

a sadly shrunken affair from Haz Bond, 50 Mayer Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent ST1 2JD

EGOLAND: editorial

No, hang it all, I'm not folding.

But I have to face you up, look you in the eye, and mumble apologetically that U-Bend is not going to be a very exciting element of the world of postal gaming for the next year-odd at least.

As you can tell from the address above, I have moved. I no longer live at the same address as Joy Hibbert. Those eleven words cover three months of separation and several more of various unpleasant happenings, none of which I intend to go into here.

But my situation at the moment is worthy of explanation. I no longer have a word processor. I do have access to one; unfortunately, at the moment it is out of action. Neither do I have access to the computer database of my readership. I do have my trusty old file cards, which have served me as a backup since issue 1; unfortunately, about three issues ago I stopped recording credit details on them. This being so, I no longer have anything but a vague idea of who has what credit with me. Thus everyone for whom I have a file card gets this issue, and I just hope I've caught everyone's COA who's moved in the past four months.

This sheet will be given to everyone I see at World Dip Con in an attempt to skimp on postal costs. Non-attendees (ers?) will get it afterwards, when I have money to send it out. The U-Bend subscriber account is empty; it was the only non-joint account that I had, and it was a choice between living on that one and starving in April. This is not good practice for zine editors, as it means I can't actually afford to fold right away. But worry not. I'm not going away. I enjoy this hobby too much.

So what about all these games I'm running, then? Well, my ideal (since I enjoy running the things) is for U-Bend to appear as a one or two sheet effort, with games tagged on the back and going to players only, plus of course hobby statisticians as appropriate. This may not be to everyone's taste; if in any game a quorum requests rehousing in a zine that's more like a zine ought to be, then I will reluctantly bow ~~to the players' wishes and arrange another home for that game, with the OGRE's aid if~~ need be. But please don't, folks; I'd hate to lose any of you.

This goes for David Oya's games too, of course; he has already offered to run them as independent flyers until I'm back on my feet. As for Geoff Brown's Lift Off!, to my jaundiced eye it seems like an excellent time to lay this turkey to rest unmourned, but if the players and GM wish it I'm happy for the game to continue under U-Bend's aegis.

Another possibility is for U-Bend to transform itself into a subzine for a while, if anyone is mug enough to have me. This has worked for some zines in the past, notably Pete Sullivan's CMag. However, there are, it seems, two categories of zines around right now; ones that are too unreliable for me to consider moving there even if you wanted me, cos it wouldn't be fair on my loyal players; and ones that are already groaning at the seams under the weight of games, subzines and sundries. I shan't categorise by name; I'm sure most readers can work out which zines go where.

Unless huge quantities of readers wish it otherwise, then, U-Bend will continue to come out as a very thin independent zine. It will do so, what'smore, at 7-8 week deadlines; I just can't afford to do it more often than that now, though if my finances improve, so will the schedule. Postage is the killer. This means, too, that despite the lack of meat on-its-bones, it will still set you back 30p minimum.

Finally -- and this goes against the grain even more than most of the enforced cutbacks -- I will have to cut some trades. I don't like this; I love reading zines even more than running games or playing them. But the spectre that whispers out of my empty purse tells me I must. So here is a little box:

if it contains an X, I'm offering a trade cut. If any of you, for completism or idiocy, want to keep getting the shrunken U-Bend, say so and I'll see if I can squeeze you in. And again, once things improve, I shall be more than glad to ask you all for a resumption of trading, if that's okay by you.

This issue almost certainly won't have any games riding with it, due to the aforementioned computer illness. But I do now have all outstanding orders back in my possession, so

at least I don't have to ask for resubmitted orders. What would help would be for readers to inform me of their credit details as scribbled inside number 27. (And I do have some idea of what they were, so no cheating!)

The future, then? There is one, indeed; I insist on it, if I have to forge it with my bare hands, there will be a future. I am currently employed in a very ill-paid job that could be done by a trained monkey (no jokes, THANK YOU, Mr Nelson). However, it has one saving grace -- I am funded to go to Manchester one day a week and study for a diploma in librarianship. Once I have that, with the present climate in academia, I stand a very decent chance of a reasonably paid assistant librarian's post in some institute or other of higher education. But that's a year away. It would be tempting to start looking for better paid work in a different field right now, but I've already done one year's work towards the diploma, and don't want to throw it away (besides, if I do, Stafford College will make me pay back all the tuition fees they've given me so far, and I don't want to think about that possibility).

So for a year, you get a very weedy U-Bend for your money. But as soon as possible thereafter, the magic wand will be waved, and the frog will turn back into a princess with all the trappings you have come to know and love over twenty-seven issues and three years.

And just to show that I mean what I say, I'm keeping a waiting list open for regular Diplomacy. One poor soul sent me a request to subscribe and go on this list in April; well, if you still want to and haven't gone elsewhere after hearing nary a peep out of me for three months and more, you're very welcome. And I'll send you a back issue, just to show you the glory that was and will be.

I think that's all I need to say. You have been very patient with me -- even you, Mark Underhay -- and I thank you. In conclusion, I must mention that a number of you (how big a number I don't know) have received communications from Joy Hibbert. Without wishing to get bitchy, if I were you, I wouldn't believe a word of the damn things. Particularly if she says that I'm folding.

See you all in six weeks max; once I get to a working computer I shall send out adjudications for games, plus a deadline. In the meantime, this is Haz and his works electric typewriter ending the editorial section.

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QUID IN ALVEOS ACCIDET: hobby news

ELECTRIC MONK is folding after a protracted, intermittent silence. (How can a silence be protracted and intermittent? Waiter, take this metaphor away and mix it better). My thanks, and doubtless many others', go to Andy and Madi Key who produced a bloody good zine for over fifty issues, and were rewarded with top spot in the Zine Poll.

THE LAUGHING ROUNDHEAD is as late as U-Bend, almost.

ON THE GAME will be out by now, from Paul Cockayne, 18 Henry Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2. It has taken over the subzines The Blue Nose Special (John Colledge) and Novelty (David Tittle) from Smodnoc (see next item). Paul is a long-serving hobby member and I have every confidence in his ability to run his zine a sight better than I do. Send him an SAE for the first issue, due at World Dip Con.

SMODNOC, yes, is running down to a fold due to Toby Harris's desire to spend more time with family. Though it annoyed some with its propensity for self-publicity, Toby turned into a very good writer towards the end, and ran his zine like clockwork. It will be missed when it goes.

S.N.O.T. is the replacement for Vick Hall's A LITTLE ORIGINAL SIN, and comes from James Hardy, whose address I don't have to hand. Its first two issues have been uneven but mainly entertaining, and the guy deserves some sort of award (like a bullet through the stomach) for offering Silverton for postal play. Vick remains present in subzine form, I'm pleased to say, and may yet resurface once exams are behind him.

U-Bend won a Gladys, fnord. But SpOff got most of them. Beware, Agar; remember the myth of the frog who swelled up and up till he went off pop....

Someone or other won the subzine poll. (That's news, Bond?)

I'm outa here... your name is on the right. If it's not your name, then your name is wrong. Deed polls are available from a solicitor.

YOU ARE:
Big Boss Agar