueghel's "Madonna and Child with St Catherine (non-revolving)", but really an excuse for an unpleasant floral mess in frame around said picture. "Bet you don't get a ghastlier Christmas card than this", says Nick, and I must admit I didn't; although, truth to tell, I tried to seek out just such an effort for one of the two cards I sent out this year. An Englishman's bad taste is a Lutheran's devotional ... I don't need Palestrina, ta; I shall purchase it from the local record shop when I can scrape together £16. On the other hand, the offer does prompt me to do my bit to revive tape-swapping in the interests of enlightening the sort of dolt who would find "Dexy's Midnight Runners" an acceptable fayre - I may eventually get round to printing a list of my classical collection, but for the nonce please take it that anything you want, I've probably got (no ribald trickies from Mr Parr, please). Anyone for a classical sampler, even?

Penderecki is something I may or may not like. He was described in the times as "the late Romantic composer that Poland never had", and while I am dubious about what the hell this actually means, I expect it is better than "his earlier stuff". Since the latter involves something like fifty simultaneous synthesised whines and electronic percussion grinding relentlessly on for about an hour with all the melody one would expect from such promising materials taken out, this would not surprise me.

I am afraid that I was labouring under a misapprehension as to quite what the Second Viennese School was. I now find it comprises Schoenberg, Webern and Berg, given which line-up I think I would agree that Schmidt and co do not fit in. This leaves me in a quandary. I have no wish to describe Mahler and Bruckner in the same terms, as they must now be classed as 'Late Romantics' - this strikes me as a singularly unhelpful and diffuse grouping. However, I take issue that anything post-Brucknerian would be "right up my street". There is nothing post-Brucknerian. He is the peak; after him comes only the apocalypse, albeit perhaps in the form of a million horn parts scored by Strauss. Let me turn from the subject of music, about which I demonstrably know nothing, to that of literary effort, about which it is not demonstrable that I know nothing:

Jeremy This question of splitting infinitives. Or, indeed, of starting a  
Tullett letter with a verbless sentence. I was under the impression that this  
was (Dorset) the sin that it used to be, and that, if one found it 'nicer' to  
no boldly go, then one boldly went.  
longer

damn! I believe that language is defined by use, not by rule books or  
degenerate students of history. As I expect you read the Times rather  
than the Guardian, you will not be aware that a little debate on this  
topic is in progress at the moment. Of particular note is the sentence in which Mrs T.



rather suggest that there are more interesting criteria by which to group children for this sort of study. A more interesting comment is that no-one, today, would dream of referring to "short Germanic-root words", because after the efforts of Goethe and all that New Germany sort of crap (he said vaguely), the language blossomed from the primitiveness of Anglo-Saxon into a hideous world of huge compounds. Or is there some other reason? Certainly, most 'classical' words were invented for technical purposes (NB not necessarily scientific), so if the conclusions of this study are correct, one might well speculate that the working classes are dooming themselves never to better their lot in a class-ridden society, in the arts or in the sciences. This is all the fault of the capitalist system, innit: on the other hand, Americans are noted for taking something of a pride in using short words. Really. I know the British tend to think of them all as heavily jargon-oriented, larynx operation-wise, but it is not so. It is definitely 'U' in America to make oneself understood. On the other hand, I could point to several Americans who take a perverse pride in being able to speak at all ... As for Tullett's encroaching on my ground in talking of Norman invasions and so on, I might point out that you Saxon types would have got nowhere without us. In any case, the 'hundreds' of years to which he refers are, in fact, two; the French was not, as far as I am aware, particularly bastardised (even if William could be accused of this *de origine*), and in any case the real nobs' language of the eleventh and twelfth centuries was Latin. What does all this go to show? Nothing.

It may appear from the above that Government scientists do nothing all day except read newspapers and moan quietly to themselves about how they're in the wrong discipline. Jeremy's comment that I presumably read the Times and not the Guardian I would take to be an esoteric insult, which I cannot fathom; as it happens, I don't read anything at all. This is what has made me the force of literary insight I am today.

Paul Which English batsman scored centuries against India, Pakistan and Australia  
in 1982? What is the highest fourth innings score to win a test match?  
((Who needs a date when we have pinpoint-trivia like this? I rather like  
idea of a 'live' lettercolumn with silly questions scattered through it)).  
(Nowhere thereydea much ..) Sorry. What for, you may well ask - well, everything. Especially missing  
the deadline. Also for not supplying a phone number ((held secret for ~~xx~~  
security reasons - I believe that Paul was the only one of my Magdalen ~~xx~~  
colleagues to be interviewed by the secret services. Or should that read for?)).  
This arises from a total inability to understand where you spend your time nowadays;  
like spending your 21st (belated happy returns)((somebody noticed, at any rate)) in the  
wrong country - or was that county?

He then goes on at some length to describe the messianic antics of the antipodes, but I won't bother with them because *I was there*. Or at least here. Well, I was somewhere, anyway. I shall clearly have to submit precise dates for everything on the front cover of this rag, because a lot of people seem to be confused as to my whereabouts at any given time. Needless to say, confusion is not due to any similarity to MacCavity, but rather ~~xxx~~ to my own palpable inefficiency. The two ~~xxx~~ answers are, of course, Derek Randall (easy ...) and India's 406 against the West Indies in (,) '75 - '76.

Apropos of nothing, as indicated in this letter I am trying to collect phone numbers. Yes, some people collect stamps, some collect dried camel dung and I collect numbers. All efforts by grateful subscribers to appraise me of their phone code will therefore be appreciated - I never know when I may need them.

Efforts to control the messiness of my typing having failed, I now realise that the above lettercolumn features several ~~x~~ names not so much obscure as obscured. Allow me to remedy this. Take a bow, in order,

Don Del Grande, John Wilman, Tony Robbins, Telecommunications Control Corporation,  
Nick Marshall, Jeremy Tullett, and Paul Erine. All letters, as usual,

gratefully received; and may I make a plea for non-correspondants to write in the next six months, if ever they will, because with finals coming up I need all the easy-to-type stuff I can get. OK?

used 'prevaricate' when she supposedly meant 'procrastinate'. As I would hazard a guess that most people would not know the latter word, and would also misuse the former, myself included, can one be justified in claiming that 'prevaricate' does not have the same sort of meanings as 'procrastinate' when popular usage dictates that it does?

Whoa, there, you loutish slob! As an ardent socialist of three second's standing, (or even seconds'), let me inform you that a mere 35% of the vote in a system which is corrupted by the Tory press and the IMF gnomes' does not constitute a popular mandate. Not for anything. Least of all for bringing new unmeaning into the English language, which for your information again is not defined by usage - this is more appropriate to sewage. The English language is defined by beauty, d'you hear? 'Usage' is what you find in rule books, Jeremy; that is why they are written, to guide babes, sucklings and damn' foreigners into the way we use our language. Ef I woz two right laike dis orl thur toime, I do not think that even an unlettered Chemist from the wildernesses of Queen Street would support my claim that I was using 'correct' English. Most of those mis-spellins have roots in common usage; however. It is simply that something goes out of the language when a clod of the Thatcherite or other persuasion chooses to place personal convenience above the minuscule effort needed to correct ignorance (and when has Thatcher ever deigned to do so?). I wrote in my first ever essay for a Magdalen Don, on the entrance paper (general section), the immortal words "English is like a beautiful woman, and should be treated accordingly." (Well, they're immortal now, anyway) Now, I have no idea of how to treat a beautiful woman, and I doubt I would be able to afford the drain on my bank balance if I had, but I still have the opinion stated so embarrassingly in that tour de force of so long ago. English is beautiful. Thatcher is not. I rest my case. The question of relative road-worthiness of 'prevaricate' and 'procrastinate' is not one I wish to consider, although I would doubt your assertion that the one is any more popularly known than the other.

As for split infinitives, they are more syntax than verbal usage. The latter, as exemplified by Mrs T.'s boo-boo, is open to modification only where a vast number of people who matter (and I don't know who these may be; presumably Guardian readers) are persistently in what would under the old usage have been the wrong. Split infinitives I object to on aesthetic grounds, although I have committed them myself on mistaken occasion.

I will, therefore, go on splitting infinitives with, or without, your approval.

There you go again, as Mr Reagan would say. I can't rid myself of the suspicion that this sentence has much of a "so there" tang appended to it, but I can find no reason in my heart to condemn Jeremy for his breve stand against outmoded canons. I mean, who cares, anyway?

There was an interesting column in the Sunday Times today about the use of language by schoolchildren. It appears that the 'working class' children tend to use the short, Anglo-Saxon words, whereas the offspring of the 'middle classes' use the longer, classically based words. The writer of this thesis notes that this is probably because long words are not commonly encountered in working-class households, although they are still understood there. Very interesting, although not surprising, especially if one has spent a year coming into town on the Blackbird Leys bus.

This struck me as being an interesting parallel with the split of language after the Norman invasion, several hundred years after which the nobles still spoke a bastard French. This is why we have two words for many items, eg mutton/sheep.

I shall resist the temptation to dismiss the first para with a quick 'balderdash', and note merely that the definition of 'working' and 'middle' classes is essentially subjective for such purposes, as you correctly imply. It is a debatable point as to whether the people to be found down Blackbird Leys way are definable as human at all. Nonetheless, I feel that I can point to sufficient "middle class" offspring whoser ignorance of the finer nuances of the lingo is pig; the highly vocal Birks, on the other hand, is uncommonly proletarian. This is not meant in a statistical way; I would

Thin Game Seven      Diplomacy      Spring 1902

AUSTRIA (Prince George) WAR! A(Ser), F(Gre) A(Tri), A(Bud), A(Vic) st u/o  
 ENGLAND (Mike Woodhouse) F(Lon) - ENG A(Nor) - Swc F(NWG) - Nor  
 F(Nor) S F(Lon) - ENG - NB A(Nor) retreat below  
 FRANCE (Ian Ferguson) A(Par) - Bur A(Nur) - Bel A(Spe) - For F(Bre) S F(Bel)  
 ((-ENG)  
 GERMANY (Allan Macgregor) F(Kie) - X HEL A(Ber) - Kie A(Pun) - Rub  
 A(Hol), F(Den) stand  
 ITALY (Craig Miles) F(Tun) - IOS A(Apu) - Ven A(Ven) - Tri S by A(Tyr)  
 RUSSIA (Peter McDonald) A(StP) S F(Swc) - Nor F(Rus) - BLA A(Nos) - Ukr  
 A(Sev) - Rum A(Gal) S Italian A(Tyr) - Vic  
 TURKEY (Jeremy Tullett) F(Smy) - AEG A(Tul) - Gre A(Con) - Bul F(Ank) - Smy

Retreats: Austrian A(Tri) disbanded by G, English A(Nor) disbands nrg.

Tullett had no worried there until I realised that the Bulgar army blocked all his other moves last season... Well spotted, Jeremy.

Press Turkey - Austria Thanks for the phone call. Careful consideration shows that I am unable to take refuge with my fleet - perhaps you meant the Autumn? Vive l'alliance!

Turkey - Constantine Porphyrogenitus Sounds nasty - keep takin' the pills.

Const Porph - Turkey How else do you think they got that colour in the first place? And now we've disposed of the intellectual press ...

England Sorry I didn't write - still, nobody wrote to me ...

Russia - Italy My apologies for being so uncommunicative, but I hope I have ascertained your intentions correctly.

Russia - Germany I wonder who caught cold?

Thin Game Four      Diplomacy      Spring 1904

AUSTRIA (See below) Anarchy: F(Gre), A(Tyo), A(Tri) st u/o  
 ENGLAND (Dave Buson) WAR! F(ATH), F(Wal), F(StP) no st u/o  
 FRANCE (Les Hazlewood) F(ENG) C A(Bre) - Ion F(Lpl) S F(LAO) - IBS  
 A(Bel) st F(NAO) - NWG F(Par) - Spe(sc)  
 GERMANY (Julien Shepley) A(Sil) - Gal A(Hol) S French A(Bel) A(Kie) A(Hol)  
 F(Den) - STP A(Per) - Pru F(Spe) - Nor  
 ITALY (John Wilman) A(Ven) S Austrian A(Tri) F(LOS) C A(Apu) - Alb  
 F(ABS) S A(Apu) - Alb  
 RUSSIA (Anarchy) A(War), F(GoB) st u/o  
 TURKEY (Nigel Bateman) A(Sev) - Nos F(BLA) C A(Ank) - Sev A(Con) - Tul  
A(Tul) S A(Ser) - Alb F(AEG) S Austrian F(Gre)  
 F(Smy) - BLS

Constantine Porphyrogenitus: As Julien Shepley requests, I must now reveal that the name 'Christie-Jane Steers' hid Chris Steadman from his unsuspecting brethren at Southampton. It also, of course, deceived the other players, and I shall have to ask Pete Calcraft to declare the game irregular. Apologies are due all round, and I shall endeavour to find some reasonable monetary recompense for.

the three players not of Southampton extraction; I'm afraid, Nigel, that I have to disallow your attempt to keep C-J alive because you sent me self-addressed envelopes, whereas I wanted five envelopes for me to inform the other players. I might have made an exception on the grounds that I didn't make it sufficiently clear were it not for the fact that C-J's re-entry would be entirely satuous. OK?

Thing Game Two Railway Rivals 1115B Round 9

A few accounting mistakes last time leave Pistol and Balls one up, and Halifax one down. Craig also asks whether I meant COBLARS in run 11 where I had HALIFAX. Durno, guv; I can't remember who ran for what where. I shall have my copy of issue ten on hand next issue - I'll check it then. Otherwise I shall assume it makes no difference, since no-one else remarked upon it.

Run

- 13 HALIFAX 20 PISTOL 10
- 14 COBL 20 + 2(S) BALLS 10 + 1(S) SAIL -2 + 1 = -1
- 15 COBL 20 - 2(P) - 4(L) SAIL 10 + 1(P) HALI - 1(S) + 4(C) PIS + 2
- 16 HALIFAX 20 - 7(B) - 1(C) BALLS 10 - 2(S) - 2(P) + 7(B) ;S + 2 ;C + 1  
(nb 2 plus on HALI)
- 17 COBL 20 - 7(P) - 4(P) BALLS 10 + 4(C) P + 7
- 18 SAIL 20 BALLS 10 PIST -1(B) - 3(S) ; nb added to their scores

Builds none. How surprising.

Moneys

- COBLARS (Len Bain - Blue) 148 + 46 = 194
- HALIFAX (Richard Morris - Black) 126 + 37 = 163 + 1 = 162
- BALLS (Richard Walkerdine - Purple) 108 + 47 = 149 + 1 = 150
- PISTOL (Alan Farr - orange) 101 + 15 = 116 + 1 = 117
- SAIL (Craig Miles - Green) 40 + 35 = 75

Runs for round ten (build up to three)

- 19 (31) Manchester - Derby (41) 20 (63) London - York (14)
- 21 (12) Hull - Leicester (44) 22 (25) Burnley - Oxford (56)
- 23 (62) London - Sheffield (22) 24 (51) Newport - Manchester (32)

Thing Game Five AT One seventy something B Round four

Craig switched his brain onto high power here to cut through the fog I'd managed to leave in last season's accounts. If I, with my steam-driven mind, am able to keep up with him, it seems that he is owed 6 points, SMRC owed two, FOKI over the bank two, Gringe has one too many and Wirkin is washed to the tune of another five. The only section of this I feel up to explaining is the last, which applies to the build from F62 to F64 - I had missed a hex on my map-reading. Loh. It might help if you all gave only essential hexes rather than outlining every turn in 100 detail - I tend to be a bit cavalier with all the crossings out. F60 should indeed have built from F63 to Paris via G101 last time. And if you'd all stop doing these nasty things to each other, of which more below, I might be able to come a whole lot better!

Scores therefore corrected to:

- CHINGE 48
- SMRC 47
- FOKI 70
- WIRKIN 24
- GRINGE 47
- MANCHESTER 7

Please note that Donald, indeed is now heavily in debt, thing-wise, and has not submitted moves for this turn. Unless he rectifies this for next turn, and I don't see how he can, because I shouldn't waste another issue on him, his tracks will go up

for auction at the end of next turn. Did any price you feel justified for the following:

A) 449 Orleans Paris, branches to Rennes, Nantes, Tours and 102

B) Orleans 127

EBE (Craig Miles - black) 18 + 5 + 2(3) + 16 (H) = 71

4a) (198) Amiens Lille b) (127) G25 F2A Montpellier

c) (128) Grenoble; (Paris) 127 F26 127; (Lyon) 068

SERC (Les Hazlewood - orange) 30 + 5 + 5(3) - 2(4) - 3(C) - 4+4 (H) = 25 ((L58

4a) (198) 199 198 197; (Nancy) 0109 Actz b) (197) 196 198 199 Jung c) (163) 159

FIRIF (John Field - green) 7 - 16 (F) - 2(C) = -11

4a) (162) 162 162 161 199 b) (199) Paris 199 198 Amiens; (Montpellier) F2A

c) (F2A) 126 127

CLINCI (Ian Kerrison - yellow) 17 + 15 + 5 (F) + 2 (H) + 3 (S) = 72

4a) (194) Le Havre; (Amiens) Boulogne; (Lille) 1100 b) (1100) Dunkerque; (L106) 1107

b) (cont.) ... (Tours) 155 c) (L107) Actz

P3V (Paul Brinc - depressive blue) 24 - 5 (J) - 5 (C) = 14

4a) (154) 152 195 b) (195) Rouen 197 c) (197) 100 Boulogne

FORN stones at 47 and the next throws are 4, 4, 2

OK guys, this is where I go completely bananas. It's five forty in the morning, I have a plane to catch today, I have had seven hours sleep (if you can call it that) in the last forty-eight, there is a strange-mythological-shape lurking in the shadows by the exit to my garage, and I've just discovered that the duplicator requires an agonising hand-crank if I don't want my three different brands of inferior paper to stick to each other (cohesion? Adhesion? Who gives?). I am going to miss out the 1329 altogether - it may win its way to the individuals concerned in the next ten days, but I'm not sure I want the hassle with air mail. As for presentation, I've ~~ex~~ decided to take a novel approach to this issue - the duplicator as artist. Let the medium be the message, man, and the message says, go to bed. I can't; I can't. concentrate, I can't type, and for all I know I can't get it up. How would I know? My eyes are so raw I can't see beyond the red blur in front of them.

Except when that bastard creature gets in the way ... goddamn, what is that thing? Haul it back to the relevant pantheon, quick, before my fevered imagination starts to add all manner of nasty claws and things to its armoury. I can feel its presence behind me as I type, so I'd better reach the bottom quick or I may not reach the duplicator at all - you can't type with your back against the wall, but a duper is made for this scene. Stuff it. I end here.

Except:

to say that the 'N' game report suffers from complete absence of score only because I can't find where I've put my personal copy of the pen. I shall buy a new one for next time. If this is a wall issue, then put me up against one.

Here it comes - I just jumped out of my skin ...

This is a redundant page.

Like many other forms of redundancy, it has been short-changed by the eighty-three odd percent of pages in proper and remunerative employ.

Not unnaturally, it feels bitter, very bitter.

It asserts its sense of humiliation in bizarre and fruitless ways -

it \* SCREAMS \* at the society which produces it, it

goes on protest marches attached to a lot of other garbage:

it even votes SNP.

But nothing changes, because

I'm in charge here, and I insist that this page be redundant.