

That would be enough

This has been issue 212 of *To Win Just Once*, published 28th February 2021. It incorporates *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, a game of *En Garde!*. Issues are published ten times a year, roughly every five weeks. © Paul Evans 2021

Deadlines

Orders for *Railway Rivals* and *Star Trader* to Mike by 12th March 2021.

Orders for *LPBS* and *Wits & Wagers* plus any other contributions to Pevans by 19th March 2021.

(Next deadlines are 16th/23rd April, 21st/28th May, 25th June/2nd July)

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.engage.co.uk

Railway Rivals – There's room for one more in Elmers End – see page 22 (Working map and rules provided).

Star Trader – The latest game has just started and there's room for more players. (Rules provided.)

Online games

Agricola (at boiteajeus.net):

Egizia (at yucata.de):

Grand Austria Hotel (at yucata.de):

Keyflower (at boardgamearena.com):

Puerto Rico (at boardgamearena.com):

Rajas of the Ganges (at yucata.de):

Snowdonia (at yucata.de):

Through the Ages (various):

Underwater Cities (at yucata.de): Pevans, Brad Martin

Credits

To Win Just Once issue 212 was written and edited by Pevans. The *LPBS* masthead (page 26) is by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, as is the drawing on page 18. The illustration on page 28 is by Nik Luker. Game and book artwork is courtesy of the publisher. Pevans took the photos and played with Photoshop.

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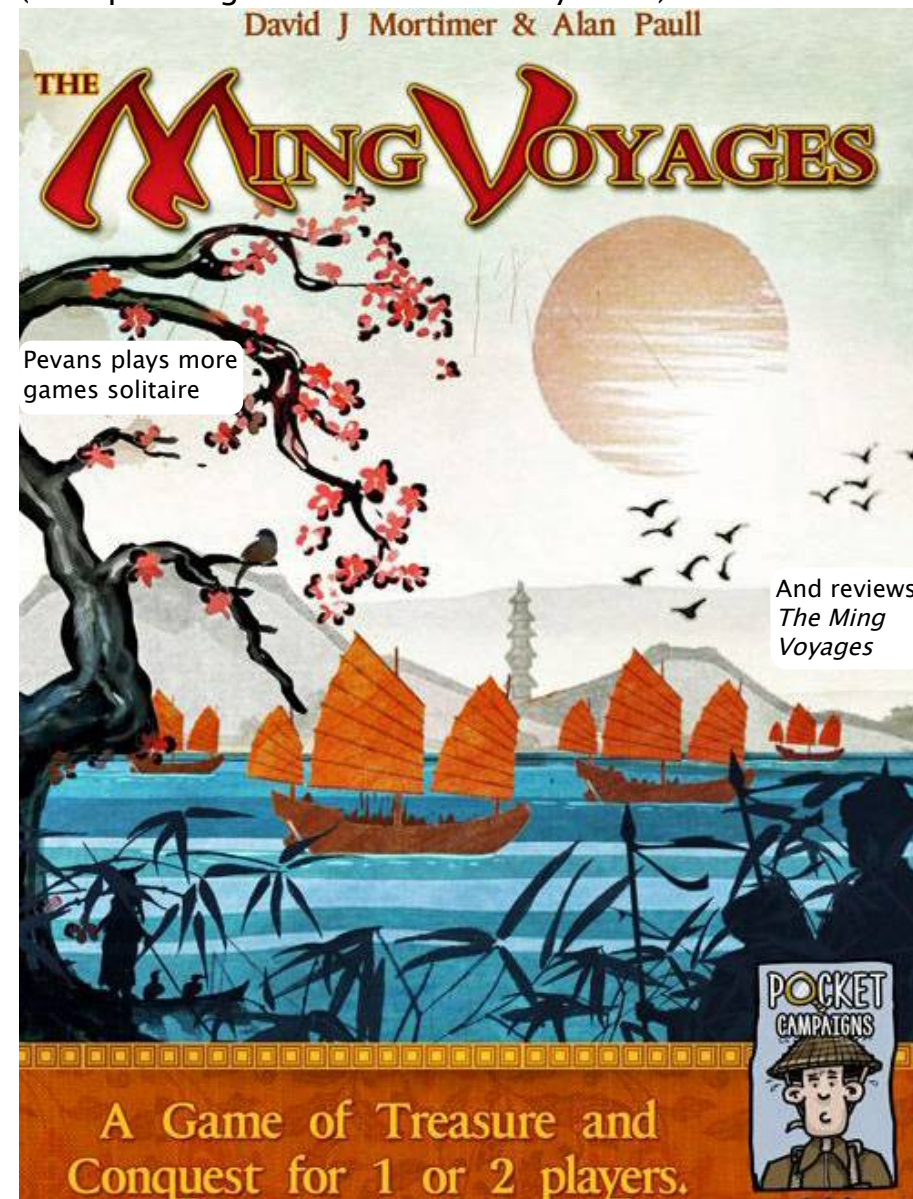
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To Win Just Once

(incorporating *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*)

David J Mortimer & Alan Paull



Pevans plays more
games solitaire

And reviews
*The Ming
Voyages*

Issue 212: March 2021

£2.00 (+ postage)

(LPBS 346: December 1672)

and online at www.pevans.co.uk/TWJO

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ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank, Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
CT	Charles Trenet	10-	8	Poor	Major PLLD	1	Ella	Hunt	3	Graeme Morris
JIT	Justin Thyme	10	31	Comfy	Lt.Colonel QOC	7	Lucy	Hunt	2	Gerald Udowiczenko
NM	Neville Moore	10	26	Poor	Captain RFG/RFG Regt. Adjnt.	1		Hunt	2	Cameron Wood
JF	Jerome Fortmayne	10	F	OK	Lt.Colonel CG/Gds Brigade Maj.	4		Hunt	6	Bill Howell
NdB	Norman de Bastille	10	F	OK	Captain PLLD	1		Hunt	4	Mark Williams
ZUT	Zavier Uliric Turenne	10+	31	Comfy	B.Bdr-General PM	4	Lois	BG	1	Bob Blanchett
HDE	Hercule D'Engin	9	12	Comfy	Lt.Colonel 53F	2		BG	2	Gerry Sutcliffe
RS	Rick Shaw	9	F	Poor	Lt.Colonel ALC/Cav Div Adjutant	2		Hunt	6	Charles Burrows
LS	Lou Scannon	9+	35	Poor	Subaltern RFG	4		BG	2	John Cooke
PGR	Petit-Garson Riche	9+	33	Comfy	Major QOC/HGds Brigade Maj.	1	Emma	HGds	2	Mark Cowper
BS	Balzac Slapdash	8	12	Comfy		9	Alison	BG	4	Matthew Wale
LR	Louis Renault	8+	26	Comfy	Lt.Colonel PM	1	Di	RP	4	Roy Bleasdale
JDGI	Jean David Goliath	7+	21	Poor	Major PLLD	2		F&P	1	James Waters
CE	Cam Embert	6-	0	Poor	Captain 13F	3		F&P	2	Dean Talbot
LV	Lascar Vivrebras	6	18	OK	Subaltern PM/BdGen's Aide (TC)	4		F&P	4	Olaf Schmidt
CdL	Cyrano de Lancet	6	15	OK	Captain PM	1	Violet	F&P	4	Rik Stewart
ML	Mustafa Lekki	6	13	Poor	Major 27M	4	Mary	F&P	2	Graeme Wilson
CdN	Claude de Nord	6+	23	OK	Colonel 69A/BdGen's Aide (XM)	3	Ada	F&P	4	Andrew Larder
HCV	Hugh Challavas-Vichy	5	7	OK		1		F&P	5	Nik Luker
RdM	Rob d'Masses	5	6	OK	Subaltern CPC	4		RP	6	Craig Pearson
JH	Jacques Hatt	4	11	Poor	B.Major GDMD	4		RP	3	Joel Halpern
LK	Lars Kristmass	4	4	Comfy	Captain 4A	4		RP	3	Martin Jennings
X1		4	0	Poor		5		RP	2	Brish Talbot
BDH	Barry D Hatchett	4+	13	Poor	Captain 69A	3	Jenny	RP	6	Ray Vahey
X2		1-	2	Poor		5		RP	4	Mark Nightingale

An F under SPs means that the character was at the Front, RIP that he died. Ret that he retired.
 + against SL means it went up this month, - means it went down.

Cash: Poor = <500, OK = 500-1500, Comfy = 1500-5000, Whthy = 5000-10000, Rich = 10000-25000, Flthy = 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
UXB	Count Uther Xavier-Beaureg'd	29	63	Comfy	General		20	Henrietta	Flr	4	Pete Card
DdE	Count Duncan d'Eauneurts	24-6	6	Rich	Colonel		8		Flr	5	Paul Lydiate
PC	Count Pierre Cardigan	24-52	Withy	B.Bdr-General	ALC/Hvy Brigadier		10	Edna	Flr	5	Matt Shepherd
BRJS	Viscount Beau Reese J Seine	24-47	OK	Colonel	RFG/War Minister		10	Maggie	Flr	3	Bill Hay
JJ	Count Jean Jeanie	23-62	Filty	B.Lt-General	/1st Div Commandr		30	Jacky	Flr	3	Andrew Kendall
LdH	Marquis Leonard de Hofstadt	23-41	Comfy	General	/1st Army Commndr		7	Frances	Flr	5	Neil Packer
JdG	Count Jacques de Gain	22-18	Filty	Fld Marshal			24		Flr	6	Ben Brown
TC	Viscount Terence Cuckpowder	21-50	Withy	Bdr-General	/Min w/o Port		6	Maggie	Flr	5	Mike Dommett
BdLS	Earl Bernard de Lur-Saluces	19-56	Rich	Lt-General	/Insp.Gen.Cav		14		Flr	3	Rob Pinkerton
BdLG	Baron Bastian de LaGarde	19-53	Withy	Lt.Colonel	RFG/CPS		4		Flr	1	Jerry Spencer
CK	Viscount Chris Knight	19-50	Withy	Colonel	CPC/Chancellor		13		Flr	2	Paul Wilson
Jdl	Marquis Jean d'Ice	19-43	Withy	B.Bdr-General	CG/Gds Brigadier		10		Flr	3	Tym Norris
Anon	Sir Les Anonyme	19-41	Comfy	B.Bdr-General	53F/Min w/o Port		3	Carole	Flr	4	Bruno Giordan
GdB	Sir Greg de Bécqueur	17-39	OK	Lt.Colonel	KM/1st Div Adjutant		9	Kathy	Both	5	Anthony Gilbert
HD	Marquis Henri Dubois	17-33	Comfy	B.Bdr-General	DG		8		Both	3	Wayne Little
BeV	Sir Ben e'Volence	17+62	Comfy	Lt.Colonel	CPC/FMshl's Aide		5	Fifi	Both	3	Ash Casey
GM	Sir Gaz Moutarde	15-30	Withy	Bdr-General			4	Anne	Both	2	Mike Clibborn-Dyer
XM	Sir Xavier Money	13-36	Withy	Bdr-General			7	Betty	Both	3	Pam Udowiczzenko
RdL	Robert d'Lancier	13-30	Comfy	Major	KM		9	Katy	Both	4	Steven Malecek
HDS	Sir Henri DuShite	13-F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General	RM/1st Army QMG		9		Both	4	Dave Marsden
MdZ	Marc de Zorro	12-37	OK	Colonel	QOC/2nd Army Adjutant		9		Flr	4	Tim Macaire
TIH	Tarquin le Hatter	11-33	Poor	Major	KM		2	Leia	Hunt	5	Jason Fazackarley
CdP	Camille de Polignac	11-31	OK	Major	RFG		4	Angelina	Hunt	4	James McReynolds
EdL	Sir Eclair de Lame	11-29	OK	Major	RFG		4		Hunt	3	Peter Farrell
AF	Sir Augustin Fourrier	11-21	Comfy	B.Bdr-General	GDM		6	Pet	Hunt	3	Brick Amundsen
WdB	Sir William de Beast	11-15	OK	Major	CPC/Hvy Brigade Maj.		6		Hunt	4	Simon Peck
CdC	Conrad de Coverlet	11	RIP								Stewart Macintyre
PFL	Phillipe F'Loppe	11+38	Poor	Major	DG/Gen's Aide (1st Army)		3	Freda	F&P	4	Phil Urquhart
PdT	Pierre de Terre	11+37	Poor	Major	QOC/QOC Regt. Adjt.		6		Hunt	2	Paul Murphy

Chatter

Well, I can report that yours truly has now had his first Covid-19 vaccination. Unlike the flu jab I had last year, the only side-effect of this one was a sore arm for a couple of days. The process was remarkably efficient, with a big team of volunteers marshalling everybody, and only took 5 minutes. Followed by a 15-minute wait to make sure I didn't keel over. I had the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, so my gag was that the draughty hall wasn't **that** cold. (This was after Geraldine vetoed my idea of asking the vaccinator whether the new chip would interfere with the one the aliens implanted. She thought they might not find it funny.)

Meanwhile, in the last couple of weeks *Games from Pevans* has completed its first purchases from Europe since the UK emerged from EU regulations. As I expected, the procedure was the same as buying things from outside the EU, as I have done in the past. HMRC charge VAT (no duty on board games) on your consignment when it arrives and the carrier passes that on - with their own fees for handling the paperwork - before they'll deliver. As a VAT-registered business, I can reclaim the VAT, of course, and the fees just add a bit to the delivery cost.

So, £200-worth of games from Germany. With VAT at 20%, that'll be a charge from HMRC of ... £73. Some things never change. In this case HMRC's ability to charge the wrong amount. If I wasn't registered for VAT, this would be seriously annoying. As it is, it's just a cash flow hit.

Oh, and the other difference from last year's purchases is that delivery took over two weeks instead of under one.

Online stats

TWJO 211 went out on 24th January. In the last eight days of the month the PDFs were downloaded 125 times. Issue 210 was downloaded 64 times in January, making a total of 262 in two months. The PDFs of *TWJO* 209 attracted 17 more downloads in January for 281 in all since publication.

Advent beers 2020

As Gerald Udowiczzenko pointed out with his *LPBS* orders, I completely forgot to include this piece in last issue as I said I would in the previous issue. Well, better late than never. Back at the start of December, I was attracted by Beer Hawk's (beerhawk.co.uk) beer advent calendar: 24 beers to sample in the run-up to Christmas! When it arrived, it was a hefty cardboard box with 24 numbered flaps from which to extract the bottles and cans of beers each day.

My first surprise was that it actually came from a French outfit, Saveur Bière (saveur-biere.com/en) and thus included quite a few French beers in what was a very international selection. Second was that almost all the beers were live. Cue efforts not to pour too much yeast into my glass.

I was also impressed to see that, while some of the brewers are well known, all the beers included were brewed specifically – and uniquely – for the advent calendar. This means reviewing the beers is fairly pointless, as you're not going to find them anywhere else. It won't stop me and has certainly given me some pointers to breweries whose brews I should be trying (or avoiding).



The first few beers out of the box were undistinguished. Then I arrived at Hoppy Tripel from the Toccalmatto brewery (based in Parma, Italy): 9% alcohol-by-volume. An Italian take on a Belgian Tripel with lots of hops. What's not to like? In the glass, it was a cloudy yellow, quite fizzy and smelling strongly of hops. Mmm... It was no surprise that it tasted strongly of hops, too, with a really smooth aftertaste, almost vanilla. But, at 9%, one to be drunk carefully. 9/10



The next success was Cinnabun, a Baltic Porter from Põhjala (in Estonia), 7% (abv). This was a black beer with almost no fizz and a gorgeous roast aroma. It was syrupy and slipped down easily with a... coconut (?) aftertaste. Apparently it contains cinnamon and Tonka beans, but coconut is what I was getting. 9/10. Now, what are Tonka beans?

I discovered the Camden Brewery a few years ago and really like their Pale Ale. They had a representative in the advent calendar: a Bock (strong lager) at 6.5% abv. It was

pretty fizzy when I poured it out and, surprisingly, a dark brown colour. The smell was strongly malty. It tasted great: a nice, malty beer with a vanilla aftertaste. "(Mostly) brewed in true Bavarian style", it says on the can. This uses a dark malt, hence the colour. The mostly bit is the added vanilla. 10/10



Femmes Fatales

No	Name	SL	Attr	Last
64	Edna Bucquette	18	W	PC
3	Kathy Pacific	17	B	GdB
54	Madelaine de Proust	17		
35	Katy Did	16	I	RdL
42	Maggie Nifisent	16	B	TC
55	Jacky Tinne	16		JJ
52	Guinevere d'Arthur	15	B/W	
10	Frances Forrin	14	B	LdH
21	Helen Highwater	14	W	
48	Fifi	14	B/W	BeV
62	Alison Wunderlandt	14		BS
11	Laura de Land	13		
16	Ophelia Derrière	13		
26	Ella Fant	13	B	CT
27	Lucy Fur	13	B	JiT
30	Leia Orgasma	13	B	TIH
45	Cath de Thousands	13		
8	Lotte Bottle	12	B	
12	Charlotte de Gaulle	12		
17	Henrietta Carrotte	12	I/W	UXB
28	Vera Cruz	12		
31	Bess Ottede	12	I/W	
1	Sue Briquet	11	B	
4	Anne Tique	11	W	GM
9	Deb Onairre	11	I	
40	Sheila Kiwi	11		
63	Carole Singeurs	11		Anon
20	Emma Roides	10	I	PGR
33	Anna Rexique	10	I	
38	Pet Ulante	10	W	AF
43	Di Lemmere	10	I	LR
53	Angelina de Griz	10	B	CdP
56	Ingrid la Suède	10		
6	Viv Ayschus	9		
57	Ava Crisp	9	I	
59	May Banquot l'Idée	9		
2	Betty Kant	8	I	XM
19	Jenny Russe	8	W	BDH
32	Sal Munella	8	W	
41	Marie Antoinette	8	B/I	
49	Mary Huana	8	B/I/W	ML
34	Freda de Ath	7	W	PFL
39	Thomasina Tancenjin	7	I	
50	Ulla Leight	7	I	
5	Belle Epoque	6	B/I	
13	Josephine Buonoparte	6	I/W	
24	Violet Bott	6	I/W	CdL
15	Ada Andabettoir	5	B/I	CdN
25	Lois de Lô	5	B	ZUT

This table shows the mistresses in Paris. B=Beautiful, I=Influential, W=Wealthy; Last=Last lover seen with this month

Regiments

Col	RFG	CG	KM	DC	OOC	ALC	CPC	RM	AF	ZUT	13F	PLD	53F	27M	4A	69A	Gscn
LCol	BdL	JdI+	DdE	HD	MdZ	PC+	CK	HDS	LR	N3	N2	HDE	Anon	N5		CdN	N5
Maj 1	EdL	N5	GdB	PFL	PdR	N4	BeV	N5+	N2	N2	N5	CT	N6+	N7	N5+		N5+
Maj 2	CdP	N5	TIH	RdL	PGR+	N4	WdB+	N4	JH+	N4	N5	N1	N3	N2	N1	N4	N1
Capt 1	N4	N3	RdL	N1	N5	N5	N2	N4	N6	N4	N2	N5	N1	N1	N3	N1	N6
Capt 2	N3	N4	N1	N4	N5	N1*	N5	N4*	N4	N2	N5	N2	N5	N1	N5	N2	N6
Capt 3	N6	N1	N1*	N6	N3*	N1*	N1*	N4*	N4*	N5*	N4*	N3*	N1*	N3*	N1*	N3*	N6
Capt 4	NM*	N4*		N6*													N1*
Capt 5																	
Capt 6																	

This table shows the ten senior positions in the 17 regiments by rank. Entries are Character abbreviations, N (+M/A) for NPCs, blank for vacant. * shows the regiment adjutant; + shows ranks held by characters with a (senior) brevet rank or an appointment elsewhere.

Brigade Positions

Guards Brigade	JdI/_/_/JF
Horse Guards Brigade	N6/N/PGR
Heavy Brigade	PC/N/WdB
Dragoon Brigade	N1/N/N4
First Foot Brigade	N3/N/N5
Second Foot Brigade	N4/N/N6
Third Foot Brigade	N4/N/N5
Fourth Foot Brigade	N3/N/N5

Current CO/Aide/Brigade Major of each Brigade; entries are ID f or player characters, "N" (+ MA if needed) for NPC, __ for vacant

Frontier Regiments

	F1	F2	F3	F4	(Defence for Dec-Feb) RNHB
Colonel	N7	N6	N5	N6	N8
Attached		JF NdB			
Also at the Front	Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers - 1 Sqn only Royal Marines				

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

Battle Results

Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers: 3
 Royal Marines: 1
 Frontier regiment 1: 4
 Frontier regiment 2: 3
 Frontier regiment 3: 6
 Frontier regiment 4: 5
 RNHB regiment: 4



Fogo is an American IPA from Thornbridge (to a Goose Island recipe), 7% abv. Goose Island produces some cracking, hop-heavy beers and this is another one – though actually brewed at the Thornbridge brewery. It's a clear amber in the glass and you immediately get the grapefruit smell. Take a swig for mouth-puckering dry, bitter, hoppiness. Gorgeous: 10/10

of chocolate with a nice vanilla smoothness as well. Apart from the expected ingredients, it contained coffee, cocoa nibs, vanilla and milk sugar. This is definitely a dessert beer, if such a thing exists. 10/10



Marvelroast is an Imperial Golden Ale from the Founders Brewing Co (USA), 8% abv. Another clear amber beer in the glass, it smelled and tasted strongly



Now I've invented dessert beers, here's another one: Chocolate and Almond Pastry Stout from Brouwerij Kees (Netherlands), 10.5% (!) abv. This one's properly black with a chocolate nose. It tasted of chocolate too, but richer than the previous one and 'chewier'. A bit too rich, if anything, so that's 9/10.

beer with a brown head and a smoky aroma. "Aged in whiskey casks", it says. It's certainly a rich-tasting brew with wonderful roast flavours. Damn fine: 9/10

Those are my particular favourites from this selection, with another half a dozen coming at 7-8 out of 10 (including a black lager, a barley wine and

Let me finish with a visit to the Emerald Isle: Shanmullagh Extra Stout comes from the Brehon Brewhouse, Inniskeen, Co Monaghan and is 7.4% abv. As you'd expect, it's a black





several decent ales), making a pretty good hit rate. There was only one real stinker in the box: Ibimi (“Cranberry, Sea Salt and Coriander”) from The Wild Beer Co (in Somerset), 5% abv. It was a strange orange colour and smelled vaguely fruity when I poured it. It tasted absolutely disgusting: sharp and rancid. 0/10 and down the sink it went (much to Geraldine’s amazement). I usually avoid lambic (brewed with wild yeasts) beers, so it was no surprise that I didn’t particularly enjoy the other lambics in the box – this was the worst, though.

Overall, it was a decent selection, with plenty of really good, drinkable beers and just the odd stinker. If you think of it as a 24-bottle/can case of beer, then it was pretty expensive. But as a collection of unique, very different beers, it’s a winner. I wonder what Brew Hawk will do this Christmas?

Letters

Alex Bardy’s experiences chime with mine.

I too am suffering quite a bit with the vast number of unplayed board games accumulating and, other than the odd 2-player game, am struggling to get very much played at all – there is very little I am finding appealing about playing them online, tbh.

Thankfully, Marvel Champions TCG is continuing to provide me with the occasional gaming ‘fix’, and my addiction to MTG Arena (Magic: The Gathering) is allowing me probably way too much time to escape from things (despite still being at work 5 days a week).

Somehow I didn’t get caught by the whole TCG bubble. I bought a *Magic* deck (and a couple of boosters) when it first came out, played a few times, thought “it’s okay” and put it away. Shows how much I know. Chris Baylis is with us, too.

I have similar problems to you. Games to play and either only myself or Fran and I, depending on the game’s topic/subject. For example: if it’s a wargame, Fran is about as interested as I am in the latest women’s shoes from Christian Louboutin or Giuseppe Zanotti.

Some/many games do not play well with 2 players, despite saying 2–4 or 2–5 etc. The rules are usually modified and the challenges are different with just 2 players, so you can only get a feel for the game rather than truly get the multiple input of a full game session.

I’m just impressed by you name-checking shoe designers!

Tables

Other Appointments

King’s Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Cardinal’s Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Aides: to Crown Prince N	to Field Marshal BeV
Provincial Military Governors: N/N/N/N/N	
City Military Governor N	Adjutant-General __
Inspectors-General: of Cavalry BdLS	of Infantry __
Commissioner of Public Safety BdLG (until May 1673)	
Chancellor of the Exchequer CK (until August 1673)	
Minister of Justice CPS (until May 1673)	
Minister of War BRJS (until February 1673)	
Minister of State __	

Shows who holds appointments outside military units (except Aides):

ID for Characters, “N” for NPC, __ for vacant, “CPS” for additional posts held by the CPS.

Army Organisation and 1673’s Summer Deployment

First Army (Defence)	LdH/PFL/__/HDS
Cavalry Division (Defence)	N6/N/RS
Heavy Brigade (Defence) - ALC CPC	
Dragoon Brigade (Defence) - GDMD PLLD	
Frontier Division (Defence)	N6/N/N4
Frontier Regiments (Defence)	
Second Army (Siege)	__/_/__/MdZ/N
First Division (Assault)	JJ/N/GdB
Guards Brigade (Assault) - RFG CG KM	
1st Foot Brigade (Assault) - RM PM	
RNHB Regiment (Assault)	
Second Division (Siege)	N2/N/N3
2nd Foot Brigade (Siege) - 13F 53F	
3rd Foot Brigade (Siege) - 27M 4A	
4th Foot Brigade (Siege) - 69A Gscn	
Horse Guards Brigade (Field Ops) - DG QOC	

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

Jacques Hatt applies for Brigade Major of Heavy Brigade

Tarquin le Hatter applies for Aide to General

Duels

Results of December's duels

Conrad de Coverlet didn't turn up to fight Justin Thyme and lost SPs.

Neither Conrad de Coverlet nor Marc de Zorro turned up for their duel and both lost SPs.

Conrad de Coverlet didn't turn up to fight Pierre de Terre and lost SPs.

Conrad de Coverlet didn't turn up to fight Petit-Garson Riche and lost SPs.

Duncan d'Euaneurts didn't turn up to fight Charles Trenet and lost SPs.

Les Anonyme (with HDE, no Expertise) drew with Ben e'Volence (with PFL, no Expertise).

Terence Cuckpowder (with UXB, gains 1 Exp) beat Robert d'Lancier (with BdLG).

Duels to be settled next month

Les Anonyme (Rapier, Seconds HDE) and Ben e'Volence (Sabre, Seconds PFL & CK, adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

New Characters

Mike Eggleton gets the Bastard son of a well-to-do Gentleman: Init SL 3; Cash 225; MA 1; EC 4 (MdN Main de Nantes).

Eclair de Lame (Rapier, Seconds CdP, adv.) has cause with Phillipe F'Loppe (Sabre, Seconds BeV) for pinching Freda.

Beau Reese Jean Seine (Rapier, Seconds JJ, 4 rests) has cause with Terence Cuckpowder (Sabre, Seconds UXB, adv.) for pinching Maggie.

"adv." shows who (if anyone) has the advantage of higher Expertise: his first duelling sequence need only contain six actions.

Challenges to be voted on

Jerome Fortmayne challenges Tarquin le Hatter "to meet me in a duel at the beginning of March."

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

Duels held over to March

Jerome Fortmayne versus Tarquin le Hatter.

All by myself – more solitaire games

Sense, Sensibility and Servants

When *Obsession* was first launched on Kickstarter, I thought about supporting it. But: unknown designer, first-time publisher... I passed. Then I played the finished article (as documented in *TWJO* 194) and was very impressed. So, when the Kickstarter for the second edition (plus *Upstairs, Downstairs* expansion) was launched, I jumped in. By the time the game arrived, of course, we were deep into the pandemic. Luckily, there's a solitaire option. Hooray!



The story of the game is that each player represents an aristocratic family in mid-19th century Derbyshire. You are doing up your house and estate to boost your family's reputation and attract prestigious guests, who also enhance your reputation. And the ultimate ambition is to court the top dogs on the social scene, the Fairchild heirs. It's kind of a cross between Jane Austen novels (set somewhat earlier) and Gosford Park/Downton Abbey (in the following century).

Your family members are cards, as are your guests, and are played to participate in activities for such benefits as money, reputation, more guests and so on. However, activities and guests also require the appropriate servants. These are pleasant wooden figures, distinguished by colour and shape, and players all start with the same set. A tea party might need a footman to serve, while a visiting countess requires a lady's maid – definite shades of *Downton Abbey* here: "I'm a valet, I don't serve tea!"

An activity must take place in the right place, too. The rooms of your house (drawing room, library etc) and features of its grounds (tennis court, stables et al) are the chunky cardboard tiles around which the game revolves. Thus game play is about acquiring more tiles to expand your estate, enabling bigger, more prestigious activities to take place.

At the same time, you have to manage your stock of servants (they're only available again two rounds after they last did something) and your hand of cards (guests and family). One key restriction in the game is that picking your cards back up takes your whole turn. It's something you will need to do more than once in the course of the game, so planning when is important.

The game is also regulated by the number of rounds – with the option of playing a shorter or longer version. Some rounds provide a specific opportunity – the Village Fair, for example – for players to gain something. Crucially, every 3-4 rounds players have the chance to add a highly prestigious Fairchild to their hand by courting them. This is done by matching what you have in your estate to

what the Fairchilds are interested in. Apart from gaining a Fairchild as a guest, the successful player takes a card that provides some benefit, if used, or bonus points at the end of the game, if not.

The solitaire game is played much like the multi-player game. You just don't have any competition. Instead, a non-player 'family' takes tiles from the 'market' each round and provides competition when courting the Fairchilds – you must beat their score to win a Fairchild. The solitaire game works both as a challenge in its own right – you still have all the management issues to work through – and a way of learning the game.



Ponsonby estate at the bottom, then main board with turn track and Fairchilds at the top

For my first (and only, so far) outing, I took the Ponsonby family, giving me the starting advantage of extra cash. Despite only playing against a starter non-player family, I couldn't manage to win over either Fairchild. I only missed out by 2 points at the last opportunity, dammit. The final totting up of scores saw me achieve 97 points. This just matched the other family's 'score', but they win ties! Beaten by the game system.

Obsession is definitely awaiting the opportunity to play again and will be one of the first things I put on the table once we're allowed to get together once more. I should mention the quality of the production, which is superb (mind you, it was an expensive Kickstarter). The attention to detail is terrific, which is why it was particularly surprising to see "fleur" mis-spelled as "fluer"! It gets 8/10 from me.

Obsession was designed by Dan Hallagan and is published by Kayenta Games (www.kayentapublishing.com). It is a board game of Victorian social climbing for 1-4 players, aged 14+ and takes 30-90 minutes to play (my solitaire game took a good 90 minutes).

More tea, Sahib?

Alubari is subtitled "A Nice Cup of Tea" and has players building the railway line from Siliguri Town into the Himalayas to Darjeeling, while establishing tea plantations along the way. Players have a couple of worker pawns which they place on action spaces, one at a time. Then the actions are resolved in their set

Points Arising

Next deadline is 19th March

I've got nothing.

Welcome

Re-joining us after, umm... a considerable gap is Mike Eggleton. Welcome back, Mike. You'll probably recognise a few players, but none of the characters.

Farewell

Stewart Macintyre finds "I am unable to devote the time required to continue with *LPBS* at present", so I have retired CdC. Thanks for your contributions, Stewart, and we look forward to welcoming you back when you can manage.

Absent friends

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

CE Cam Embert (Dean Talbot) has NMR'd. Total now 1

DdE Duncan d'Euaneurts (Paul Lydiate) has NMR'd. Total now 1

LK Lars Kristmass (Martin Jennings) has NMR'd. Total now 1

NdB Norman de Bastille (Mark Williams) has NMR'd. Total now 2 and is sent to a Frontier regiment

Announcements

Bernard de Lur-Saluces asks NPC Aide to Lt. General (BdLS) to resign

Claude de Nord applies for Army Adjutant of First Army

X2 (Mark Nightingale) has NMR'd. Total now 1

RdM (Craig Pearson) has been floated at his request.

X1 (Brish Talbot) got the benefit of the doubt and was floated

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 an email group for *En Garde!* players and GMs, providing a forum to swap stories and ideas. Sign up at: <https://groups.io/g/EnGarde>

Reminders: It is worth sending orders in even if they're 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 emailed to lpbsorders@pevans.co.uk – you'll get an automated reply when the message arrives in my mailbox. Please give your name and your character's name and specify actions in full detail. If you want a query answered before the deadline, please use LPBS@pevans.co.uk instead.

Camille de Polignac applies for Aide to General

Jean David Goliath applies for Brigade Major of Horse Guards Brigade

the other gentlemen of Paris to help you keep. I'll bring a friend or two, you can bring a friend or two, we'll meet at dawn and settle our differences like two gentlemen. Well, like a gentleman and a clown, anyway. Given your previously "display" of swordsmanship, I'll be sure to wear a hardened codpiece...

In case what I am saying is too obtuse for your – admittedly limited – wits, let me repeat what I said in my last letter:

You are without honour, no gentleman, and a disgrace to even such a questionable regiment as the King's Musketeers! I say here and now that you are unfit to wear the King's uniform, in ANY Capacity. You are truly a waste of human flesh. As such, I call you out! You were too much of a coward to cross swords with me in October, but instead bore false witness against me, so I challenge you now to meet me on the 1st of March upon my next visit to Paris or be known to all as the poltroon and craven knave that I proclaim you!

I call upon the gentlemen of Paris to support my claim against you. Meet me sword in hand or never show your face in polite society again, you jackanapes!

† Lt. Colonel Jerome Fortmayne
Cardinal's Guards
At the Dutch Front

To Jerome Fortmayne

Sir, firstly, you were tried and sentenced fairly. To assert otherwise is to insult the intelligence and wisdom of His Majesty, who chooses ministers and their servants to act in

his place. Such an insult is close to sedition and lèse majesté. Beware! Secondly, to hurl insults around the campfires of the army is not the act of a gentleman and only serves to spread demoralisation and disaffection, an act deserving of death. Be warned. Finally, you have been justly sentenced to serve with the Frontier Regiments. To make use of your own 'cat's paw', the Brigade Commander, to avoid such service is the act of a coward. Be dead and France will be the better for it.

† Bastian LaGarde, Commissioner of Public Safety and Minister of Justice
for His Majesty, King Pevans

Dear Major Goliath

The Young Gentleman of Paris will next convene in February 1673 where you are welcome to join us and tell us about your fearless battles routing the Dutch.

Keep safe and avoid any suspicious tulips, hard rubbery cheese and people wearing orange. The QOC will be riding out next month to bolster our forces. I will bring you a bottle of New Year's Eve Champagne from my club to toast the fallen.

† Captain Garcon-Riche, QOC

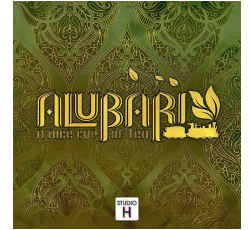
Poetry Corner

(All signed poetry submissions gain their author at least 1 SP)

When sober I always drink more;
When drunken I am such a bore.
I'm the one who regales
All the guests with his tales
Then suddenly slumps to the floor.

† Greg

order. The actions let players pick up resources, convert these to better resources (e.g. iron ore to steel), excavate a plantation, secure a Contract (for bonuses during and at the end of the game) and use their resources to lay track on a section of the railway or build a station in a town along the railway.



However, what players can do is limited by the weather. Everything is fine when it's sunny, but less work can be done when it's raining (though this does help the tea grow) and some things can't be done at all when it's foggy. This will all be very familiar if you've played Tony Boydell's terrific *Snowdonia*. *Alubari* is his development of that game, transporting the action to India and adding a few extra elements – tea for one.

Every now and then there will be a tea harvest, giving tea leaves (cardboard tokens) to players who own tea plantations. These provide another resource and are worth points at the end of the game. However, using the 'Chaiwala' action lets you turn tea leaves into 'Chai' – that is, the drink, tea. This, too, is worth points at the end, but is much more useful during the game. Spending Chai when you take an action adds a bonus to the action – laying extra track, for example.

This is a significant difference from *Snowdonia* and adds something else for players to think about and manage. The Chaiwala lets players gain tea leaves as



Just time for a cuppa before I set off on the (rail)road to Darjeeling

well as turning them into Chai, so they're not completely reliant on owning plantations. The game ends when the railway is complete – there's a clever mechanism of events (somewhat different from the one in *Snowdonia*) that will make this happen even if the players are dilly-dallying. Apart from resources, everything players have done will be worth points, particularly if they achieve the goals on their Contracts.

The solitaire game has some restrictions to the initial set-up and during play, but is otherwise very much the same game. Being familiar with *Snowdonia*, I found it straightforward. I invested in a locomotive that let me spend rubble (from excavations) instead of chai to super-charge my actions. Then the events mechanism cleared the first five plantations, so I had to hustle to clear the remaining three – providing the rubble I needed and also achieving the goal on one of my Contracts.

I used my super actions to build the railway, stopping short of Darjeeling to give me time to build stations and score more points before the events mechanism could complete it. I scored 161½ points. Is this good or bad? I don't know. The rules offer no guidance on what's a good score. Instead, there is a series of 'Achievements' that the solo player is challenged to accomplish.

Alubari is very clearly the same game as *Snowdonia*, albeit with some tweaked mechanisms and the addition of tea/Chai. This gives the game a very different flavour though. I rank *Snowdonia* as 9/10 on my highly subjective scale so I think *Alubari* should start with the same score. However, that's a provisional ranking until I can sit down and play it with other people.

Alubari was designed by Tony Boydell and is published by Studio H (www.facebook.com/studiohgames), a spin-off from book publisher Hachette. It is a board game of railway-building and tea-making for 1-5 players, aged 10+, and takes 45-120 minutes to play (my solitaire game took about 90 minutes).

A Pile of Junks

The Ming Voyages reviewed by Pevans

Back in the early 1400s, during the Ming Empire, China's great fleet of ocean-going junks ventured west. Under Admiral Zheng He, the fleet certainly reached East Africa and possibly went further. In *The Ming Voyages*, completing these voyages (in abstract) is the goal of one player, the Ming Emperor (not to be confused with the Emperor Ming – that's a whole different kettle of fish).

This is an asymmetric game with the other player being Overlord of the barbarian hordes to the north of China. Their goal is to invade the Empire. Specifically, to control the five 'Borderlands' between the barbarian homelands

To: Lieutenant Colonel Fortmayne
 Mon cher Jerome,
 Greetings to you dear chap, out there in the frozen wastes of the United Provinces, crikey I reckon it must be really cold, you have my sympathies what with having to live in a tent, queue up for the communal latrines, brave the fayre of Army food and dodge the daily perils of the enemy. I mean, don't get me wrong, I'd love to be there, fighting alongside you and the lads, but – what a nuisance – paperwork and issues of national security demand my presence back here, in Paris, having to endure all those tedious parties, womanising, special events etc etc.

Now, come, come Jerome what's all the nonsense that you have allegedly been spouting in a public letter I hear is circulating around Paris?! Accusations of me, Tarquin le Hatter, good old Tarquin, not being a gentleman, a coward, a disgrace... surely the cold has fuddled your wits my friend, or is it the nagging fear that some time, some when, before those long... slow... arduous 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days are up... an enemy's bullet will arrive with your name on it? Clearly, whatever the reason, you talk gibberish and you know, deep in your heart, that I had no choice other than to speak up against your crimes. As Deputy Commissioner for Public Safety duty calls for no less but I do share your disagreement over your posting to the Front for a year as I would have executed you immediately and thus saved yourself, and the enemy, a lot of needless bother.

Still, no hard feelings, eh? Take it all in good spirit. Anyway, should you survive – miracles allegedly do happen – and you return to Paris it's not me you ought to be seeing it's those other two, d'Euuneurts and de Lagarde, they were the ones who actually made the decision to find you guilty and send you off out there. However, as you are unlikely to survive, I don't really need to bother wasting thought over it!

† Major Tarquin le Hatter
 King's Musketeers
 Deputy Commissioner for Public
 Safety

December 6, 1672

Dear Clown,

I received your letter and wished to thank you for it. It's just the sort of thing I needed to keep me focused on staying alive here on campaign until I can return to Paris to "discuss" things in person with you and those whose approval you dance and caper for.

However, I think you have miscalculated with respect to when I shall return to Paris. In fact, I was just in Paris a few days ago, delivering dispatches and formally receiving my commission as Lt. Colonel. I did not have much time, but I spent what little free time I had LOOKING FOR YOU. Alas, Clown, I could not ferret out at which circus, children's party, or brothel you were performing in the short time I had available.

I expect I shall be back in Paris again on the 1st of March. To ensure that we do meet FACE-TO-FACE then, I should like to make an appointment with you, one which I am inviting all

now out of debt and with a full purse. All I must do is live long enough to spend it.

Speaking of paying debts, I tried to locate the Clown when I was in Paris but could not find him before I had to return here. Perhaps if I publicly call him out he will be forced to meet me in March?

God grant that I may meet him at sword-point soon. I look forward to making a start on My List:

The Coward: d'Euaneurts
The Catspaw: de Lagarde
The Clown: le Hatter

Military Missives

To Colonel Viscount Beau Reese Jean Seine

The Royal Footguards Barracks
My lord,

It is my pleasure to present to you a letter of introduction from my sponsor, Earl Yves Riseur. The earl was once a captain in His Glorious Majesty's father's Foot Guards and he prays that I may find similar service with his old regiment. The earl is a very kind gentleman who has taken a keen interest in my education and upbringing and often visits my mother, a war widow herself, to do everything he can to assist our family.

Unfortunately, the earl is currently in a tight spot financially and is unable to assist me in purchasing a suitable commission, so I should like to apply for the rank of private unless I can find a suitable loan to enable me to take the rank of subaltern. However, the earl says that there are always opportunities for advancement for a

bright young man such as myself and he is sure that I will soon prove myself and that I will rise quickly through the ranks.

If it is to your convenience, I should like to present my credentials to you at your club in the first week of December.

I have the honour to be Your Lordship's obedient servant

† Lou Scannon

Personal

Since arriving in Paris I have noticed an undercurrent of aggression against certain men of honour and goodness. If this continues, I will be forced to teach them some manners and I will have satisfaction!

Investment in my fromagerie is now open again, if anyone is interested. I would also like to offer my condolences to the family of Peruvian Ambassador, Pedro Antonio Fern de Castro, 10th Count of Lemos. May you be welcomed into heaven by a thousand Lamas.

Your humble servant

† Claud De Nord

Maman

Something strange is happening in Paris. It's as if there is a Puritan revolution sweeping the town. Weeks go by and there are no parties! No social events at all. Something is definitely wrong.

How do we combat this wave of Puritanism? I am trying to fix it by hosting parties of my own, but I shouldn't be the only person doing it.

Yours, etc,

† XM



The Ming Voyages set up for the start of a solitaire game

and the heart of the Empire. Hence this player is building troops and invading, while the other is building ships and sailing off. Either can win outright by completing their goal.

The asymmetry continues in the game's mechanisms. It's essentially a card game, but only the Emperor draws cards. At the end of each round, in which both players will have played a card, players swap hands. The Emperor then draws two more. Thus the Emperor knows the options available to the barbarian Overlord on their turn and can try to minimise the damage.

Except: these are cards of two halves. One end shows an action for the Emperor, the other for the Overlord (apart from a few that have two actions for the same player). Whatever card you play in your turn, your opponent gets the chance to use their action on the card as well (called a 'reaction' in the rules). Yes, some serious thinking is required here.

While the Emperor has the advantage of always playing from a larger hand of cards, they can only use an action if they've completed the relevant voyage. Tricky early on (the Emperor starts with a random voyage done), this becomes more powerful as the game proceeds. Luckily, each card also shows a number of Command Points that players can use instead of the action on the card (familiar to anyone who knows co-designer David Mortimer's *The Cousins' War*).

The Emperor can use Command Points to build ships, amass gold and attempt voyages (voyages need ships and gold – the more, the greater the chance of success); to recruit, deploy and attack with troops. The Overlord can use them to

amass, move and attack with barbarian hordes; to gain and deploy settlements (harder for the Emperor to remove, but can only go into Borderlands already conquered). However, you must use all the points for just one of these in a turn. And your opponent still gets the chance to use their action on the card.

There's one other option available to players: reserving a card. Instead of playing one, you place it face down and can use it in a later battle. This is a good way of getting rid of a card you really don't want your opponent to have. Battles are resolved by rolling three dice: a triple beats a double, which beats a single and a higher set beats a lower one. Troops, hordes and settlements are removed according to who won and you carry on until only one side occupies the area. If you have reserved cards, you can use them to re-roll dice. It's a simple mechanism and quick to resolve.

Returning to the game overall, if nobody achieves an outright victory, you play until you've been through the deck a second time and played all the cards. Players then score according to what they've achieved (and their opponent hasn't) to determine a 'minor' victory. I say go all-out for a Major Victory!

The game looks very intriguing. The problem is that current circumstances mean I don't have anyone to play with. Luckily *The Ming Voyages* can be played by one. You are the Emperor and 'Event' cards provide the Overlord's actions. There are three small Event decks, of increasing strength. For example, if a level 1 card attacks with one horde, the equivalent level 2 uses two and so on.

As Emperor, you draw cards and play one as usual. If it has a barbarian action on it, you then draw an Event card for the Overlord's reaction. Which deck you draw from depends on the 'Difficulty Level' you set at the start of the game. On the Overlord's turn you pick a card according to specific rules and its Command Points determine which deck of Event cards is used. You then get to use the Emperor's action on the card, if possible, as your reaction.

This means that the Overlord's actions are in a random order (and different from what the Overlord can do in a two-player game), reducing the Emperor's control



Those pesky barbarians stage their first invasion

Dear Col. Turenne,
I will also be more than happy to be your second on the Field of Honour.
† JiT

Despatches from the Front

To Brigadier d'Ice
Guard's Brigade HQ

I am afraid to report that this will be my last communique. It is with great regret that I must inform you that I have been carried from the field of battle and fear that I shall not see the sun set on this fine day. I have to report to you though that the Cardinal's Guard have made me proud today. They have fought with great honour and bravery against a strong, but ultimately futile, Dutch attempt to break the siege.

Under your orders we deployed at the ford to ensure that the Dutch relief force could not approach the fortress and attack the rear of His Majesty's frontier regiment. It is clear that you were right to bring the regiment to the front this month otherwise they would have been able to overwhelm the besieging French troops. I thank God that it was the Cardinal's Guard representing the brigade today, for I fear what mischief the Dutch could have wrought if those popinjays of the musketeers had attempted to hold back the Dutch.

I led the charge to intercept the dastardly Dutch forces who were attempting to outflank our ranks. I have to say how proud I was to hear our brave men cheer and fall in behind me. I took down five or six Dutchmen and it was soon clear that they could not break through our

ranks. Unfortunately, the toll on our regiment was high and I have to report that many fine young men in the Cardinal's service will not be returning to Paris for Christmas. I expect that I shall be amongst their number if the surgeon's opinion is correct.

As such I am handing over command of the regiment to Major Jerome Fortmayne, whom I recommend to you for a field promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel.

Your servant,

† Lt. Col Thierry d'Actyl
Cardinal Guards' HQ

PERSONAL JOURNAL OF LT
COLONEL JEROME FORTMAYNE,
CARDINAL'S GUARDS
December 3, 1672

Back at the Front, after a couple of days in Paris. The brief taste of normal life makes this cold and muddy siege just that much more unpleasant. As much as I enjoyed the brief respite from this painful exile, the reason for it – delivering the personal effects of poor d'Actyl to be sent home to his family – was truly painful. How ironic that he, who has almost as much reason to despise le Hatter as I, should be killed in service to the King while the Clown continues drawing breath. Poor fellow!

Yet d'Actyl's death has meant a promotion for me. What a cruel jest! Now I am Lt. Colonel Fortmayne, yet still relegated to exile here on the Frontier. Who knows? If I manage to survive this year in Purgatory, I may even be a General when I return to Paris in the fall. Not to mention I am

To all of Paris
 Contrary to rumours, I did not die at the Front in November and I have been assured by my confessor that I am not some kind of blasphemous monstrosity returned from the grave, despite what the King's Musketeers may think. It would appear that someone on the battlefield mistook Lt. Col. d'Actyl for myself and listed me as KIA.
 If anyone disbelieves me they are welcome to join me at my club in Week 1 of January and see for themselves.

† B.Bdr Gen D'Ice

The Picardy Musketeers held a wake for our Fallen comrades in Week 1, 1672. Regimental Valour was on display and we will remember those who gave their lives for God, King and France.
 † BBG ZUT, CO PM

***** Party ***** Party *****

Gentlemen of Paris
 This is advance notice for a Valentine's Day Party at my club in the second week of February 1673. The theme is Ancient Rome. Please bring your ladies and your togas. All Gentlemen of social level 10+ are welcome. Arrangements can be made for gentlemen of lower social levels; please contact me first. Costs paid.
 † XM

Camille de Polignac will host a party at his club during Week 1. Gentlemen of SL 10 and above are welcome, with their mistresses. Refreshments will be provided.

To those who consider themselves to be Gentlemen of Paris.
 From: Marquis Leonard de Hofstadt
 I shall be seeing out the Month of January at the Fleur once the New Year hangovers have settled. Well-behaved guests are welcome in week 4. Bring your ladies, too!
 Social level 15+: your names will be with the door staff allowing your entry without question.
 Social level 14 and below: please contact my office directly so that I can ensure space in our private room.

Matters of Honour

To Duncan d'Eauneurts from Charles Trenet
 Since I have barely settled in Paris, since I have no seconds and barely two weeks training during which I have achieved little more than a passing acquaintance with the weapon of my regiment and since, furthermore, my intended opponent is deficient in none of these areas, being an established figure in Parisian society, amply supported by seconds, and *puissant sans pareil* upon the field of honour (pause for breath), I deem it unseemly to trouble him with the task of spilling my blood and will, instead, send my servant to the appointed place with a brief explanatory note (expressing regrets for absence and the hope that, unencumbered as he now is by his former mistress, he has more success this month than last in finding another) and a tray of fine croissants and coffee as inadequate recompense for having deprived them of their rest.



It's a win: three command points, so I roll 3 dice; a ship and four gold means I just need one of them to be a 4 or less to complete my seventh voyage.

over what happens. However, knowing the rules for which card will be picked in the Overlord's turn, you can often make sure it's one with a reaction you can use.

For my first solitaire game, I followed the recommendations in the rules and played on the 'Easy' level. The effect of the Event cards was to build up hordes in the barbarian homelands until strong enough to attack the borderlands. The first such incursion was easily defeated by my high-rolling troops. However, it wasn't long before the barbarians were taking over the borderlands. I had some reserve troops ready to counter-attack the invaders, but then realised that the barbarians were less likely to attack empty borderlands than garrisoned ones. So I concentrated on acquiring ships and gold and completing voyages, using the occasional card action to remove hordes from a borderland.

I completed the seventh voyage for a win just after drawing the last cards from the second time through the deck – so the game was almost over. Phew! That was a decent challenge, but I now had a much better idea of how the game worked. After reviewing the rules, my second game, a few days later, was on the medium setting. This time I essentially ignored the barbarians and just completed voyages – again using the occasional card action to keep borderlands empty. I won just after drawing the last cards on my first time through the deck.

This seemed too easy, so I reviewed the rules again and re-set the game for the 'Hard' setting. I won just before getting through the deck the first time. I've just tried again, on the 'Brutal' level. This time, the barbarians' attacks were more successful and they reached a high point of holding four of the five borderlands. However, a card action reduced that to three and I completed my seventh voyage for another win. This was on my second pass through the deck, but only just.

I've discussed this with co-designer Alan Paull and we've come to the conclusion that I'm a lucky git! It is noticeable that over a total of six games played now, the green (Emperor's) dice have rolled a triple 6 three times. The white (barbarian) dice have only done so once. Maybe I should use the white dice next time...

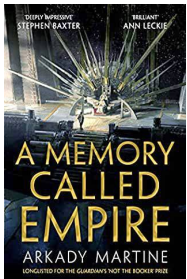
What this has done is whet my appetite for playing the two-player game. And I managed to do so in a gap between lock-downs. Nephew Tom came round (after a suitable quarantine period) and *The Ming Voyages* was one of the games we played. Tom was the Emperor, giving me my first chance to try being the barbarian Overlord. Using the main deck rather than the Event cards is rather different and gives the Overlord more options.

The asymmetric nature of the game was a delight and there are some tricky decisions to be made over which cards to use and which to pass back to your opponent. I took the opportunity to reserve cards that I really didn't want Tom to have – the Overlord has the advantage of being able to use reserved cards to bolster Command point actions, not just for re-rolling dice in battles. (Tom was rather aggrieved when I rolled a triple six in our first battle.)

The result was close, but Tom managed to complete his seventh and winning voyage while I was lining up to take the fifth borderland. Mind you, he did have the use of the lucky dice. I am looking forward to playing it again and am not rating the game (on my highly subjective scale) until I have played it some more.

The Ming Voyages is a highly asymmetric board game for 1–2 players, aged 12+, and takes around 45 minutes to play. It was designed by David Mortimer and Alan Paull and is published by Surprised Stare Games (www.surprisedstaregames.co.uk) and their international partners. This review was first published in the Fall 2020 issue of Gamers Alliance Report (www.gamersalliance.com).

Reading Matter



Following recent recommendations (not to mention winning the best novel Hugo), I picked up an e-copy of Arkady Martine's *A Memory Called Empire*. And what a fascinating read it was. The setting is a far future galaxy-spanning human civilization. It is dominated by an empire, Teixcalaan, which every so often absorbs (peacefully or otherwise) one of the smaller societies around it. The story follows Mahit Dzmare, the new ambassador from the independent Lsel Station to the Teixcalaanli capital – a planet-spanning city (hmm, haven't come across one of those for quite a while).

So far, so ordinary: far-future galactic empire and an outsider who will be our introduction to this culture. Though Mahit is something of a wannabe Teixcalaanli. She's already steeped in the culture that she would like to be a part

and disappeared into the countryside. And then there's William de Beast, who is not in evidence this month either. After realising that he can't be Lt-Col of the Crown Prince Cuirassiers (Ben e'Volence holds this rank), he receives a visit from the debt collectors and has to repay his loan with double interest. Packing his kit-bag and changing into his field uniform, the Major stands by to be called into action. He's still waiting as 1673 arrives.

The only war is UP

As the French campaign in the United Provinces beds in for the winter, the Frontier troops are joined by a few reinforcements. The Royal Marines show their mettle immediately, charging straight over the Dutch defenders at the fort they're assigned to. Regimental commander Henri DuShite is Mentioned twice in Despatches ("What's he doing here? What's he doing over there?!") and picks up a round 500 crowns in loot. His Majesty rewards him further with a Knighthood.

Lieutenant-Colonel Rick Shaw has only brought one squadron of the Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers into action, which limits the area the cavalymen can patrol. Still, his bravery receives a Mention in Despatches ("He couldn't bring the whole regiment?").

CG Lt-Colonel Jerome Fortmayne is serving his sentence and is attached to Frontier regiment 2 for the winter. His attempts at drilling the Frontier troops meets with mixed results, but he does get a 100-crown bonus. ❖

Press

Announcements

The Royal Foot Guards is still looking for men of character to serve both in the ranks and as officers. Financial Assistance available for deserving candidates.

† Viscount Beau Reese Jean Seine,
Colonel RFG

To all Members of the Guards
Brigade

It is my intention to take the Brigade to the Front in February. That will give you all of January to work off the Christmas excesses and be fit to fight.

† B.Bdr Gen D'Ice

Social

To: Picardy Musketeers
Gentleman,

To celebrate our successful campaign and in preparation for the Christmas festivities, I will host a regimental dinner party during week 3.

All welcome including mistresses.

Regards,
† Louis Renault
Lt. Colonel

To all of Paris

Why are there no Parties for the people of lower social level to go to? Take the November press – no parties for below Social Level 10. It is a disgrace, just one a month would be a help...

up for the debt collectors' recent visit. It's also Bastian de LaGarde's turn to be host as he welcomes Tarquin le Hatter and Leia. Bastian eschews the New Year parties in favour of celebrating in the red light district. He celebrates so well that he doesn't even notice the footpads relieving him of his spare change.

The month and the year finish with Xavier's party in Bothwell's, which is pretty well attended. Betty on his arm, Xavier welcomes Augustin Fourier, who brings Pet Ulante. Charles Trenet escorts Ella. Eclair de Lame flies solo as his lady friend has been wooed by another while he was with his rapier. Greg de Bécqueur brings Kathy and insists on telling everyone just how wonderful their Christmas tree is. Gaz Moutarde accompanies Anne. Jean David Goliath is on his tod, but Justin Thyme has Lucy on his arm. Marc de Zorro is with Guinevere. Neville Moore is unaccompanied. As is Pierre de Terre (his female company resides in a bawdyhouse). And Tarquin le Hatter brings up the rear with Leia.

Leonard de Hofstadt and Frances continue to welcome Toadies to the Fleur. Ben e'Volence and Fifi, of course, with Phillipe F'Loppe returning on his own to raise another ~~glass~~ bottle of bubbly to his host. The other occupants of the premier club are Pierre Cardigan and Edna once more, Uther Xavier-Beauregard, released from his onerous duties as Keeper of the King's Footstool to spend time with Henrietta Carrotte, and Terence Cuckpowder, now accompanied by Maggie Nifisent (last seen on Beau Reese Jean Seine's arm) after winning her back the week before. That'll be another duel.

Camille de Polignac and Angelina see in the New Year at Hunter's, which they have to themselves. Petit-Garson Riche and Emma do the same at the Horse Guards. Hercule D'Engin is alone in Blue Gables. And the regulars of Claude de Nord and Ada and Mustafa Lekk and Mary are in the Frog & Peach. Hugh Challavas-Vichy has decided it's time to try out a bawdyhouse.

Jacques de Gain is the undisputed iron man this December: the only Parisian to spend the entire month in the gym – practising rapier in his case. Les Anonyme starts the month in the Fleur, but is with his rapier for the rest of the time. Barry D Hatchett has the same routine. Bernard de Lur-Saluces deals with his frustration by starting the month in the red light district. He still spends the rest of the month working out with his sabre. Beau Reese Jean Seine is another copying Les's schedule. Balzac Slapdash manages three weeks with his rapier, taking Alison out the once. Chris Knight and Henri Dubois follow the same pattern as Bernard. After failing in his courting effort, Jean d'Ice works out his frustrations over three weeks with his rapier.

Practising for two weeks each are Augustin Fourier (sabre), Eclair de Lame (rapier), Jacques Hatt (sabre), Jean Jeanie (rapier), Louis Renault (rapier) and Neville Moore (rapier). Several others fit in the odd week of sword swinging.

This leaves the question of what Conrad de Coverlet is up to. He's suddenly found urgent business to attend to on the Coverlet estates, packed up his belongings

of (be careful what you wish for!). Presumably this is why she was chosen as ambassador at short notice after the tragic death of her predecessor. Ah, I can see the beginnings of a plot here.

The fascinating bit is that this empire runs on ritual and bureaucratic protocols that you need to know your way around. Oh, and poetry. Not only must you be able to quote the classics, you need to be capable of extemporising your own verse. Containing double meanings and allusions to the classics, of course. Oh boy. Our introduction to Teixcalaan begins with Mahit's arrival and meeting her liaison/assistant/minder, Three Seagrass. All Teixcalaanli names consist of a number and a noun – the current Emperor is Six Direction. What a brilliant idea. Of course, both parts of the name have significance here.

Mahit's advantage is a technology that Teixcalaan doesn't have. An implant that contains the memories of Yskandr, her predecessor – think a low budget version of the stacks in *Altered Carbon* that add memories but don't involve a full takeover by the implanted person. These *imago*s are used by the Stationers to pass on knowledge and experience across lifetimes. By implanting the physical device from the previous user. The *imago* Mahit has was deposited by Yskandr fifteen years ago when he last returned to Lsel. She's essentially a bit out of date.

The book's plot is what I expected as Mahit's activities introduce us to the complexities of Teixcalaan and life in the empire's capital. Her life is pretty complicated, too, as she tries to work out what happened to Yskandr, to discover what he was up to and to carry out her mission on behalf of Lsel Station. Along the way she makes friends and enemies (not necessarily different people), finds her way into seamier parts of the city and has more than one audience with the Emperor himself. (Oh and, about three-quarters of the way through, finally does what I've been expecting since chapter two.)

What makes the book so fascinating is the society Martine shows us. Its elaborate ritual, the pre-eminence of poetry, the fine divisions of class and status and the iron fist inside the prettily-embroidered, lace trimmed, velvet glove. Not to mention the crazy names! I thought that this must be modelled on Imperial China (because interstellar empires usually are), but it turns out that in real life Martine is a historian of the Byzantine Empire. Well, well.

I was a bit indifferent to *A Memory Called Empire* when I finished it. But it has remained with me since and grown more intriguing as I think about it. A sequel, *A Desolation Called Peace*, is due out this year and I shall definitely be picking that up when I can.

Games Events

Well, the vaccines are starting to have an impact, but I personally doubt that there'll be any board games events for months yet...

The following box concentrates on events I hope 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)~~ to play online at various websites. For more info, see www.pevans.co.uk/Swiggers

~~**Games Games Games Days:** from noon(ish) on the second Saturday each month 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). Please contact me if you're thinking of attending in case other things have got in the way.~~

UK Games Expo: pushed back to 30th July-1st Aug 2021 at the NEC 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. 14th-17th October 2021, at the Messe (Exhibition Centre) in Essen. Contact Friedhelm Merz Verlag, Postfach 210250, Bonn, 53157 Germany or see www.spiel-messe.com/en

MidCon: mid-November 2021 at the Hallmark Hotel (and Hallmark Inn across the road) in Derby. **MidCon** is a friendly board games convention in a decent hotel. Expect mostly open gaming plus a few organised events, including a bring 'n' buy and quiz, plus a trade stand from Spirit Games. 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

Subscribing to TWJO

TWJO is published on paper and online at www.pevans.co.uk/TWJO (as a free PDF). If you want to play in any (or all) of the games in TWJO, you have two options. You can subscribe to the paper edition, which includes playing in the games. Or you can take the PDF edition and pay the "games only" subscription.

The table on the right shows the costs for the paper edition, including postage, and the games only subscription.

	UK	Rest of Europe	Rest of World	Games only
10-issue (1 year) subscription	£27.00	£36.00	£43.00	£5.00

To subscribe, send your name, address and payment to *To Win Just Once*, 180 Aylsham Drive, Uxbridge UB10 8UF, UK or TWJO@pevans.co.uk. You can pay by bank transfer (contact me for the account details), by UK cheque (payable to Margam Evans Ltd) or by PayPal to TWJO@pevans.co.uk. Or subscribe online at www.pevans.co.uk/TWJO, where you can pay by credit card (via PayPal) or PayPal account.

Bothwell's is the scene of a Queen's Own Carabiniers get-together, hosted by Marc de Zorro with Guinevere on his arm. Joining them are Justin Thyme and Lucy, Pierre de Terre and Petit-Garson Riche. Petit-Garson insists on buying the drinks for his comrades. Gaz Moutarde and Anne Tique are also there, welcoming Zavier Ulric Turenne and Lois de Lô as their guests. It's the first time Gaz and Anne have been out of her place for a while. Xavier Money takes the opportunity for some time with Betty Kant at his club. And Robert d'Lancier is at the gaming tables getting Katy Did to blow on his dice (NOT a euphemism). It doesn't seem to work as he cuts his first bet. He wins the second, only to lose the third. And then repeats the sequence again, leaving him a couple of hundred crowns out of pocket and no better off in esteem. But then he does spend the rest of the month at home "recovering from my duel". (Which may very well be a euphemism.)

Leonard de Hofstadt and Frances receive more guests at the Fleur: Ben and Fifi again plus new boy Lou Scannon, who can now regale his men with tales of the Fleur when he does his regimental duties next week. Shame about the courting, though. Terence Cuckpowder's party is also on, but the Minister has a more exclusive guest list. In attendance are Bastian de LaGarde, Greg de Bécqueur (and Kathy) and Jean Jeanie (plus Jacky). The only problem is that Greg will insist on telling tales of the Musketeers' victories in the summer. Pierre Cardigan and Edna complete the contents of the club. Balzac Slapdash appears in Blue Gables with Alison Wunderlandt on his arm. And in the Frog & Peach we find Hugh Challavas-Vichy, Mustafa Lekk and Mary again.

It's Christmaaas!

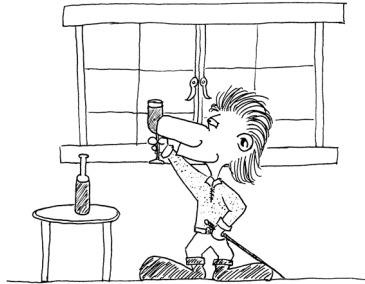
Christmas week sees somebody in every Parisian club. Red Phillips even sees several of them. Louis Renault and Di host Louis's regimental colleagues, Cyrano de Lancet (with Violet) and Lascar Vivrebras. (Regimental duties will keep Cyrano and Lascar from the New Year parties.) The Frog & Peach is home to Hugh Challavas-Vichy, Mustafa Lekk and Mary again, but has the addition of Claude de Nord and Ada this week, trying out Claude's new club.

After a visit the bawdyhouses (where the footpads were disgusted that he'd spent everything) and a week's practice with a two-handed sword, Hercule D'Engin turns up in Blue Gables, which he has to himself. Petit-Garson Riche and Emma are alone in the Horse Guards. Hunter's sees Charles Trenet and Ella, Camille de Polignac and Angelina again, with the addition of Justin Thyme and Lucy Fur.

In Bothwell's Gaz Moutarde and Anne continue to host Zavier Ulric Turenne and Lois. Xavier Money and Betty are also there, finalising arrangements for their New Year party next week. Pierre Cardigan and Edna reside in the Fleur de Lys, as usual. Leonard de Hofstadt and Frances have more guests: Ben e'Volence and Fifi for the third time and Phillipe F'Loppe and his new conquest, Freda de Ath (who succumbed to the fresh flowers and sugar-coated fruit), for the first time. Leonard passes some cash to Phillipe for "his excellent Aidery" which helps make

well as Camille, who takes the opportunity to pass his host (and CO) a jingling purse “for the ‘Regimental Benevolent Fund’”. The only problem is that Greg will insist on telling tales of the Musketeers’ victories in the summer.

Also in the Fleur, Leonard de Hofstadt isn’t really throwing a party. He and Frances Forrin are simply entertaining a couple of Toadies: Ben e’Volence and Pierre de Terre, Ben accompanied by Fifi. However, Leonard proposes that they reflect on the sad passing of their friend, whatsisname... After a few more drinks, they settle on Terry Hactyl: “RIP, Terry” is the toast. Other members filter into the club. Les Anonyme brings Carole Singeurs for a drink but, as they enter, spots the uniform of a Crown Prince Cuirassier. As commander of the 53rd Fusiliers, Les has a duty to swap challenges with Ben e’Volence. Again. Jean Jeanie is in the club, bringing Jacky Tinne with him. And Edna Bucquette arrives on the arm of Pierre Cardigan, as always.



Bothwell’s is home to just Marc de Zorro and Guinevere d’Arthur this week. In the Blue Gables Xavier Ulric Turenne, CO of the Picardy Musketeers, is holding a wake for the regiment’s recently fallen. His invitation has been taken up by his comrades: Cyrano de Lancet, Louis Renault and Lascar Vivrebras. Cyrano has brought Violet Bott with him, while Lascar is accompanied by Di Lemmere (though this may not continue much longer, judging by his activities the following week).

Jean David Goliath, he of the famously small stature, has guests at the Frog and Peach. Joining him for a drink are Barry D Hatchett, who brings Jenny Russe with him, Claude de Nord, escorting Ada Andabettoir, and Jacques Hatt (who’s off to the bawdyhouses next week). Their presence does not bother the club’s other members. Hugh Challavas-Vichy is overwhelmed just by being in Paris, let alone the fine surroundings of his new club. And all this cash people keep giving him! By comparison, Mustafa Lekki is an old hand as he and Mary Huana settle at their accustomed table.

Having signed up with the Horse Guards club, Petit-Garson Riche takes Emma Roides along to see what it has to offer. “It’s a bit ... horsy,” is the response. And Tarquin le Hatter has Hunter’s to himself (and Leia Orgasma) this week.

The following week Tarquin and Leia have guests: Claude de Nord and Ada. Hunter’s is rather fuller, as both Camile de Polignac and Charles Trenet roll in, bringing Angelina and Ella, respectively. Jean David Goliath would also like to Toady to Tarquin, but the doorman is adamant: “You’re not on the list.” A few crowns get Tarquin a peek at the list, but it’s blank where his name should be – just after Jacques de Gain. It’s off to the bawdyhouses for Jean after this.

Freshford (*Railway Rivals* game 15 - RR2469CT)

Turn 1

BIEN heads north while the other three go northwest though the same gap in the Chiltern hills. Surprising how many have a favourite pub in mind...

Builds

BIEN’S INTERNATIONAL EXPRESS NETWORK (BIEN), Christian Bien – Red

a (London B25) – E26 – H24

b (H24) – L22 – St Albans – N22 (+6)

c (N22) – Luton – D59 (+6)

Points 20 +12 = **32**

CHILTERN HALL AND IN RAILS BEYOND YONDER STOKE-CHURCH (CHAIRBOYS), Mark Cowper – Black

a (London B25) – D24 – D21

b (D21) – D19 – E19 – E18 – F17 – F16

c (F16) – Beaconsfield – G15 – H14 – High Wycombe – H12 (+4).

Points 20 +4 = **24**

RED LINE RALE (RLR), Anthony Gilbert – Purple

a (London C25) – C21

b (C21) – C20 – E19 – E18 – F17 – F16

c (F16) – Beaconsfield – G15 – H14 – High Wycombe – H12 (+4)

Points 20 +4 = **24**

CANTERBURY RAILS (CJR), Rob Pinkerton – Blue

a (London C25) – C21

b (C21) – C20 – E19 – E18 – F17 – F16

c (F16) – Beaconsfield – G15 – H14 – High Wycombe – H12 (+4)

Points 20 +4 = **24**

GM Notes

Order layouts: Your Name, Company Name, Company Colour.

Freshford is a small halt on the line between Bath and Westbury, where I spent a year while at University with six other Building Engineering Students. [And held a very memorable house-warming party. PE]

Next turn’s die rolls are: 4, 5, 5 (and for three companies possibly H12 – J11 – K12 – Princess Risborough).

**Orders to Mike Dommatt, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommatt@yahoo.co.uk
by Friday, 12th March 2021**

Way Station (*Star Trader* game 11)

Turn 1

"He wants it built where?"

"Yes, I know. Not a ship yard at the system for anything bigger than a bucket."

"What shall we do?"

"Build it somewhere else and show him cute pictures of kittens."

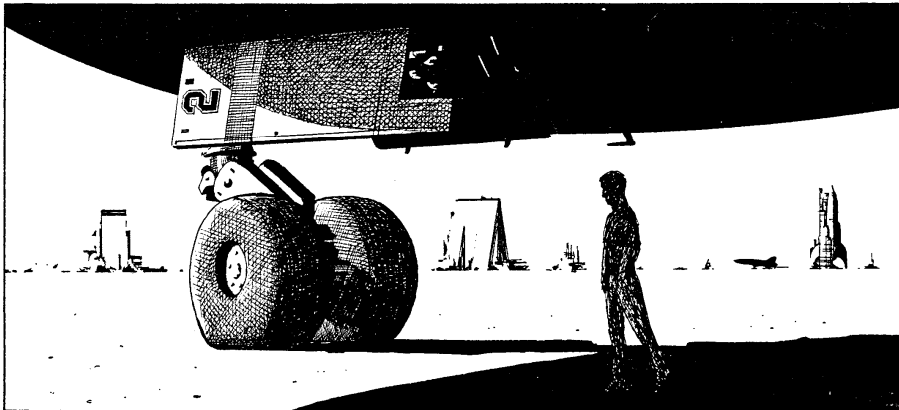
Trading was a little tentative in the first Quarter. At Gamma Leporis MINING AND MORE bid 3 and bought 6 Alloys, but there were more than enough for SIRIUS CYBER to buy 6 more for the same price.

At Delta Pavonis, PETROLEUM AND OTHER COLONIAL GOODS bid 9 to buy 10 Petroleum and gained a Dealership. SIRIUS CYBER bid 8 to buy Spice. No one was selling.

Tau Ceti saw competition for Isotopes: AMALGAMATED INTERSTELLAR METALS INC bid 6 HTs and bought 4 units while HAPPY FEATURES bid 5 and also bought 4 units. COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE hoped to buy Alloys for 5 HTs but bid too low.

HARRIMAN ENTERPRISES bid 12 HTs to buy Petroleum at Mu Herculis, bought 8 and gained a Dealership

At Sigma Draconis HF, PCC and HE all bid 12 HTs for Spice, but HF got in first to buy 6 units and gain a Dealership, while PCC bought the 4 units left. HE didn't get any. HAPPY FEATURES bought 10 Isotopes for 6 HTs each and took a Dealership, leaving AIM to pick up 3 for 5 HTs apiece and HE with none again.



encounter, between Charles Trenet and Duncan d'Éauneurts, happen. Instead, Trenet has left an explanatory note (see Press, but basically he's not worthy – or, indeed, competent) along with some very fine croissants and coffee.

What Minister?

Both Pierre de Terre and Petit-Garson Riche have decided there needs to be a vacancy at Major in the Queen's Own Carabiniers. With both men and Marc de Zorro calling in favours, the incumbent steps down at once – also producing a vacancy for Brigade Major of the Horse Guards. Captain Riche then buys his way into the space in the regiment. A new Brigade Major is required, too, and Phillippe F'Loppe, Pierre de Terre and Petit-Garson Riche are the only three who can have this appointment. Major Riche gets lucky.

There's already room in the Royal Foot Guards for another Major. Captains Camille de Polignac Neville Moore both spot the opportunity and flash their cash (recently borrowed in Moore's case). As the senior Captain, Polignac gets in. Moore doesn't. The regiment sees a new recruit as well: Colonel Beau Reese Jean Seine signs up new arrival Lou Scannon. Having borrowed a bit of cash (and been donated even more by Seine), Scannon buys the rank of Subaltern. He'd like to be excused regimental duties, but doesn't ask his battalion commander. Lt-Col Bastian de LaGarde, to do so.

There's only applicant to be Minister of State: the man whose term just expired, Duncan d'Éauneurts. However, with no influence used on Éauneurts' behalf, His Majesty stamps his foot (narrowly missing Uther Xavier-Beauregard clutching the Royal Footstool) and declares, huffily, that nobody gets the job this winter.

Henri DuShite may be First Army QMG, but he's also commander of the Royal Marines and decides his regiment needs a workout. He volunteers them all for a season on active service, explaining, "As QM of the First Army, I am out to test some new powder and shot combination – waterproof cartridges perhaps for the regiment – to help take the canals of the Dutch in the new year."

As Pierre Cardigan is Heavy Brigadier, Lieutenant-Colonel Rick Shaw is acting commander of Archduke Leopold's Cuirassiers. He fancies three months at the front, too, but only takes First Squadron with him.

Ad hoc parties

There's only one event scheduled for the beginning of December: Camille de Polignac's party. However, Camille is not accepting guests. Instead, he and Angelina di Griz are attending the impromptu shindig hosted by Beau Reese Jean Seine. Those caught out and spending the week cooling their heels in the Fleur's lobby are Augustin Fourier, Charles Trenet, Justin Thyme and Xavier Money. They're not happy. The happy people are Beau's guests. With Maggie on his arm, the Minister of War welcomes Bastian de LaGarde, Eclair de Lame, Greg de Bécqueur (escorting Kathy Pacific), Lou Scannon and Neville Moore. As

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 16). You will also need (access to) a copy of the published rules to *En Garde!* (see www.engarde.co.uk).

Orders for January 1673 to Pevans at 180 Aylsham Drive, UXBRIDGE UB10 8UF, UK or lpbsorders@pevans.co.uk by Friday 19th March 2021



December 1672 (346)

December starts with Les Anonyme (Fusilier) settling his regimental differences with Ben e'Volence (Cuirassier). Anonyme is by far the bigger man and isn't carrying the old wounds that e'Volence is. Conversely, e'Volence wields a sabre while Anonyme uses a rapier. And both have one second: Hercule D'Engin for Anonyme and just Phillippe F'Loppe for e'Volence (where is Chris Knight when you want him?). Anonyme starts with a furious lunge, e'Volence with a furious slash. The lunge hits home first, but doesn't faze e'Volence whose slash is next. The two cuts arrive at the same time, of course. Both men promptly surrender. We'll call it a score draw.

Next up are Terence Cuckpowder and Robert d'Lancier over the latter's effrontery in pinching Katy. Minister Cuckpowder brandishes his trusty sabre while Lancier, despite being in the King's Musketeers, is dragging a cutlass with him. The smart money's on Cuckpowder, who has bags of experience (and expertise). He is seconded by Uther Xavier-Beauregard while Bastian de LaGarde supports Lancier. Lancier immediately demonstrates his lack of skill by attempting a lunge with his cutlass. The blunt end of his blade does no damage whatsoever. Unlike the sabre slash that is Cuckpowder's response. Lancier blocks in case there's another one of those. Then he parries, just in case his opponent tries the unexpected lunge. Cuckpowder just slashes him again and Lancier concedes the duel.

There should be half a dozen more duels, most of them involving Conrad de Coverlet, but of Lieutenant-Colonel Coverlet there is no sign. Nor does the final

MINING & MORE bought 2 Isotope Factories at Tau Ceti and laid down a Phoenix Hull there with B crew, Cargo and Passenger pods and space for more.

PETROLEUM AND OTHER COLONIAL GOODS took on Passengers at Delta Pavonis and sold the Light Weapons pod off the Malacca. Visiting the Federation Banks, they took out a 520 HT loan over 4 Quarters at 25 HTs a turn interest. They laid down a new Phoenix hull at Tau Ceti with Augmented jump and Cargo pods, bought a new Cargo pod for the Mallaca and re-equipped all the ships with straight A crew. Political Connections were raised to 8 and then they bought 3 Spice Factories at Sigma Draconis and 5 Petroleum Factories at Delta Pavonis.

HAPPY FEATURES increased their Reputation and were loading Passengers at Sigma Draconis. Two Warehouses were bought, at Tau Ceti and Alpha Centauri, and at Tau Ceti a Corco Iota hull was laid down with A crew and Cargo and Light Weapons pods.

HARRIMAN ENTERPRISES took passengers on at Sigma Draconis and Mu Herculis, increased their Business Connections and laid down a Phoenix Hull at Mu Herculis.

COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE INC bought 2 Monopole Factories at Mu Herculis and 5 Alloy Factories at Gamma Leporis. A new Phoenix Hull, Espresso, was laid down at Epsilon Eridani while the existing crews were upgraded to A

TRADIAETHA MASNACHWYR TEGWEN sold all but the passenger pod off their ship, as it was loaded with new Passengers. They laid down 2 Corco Zeta Hulls at Beta Hydri, 2 Corco Zeta Hulls at Epsilon Eridani, and 2 Corco Zeta Hulls at Tau Ceti. Then they went to the bankers and borrowed 803 HTs for four Quarters paying 39 HTs per turn interest. Back to the Shipyards and another Corco Zeta Hull at Alpha Centauri this time, and then all 7 new ships were given Augmented Jump pods. At which point they stopped.

AMALGAMATED INTERSTELLAR METALS INC increased their Reputation and then took out a loan for 250 HTs for 4 Quarters at 12 HTs interest a turn. Warehouses were bought at Beta Hydri, Epsilon Eridani, Tau Ceti and Mu Herculis and new Phoenix Hulls with Cargo Pods were laid down, one at Beta Hydri and the other in the crowded Shipyards at Tau Ceti. And agent Percent was signed up.

SIRIUS CYBER loaded passengers at Gamma Leporis and spent money on their Reputation and increasing Political Connections, before borrowing 350 HTs over 4 Quarters at a cost of 16 HTs each turn. The money was then spent on 4 Phoenix Hulls, one laid down at Alpha Centauri, one at Tau Ceti where space was found, one at Epsilon Eridani and the last at Gamma Leporis – whatever anyone says, the Chairman thought. Each has Cargo and Passenger pods, and most have low grade crews.

Corporation Table

Corporation letter and name	Connections			Init'v Bid	Turn order	Cash Rep		Player
	Bus/Crim/Pol							
A Costa Nostra Coffee	8	0	0	0	6	110	20	Mark Cowper
B TMT	0	7	0	0	5	667	20	Jerry Elsmore
C AIM	4	0	3	0	4	243	22	Paul Evans
D Harriman Enterprises	2	4	3	0	8	314	24	Anthony Gilbert
E Happy Features	3	0	5	0	1	126	26	Joel Halpern
F PCG	1	0	8	5	3	111	23	Przemek Orwat
G Sirius Cyber	4	3	1	0	7	120	28	Charlie Sundt
H Mining & More	4	0	3	5	5	266	20	Sergiusz Orwat

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

News

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

Turn 3 C8

Turn 4 B6, **B2**

Turn 5 **P4, 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

Remember: emergency hyperjump does NOT operate in this game.

Ships appear on the map the turn they are launched.

Questions, ask me; clever ideas, run them past me first.

**Orders to Mike Dommatt, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommatt@yahoo.co.uk
by Friday, 12th March 2021**

In this game I'll put the answers into (up to) nine bands, with the (roughly) median answer at 1:1. If there are more than three answers higher than this, the remainder will be in the "bigger than anything else" 5:1 band. Anything lower than the lower 4:1 band will go into the "smaller than anything else" 5:1 band.

Players now bet on one (or two, in the last round) answer, staking up to 10 each round – except the last where they can go all-in – from their funds (80 to start with) – default bet is 10. The correct answer pays out at its stated odds with a 10 bonus for those who gave the correct answer in the first place (whether or not they bet on it). After seven rounds, the player with the most money wins.

As you can see, the game has plenty of scope for tactics and the winner is not necessarily the smarty-pants. You can, of course, Google the answers, so please don't. I will take action if anyone is suspiciously accurate...

Round 5 question

The next question is: in what year was Charles Dickens's novella, *A Christmas Carol*, first published?

**Round 4 bets and round 5 answers to Pevans at 180 Aylsham Drive,
Uxbridge UB10 8UF or TWJO@pevans.co.uk by 19th March 2021**

Online Games

I play board games online (turn-based and, occasionally, real-time – especially on Wednesday evenings) and would welcome *TWJO* readers joining me. Let me know what games you'd like to play and I'll add you in.

It's about time there was another *TWJO* game of *Agricola* (at www.BoiteaJeux.net). Do I have any interest?

On yucata.de I'm playing *Egizia*, *Glen More*, *Rajas of the Ganges* and *Snowdonia* and have recently been introduced to *Underwater Cities*. Brad's interested in the last – any more? And my latest 'find' is *Grand Austria Hotel*...

I fancy some more *Keyflower* (at BoardGameArena.com). And how about *Puerto Rico* while I'm there?

As well as boardgaming-online.com and BoardGameArena.com, *Through the Ages: a New Story of Civilization* can also be played through the app or Steam. I'm not sure about the pretty pictures, but this implementation gives access to the New Leaders and Wonders expansion (for an additional fee), which is fun. I'm happy to play on any platform.

Round 4 answers

The next question is: to the nearest 50 feet, how tall is the Empire State Building in New York (not including the antenna on top)?

Mike Dommatt wants to know if I'm including the ape. Sigh. And then gives his answer in metres. Double sigh. I have rounded answers to the nearest 50 feet - that's rounded **up** for the person who said 1,325 (Hi, Gerald).

Odds	Answer	Given by
5:1	1,500+	Mark Cowper (1,500), Anthony Gilbert (2,800), William Hay (1,550)
4:1	1,450	Mike Dommatt (440M, without ape or biplanes)
3:1	1,400	Chris Baylis (1,399)
2:1	1,350	Gerald Udowiczenko (1,325)
1:1	1,250	John Cooke, Pam Udowiczenko
2:1	1,200	Alex Bardy
3:1	1,050	Andrew Kendall (1,068)
4:1	1,000	Rob Pinkerton
5:1	<1,000	Colin Bruce (600), Tim Macaire (850), Matthew Wale (620)

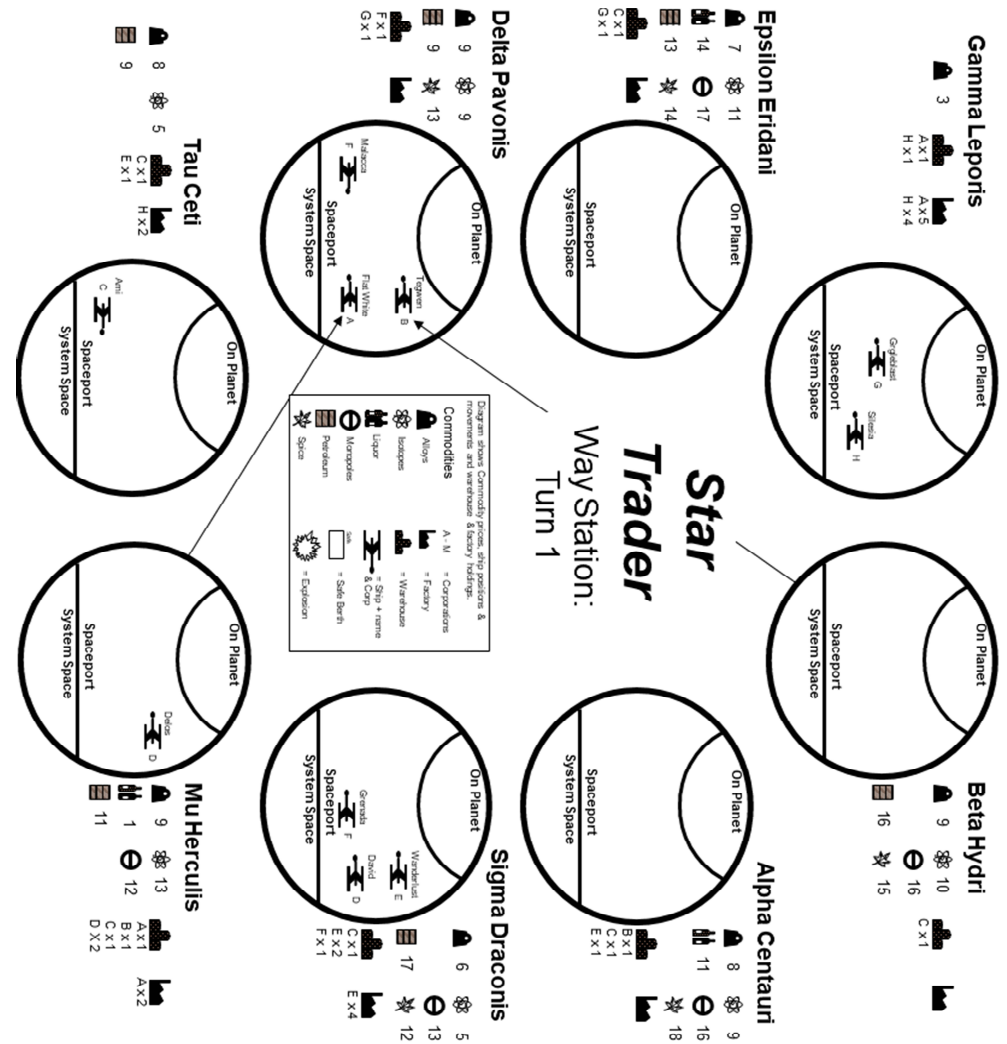
Round 4 bets

Mesdames, messieurs: faites vos jeux! Anybody and everybody can now bet on what they think is the correct answer above (staking up to 10 points), regardless of whether they gave an answer or not - nor does anybody have to bet on their own answer. Get it right and your bet pays out at the indicated odds (there's a 10-point bonus for anyone who gave the right answer).

What's this all about?

This game is open to all readers of TWJO and is based on Dominic Crapuchettes's *Wits & Wagers* (published by North Star Games and used here with their permission). It's one of the very few trivia games that I give house room to because it's not just about being the biggest know-it-all.

Each round a question is posed that has a number as its answer. Players' answers are sorted and given different odds. The middle number gets odds of 1:1, those either side of it 2:1, then 3:1 and 4:1 with the final categories being 5:1 that the answer is larger/smaller than anything else.



Elmers End (*Railway Rivals* game 16 – RR24700)

Start-up

Our fourth player is Mike Clibborn-Dyer, giving us a full set for the start-up.

UNORTHODOX ENGINEERS (UE), Jonathan Palfrey – Green

Starts: Britton Ferry (K22)

RAREBITE CYMRU RAIL (RCR), Mike Dyer – Black

Starts: Swansea (J16)

GERALD'S WELSH RAILWAY (GWR), Gerald Udowiczenko – Red

Starts: Port Talbot port (G23)

BABEL AND SWANSEA HAULAGE (BASH), Bob Blanchett – Blue

Starts: Llanelli port (L8)

GM Notes

Order layouts: Your Name, Company Name, Company Colour.

Elmers End is an interchange on the Hayes Line, meeting the new Croydon Tramlink, where I did various works as part of Southern Region Power Supply Upgrade. It had been intended to extend the Docklands Light Railway from Lewisham down to Hayes, but that probably won't happen for many years, if at all. And I tend to think of elephants.

Jonathan has put a bit of work into tidying up the map, which is much appreciated. In particular, he's replaced the hex co-ordinates with clearer versions. A copy of this version will be sent to players and used for the map on the website.

The first turn's die rolls are: **6, 3, 5**

**Orders to Mike Dommett, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommett@yahoo.co.uk
by Friday, 12th March 2021**

Wits & Wagers

Round 3 bets and scores

The question is: on average, what percentage of an adult human's body weight is their brain? And the answer is 2%. Surprised me – I thought it would be more.

Player	Answer	Bet on	Stake	Score	Total
Alex Bardy	28	2	5	25	85
Chris Baylis	1.79	1.79	10	0	50
Colin Bruce	15	28	2	0	89
Charles Burrows	2	2	10	60	120
John Cooke		5	10	0	70
Mark Cowper		8	10	0	50
Mike Dommett	2	2	10	60	160
Alex Everard				0	80
Anthony Gilbert	3	2	5	25	90
William Hay	4	4	10	0	50
Bill Howell				0	75
Andrew Kendall	8	6	10	0	58
Nik Luker	4.5			0	120
Tim Macaire	6	3	10	0	55
Graeme Morris	2			10	120
Rob Pinkerton	5	2	2	10	143
Gerald Udowiczenko	5	2	5	25	130
Pam Udowiczenko	2	2	10	60	120
Matthew Wale	4	4	10	0	55
Everybody else					80

A new player this time – thank you, John – and several correct bets, including Mr Dommett who opines that the answer is 0.4% in the case of Donald J Trump. Mr Baylis wanted to bet on an answer that hadn't been given, but stuck to his guns.

And Mike Dommett takes the lead as Rob Pinkerton put up a small stake.