

That would be enough

This has been issue 183 of *To Win Just Once*, published 13th April 2018. It incorporates *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, a game of *En Garde!*. Issues are published ten times a year, roughly every five weeks. © Paul Evans 2018

Deadlines

Orders for *Railway Rivals* and *Star Trader* to Mike by 4th May 2018.

Orders for *LPBS*, shots in *Trophy Hunter* and all other contributions to Pevans by Friday, 4th May 2018.

(Next deadlines are: 1st/8th June, 6th/13th July, 10th/17th August)

Waiting lists

En Garde! new players are always welcome in *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*. You will need the rules to *En Garde!* in order to play: www.engarde.co.uk

Railway Rivals – the latest game is under way, Martin Jennings is up for the next one, who else? (working copy and rules provided).

Star Trader – new players are welcome to join the current game (to gain experience, if nothing else, and there is an existing Corporation to take over). Rules provided.

Online games

Agricola (at www.boiteajeux.net):

Innovation (at www.boardgamearena.com): Pevans

Keyflower (at www.boardgamearena.com): Pevans, Brad Martin

Pax Porfiriana (at www.yucata.de): Pevans

Funkenschlag (*Power Grid*) (at famdepau.nl): Pevans

Through the Ages (at www.boardgaming-online.com):

Credits

To Win Just Once issue 183 was written and edited by Pevans. The *LPBS* masthead (page 24) is by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, as are the drawings on pages 27 and 29. Game, book and beer artwork is courtesy of the publisher/brewery. Photos were taken by Pevans (except where noted), who played with Photoshop.

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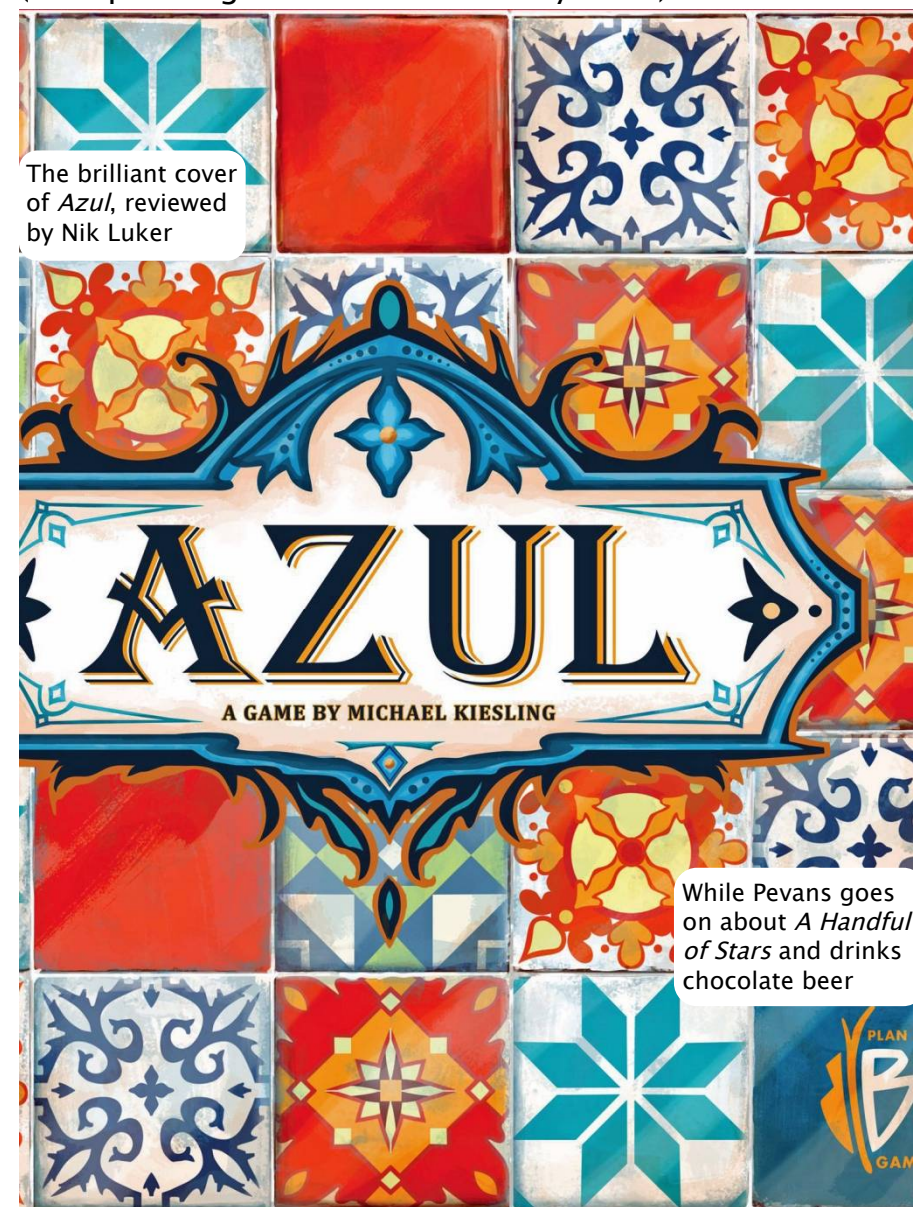
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To Win Just Once

(incorporating *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*)



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ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank, Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
CLD	Charles Louis Desapear	13	34	Comfy	Bdr-General/2nd Army QM Gen.	3	Emma	Both	4	Martin Jennings
LOUT	Louis Oeuf Ur Terribles	13	32	Comfy	Lt.Colonel RM/FMshl's Aide	2	Sue	Both	5	Dave Marsden
SdM	Swindelle d'Masses	13	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General QOC/HGds Brig Maj.	4		Both	4	Craig Pearson
FAG	Sir Felix Anton Gauchepied'er	13	+42	Withy	Major CG/Gen's Aide (3rd Army)	8		Both	4	Jason Fazackarley
JD	Jacques Diabolick	11	RIP							Cameron Wood
HD	Sir Henri Dubois	10	+ F	Comfy	Major DG	1		Hunt	3	Wayne Little
XM	Xavier Money	9	12	Comfy	Lt.Colonel GDMD	5	Betty	F&P	3	Pam Udowiczenko
SAD	Simon Alfred Devereux	9	F	OK	Captain DG	6		HGds	2	Paul Wilson
FSdM	Florent Sans de Machine	8	9	Comfy		3	Charlotte	BG	4	Nik Luker
RBCB	Raoul Bernard de Chenin Blanc	7	7	OK		5			4	Olaf Schmidt
LI	L'Inconnu	7	8	OK		5	Anna	BG	1	Gerald Udowiczenko
ADD	Arthur 'Dekka' Dent	7	7	Poor	Captain PLLD	6		BG	1	Graeme Morris
VdC	Vulson de Chalais	7	RIP			4	Ava	F&P	4	Brian Heasley
RdL	Robert d'Lancier	7	+ 24	OK	Captain RM					Steven Malacek
GS	Guido Spoons	6	RIP							Ray Vahey
PDG	Padamus Da Grim	6	F	OK	Major GDMD	6		F&P	2	Graeme Wilson
JML	Jean-Marie Lillebonne	5	12	Poor	Major 13F	4	Thomasina	F&P	4	Mark Nightingale
X1		5	0	OK		6			2	Francesca Weal
BS	Balzac Slapdash	4	14	Comfy	B.Bdr-General	9		RP	4	Matthew Wale
HDE	Hercule D'Engin	3	1	Poor		2			2	Gerry Sutcliffe
AF	Augustin Fourier	3	10	Poor	Subaltern GDMD/Bdr's Aide (GIS)	2		RP	3	Brick Amundsen
FP	Fabien Petanque	2	2	Poor	Subaltern PM	6			3	Bob Blanchett

An F under SPs means that the character was at the Front, RIP means that he died.

+ against SL means it went up this month, - means it went down.

Cash: Poor = <500, OK = 500-1500, Comfy = 1500-5000, Withy = 5000-10000, Rich = 10000-25000, Fithy = 25000+

Last seen is the lady the character was last seen with in public.

EC is Endurance Class: 1 = <60, 2 = 60-90, 3 = 91-120, 4 = 121-159, 5 = 160-200, 6 = 201+

The Greasy Pole

ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank, Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
PIS	Viscount Pierre le Sang	25	61	Withy	General/State Min.	7	Guinevere	Flr	4	Bill Howell
BdZ	Viscount Bill de Zmerchant	25	F	Comfy	Fld Marshal/War Minister	7		Flr	3	Tim Macaire
PC	Count Pierre Cardigan	24	39	Rich	General	9	Edna	Flr	5	Matt Shepherd
EB	Marquis Etienne Brule	24	F	Withy	B.Bdr-General DG/Chancellor	3		Flr	4	James McReynolds
UXB	Count Uther Xavier-Beauregard	23	59	Withy	B.General/2nd Army Commdr	16	Henrietta	Flr	4	Pete Card
JdG	Count Jacques de Gain	23	49	Fthly	B.Lt-General/Cav Div Commdr	21		Flr	6	Ben Brown
FdA	Viscount Frele d'Acier	22	F	Comfy	Lt.Colonel DG	15		Flr	3	Peter Farrell
AdA	Count Amant d'Au	22	F	Rich	B.Bdr-General RFG	9		Flr	5	David Brister
DdE	Baron Duncan d'Eauneurts	21	+ 76	Comfy	B.Bdr-General KM/CPS	5		Flr	5	Paul Lydiate
SdIC	Baron Sebastian de la Creme	20	43	Comfy	B.General/3rd Army Commdr	4		Flr	5	Alan Percival
JJ	Count Jean Jeanie	20	F	Rich	Lt.Colonel RFG	24		Flr	3	Andrew Kendall
RS	Viscount Richard Shapmes	20	F	Withy	Lt-General/Prov.Mil.Gov	16		Flr	4	Charles Popp
BRJS	Baron Beau Reese Jean Seine	19	F	OK	Major RFG/Min w/o Port	4		Flr	3	Bill Hay
WNM	Viscount Was Nae Me	18	44	Rich	B.Lt-General/2nd Div Commdr	11	Vera	Both	3	Mark Farrell
TC	Baron Terence Cuckpowder	18	F	Withy	Bdr-General/HGds Brigadier	6		Both	4	Mike Dommatt
LdH	Sir Leonard de Hofstadt	16	37	Comfy	Bdr-General/Gds Brigadier	5	Frances	Both	5	Neil Packer
GM	Sir Gaz Moutarde	16	32	Rich	B.Lt-General	4		Both	2	Mike Clibborn-Dyer
CC	Baron Chopine Camus	16	F	Withy	B.Lt-General/Hvy Brigadier	8		Both	4	Stewart Macintyre
SAZ	Baron Sebastian Adis II	16	RIP							Mark Cowper
AdF	Sir Alan de Frocked	15	30	Withy	Colonel CG/3rd Army Adjutnt	3	Madelaine	Both	2	Charles Burrows
GIS	Sir Gaston le Somme	15	30	Comfy	B.Bdr-General RM/1st Army Adj't	2	Bess	Both	3	Jerry Spencer
BdLS	Bernard de Lur-Saluces	14	30	Withy	B.Lt-General/1st Div Commdr	7		Both	2	Rob Pinkerton
Jdl	Sir Jean d'Ice	14	F	OK	Lt.Colonel CG	5		Both	3	Tym Norris
JE	Marquis Jean Ettonique	14	F	Withy	Major DG/Gen's Aide (2nd Army)	13			5	Tony Hinton-West

Chatter

Despite my downbeat assessment last issue, Wales finished second in the Six Nations, thanks to just defeating France in Cardiff on the last weekend. Ireland won, of course, beating all-comers, so Geraldine is very happy.

My apologies for the late appearance of last issue. This one should be on time – not least as I have no leeway before I head off to the US of A for this year's Gathering of Friends. Expect my notes on the new games I've played while I'm there in the next *TWJO*.

Star Trader – Voyager

It looks like we have a drop-out from the current *Star Trader* game. If anyone would like to take over their Corporation, Smitten Kitten, let me or Mike know. It could be a useful introduction to the game for a new player.

TWJO online

TWJO 182 was published in the middle of March and the PDF versions had racked up 107 downloads by 31st. Issue 181 was downloaded 17 times in March, giving it a total of 142 in two months. 14 more downloads took *TWJO* 180 to 259 since publication.

Looking at other things in the website logs, I noted lots of referrals from www.your-website-sucks.net. Miffed, I went to look and the website doesn't seem to exist, though the domain is registered (at the beginning of March). Somebody's having a bit of fun, I think.

Letters

Chris Baylis responded to the news that last issue was delayed.

How Unprofessional of you – *Games Gazette* was never late, except sometimes.

The current incarnation of *Games Gazette* is online – www.gamesgazette.co.uk – which is never late. Meanwhile, Alex Bardy appreciated my Toy Fair report.

As always, I enjoyed reading your account of another show/fair – am only really familiar with *Mountains of Madness* of the 'new' games you mentioned, and had heard similar opinions that it is not a 'Cthulhu' game per se, more of a party game in Cthulhu clothing... Lovecraft would be spinning in his grave if he knew!

Chocolate beers

My indulgent Easter treat was a case of chocolate beer: mmm... beer **and** chocolate, what could be better? And, having indulged, here are my tasting notes.

Brigade Positions

Guards Brigade	LdH/N/N5
Horse Guards Brigade	TC/N/SdM
Heavy Brigade	CC/N/N4
Dragoon Brigade	N6/N/N6
First Foot Brigade	N3/N/___
Second Foot Brigade	N4/N/N2
Third Foot Brigade	___/___/N5
Fourth Foot Brigade	N5/N/N6

Current CO/Aide/Brigade Major of each Brigade; entries are ID for player characters, “N” (+ MA if needed) for NPC, ___ for vacant

Frontier Regiments

	F1	F2	F3	F4	RNHB
Colonel	N6	N5	N5	N2	N5
Attached					
Also at the Front					

(On campaign for June–Aug)

This table shows the Colonels of the Frontier regiments (“N” + MA for NPCs), together with the volunteers assigned for the season.

Battle Results

Horse Guards Brigade: 1	27th Musketeers: 6
Dragoon Guards: 3	Frontier regiment 1: 3
Queen's Own Carabiniers: 1	Frontier regiment 2: 3
Heavy Brigade: 1	Frontier regiment 3: 4
Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers: 3	Frontier regiment 4: 5
Crown Prince Cuirassiers: 2	RNHB regiment: 2
Royal Foot Guards: 4	

Other Appointments

King's Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Cardinal's Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Aides: to Crown Prince N	to Field Marshal LOUT
Provincial Military Governors: RS/N/N/N/N	
City Military Governor N	Adjutant-General ___
Inspectors-General: of Cavalry N	of Infantry N
Commissioner of Public Safety DdE (until March 1671)	
Chancellor of the Exchequer EB (until April 1671)	
Minister of Justice CPS	
Minister of War BdZ (until August 1670)	
Minister of State PIS (until November 1670)	

Shows who holds appointments outside military units:
ID for Characters, “N” for NPC, ___ for vacant, “CPS” for additional posts held by the CPS.

Young's Double Chocolate Stout (5.2%)

This is a good-looking stout with a nice smell of chocolate and some good bitterness in the mouth. There's plenty of chocolate in the aftertaste, too. The label does say It contains "real chocolate", but nothing to explain why it's double chocolate. It is a bit fizzy for me and thinner than I would expect a stout to be, but a decent beer.

All in all, an excellent selection of beers: the Meantime and Thornbridge Porters stand out, along with my old favourite, Saltaire's Triple Chocoholic. All I've got to do now is pick up a few bottles of all three.

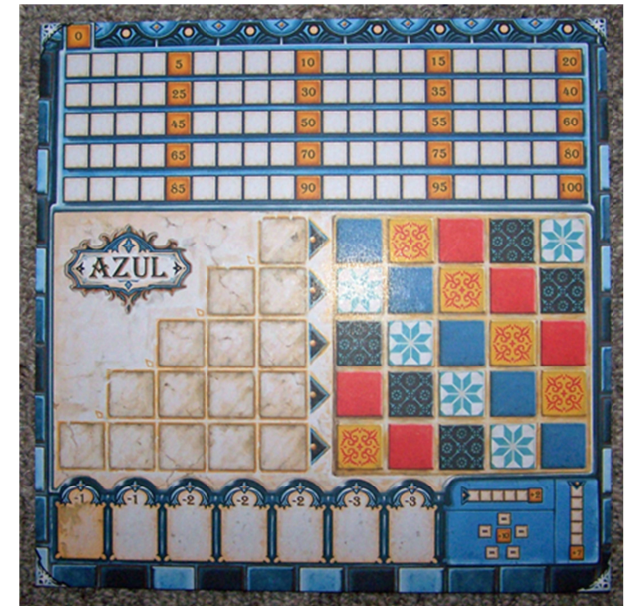
Tiling Walls in Portugal

Nik Luker reviews Azul

One of the big hits of Spiel '17 and recent winner of France's *As d'Or*, *Azul* is an essentially abstract game based on the theme of tiling the Portuguese royal palace of Evora with “azulejos” (originally white and blue ceramic tiles). In a very fine production, these are represented by resin tiles in five colours, roughly 2 cm square. Players will attempt to position these, according to set rules, onto their boards until one player completes a line of five different tiles, whereupon final scoring takes place.

Each player receives a player board which is divided into four sections: a score track at the top, a holding area (referred to as pattern lines), a wall area of pre-printed tiles and a line of floor spaces at the bottom. According to the number of players, several ‘Factory’ mats are arranged in a circle on the table and four tiles – drawn at random from a cloth bag – are placed on each Factory.

Azul is played over a series of rounds of three phases each and the rules are surprisingly



An *Azul* player board (photo by Nik)

simple. In the ‘Factory offer’ phase, each player in turn can either take all the tiles of one colour from a Factory, placing the other tiles into the centre of the circle, or take all the tiles of one colour from the centre (plus the start player token if they are the first to do this).

Either way, the tiles taken must be placed into one, and *only* one, of the pattern lines on the player’s board. They must be placed from right to left and, if a pattern line already holds tiles, only tiles of the same colour may be added. In addition, tiles may not be placed into a pattern line whose corresponding wall line contains a tile of the same colour. Should a player end up with more tiles than they can place into a line, the excess go into the player’s floor area and will score negative points later.

Once all the tiles have been taken, the ‘Wall-tiling’ phase begins. Each player checks through their pattern lines from top to bottom and moves the rightmost tile of each *complete* line to the matching space in the corresponding line of the wall, scoring points for the placement immediately. The remaining tiles from the line are removed to the box lid. Tiles in *incomplete* pattern lines are left in place for the next round.

Scoring is simple. A tile placed into the wall with no tiles adjacent to it scores one point. Any tiles horizontally linked to the placed tile, however, increase the score

by one each. Similarly with vertically linked tiles. Each tile in a player’s floor area incurs negative points as indicated on its space and is then removed to the box lid.

The Factory mats are re-seeded with four tiles each from the bag and a new round begins. The game ends after the Wall-tiling phase in which at least one player has completed at least one horizontal line of tiles in their wall. Bonuses are awarded for each complete horizontal and vertical wall line and for each set of five



Azul tiles set up for a four-player game (photo by Nik)

first duelling sequence need only contain six actions.

a package a midget would be disappointed to own.”

Challenges to be voted on

Felix Anton Gauchepied'er challenges Duncan d'Eauneurts as “he is a brutish man who promised a lady so much *only* to then fail to deliver with

All duels listed above (including any to be voted on) must be fought next month. Orders conditional on a challenge being voted cause are acceptable.

New Characters

Ray Vahey gets the First son of a Merchant: Init SL 4; Cash 165; MA 3; EC 3 (X2).

Mark Cowper gets the First son of an Impoverished Count: Init SL 12; Cash 44; MA 6; EC 2 (X3).

Cameron Wood gets the Bastard son of a very wealthy Viscount: Init SL 9; Cash 675; MA 5; EC 1 (X4).

Brian Heasley gets the First son of a well-to-do Gentleman: Init SL 5; Cash 275; MA 5; EC 1 (X5).

Tables

Army Organisation and 1670's Summer Deployment

First Army (Field Ops)	__/_/_/GIS/__
First Division (Field Ops)	BdLS/_/_/__
Guards Brigade (Field Ops) – RFG CG KM	
Dragoon Brigade (Field Ops) – GDMD PLLD	
Cavalry Division (Field Ops)	JdG/_/_/__
Horse Guards Brigade (Field Ops) – DG QOC	
Heavy Brigade (Field Ops) – ALC CPC	
Second Army (Siege)	UXB/JE/N1/CLD
Frontier Division (Siege)	N1/N/N3
Frontier Regiments (Siege)	
Third Army (Defence)	SdIC/FAG/AdF/N
Second Division (Defence)	WNNM/N/N3
3rd Foot Brigade (Defence) – 27M 4A	
4th Foot Brigade (Defence) – 69A Gscn	
RNHB Regiment (Defence)	
Third Division (Defence)	__/_/_/N2
1st Foot Brigade (Defence) – RM PM	
2nd Foot Brigade (Defence) – 13F 53F	

Organisation and Deployment for the Campaign Season with Army and Division posts (Commander/Aide/Adjutant/QMG)

Entries are ID for player characters, “N” (+ MA if needed) for NPC, __ for vacant

X1 (Francesca Weal) has been floated as Fran's been busy with other things.

Notes

The *En Garde!* rules are available to LPBS players at a reduced rate: see any month's Points Arising page at www.pevans.co.uk/LPBS.

There's a Yahoo! group for *En Garde!* players that provides a forum for players of different games to swap stories and ideas. Sign up and get talking at: <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/EnGardePlayers/>

Announcements

Gaston le Somme asks NPC Major 1 of Royal Marines to resign

Jean-Marie Lillebonne asks NPC Lt.Colonel of 13th Fusiliers to resign

Robert d'Lancier asks NPC Major 1 of Royal Marines to resign

Duels

Results of May's duels

Duncan d'Eauneurts (with WNM, gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Alan de Frocked (with LdH).

Charles Louis Desapear (gains 1 Exp) beat L'Inconnu.

Simon Alfred Devereux didn't fight Charles Louis Desapear and lost SPs.

Vulson de Chalais didn't fight Jean-Marie Lillebonne and lost SPs.

Grudges to settle next month:

Sebastian Adis II (Foil, 3 rests) has cause with Vulson de Chalais (Rapier, adv.) for pinching Marie.

Reminders: It is worth sending orders in even if they're a day or two late: I may be able to action the orders and should be able to use any press. It also reassures me that you're still there.

Orders (and press) should be e-mailed to lpbsorders@pevans.co.uk – you'll get an automated reply when your message arrives in my mailbox. Please give your name and your character's name and specify actions in full (since it's without your character sheet). If you want queries answered before the deadline, e-mail LPBS@pevans.co.uk instead.

Sebastian de la Creme applies for Army Commander of First Army

Sebastian de la Creme applies for Army Commander of Third Army

Jean d'Ice (Rapier, Seconds LdH, adv.) has cause with Robert d'Lancier (Cutlass, 1 rests) for pinching Ava.

Jacques Diabolick (Rapier, 2 rests) has cause with Balzac Slapdash (Rapier, adv.) for pinching Mary.

Amant d'Au (Dagger, adv.) has cause with Gaston le Somme (Cutlass, 5 rests) for pinching Katy.

Felix Anton Gauchepied'er (Dagger, 4 rests) challenges Duncan d'Eauneurts (Sabre, Seconds WNM, adv.).

"adv." shows who (if anyone) has the advantage of higher Expertise: his

tiles of a single colour. The player with the highest score after this wins of course.

That's all there is to it. As described, the game doesn't sound overly interesting, but within these simple rules hides something truly devious. For starters, the random mix of tiles on the Factory mats provides some tricky decisions as to which tile(s) to take. Players must bear in mind that the remainder will be added to the central pool, possibly setting up a juicy selection for an opponent. And it is a very good idea to keep an eye on opponents' boards to avoid such a scenario. That said, the agonising choice between taking tiles to benefit oneself and taking tiles to prevent an opponent doing so arises all too often.

As the game progresses, its subtleties begin to emerge. For example, it is entirely possible, especially later in the game, to force an opponent to take tiles which they cannot place into their wall. There is something strangely satisfying about offloading 'junk' tiles on an opponent, thereby forcing them to take negative points. Conversely, it is sometimes worth deliberately taking a few negative points in order to avoid a much bigger disaster later in the game. The trick, of course, is knowing when to do this.

Aside from stitching up opponents, careful attention also needs to be paid as to how to fit tiles into one's wall, as this is where the points are scored. First time players frequently concentrate on finishing a horizontal line as fast as possible as this ends the game. It does not score many points, however.

Better to concentrate on placing tiles into a matrix of linked horizontal and vertical pieces. This gives a nice steady accumulation of points throughout the game, but starts to determine which tiles should be taken from the Factory mats or central pool. Which returns us to our original dilemma of what is good for oneself may set up something better for an opponent. Interestingly, and at the risk of appearing sexist, women seem to be better at judging this than men.

I should point out here that the reverse of each player board features a grey wall area with no pre-printed tiles. This variant uses the same rules as the standard game, except that when a tile is moved from a pattern line to the wall, it may be placed on *any* space in the corresponding wall line so long as no colour appears more than once in each of the five *vertical* lines of the wall. Blokes seem to fare better with this set-up and I'm not sure why. Different male/female psychologies? Pattern matching/spatial awareness issues? Or just the individuals I've played the game with? Answers on a postcard please...

But I digress. *Azul* is a good value package. Production quality is decent – the player boards and Factory mats are of a good size and thickness, the resin tiles are well moulded and nicely decorated, the rulebook clear and concise. The only let-down is the first player marker. This is a cardboard tile of the same size as the resin tiles, which serves its purpose perfectly well, but just doesn't look as good as the rest of the game. A resin tile in keeping with the others would be

much better (and, I've learned, will be included in new editions of the game and available from the Next Move webstore). This is only a minor quibble however.

Gameplay is swift and slick with little downtime; this one definitely does not outstay its welcome even with its maximum four players, which, in my opinion, is where it is at its best. A word of caution here – the amount of control one has of the game decreases with the number of players, so if you're not comfortable with limited control this one may not be for you. Replay value, thanks to the random tile draw at set-up and short game time, is high. If you're looking for something that's a bit meatier than your standard filler, but doesn't take much longer to play, *Azul* ticks all the boxes. Recommended.

Azul was designed by Michael Kiesling and is published by Plan B Games. It is for 2–4 players, aged 8+, and takes 30–45 minutes to play.

Re-conquer the Galaxy

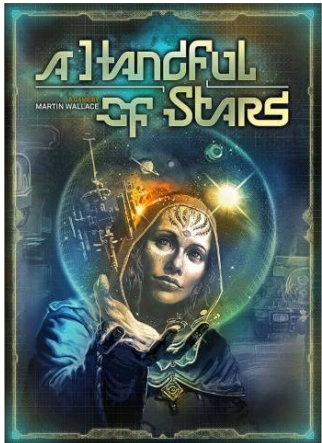
A Handful of Stars reviewed by Pevans

A new game from Martin Wallace demands to be played, as far as I'm concerned. However, I had a bit of trouble persuading other people to join me as this one is essentially a wargame. And a multi-player wargame, too, which is hard to pull off. The game has a science fiction theme, with players trying to re-build their empires after a cataclysm has re-distributed solar systems across the galaxy. In game terms, this means players start with scattered holdings, providing a different challenge each game.

The solar systems are square tiles and are distributed at random into the marked positions on the board. The board shows connections between positions, but some of these will be closed off, depending on just which system tile goes where. This is

a neat mechanism that enhances replay value and means the geography of the board needs to be studied before the game starts. Expect a few systems to be all but isolated with restricted access. Very useful defensively, not so good if you're trying to expand out of them.

There is a card for each system as well and players are dealt a number of these to provide their holdings at the start of the game. These will be an equal number of inhabitable (where colonies can be built and which provide population) and uninhabitable systems – providing resources, but limited to outposts. Once players have all marked the systems they hold, they decide which should be their 'Homeworld' (placing a wooden cylinder in



but, unfortunately, he's proved to be a lost cause. He recently attempted to have me removed from the government – an unforgiveable act of treachery in my book. I've asked him to leave the regiment as a consequence. If he refuses, I'll ensure he remains constantly at the front until he either reconsiders or an enemy howitzer shell (I'm told he remains too far behind the lines to be hit by a musket or cannon ball) sends him back to Paris in a box.

Points Arising

Next deadline is 4th May

Thanks to Paul Lydiate for the detailed court report (which I've edited slightly) and to Jason Fazackarley for FAG's interruption.

As I was asked the question: influence may be used to reduce the Royal Displeasure die roll. This will require a level 9 favour. Or bribe...

As most characters will be on active service for the next three months, **I will run June and July back to back. Please send two sets of orders for this deadline.** Orders for July may be conditional on what happens in June – if there is a major impact on any characters in June, I will give the affected players an opportunity to modify their July orders. Replacements for anyone who dies in June will start in August.

June is the start of a new season. **All characters start the month in Paris and all duels must be fought.** Any vacant appointments not taken by player characters will be

Hoping that Madelein and yourself are keeping well,

Your loving Son, † Duncan

My aide has volunteered to lead the attack at the front. Some might think this overcompensating for mis-delivering correspondence, others would see it as a desire to impress others. I take full responsibility for the mis-delivery.

† Cuckpowder

filled by NPCs – unless a post is appointed by a player character, who may order that it is left vacant (if you have an appointment or a rank that allows you to appoint posts, don't forget to do so).

June is the start of the campaign season. **All units listed on the "Army Organisation" table will be in action** (any volunteers will serve with the Frontier regiments). Characters who are part of one of these units can only avoid active service by resigning from their regiment and/or appointment.

Next turn is the last month characters can make investments for this campaign. The return on investments will be paid in September.

Absent friends

I had no orders ("No Move Received") from the following and they suffered the consequences:

GS Guido Spoons (Ray Vahey) has NMR'd. Total now 2 and is sent to a Frontier regiment

My name is Arthur Dent. People call me ‘Dekka’. I went to school with a guy called Inigo Monty-something-or-other. Foreign chap. You and his father were mates... weren’t you? Or was it you killed him? Blowed if I can remember. Fancy a cup of tea?

As we set out for the front, I know our thoughts are for those we leave behind us; but we will serve His Majesty valiantly. † Cuckpowder

Baron Cuckpowder

I was not aware of these plans when I arranged the party. I have no wish to be excused from action: I will be honoured to lead my squadron to glory. Freda will be so disappointed... Well, cannot be helped – duty to country comes first.

Kind regards,

† Viscount D’Acier

To Brigadier-General Terence Cuckpowder

Thank you for your help in my obtaining the position of Lt. Col. in the Cardinal’s Guard.

If there is any way I can return the favour, do let me know.

Yours cordially,

† Sir Jean d’Ice

Lord Percy Percy says, as fashion is tending towards the vindictive, we have a rather fashionable CPS.

Hercule, new to this great city and of good background; seeks position and good friends in forging his future and lessening that of His Majesty’s enemies.

Dearest Duncan,

News of your elevation to Baron has set all Eauneurts-sous-Montreuil a-gabbling. Well done laddie, ye’ve done us all proud!

Well, as they say back home in Scotland, ‘A Laird needs a Lassie’. D’ye ken a similar saying in the French tongue? Mayhap ‘A Baron needs a Baronne’ might hit the mark?

Anyway, Madelein and I think it’s high time you found yourself a wife and started tae produce some baronets, or whatever the title is. Especially so in light of the rumours starting the rounds concerning your poor father’s regiment. Is it true that ye saw fit tae allow a kilt-lifting nancy tae enter the ranks? Tell me it cannae be so.

Your Concerned Mama,

† Lady Isla d’Eauneurts, Chateau d’Eauneurts, Eauneurts-sous-Montreuil, Pas-de-Calais, Picardy

Chère Maman,

You could well be right. Perhaps it is time I found some lady to serve as a permanent companion. Paris boasts so many desirable ladies, however, that a search for the right one may take considerable time. In any case, such a course will now have to wait until the Musketeers and I return from the front in September.

Regards the ‘kilt-lifting Nancy’ I assume that you are referring to Felix Anton Gauchepied’er? I myself have come to the conclusion that allowing him into the regiment was a grave error of judgement on my part. I had hoped that some time with the King’s Musketeers might make a man of him

their colour) and which their first colony (a wooden disc) – the others remain outposts (wooden cubes).

Several things follow from this. First off, the luck of the draw will give some players better starting positions than others. Having a few systems close together is good, provided they’re connected. And a corner position – or one of those dead ends – is more defensible, though this depends on which connections are open.

Secondly, players score points for their outposts (3 points each), colonies (5) and homeworld (7). This means it’s useful to have neutral inhabitable systems close to your starting position: they provide opportunities to expand into and build more colonies and outposts. However, while a better starting position is good, it should make you a target for the other players.

As each player has the same wooden pieces on the board, they start with the same score – shown on a track on the board. Players’ scores will go up as they build new outposts and colonies and will go down as other players conquer them. Yes, this is a wargame. Most of players’ points come from their holdings on the board, but there are a couple of other sources.

As well as the main board, each player has their own board (well, sheet of card). The top row of this is where they place their undeployed colony discs. As each colony is placed, its space is filled with a ‘Development’ tile, drafted from those available. Generally, these tiles provide resources, but they can also give players points or increase the capacity of their ‘Reserves’ (more of this later). The first two spaces are emptied by placing their homeworld and initial colony, so players start with a couple of Developments each.

As well as Developments, players can acquire ‘Technologies’ from the substantial deck of Technology cards. A number of these are available to purchase – using ‘Research’ resources. They provide all sorts of useful things, such as combat bonuses, faster movement and even victory points. There is one special Technology: wormholes. If this comes out (and it has in every game I’ve played), it can be bought by every player (they take a tile rather than the card). Being able to use wormholes allows a player to move their fleets directly from one system tile with a wormhole icon to another. This can radically alter the geography of the board, but I have to say that it’s had minimal effect in the games I’ve played.

Gameplay is driven by cards, with each player having their own deck. They draw a hand, play from there and then refill their hand, shuffling their discard pile when their deck runs out. In a neat mechanism, this is what determines the end of the game. Each time any player re-shuffles, a counter is moved along a track. When this reaches a specific point, depending on the number playing, the final round is triggered. Then the player with the most points wins (though it’s worth checking that players’ points have been recorded correctly – tot up their wooden pieces on the board plus any Developments and played Technologies with points).



Green's player board with a card in reserve

Cards will have one or more resource icons (population, matter, energy, research) in the top left corner and/or some text in the body of the card. When a card is played, it is either for **one** of the resources shown or to do what the text says. Some cards, marked 'Reserve', have a permanent effect, once placed in a player's 'Reserve'. Some, marked 'Combat', can be played during a battle. Some are marked 'free action' and can be played in addition to everything else a player does in their turn. And some are 'one use only' and go out of the game once used.

Players' starting decks consist of a standard set of four cards in their colour plus their starting systems and two random Technologies (all Technologies are useful – in the right circumstances – but some are more useful than others, especially when you get them free at the start of the game). In addition, each player draws a 'race' card and takes the three special Technologies associated with that particular alien race. Thus the Aggroloids have some big guns, while the Technoids acquire new Technologies more easily.

Players shuffle their deck and draw a starting hand of six cards. In good Martin Wallace style, each turn consists of the current player taking two actions, powered by the cards (and Developments) they have available. This goes round until the end of the game is triggered, when players complete the round and play one more full round.

This being a wargame, an obvious action is building military units: fleets and starbases. These are cardboard pieces in the player's colours and can only be built at the player's colonies (and homeworld). Fleets have a strength of 3, while starbases are worth five, but can't move. However, they cost the same: one population resource and one matter. The build action lets a player construct up to two units, playing cards and/or flipping over Development tiles to provide the required resources.

who without any proof makes such public statements. That Department is a shambles – following on from the tyranny of the Mad Sheikh, they have now appointed a CPS without any judgement who I fear is only trying to feather his own nest by confiscating from the estates of brave men whose only aim to serve our great country and Le Roi. The way he treated his Lt Colonel shows the type of man he is; no way is he fit for any public office other than Inspector of Sewers and Field Latrines. To say I am slightly annoyed by this distraction is an understatement.

I remain, your loyal, hard-working, servant

† Baron Adis
Quartermaster-General 1st Army

Brigadier le Baron Duncan d'Éauneurts, OC King's Musketeers, to
Monsieur Florent Sans de Machine and Monsieur Raoul Bernard de Chenin Blanc
Greetings!

Gentlemen,
The King's Musketeers, the finest regiment in France (with the possible exception of the Royal Foot Guards) will be spending the Summer at the front and I would like to invite you to take up one of the vacant captaincies so as to lead one of our companies to glory.

I would be happy to provide sufficient monies to purchase the rank and provide the necessary horse if required.

I assume that neither of you wishes to kick your heels in Paris while *real*

men win fame at the front and if you intend to join a regiment, why not join the best?

I will leave instructions with the recruiting sergeant to the effect that applications from you are to be accepted immediately.

† Brigadier d'Éauneurts
P.S. I would also be happy to admit Messieurs Robert d'Lancier, Jean-Marie Lillebonne and Balzac Slapdash when their social standing proves sufficient.

Lèse Majesté? All true Parisians would voluntarily reduce their social standing rather than pretend to be on a social standing with the Dauphin.

† le parapluie rouge

CPS d'Éauneurts

You, Sir, are sadly misinformed and I demand that you issue a full apology to working gentlemen of the Quartermaster-General office over your recent allegations. If you can drag yourself from banqueting and carousing, I "invite" you to join me at the front where you can inspect the First Army Procurement Ledgers in person and, when you fail utterly to find any proof of corruption, I challenge you to take the honourable course and resign your position. Sadly, the quality of the CPS office leaves a lot to be desired nowadays – your public treatment of your Lt Colonel shows what sort of character you are.

Yours,
† Baron Adis
Quartermaster-General 1st Army

themselves under your command will soar.

† Brigadier le Baron Duncan
d'Eauneurts

Duncan,

So be it: “the gloves are off”, as I believe they refer to it!

You, darling, may have the power at the moment, but times change and I'll see the end of you yet sweetheart!

† Felix

Lt.Colonel Gauchpieder,

It is not a question of ‘who has the power’, but more what they intend to do with it.

Had you asked, I would have been more than happy to do what I could to secure you an appropriate appointment. Instead of which you attempt to oust me from the only government appointment for which I was eligible at the time – without so much as a ‘by your leave’.

It appears that the concepts of honour, loyalty and obligation are totally alien to you – and THAT is why I no longer wish to see you amongst the ranks of the King's Musketeers.

If you choose to make a lifelong enemy of me over this, so be it.

† Brigadier d'Eauneurts

Dear Colonel Diabolick,

My Name is Fabien Petanque. I am a son of Picardy newly arrived in Paris to Serve My God, King and Country.

It is my hope to become a Swift, Keen, Reliable and Sturdy young man and it is my hope that you will consider

my application for a Commission as a Subaltern in the Picardy Musketeers.

Lt. Gen. Sir Gaz Moutarde is a friend of a member of my Church congregation back home and he suggested your Regiment as a place where a dedicated man of promise could be of considerable use.

I am available for Regimental Duties Immediately.

I remain, Your Servant,

Fabien Petanque, Late of Picardy

My Dear JD,

This good chap indeed comes heartily recommended. Of sharp mind and wit he should prove to be a valuable aide in your good regiment.

Yours, etc...

† Gaz Moutarde

PS We learned at church that whatever you do, don't let him sing. It tends to attract cannon fire every time.

Dear Petanque,

You are welcome to join the Picardy Musketeers, the hardest drinking, hardest charging group of bastards to fight for the King. Just remember, never confuse your fusil for your gun.

† JD

Personal

Dear Field Marshal de ZMerchant and 2nd Army Commander Xavier-Beauregard

I read with dismay the scurrilous and filthy accusations from our CPS about Corruption in the Military. Utter Nonsense. I urge you to protest to the Ministry of Justice in the strongest terms about the conduct of the CPS,

Having got some units (and players start with a fleet in each of their systems and starbases with their homeworld and colony), it must be time to attack. By taking the move action, players can move their fleets and start one fight – invading a neutral system or one belonging to another player. It costs one energy resource to move one fleet from one system to an adjacent one. Thus, launching a decent invasion requires plenty of energy.

Combat is an interesting, incremental process. When a battle starts, the strengths of the two sides are checked and a marker placed to show the difference. So, if I attack with two fleets (strength of 6) against a defending starbase (strength 5), the marker is +1 in my favour. It is then up to the player on the losing side to shift the marker to their side. They can do this by moving in fleets (if they have the energy resources to do so), playing Combat cards and/or using Matter resources (“throw rocks at 'em!”) from cards or Development tiles.

This continues until one player gives up. The loser loses half their units, rounded up, and must retreat the rest – they are lost if they can't retreat. The winner loses half their units, rounded down. If the defender loses, they lose any wooden piece in the system and their score goes down by the appropriate amount. They also lose the card for the system, which goes back onto the neutral systems pile. Importantly: win or lose, the defender refills their hand after the fight, hopefully ensuring they're not an easy mark for the next player.

Inhabitable system tiles have a strength printed on them, which is used if they are neutral and are attacked. What's more, at the start of the game a random alien fleet counter is placed on each neutral system and its strength isn't revealed until the system is attacked. This means the neutral systems can be a tough nut to crack. Or a pushover. There's one wrinkle to Combat: once the initial relative strengths have been revealed, if the losing side can't move the marker to their side of the track, the winner does not lose any pieces. Hence, attacking neutral systems with overwhelming force is a good idea!

Having conquered a system, the next thing to do is make it yours. The Colonise action lets a player build one colony (only on habitable systems) or outpost on a vacant system. This costs one population resource (from cards and/or Development tiles) for an outpost (and scores them three points) and three for a colony (for five points). The player also takes the card for that system and places it on their discard pile. Remember that military units can only be built on colonies, so taking habitable systems and building colonies lets you expand your military might further.

The Reserve action allows a player to put cards from their hand into the two reserve slots shown on the player board. Each slot can have a maximum of two cards (unless expanded by a '+1' Development tile) and slot 2 can only hold 'Reserve' (i.e. permanent effect) cards. Think of the reserves as a way of extending your hand: you can play a card from reserve in just the same way as



A section of the board – note the completely inaccessible system in the corner

playing a card from hand. The point to remember is that you can't put a reserve card back into your hand.

To take one of the available Technology cards, players use the Draft action and pay the Research resources shown on the card (by playing cards and/or flipping Development tiles). The card goes onto their discard pile and a new card is drawn to replace it. Playing an 'Action' card takes up one of a player's actions. Finally, players have the option to discard cards, remove a card from the game or even pass – though I wouldn't recommend it – as their action.

A few things fall out of all this. First, regardless of what you want to do, your actions in any turn are constrained by the resources available to you. Development tiles and cards in reserve provide flexibility here, so that you're not limited to the cards in hand. It can be well worth stocking up your reserves, both for offence and defence, which makes the '+1' Development tiles useful.

Second, taking new systems and buying technologies both add to your capabilities, but they also make your deck bigger. Thus it takes longer to get the cards you want into your hand. What's more, the resources available to you will depend on which systems you conquer. Taking habitable systems, as I suggested, lets you expand your military, but fills your deck with Population resources...

What does this give us? Well, *A Handful of Stars* is a moderately complex game, though it's pretty straightforward once you get the hang of it. It is, as I keep

Matters of Honour

Ms Slapdash,

Word has reach me at the front that you have absconded with a lady friend of mine. You may keep her; I was done with her anyway. I will find another lady or three when I get back. However, I also need to teach you a lesson in manners. I look forward to carving my initials into your worthless hide.

Yours,

† Jacques Diabolick

Military Missives

Ooooooh... ooooooh... ooooooh, well get you sweetheart!! So Dunkie-wunkie hates me now, eh! A bit different to when you interviewed upon joining the Regiment: it was all flowers and drinks then, darling, those tedious stories about how numerous women never understood you and your 'curiosity' about 'what men can share'!

How many times have I heard that before, the lusty look, the fumbling words... sigh... sad really because after your boasts about "How a CO can be good to you if only you'll be good to him", especially so if you consider your meagre portion was of much use to me! My God, I've seen my fair share, darling, but, not wishing to be cruel, never that small. I mean I've eaten bigger baby carrots. Anyway, know this, sweetheart, this lady's going nowhere. The Regiment is fully behind me (!) as the men never see you and 'Duncan who' is one of the more printable references going around the barracks.

May I suggest it is you who needs to tender a resignation. Leave it on my desk and I'll ensure one of the privates leaves the back door open... you wish!

† Felix xx

Lt.Colonel Gauchpieder,

I was warned that admitting a delusional, cross-dressing catamite into the regiment would not end well. Believing that every man (and I use the term most loosely in your case, of course) of suitable build and station deserves the chance to join the King's Musketeers and show the world what he's really made of, however, I regrettably ignored the warnings.

It is a source of deep regret to me that during the time you have spent with the regiment you have succeeded only in showing yourself to be a cowardly, spiteful ingrate totally unfit to wear its uniform.

I will not dignify your baseless, catty slurs with a response. You shall pay for them at the end of my sword as soon as we cease to share the same regiment – though not before.

Since you refuse my request to tender your resignation, I trust you will become reconciled to a tiresome existence at the front, for it is there – with responsibility for digging and maintaining the frontier latrines – that you will now find yourself until an enemy howitzer round relieves the world of your odious presence. Doubtless as the cause of the permanent exile from Paris to which they are subject, your popularity with the men unfortunate enough to find

probably not the best tactic and a barrage of grapeshot sends the Musketeers back the way they came. Except for Colonel Chalais, whose body has to be retrieved later. RIP. Still, he definitely doesn't have to fight that duel now.

Commanding the Royal Foot Guards, Bdr-Gen Amant d'Au takes things more cautiously. His reconnaissance skills earn him a Mention in Despatches ("Some fine mapwork") and he splits the 500-crown financial reward 40:60 with Lt-Colonel Jean Jeanie, who did the actual drawing. Major Beau Reese Jean Seine can't draw for toffee and gets no prizes.

Major Padamus Da Grim and his squadron of Grand Duke Max's Dragoons are attached to Frontier regiment 2. A peaceful month brings them nothing. Lt-Colonel Jean d'Ice is transferred to Frontier regiment 3 now that his battalion of the Cardinal's Guard has joined him. A modicum of bravery brings him over two hundred crowns' worth of loot when a Spanish patrol comes his way.

For Colonel Jacques Diabolick, attached to Frontier regiment 4, even a modicum of bravery is a step too far. The regiment's position is peppered by musket fire from Spanish patrols. He stands up to check whether they've re-loaded and the other troops can guess the answer from his bullet-ridden body. RIP.

Meanwhile, the Royal North Highlanders are up to their usual business on the borders of the Spanish Netherlands. They provoke any Spanish troops they come across. Bdr-Gen Sebastian Adis II, commanding a battalion of the Highlanders, probably shouldn't have done this when confronted with cavalry. He is ridden down by the horsemen. RIP. Lt-General Richard Shapmes is more considered with the battalion he's in charge of. His reward is a couple of hundred crowns' worth of Spanish booty. The Field Marshal, Bill de Zmerchant, commands another RNHB battalion. He is discussed at some length in the Despatches ("What's the Field Marshal doing here?" "And wearing a kilt!") and plunders some 500 crowns' worth for himself. ❖

Press

Announcements

Gentlemen of the Grand Duke Max Dragoons

Just a reminder that we will be going to the Front in June. Sgt Stronginthearm is expecting to see you in the regimental gym, 4 days out of 7 this month. Do NOT disappoint him.

Yours, etc, † XM

Social

Gentlemen of Paris

Apologies: my party will have to be cancelled due to my regiment been called to the front.

Kind regards

† Viscount Frele d'Acier

saying, a wargame, so attacking other players is central to the game. Particularly as taking a solar system from another player and then colonising it both increases your score and reduces theirs. While being able to defend your patch is useful, you need to conquer territory as this is where the majority of the victory points come from.

Tactically, there is a lot to think about, starting with the geography of the board – something that the availability of wormhole technology changes radically – and your position. What forces are available to you where. Which technologies can be bought. And, of course, the cards in your hand. An obvious gambit is to take technologies early. This lets you get most benefit from them (once they've cycled into your hand), but you have limited research points initially.

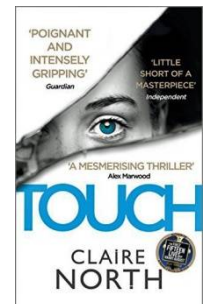
Conquering and colonising other systems is the way to score points, of course. However, doing so means building enough military forces first, something that is obvious to your opponents. And, of course, as soon as you take a lead, you become a target for the other players... There is a lot to think about and players have a lot of decisions to make. There is also a substantial luck element. Not in combat, but in the available Technologies and, particularly, players' starting positions.

All in all, *A Handful of Stars* is an interesting game that provides players with challenges and plenty of variety. However, it is a wargame, which is a turn-off for some, as I have found. I'd suggest being wary of a three-player game, though. It suffers from the usual problem with a three-cornered wargame: if two players fight each other, the third wins, making everybody very wary. It gets 6/10 on my highly subjective scale.

A Handful of Stars was designed by Martin Wallace (the third of his card-based wargames, after *A Few Acres of Snow* and *Mythotopia*) and published by Treefrog Games (the last title from Treefrog, as Martin is concentrating on designing games for other publishers). It is a wargame for 2–4 players, aged 13+, and takes a couple of hours to play. This review was first published in the Gamers Alliance Report: gamersalliance.com

Reading Matter

In between *The Last Kingdom* books, I've been reading more from Claire North, the author of *The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August*, which I reviewed in TWJO 177. Her second novel, *Touch*, is almost as brilliant as *...Harry August*. Here we have a world in which some people are able to transfer themselves into the bodies of others. From what we learn through the book, this is something they only discover at the point of death: desperate to live, they reach out, touch and find themselves in another person's body.



In effect, they are all but immortal, able to move from body to body with just a touch. As we discover, the host's personality is suppressed, not killed. So, when the ... parasite moves on, the host is suddenly back in control, with no perception of the time that's passed. Now, if they've been possessed for a few seconds, or even minutes, they probably won't even notice. But fifty years? Imagine being a 20-year old who is suddenly 50 years older, dying of cancer under the gaze of a wife and children you've never seen before. These creatures should not have our sympathy: what they do is truly terrible.

However, the story is told from the viewpoint of one of them and we can't help but sympathise. We meet our viewpoint character as they narrowly survive an assassination attempt – we never know their real name, just like we never find out whether they were originally male or female. By hopping from body to body our 'hero' is able not only to escape, but to catch their would-be killer.

What follows would be a conventional thriller – pursued around the world by a shadowy organisation until our hero, codename 'Kepler', can learn enough to turn the tables – were it not for the singular nature of the main character. What's more, North intersperses the action of the present with flash-backs that tell us more about our hero and the singular life they've led.

It's this exploration of their life that engages our sympathies for 'Kepler' – they eventually accept this designation. We learn about their beginnings – centuries ago – and how they have become a more considerate parasite, engaging hosts in explicit agreements to take over their lives for a period. We also discover that a community has grown up between these creatures as their paths cross across the decades (one of the similarities with ...*Harry August*).

I have to say that it was only after I'd finished the book that I realised how much I'd identified with what is really a monstrous creature. North does such a good job of making 'Kepler' appear human, despite their strange, parasitic life. There are some similarities with ...*Harry August*, in the style of plot and in the strange form of immortality. I was also very taken with the way North uses the layout of the text as a way of emphasising its content. *Touch* is a cracking read and one I heartily recommend it.

From this I moved to the author's "Gameshouse" trilogy of novellas. The common theme of this is a house of games that exists across the centuries and around the world. Players are drawn in from everywhere, initially playing games we will all be familiar with. The enigmatic mistress of the house will then invite the best players to participate in games that have real people as pieces. It is by winning these games that players become part of the gameshouse's inner circle.

The first story, *The Serpent*, tells the story of Thene, a woman in Renaissance Venice, escaping a bad marriage. She follows her husband into the gameshouse, where she proves to be the better player. Her game is against other players, each with a candidate for the most powerful position in the Venetian government. She

Watching Robert's initial success are Jean-Marie Lillebonne, accompanied by Thomasina Carrotte, and Xavier Money with Betty Kant. Xavier and Betty are back the following week and Xavier fits in a week with his sabre before looking for Frele. Jean-Marie is in the gym with his rapier for the remaining three weeks.

Our iron men this month are Balzac Slapdash and Jacques de Gain, both practising their rapier skills for all four weeks. Apart from those already mentioned, spending three weeks in the gym are Arthur 'Dekka' Dent (sabre – after his week's courting), Bernard de Lur-Saluces (rapier), Duncan d'Eauneurts (sabre), Hercule D'Engin (rapier) and Sebastian de la Creme (rapier). Bernard and Hercule fill their fourth weeks with visits to the Bawdyhouses. Augustin Fourier and Fabien Petanque have regimental duties as well as visits to the red light district, so they manage two weeks' practice (sabre and rapier, respectively).

Picking and choosing

French forces on the frontier receive a big boost this month, with lots of troops warming up for the summer campaign. The Horse Guards Brigade patrols the southern borders, countering the occasional Spanish foray into French territory. The Queen's Own Carabiniers take a mauling, but the Dragoon Guards do better, with substantial rewards for its officers. Brevet Brigadier-General Etienne Brule, commanding the DGs, receives a Mention in Despatches and picks up a few crowns. There's also a Mention for Lt-Colonel Frele d'Acier ("Shouldn't he be hosting a party about now?"). The DG Majors receive new titles after both see their names in the Despatches. Major Henri Dubois gets a Knighthood, while Major Jean Ettonique becomes a Marquis and pockets a hundred crowns of booty. This leaves Captain Simon Alfred Devereux, but there are no rewards for him.

Horse Guards Brigadier Terence Cuckpowder concentrates on plundering, losing no opportunity to pick up goodies liberated by his troops. This adds up to some 600 crowns in all. His Brigade Major, Swindelle d'Masses (whose own rank is now Bdr-Gen as well), pulls in 800 crowns worth for himself. This brings him a Mention in Despatches, as well ("highest earner in the Brigade").

The Heavy Brigade's bailiwick is the frontier with Savoy, where they find they have little to do. Brigadier Chopine Camus has the men mount regular patrols and demonstrate their horsemanship in view of their Savoyard equivalents. He wins the best part of a thousand crowns in bets with his opposite number and earns promotion to (brevet) Lieutenant-General. His Majesty further rewards him with the title of Baron. Captain Guido Spoons of the Crown Prince Cuirassiers is one of the few casualties. He falls off his mount trying to pick up a sabre whilst at full gallop and breaks his neck. RIP.

The Royal Foot Guards and 27th Musketeers are reconnoitring the Spanish positions on the border of Franche-Comté. 27M Colonel Vulson de Chalais fancies his chances of seizing a Spanish battery. Charging the guns from the front was

club in week 4. This consists of Duncan d'Éauneurts, Gaston le Somme, Gaz Moutarde (who's spent the rest of the month at home with his lady), L'Inconnu, Sebastian de la Crème, Was Nae Me and Xavier Money.

There were only two members in the Fleur at the start of May: Pierre Cardigan and Uther Xavier-Beauregard. They each spend a quiet week with their ladies: Edna Bucquette and Henrietta Carrotte, respectively. Then it's off to the gym for three weeks' sabre practice for them both. Pierre le Sang was summoned to the Louvre at the start of the month, where his prompt attendance – and small gift – pleased His Majesty. The following week he turns up at the Fleur with Guinevere d'Arthur in tow and they stay there for the rest of the month.

Bothwell's is much busier than the Fleur. Alan de Frocked brings Madelaine de Proust before adjourning for three weeks with his rapier. Charles Louis Desappear escorts Emma Roides, visiting Bothwell's for two weeks before the compulsion to practise rapier overtakes him. Felix Antoine Gauchepied'er flounces into the club to show off his new uniform. He hangs around for another week, returning again after his visit to the Bawdyhouses, but can find no members of his erstwhile regiment to pick a fight with.

Gaston le Somme is accompanied by Bess Ottede and leaves word at the door to admit Robert d'Lancier as his guest, should Robert appear. However, there's no sign of him and, next week, Gaston is off to court another lady – successfully – and fit in a week with his sabre before he looks for Frele. Leonard de Hofstadt has Frances Forrin on his arm for his week in Bothwell's, then it's rapier in hand for the rest of the month.

Louis Oeuf Ur Terribles brings Sue Briquet to Bothwell's and then takes his cutlass to the gym for three weeks. Was Nae Me is the last to visit in week 1 and escorts Vera Cruz. They stay there for three weeks, enjoying the ambience as the club gets quieter. Raoul Bernard de Chenin Blanc also rolls up, claiming that Was Nae Me is throwing a party. This is news to both the club's staff and Was, so Raoul is stuck in the vestibule. The miffed Raoul spends the next week with his female companion before putting in two weeks with his rapier.

L'Inconnu is the man installed at Blue Gables for most of the month, enjoying the company of Anna Rexique. Florent Sans de Machine is there with Charlotte de Gaulle to start with – then he takes his rapier to the gym for the rest of May.

Robert d'Lancier is the week 1 attraction at the Frog & Peach, where he displays a winning streak on the gaming tables. Egged on by Ava Crisp, he places six bets and wins five of them (losing the last) to finish the week well ahead. Flush with his winnings, he heads off to Bothwell's where he hopes to see Gaston and present him with a small token of his appreciation. A lack of co-ordination means he spends the week kicking his heels. A week's cutlass practice later, he and Ava are back in the Frog & Peach. This time, however, his bets don't pay off nearly as well: 3 wins, 2 losses and a cut leave him with just a little extra cash.

must find the best way to use her 'pieces' to discredit her candidate's opponents and manipulate him into the position.

I found it an interesting story, but nothing like as engaging as North's novels. To start with, I didn't get to grips with the game within the story. It has no rules, apart from not killing other players, so there's no structure to it. What does work, though, is the characterisation of Thene and the way she learns about the people that are her pieces, so that she can work out how to use them in the game. North does a good job, too, of giving us a feel for 17th century Venice.

The second story, *The Thief*, is more straightforward: it's a game of hide and seek, played in 1930s Thailand. Sorry, Siam. Our hero, Remy Burke, has been manipulated into the game by his opponent, who appears to have all the advantages. Remy is unprepared and in unfamiliar territory, but has to keep away from his opponent for as long as possible. Then it will be his turn to hunt the other guy, winning if he can catch him more quickly than he was caught.

This is a more appealing tale. Remy is a likeable underdog, the time and the place are wonderfully evoked and the conclusion is terrific. So, the novellas are a mixed bag so far. However, there are some recurring characters and hints in *The Thief* that the concluding part of the trilogy will centre on the gameshouse itself.

Games Events

This box concentrates on events I expect to attend.

Swiggers: games club that meets every Wednesday evening, upstairs at The Shipwright's Arms, 88 Tooley Street, London SE1 2TF (next to London Bridge station). For more info, see www.pevans.co.uk/Swiggers

Games Games Games Days: from noon(-ish) on the second Saturday each month – now at the Leon in Spitalfields Market (London E1 6DW). It's brightly lit, has big tables and they don't mind us stopping all afternoon. Closest stations are Liverpool Street (Tube and rail) and Shoreditch High Street (Overground).

UK Games Expo: 1st-3rd June 2018 at the NEC (Hall 1 and Hilton Metropole). This is a public event that showcases games of all sorts with a huge trade hall plus demonstration and participation games and guests. For gamers there are lots of tournaments and open gaming. For details see www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk

Spiel: the board games event of the year. 25th-28th October 2018, at the Messe (Exhibition Centre) in Essen. Contact Friedhelm Merz Verlag, Postfach 210250, Bonn, 53157 Germany or see www.merz-verlag-en.com

MidCon: 2nd-4th November 2018 at the Hallmark Hotel in Derby. **MidCon** is a friendly board games convention in a decent hotel. See www.midcon.org.uk.

For more extensive information on UK board games events, try The Queen's Lane Advertiser at www.boardgamers.org.uk/qla.php

Voyager (Star Trader game 9)

Turn 5

At Alpha Centauri SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS sold 8 Spice for 14 HTs each and gained a Dealership.

SSL was trying to sell Monopoles on Beta Hydri, but had no ship there. RED STAR LINE sold 14 units at 17 HTs each and was granted a Dealership. TRANSURANIC TRADING used Agent Percent to sell 6 Monopoles at the closing price. TRANSURANIC then sold 6 Petroleum for 13 HTs each and there was enough demand for COSTA NOSTRA INC to sell 4 more at the same price.

COSTA NOSTRA INC sold 6 Spice for 10 HTs each to take a Dealership at Sigma Draconis, as the price held up. SSL considered buying on Contract but changed their mind.

Corporations were steering clear of Gamma Leporis, despite the restoration of order. TRANSURANIC bought a Warehouse, possibly as earnest of more in the future.

OXFORDS NOT BROUGUES bought 4 Alloys at Epsilon Eridani.

RED STAR LINE sold 11 Isotopes for 7 HTs each at Delta Toucanis, gaining a Contractorship, and also bought 5 Petroleum on Contract.

At Tau Ceti it was FATCATS buying 12 Isotopes for 7 HTs each who got a Dealership. TRANSURANIC picked up 4 more at 6 HTs apiece while OXFORD's bid of 4 was too low. FATCATS then laid down a new ship at Tau Ceti and, for reasons unknown, gave it the same name as one laid down last Quarter.

Mu Herculis saw INTERSIDEREAL NOVICES selling 9 Alloys for 10 HTs each and gaining a Dealership. SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS sold 9 Liquors for 12 HTs apiece and took a Contractor's position. Finally, INTERSIDEREAL NOVICES, judging their bank balance, bought 5 Petroleum for 8 HTs each and loaded it onto their ship.

SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS used their Agent Ferret to land their streamlined Piccolo on Planet at Epsilon Eridani, where they are reputed to have loaded a shed load of Tempus. With Agent Willy also in the Dutchman's entourage, this could be a profitable venture.

COSTA NOSTRA PIZZA bought a Warehouse at Delta Toucanis and two Petroleum facilities to fill it. To replace their lost ship they laid down a new Phoenix hull at Tau Ceti Spaceport, the 'THIN CRUST SEAFOOD DELUXE', which may or may not contain Anchovies.

OXFORDS NOT BROGUES decided to pay to increase Reputation and gained a substantial boost to their standings with a rebranding exercise.

Other new recruits this month are Arthur 'Dekka' Dent, who joins the Princess Louisa's Light Dragoons, and Fabien Petanque, admitted to the Picardy Musketeers by Jacques Diabolick. Petanque buys himself the rank of Subaltern, while Dent goes all the way to Captain.

Minister of State Pierre le Sang embraces the status quo in his government, re-appointing Etienne Brule as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Brule repays him with his continuing 50 crown/month donations.

Bernard de Lur-Saluces takes advantage of being a Lieutenant-General who is Adjutant-General and appoints himself to the command of First Division, in good time for this summer's campaign.

Gaston le Somme names Augustin Fourier as his Aide. Sadly for both of them, le Somme cannot be Brigadier of the Third Foot. He is only a brevet Brigadier-General and thus his options are limited to First Foot Brigade.

The cavalry commanders must feel they need to do some preparation for the summer campaign: both the Horse Guards and the Heavy Brigades are ordered to the frontier by their respective commanders. Bdr-General Cuckpowder leads the Horse Guards and mobilises the Dragoon Guards and Queen's Own Carabiniers. This means Etienne Brule, Frele d'Acier, Henri Dubois, Simon Alfred Devereux and Swindelle d'Masses join Jean Ettonique in action. Chopine Camus takes the Crown Prince and Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers with him. Guido Spoons is thus leaving Paris.

Amant d'Au gives the Royal Foot Guards their marching orders, too, taking Jean Jeanie and Beau Reese Jean Seine with him. Jean d'Ice summons his battalion of the Cardinal's Guard into action. Field Marshal Bill de Zmerchant and Lt-General Richard Shapmes join the exodus by volunteering themselves to the Royal North Highland Border regiment. Zmerchant's parting shot is to settle the Minister of Justice's bar bill at the Fleur.

One of our hosts is missing

With so many Parisians having decided on a month of military action, it's not surprising that the city's social life is subdued throughout May. The one event that is scheduled is Frele d'Acier's celebration at the Fleur. However, as already noted, Frele has left Paris with the Dragoon Guards. This news doesn't seem to have reached all his guests, so there is a small gathering outside the



Pierry-poos. I mean, the poor soul might have well have been a eunuch for all that he then tried to offer me!”

Attempts to interrupt are to no avail, as the man in the habit flounces around the courtroom and continues, “There are those in Paris who will remember the previous holders of the Public Safety Commissioner’s post, those such as Sheikh Yadiq Al-Abowt and Maurice Fluff-Bunny. These men received criticisms in their day, but I believe they were far more fit to hold office than d’Eauneurts. It should be he who stands here on trial today and not these darlings. I trust you will now see through his falsehood and seek to dismiss him with immediate effect – I would be far more suited to be the Commissioner.”

As court officials finally remove Gauchepied’er, his parting shot is “Death to the Baby carrot!”

Shaking his head sadly, Minister le Sang picks up where he’d left off. “They’re obviously guilty,” he decides, “and I therefore sentence the pair of them to have all their assets confiscated.”

Both men appeal to the King and His Majesty is pleased to commute d’Astartlie’s sentence to a fine of a mere 200 crowns. Of course, both men are out of a job and CPS Eauneurts assumes their portfolios (or lack thereof).

Going up in the regiment

General Sebastian de la Creme has suggested that the commander of Third Army should step down. He has friends in very high places and calls in a couple of favours to back this up. The General’s resignation looks a sure thing until Brigadier-General Terence Cuckpowder intervenes. His friends may not be as significant as Creme’s, but his influence does throw a note of doubt into things. It’s to no avail, however, as the Army commander quits his post, allowing Field Marshal Bill de Zmerchant to appoint Creme in his place.

Major Vulson de Chalais uses his influence in an attempt to remove his commanding officer in the 27th Musketeers. The man’s departure becomes a certainty when Duncan d’Eauneurts puts his weight behind it. This allows Chalais to buy not just the freshly vacated Lieutenant-Colonelcy, but the empty Colonel’s rank as well. Having taken command of the regiment, he volunteers it for active service.

As commander of the King’s Musketeers, Duncan d’Eauneurts is clearly unhappy with his excessively flamboyant Lt-Colonel, Felix Antoine Gauchepied’er, and has demanded his resignation. To make the point, he orders Gauchepied’er’s command, first battalion, into action. However, Paris’s most ineligible bachelor forestalls this by resigning as requested. What Eauneurts may not have foreseen is that Alan de Frocked promptly admits Gauchepied’er to the Cardinal’s Guard – red is probably more his colour – where he buys his way back to Major, recycling his loans to do so.

SWISS MERCENARY FLEET had a loan to repay, and just managed to meet the deadline. They start the next Quarter with a clean sheet.

TRANSURANIC TRADERS became the first Corporation to hold the lot when it bought a new Warehouse at Beta Hydri as well this Quarter, and has storage facilities everywhere.

RED STAR LINES was shuffling pods between its ships, and now has the Passenger capacity on RedTwo.

FATCAT laid down Ashbrook Two, possibly intending to rename on launch, and bought first one, and then a second Warehouse at Gamma Leporis.

INTERSIDERAL NOVICES bought a new Passenger pod for the Tracey and loaded the pod from the Warehouse as well. The two Cargo pods were stored in their place. A new Phoenix Hull was laid down at Tau Ceti. Money then ran out.

And the effect of the technical breakthrough in alcohol production will slowly reduce the Liquor prices Quadrant wide.

Corporation Table

Corporation letter and name	Connections Bus/Crim/Pol	Init’v Bid	Turn order	Cash	Rep	Player
A Costra Nostra Pizza Inc	9 0 2	0	7th	187	29	Mark Cowper
B Oxfords not Brogues	1 0 7	0	6th	74	27	Mike Clibborn-Dyer
C FATCAT	4 0 7	7	2nd	154	28	Jerry Elsmore
D Solar Spice & Liquors	10 0 6	6+4	1st	195	40	Paul Evans
E Swiss Mercenary Fleet	4 0 5	0	5th	27	34	Martin Jennings
F Smitten Kitten	4 0 7	N	9th	180	22	Michael Martinkat
H Intersidereal Novices	7 7 3	0	8th	45	40	Mateusz Ochman
J Red Star Lines	9 7 2	3	3rd	422	40	Przemek Orwat
K Transuranic Trading	6 0 7	0	4th	235	32	Bob Parkins

N under Initiative Bid means No move received, F indicates the Corp was floated

News

EV 18 (Liquor production breakthrough) took place this turn and SSL took OP 12.

There were four new News chits this turn. The current list (new chits in **bold**) is:

Turn 7 B1, C3, P2, **C7**

Turn 8 B1, B6, C6, **B4**
Turn 9 **C6, P6**

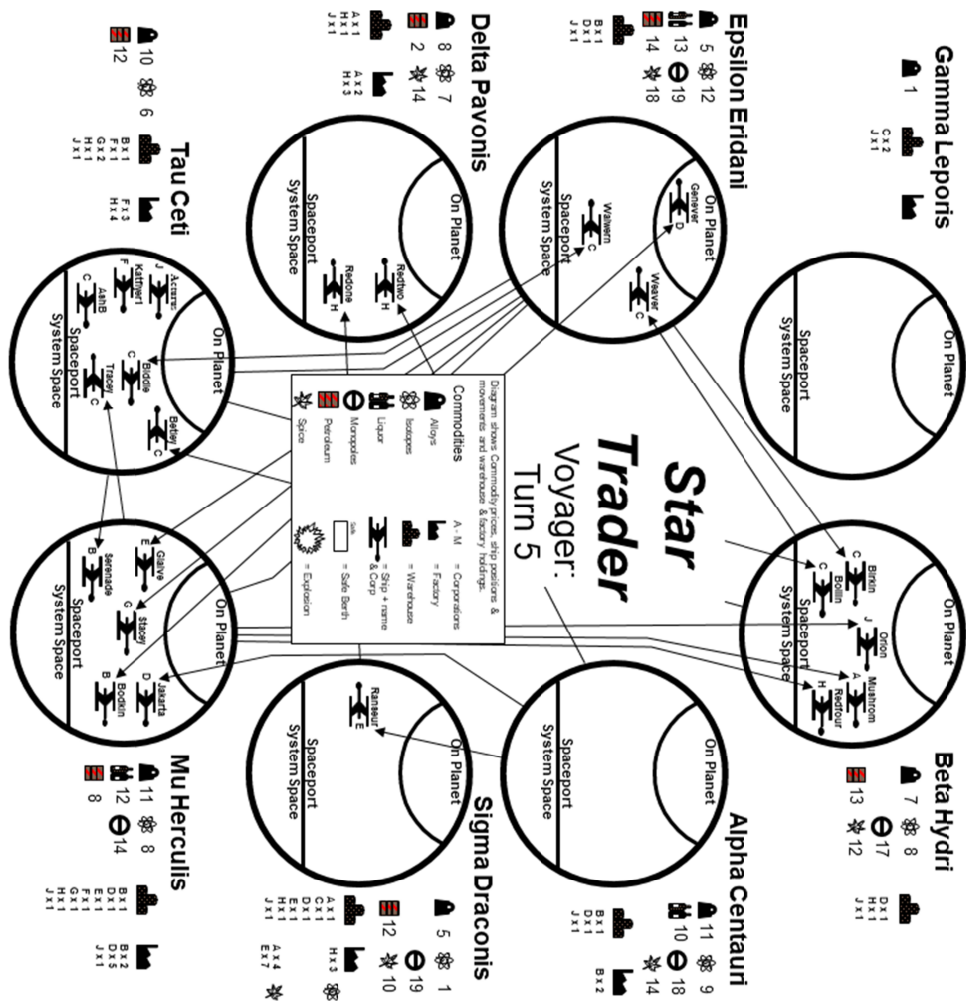
(Chits are identified by the Connection type and level required to see them and disappear/take effect in the News Phase of the turn listed.)

GM Notes

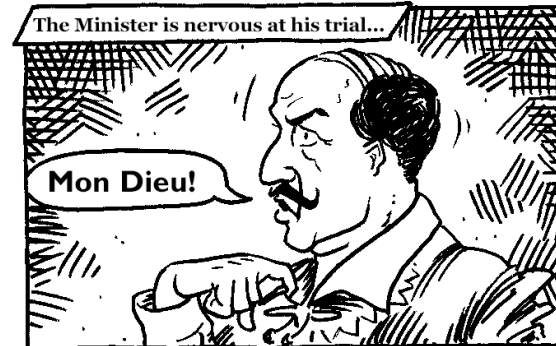
Anyone wish to play SMITTEN KITTEN for the rest of the game? It appears Mike Martinkat has dropped out.

I am allowing the storage of Cargo Pods containing contents in Warehouses for the moment.

Orders for next turn to Mike Dommett, 119 Victoria Road, Alton GU34 2DD or by e-mail to mike_dommett@yahoo.co.uk by Friday, 4th May 2018



General of the Second Army). A third, identical letter was also found where the name of recipient was blank – obviously meant for the Quartermaster of the Third Army if or when one is appointed.”



This document, too, is read out: “Prosecution Exhibit C – Letter from His Excellency Baron Ricard d’Astartlie, His Majesty’s Minister without Portfolio, to Brigadier-General le Baron Sebastian Adis II (Quartermaster of the First Army). General Adis, in my experience newly appointed Quartermasters are often fired with a desire to make rational economies where their supply responsibilities are concerned, yet are held back by concerns that the savings they make might be misconstrued as embezzlement. As chance would have it, however, I find myself in a position to guarantee that any savings you may make where the First Army is concerned are seen in this light and attract no unpleasant consequences – provided half of any savings are diverted to myself in order to defray necessary expenses involved. If the above proposal is of interest, please don’t hesitate to contact me at my office in the Gallerie du Louvre. (Signed) Baron Ricard d’Astartlie.”

“The letter to Brigadier-General Charles Louis Desapear is identical except insofar as it pertains to the Second Army’s supplies rather than the First,” reports Eauneurts. “From the above evidence it is clear that the accused wilfully conspired to defraud the Army Commissariat as charged. Their only saving grace, if such it can be called, is that they were discovered before they were able to put their heinous scheme into operation.”

“The prosecution rests,” he concludes.

“Thank God for that!” mutters the Minister of State. But, before he can give his verdict, there is a commotion on the public benches. A nun is insisting on being allowed to address the court. Le Sang defers to the holy sister only to realise, too late, that it’s actually Felix Antoine Gauchepied’er in a habit (the beard should have been a dead giveaway...).

“Pierrey-Poos,” begins Gauchepied’er, “I must ask you to dismiss the blatantly trumped-up charges against these two fine men: Ministers of France who find themselves standing before you due to the outrageous machinations of Duncan ‘Baby carrot’ d’Eauneurts. I myself fell victim to his lies and deceit when applying to join his Regiment. Oooh, the things he promised me, there was nothing he couldn’t do for me if only I’d be good to him! Pah, he needn’t have bothered,

Eauneurts puts down the letter. “As the newly appointed Minister of Justice, Baron de Siever was in a position allow the wrongful diversion of monies in this way,” he points out. “The two Barons were brought in for questioning and their houses searched. During the second day of their incarceration I received a visit in person from the ‘French Patriot’ cited above and witnessed a notarised statement (which I submit as Prosecution Exhibit B) detailing a conversation this Patriot overheard between the two defendants. (The Patriot has asked that their identity be withheld: although whistle blowers are outwardly lauded, in practice they often find it difficult to secure employment after the whistle is blown.)”

This is a more impressive document, adorned with seals and easier to read. “Prosecution Exhibit B - Statement from a French Patriot,” intones the CPS. “In mid-March I overheard the following conversation between Baron Robin de Siever and Baron Ricard d’Astartlie:

RICARD: I’ve been approached by a gentleman who has a scheme to make us both a lot of money.

ROBIN: Nothing illegal I hope...?

RICARD: It’s only illegal if you get caught, Robin - and this is foolproof.

ROBIN: Tell me more.

RICARD: Well, the gentleman in question has considerable influence amongst the clerks in the Appointments Section at the Ministry of State. He tells me that Viscount le Sang has little interest in who becomes the next Minister of Justice and that he can arrange for an application from you to find its way to the top of the pile.

ROBIN: How will that make us rich? The salary of the Minister of Justice amounts to little more than 50 crowns per month...

RICARD: That’s where I come in Robin. Once you’re Minister of Justice, I approach all the Army Quartermasters confidentially, encouraging them to make ‘savings’ of 20,000 and guarantee that there will be no repercussions provided they hand half the savings over to me. On receipt of the monies, I leave half of all I receive with your banker and you turn a blind eye to their embezzlement. We stand to make up to 15,000 crowns each from the scheme!

ROBIN: But what if a Quartermaster doesn’t want to play ball and reports you Ricard? Wouldn’t we both be for the chop?

RICARD: Not at all. You deny all knowledge of my activities and I claim to be motivated by a desire to serve as Commissioner of Public Safety, attempting to prove my worth beforehand by entrapping those likely to defraud the commissariat. It’s foolproof, I tell you...”

A further draught of water is needed before the CPS carries on. “In support of these allegations I submit two letters, as yet undelivered, which were found during the search of Baron d’Astartlie’s office. The letters were addressed to Brigadier-General le Baron Sebastian Adis II (Quartermaster-General of the First Army) and Brigadier-General Charles Louis Desapear (Quartermaster-

Watercress (*Railway Rivals* game 13)

Turn 1

Builds

GRAND RAIL EAST ATLANTIC TRUNKLINE and SLOW LOCOMOTIVES ONLY USED GENTLY ON HILLS build west out of London along the Thames Valley. TIGER IN SMOKE and SLOW WAGON IN FAST TRAFFIC both built southwest to Leatherhead before diverging. BASINGSTOKE ASSOCIATED STEEL HIGHWAY built towards Farnborough, while MISSED, DELAYED AND CANCELLED RAILS built through Woking on the LSWR alignment.

BASINGSTOKE ASSOCIATED STEEL HIGHWAY (BASH), Bob Blanchett – Black

a)(London L68) – L63

b)(L63) – L61 – K61 – K60

c)(K60) – Virginia Water – I59 – H58 – G58 – G57 (+3)

Points: 20 +3 = 23

MISSED, DELAYED AND CANCELLED RAILS (MDCR), Mike Dyer – Blue

a)(London M68) – M67 – M66 – L65 – K65 – K64

b)(K64) – J63 – J62 – I62

c)(I62) – H61 – G61 – Woking – F59 – E59 (+3)

Points: 20 +3 +3 = 26

SLOW LOCOMOTIVES ONLY USED GENTLY ON HILLS (SLOUGH), Brad Martin – Orange

a)(London N67) – N62

b)(N62) – Slough – N58 (+1.5)

c)(N58) – Maidenhead – L55 – L54 (+3)

Points: 20 +4.5 = 24.5

GM Notes

Order layouts generally OK. Please separate the die rolls.

As you may have noticed, Brad Martin has taken the sixth slot.

TIGER IN SMOKE (TIS), Jonathan Palfrey – Green

a)(London N67) – I65

b)(I65) – Leatherhead – F62 (+1.5)

c)(F62) – F60 – Guildford – C59 (+3)

Points: 20 +4.5 = 24.5

GRAND RAIL EAST ATLANTIC TRUNKLINE (GREAT), Rob Pinkerton – Red

a)(London N67) – N62

b)(N62) – Slough – M59 (+1.5)

c)(M59) – Windsor – M58 – M57 – Maidenhead – N55 (+3)

Points: 20 +4.5 = 24.5

SLOW WAGON IN FAST TRAFFIC (SWIFT), Gerald Udowiczzenko – Yellow

a)(London M68) – M67 – L66 – K66 – J65 – I65

b)(I65) – H64 – G64 – Leatherhead – E63 (+1.5)

c)(E63) – Dorking – C64 – B64 – A64 – N23 (+3)

Points: 20 +4.5 = 24.5

MDCR earns the bonus points for connecting Woking, where Paul went to school (he is an alumnus of The Woking County Grammar School for Boys).

Next die rolls are: 4, 6, 5

**Orders for the first turn to Mike Dommett, 119 Victoria Road,
Alton GU34 2DD or by e-mail to mike_dommett@yahoo.co.uk
by Friday, 4th May 2018**

Trophy Hunter

Turn 7

This turn's shots

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1	m																			
2								x	x				X							x
3												X	M					l		
4																		l		
5						X												l		
6										g										
7										g										
8							e	e		g		a	a	x						
9	x						e	e					x						G	
10			x																	
11		a	a																	
12													X	X						
13			g									X	X				x			
14		x	g	x		e	e													
15			g			e	e													
16																X	a	A		
17								L		x								x	s	
18				a	a			L										S		
19		b						l	X	X										
20																				

with the pointy end!). Having mastered this, he wastes no time and attacks with a furious lunge. Desapear was clearly expecting this: he parries the lunge and ripostes. It's just a light blow, as these things are reckoned, but it's enough to draw blood and produce a capitulation from L'Inconnu.

Jean-Marie Lillebonne of the 13th Fusiliers is expecting to fight Vulson de Chalais of the 27th Musketeers, but there's no sign of him.

Taking down the Ministers

Duels out of the way, most Parisians' objective is now the courthouse for this month's prosecutions of the Minister of Justice and a Minister without Portfolio. Snacks and throwing items purchased, the audience settles down on the public benches, nattering away. A hush only falls when Viscount Pierre le Sang, the Minister of State, enters. All rise while he takes his place in the seat of judgement. Once everyone is seated again, the court usher announces the case.

"The treason court is now in session. The first case concerns His Excellency Baron Robin de Siever, the Minister of Justice, and His Excellency Ricard d'Astardlie, Minister without Portfolio, who are charged with conspiracy to defraud the Military Commissariat – a treasonable offence. The Commissioner may state the case for the prosecution."

The Commissioner of Public Safety, Baron Duncan d'Eauneurts, rises from the prosecution table and enunciates, with much gravitas, "THE CASE FOR THE PROSECUTION OF BARON RICARD D'ASTARDLIE (MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO) AND BARON ROBIN DE SIEVER (MINISTER OF JUSTICE)." A sip of water is required before he continues, less portentously, "The Accused before you are charged with Treason: to wit, Conspiracy to Defraud the Commissariat and put the lives of His Majesty's soldiers at risk in order to line their own pockets. With your permission, My Lord, I will outline the events which led to these would-be Robber Barons being arrested and charged."

"The Court may be aware of the general call for information which my office issued regarding rumours of corruption in the military regarding the issue of shoddy, substandard equipment to the troops. The call was soon answered by an anonymous letter addressed to me and received at Le Châtelet. I submit this as Prosecution Exhibit A and read it to the Court."

He picks up a small sheet of discoloured paper and squints to read it: "Commissioner, I have evidence that Baron Robin de Siever, the newly appointed Minister of Justice, and His Majesty's Minister without Portfolio Ricard d'Astardlie are plotting to embezzle funds meant to provide replacement equipment to the First, Second and Third Armies prior to the commencement of the Summer Campaign. I will be more than happy to furnish you with this evidence once these gentlemen are in custody for, until that happens, I go in fear of my life. Yours sincerely, A French Patriot."

Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses

Being a correspondence game of *En Garde!* run by Pevans since April 1986 and now published as part of *To Win Just Once*.

New players are always welcome. If you'd like to play, you'll need to subscribe to *TWJO* (see page). You will also need (access to) a copy of the published rules to *En Garde!* (see www.engarde.co.uk).

Orders for June and July 1670 to Pevans at 180 Aylsham Drive, UXBRIDGE UB10 8UF, UK or lpbsorders@pevans.co.uk by Friday 4th May 2018



May 1670 (315)

Watery May sunshine greets Parisians who are about their business early. This includes several individuals whose cloaks conceal the sharpened steel they are carrying to their meetings. Amongst these we can number none other than our illustrious Commissioner of Public Safety and commander of the King's Musketeers, Baron Duncan d'Euaneurts. Accompanied by Was Nae Me, Eauneurts carries his sabre to his appointment with Sir Alan de Frocked of the Cardinal's Guard. Frocked is seconded by Leonard de Hofstadt and will be using the more traditional rapier.

The duel looks stacked in Eauneurts' favour: his beefy stature dwarfs the slight frame of Frocked, who is much less skilled at swordplay. However, once formalities are out of the way, it is Frocked who scores first blood. Without preamble, he lunges, skewering his opponent's left arm. However, Eauneurts is not left handed and responds with a slash that does far more damage. Undaunted, Frocked completes his attack with a cut. Eauneurts hits him with a second slash as he recovers his balance. Those two hefty blows are enough for Frocked and Hofstadt throws in the towel on his behalf.

Charles Louis Desapear has two duels to fight this month and decides to take on Simon Alfred Devereux first. After waiting around for a while, it becomes apparent that Devereux is not going to show, so Desapear hustles on to his appointment with L'Inconnu. The discrepancy in size is obvious: Desapear may not be a big man, but he'd make about three of L'Inconnu. What's more, L'Inconnu is having trouble working out how to hold his foil (hint: stick them

As expected, last time's Lion attracts a hail of bullets. However, it's only finished off by Jerry Elsmore and Graeme Wilson.

There are mixed results for those not shooting at the Lion. Andy Kendall, Nik Luker and Pam Udowiczenko miss everything. There must be something wrong with Graeme Morris's sights: he hits the dead bit of Lion.

Mr Baylis waffles on: "Onward into the mighty jungle where the density of the foliage is only matched by the density of the nut with a camera (I am not shooting defenceless animals with anything but a Canon – or should that be Cannon?).

"After my clever ploy last time to flush the critters into full view I quickly ran (another wheelchair joke) to where I knew they would emerge once my beaters had hurried them along. There is most definitely something in one of the following spaces, if not in both. I shall let these spaces have both barrels – one contains water the other ginger beer." He hits a Gorilla. Probably with the water.

Alex Bardy finishes off last turn's Antelope on his own. Tim Macaire gets lucky and finds the rest of the Snake that was injured earlier. Dave Marsden pots a Monkey that Pam only just misses.

Scores

Player	Shots	This turn	Total
Alex Bardy	R16	4	12
Chris Baylis	R9	4	14
Charles Burrows	P16,H18	1	12.83
Mark Cowper	H18	1	7
Mike Dommett	H18	1	14
Jerry Elsmore	H17	2.5	6

Key

Animals	Symbol	Size (squares)	Number on grid	Points Value
Bush	B	1	12	0
Monkey	M	1	12	4
Antelope	A	2	9	8
Snake	S	2	?	10
Gorilla	G	3	6	12
Lion	L	3	3	15
Elephant	E	4	2	20

Other symbols

	X	Missed shot
UPPER CASE = this turn, lower case = last turn, Strikeout = dead animal		

Notes: animals go up and down or left and right, not diagonally, with two exceptions. Elephants are blocks of four squares; each Snake is two diagonal squares and moves by up to three squares a turn.

Animals only touch (if at all) at corners and only Snakes will go next to a Bush.

Bill Hay	I19,H18	1	5.25
Andy Kendall	M12,N12	0	6.5
Rob Lee	H18	1	4
Nik Luker	N12,M13	0	12.5
Tim Macaire	R18	5	16.33
Dave Marsden	L3,M3	4	7.5
Graeme Morris	H19,I19	0	7.5
Rob Pinkerton	H18	1	3
Gerald Udowiczenko			2.58
Pam Udowiczenko	M2,L13	0	2
Matt Wale	F5,H18	1	6.25
Graeme Wilson	H17	2.5	11.5
Paul Wilson	H18	1	8.5

What's this about?

This game is essentially a variation of *Battleships* and is open to all readers of *TWJO*. The 20 x 20 grid represents an African safari park where a population explosion means some animals must be culled. The players are trophy hunters allowed in to carry out the cull.

All you have to do each turn is nominate two squares to take pot-shots at: F9 and M17, say (the second is only used if the first misses). Letters (A-T) run across the grid and numbers (1-20) up and down (thus A1 is the top left corner).

The first hit on each animal scores points in proportion to its size. For example, a Lion is three squares and worth 15 points, so the first hit scores $15/3 = 5$ points. If several players hit the same square at the same time, they share the points; if several players hit different squares of the same animal at the same time, they get the points for the square they hit.

Once an animal has been identified, subsequent shots share the points of the square they hit (there are no points left for the square(s) hit initially) with a minimum score of 1 point. So if players A and B hit the second square of that lion and C gets the third, C gets 5 points and A and B get $2\frac{1}{2}$ each.

An animal is dead when all its squares have been hit. No more points can be scored for this animal. After 10 turns or when the board is clear (except for any snakes), the player with the most points wins.

**Send your shots to Pevans at
180 Aylsham Drive, UXBRIDGE UB10 8UF or
to TWJO@pevans.co.uk by Friday, 4th May 2018.**

Online Games

TWJO readers are welcome to join in the various online board games we're playing. Let me know what games you'd like to play and I'll add you in.

Brass game 62 (at brass.orderofthehammer.com) was my first win in six games in a close result. Game 63 is almost halfway through and I'm hopeful. Let me know if you'd like to join in.

Can I persuade anyone into a game of *Keyflower*? Let me have your ID at BoardGameArena.com and I'll invite you into a game.

Through the Ages: a New Story of Civilization is going well (at boardgaming-online.com). Game 10 was a fine victory for Mike Tobias, leaving the rest of us trailing. Game 11 is on the verge of finishing and looking close.

Our latest game of *Pax Porfiriana* (at yucata.de) ended with a win for Mark. We've started another, which is looking tricky as the first Topple appears. More players are welcome: let me know if you'd like to join in.

Meanwhile, *Power Grid (Funkenschlag)* is proving as tough online as in real life. Who'd like to give it a go at famdepaus.nl?

I'm not sure what happened in the four-player *Innovation* game: I was dead last and then somebody played a card that meant I won! Entertaining – for me, anyway. Who's interested in a game at BoardGameArena.com?

The *Agricola* game at www.BoiteAJeux.net is going well – I'm up for more if anyone else is interested.

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