

That would be enough

This has been issue 234 of *To Win Just Once*, published 22nd May 2023. It incorporates *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, a game of *En Garde!*. Issues are published ten times a year, roughly every five weeks. © Paul Evans 2023

Deadlines

Orders for *Railway Rivals* to Mike by Friday 9th June 2023.

Orders for *LPBS*, By Popular Demand entries and any other contributions to Pevans by Friday 9th June 2023.

(Next deadlines: 14th July, 18th August, 22nd Sept)

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 – Chris Rudram and Rob Pinkerton are in the queue for the next game. (Working map and rules provided).

Star Trader – Mike Dyer, Pevans and Przemek Orwat are up for a game. Who else? (Rules provided)

Credits

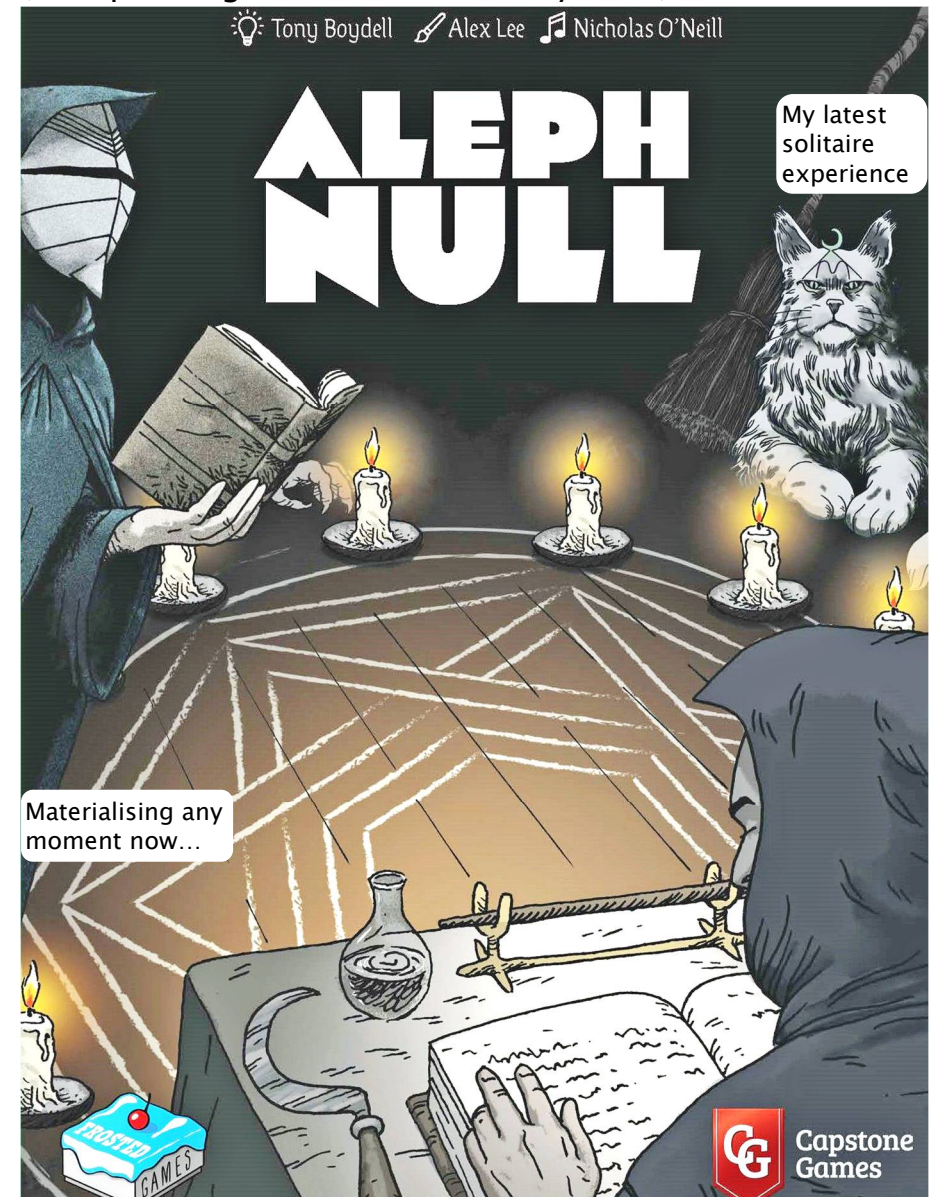
To Win Just Once issue 234 was written and edited by Pevans. The *LPBS* masthead (page 19) is by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, as are the drawings on pages 21 and 25. The illustrations on pages 20, 22 and 23 are by Tim Wiseman and Bryan Lea drew the one on page 24. Game and book artwork is courtesy of the publisher. Pevans took the photos and played with Photoshop.

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To Win Just Once

(incorporating *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*)

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Contents

Contents 2

Chatter..... 3

Letters..... 4

Circles of Hell 5
 Pevans reviews *Aleph Null* 5

Reading matter..... 8

Games Events..... 10

Seahill (Railway Rivals game 17 – RR2509I(N)) 11
 Turn 9 11
 Latest map 13

By Popular Demand 14
 Turn 8 results and scores 14
 Turn 9 categories 18

Subscribing to TWJO 18

Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses 19
 December 1674 (370) 19
 Press 26
 Points Arising 29
 Duels 30
 Announcements 31
 Tables 31
 Army Organisation and 1675's Summer Deployment 31
 Brigade Positions 32
 Frontier Regiments 32
 Battle Results 32
 Other Appointments 32
 Femmes Fatales 33
 Regiments 33
 The Greasy Pole 34

That would be enough 36
 Deadlines 36
 Waiting lists 36
 Credits 36

ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank,	Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last	seen	Club	EC	Player
CdN	Claude de Nord	12+	58	Comfy	Colonel	KM	3	Madeline	Hunt	4	Andrew	Larder
FS	Sir Felipe Savant	11	27	Poor	Captain	RFG	5	Pet	BG	4	Brick	Amundsen
LSD	Louis Severin Descartes	11+	45	Withy	Colonel	GDMD/FMshl's Aide	2	Sheila	Hunt	1	Chris	Schotmann
BS	Sir Balzac Slapdash	11+	34	Comfy	B.Bdr-General	PLLD	13	Alison	Hunt	5	Matthew	Wale
AdE	Sir Antoine d'Eques	11+	33	Poor	Major	13F/2 F Brigade Maj.	7		Hunt	2	Graeme	Morris
HWB	Hector William Boone	10	25	Comfy	Captain	RFG	5		Hunt	5	Paul	Wilson
MP	Maurice Pauvre	10	23	Comfy	Colonel	PM	3		Hunt	4	James	Waters
AC	Alexandre Capone	10+	30	OK	Colonel	ALC	3	Ella	Hunt	5	Ray	Vahey
RdH	Roger d'Horne	9	28	Comfy	Lt.Colonel	QOC	1	Henrietta	HCds	4	Steven	Malecek
TdLl	Thomas de la Lune	9	25	OK	B.Bdr-General	4A	3	Violet	BG	5	Peter	Card
LV	Lascar Vivrebras	9	F	Comfy	Captain	RFG	4		BG	4	Olaf	Schmidt
TS	Tristand Sault	8+	30	OK	Lt.Colonel	GDMD/Drgn Brig Maj.	4	Jenny	BG	2	Mark	Nightingale
VdP	Vinne d'Pooh	8+	26	Comfy	Major	RM/1 F Brigade Maj.	4		RP	2	Terry	Crook
AlCh	Alvin Charles	8+	25	OK	Major	GDMD	5		F&P	2	Graeme	Wilson
KCC	Kitt Chevalier-Cavalier	7	20	OK			4	Emma	BG	4	Mark	Cowper
JCE	Jean-Claude Etienne	6	18	Comfy	Major	RM	7	Viv	F&P	4	Tim	Rattray
FXC	Frank X Change	6+	32	OK	Captain	CPC	4		F&P	4	Nigel	Monaghan
FXF	François-Xavier Flamand	6+	24	OK	Major	PLLD	2	Thomasina	F&P	3	Robert	Strudwick
X2		5	0	Poor			5			3	Gerry	Sutcliffe
FLV	Fouche La Vache	5+	16	Poor	Captain	GDMD/LtGen's Aide (JH)	3	Eve	RP	2	Pauli	Kidd
RdS	Ray de Sofelosdarc	4	6	OK			2		RP	4	Nik	Luker
CA	Come Asiouar	4+	16	Poor	Captain	PM	3		RP	4	Jacob	Andersson
X4		2	0	Poor			2			4	Jayson	Elliot

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, Withy = 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+

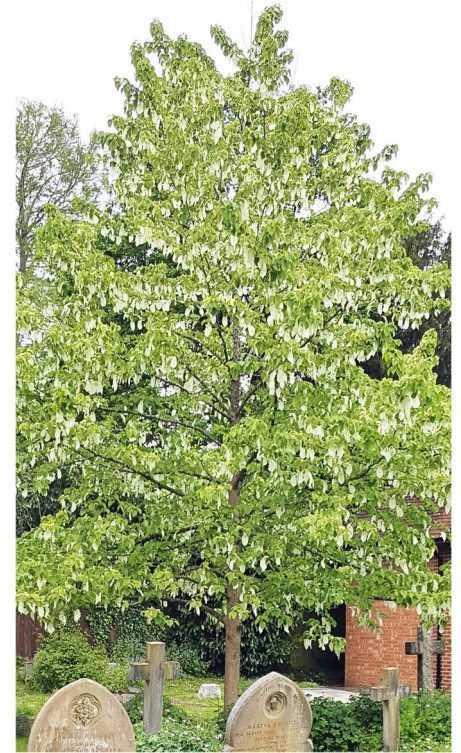
The Greasy Pole

ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank, Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
LdH	Count Leonard de Hofstadt	29	F	Withy	General/Min w/o Port	8		Flr	5	Neil Packer
BRJS	Count Beau Reese Jean Seine	24	62	Fithy	B.Bdr-General RFG/State Min.	12		Flr	4	Bill Hay
JdC	Count Jacques de Gain	24	49	Fithy	Flt Marshal	24			6	Ben Brown
PC	Count Pierre Cardigan	24	35	Withy	Lt.Colonel ALC	10	Edna	Flr	5	Matt Shepherd
BeV	Earl Ben e'Volence	23	58	Withy	Colonel CPC/Min w/o Port	9	Lotte	Flr	3	Ash Casey
JJ	Count Jean Jeanie	23	53	Fithy	General	32	Jacky	Flr	3	Andrew Kendall
BdLS	Count Bernard de Lur-Saluces	22	49	Fithy	Lt-General	18		Flr	3	Rob Pinkerton
CdP	Marquis Camille de Polignac	21	47	Poor	Lt.Colonel RFG/Justice Min.	4	Angelina	Flr	4	James McReynolds
TC	Viscount Terence Cuckpowder	21	44	Comfy	Bdr-General/HGds Brigadier	6	Morgane	Flr	6	Mike Dommitt
GdB	Viscount Greg de Bécqueur	21	+118	Rich	Bdr-General/Gds Brigadier	11	Bette	Flr	5	Anthony Gilbert
Anon	Baron Les Anonyme	20	45	OK	Bdr-General/Min w/o Port	3	Carole	Flr	4	Bruno Giordan
HDS	Marquis Henri DuShite	18	39	Rich	B.Bdr-General RM	13		Both	4	Dave Marsden
XM	Baron Xavier Money	17	52	Withy	Bdr-General/Min w/o Port	7	Kathy	Flr	3	Pam Udowiczzenko
LS	Lou Scannon	17	49	Rich	Captain RFG/C.Prnce Aide	4	Bess	Both	2	John Cooke
RS	Baron Rick Shaw	17	+57	Withy	B.Lt-General/Adjutant Gen	2	Maggie	Both	6	Charles Burrows
JIT	Marquis Justin Thyme	16	38	Withy	B.Bdr-General QOC	11	Guinevere	Both	2	Gerald Udowiczzenko
EdL	Baron Eclair de Lame	16	+53	Rich	Major RFG/Gds Brigade Maj.	12	Lucy	Both	3	Peter Farrell
ZUT	Baron Zavier Ulric Turenne	16	+50	Withy	Lt-General/Min w/o Port	4	Laura	Both	1	Bob Blanchett
GM	Sir Gaz Moutarde	15	37	Withy	Bdr-General	4	Anne	Both	2	Mike Clibborn-Dyer
TIH	Tarquin le Hatter	15	F	Comfy		3		Both	5	Jason Fazackarley
NM	Sir Neville Moore	14	39	Withy	Captain RFG/LtGen's Aide	1	Vera	Hunt	2	Cameron Wood
PFL	Sir Phillippe F'Loppe	14	27	Comfy	Colonel DG	4	Freda	HGds	4	Phil Urquhart
LR	Sir Louis Renault	13	41	Withy	B.Lt-General	2	Katy	Both	4	Roy Bleasdale
MdG	Martin de Garnache	13	35	Comfy	Major RFG/RFG Regt. Adj.	3	Fifi	Both	4	Bill Howell
PaN	Pierre a'Noyer	13	30	OK	Captain RFG/Capt.K's Esc	3	Sue	Both	3	Tym Norris
JH	Sir Jacques Hatt	13	+44	Comfy	B.Lt-General/Drgn Brigadier	4	Cath	Both	3	Joel Halpern
ZvT	Zeold von Tu	12	27	OK	Subaltern CG/BdGen's Aide (BeV)	5	Belle	Both	3	Tim Macaire
CO	Claude Oppere	12	F	OK	Lt.Colonel DG	3			6	Paul Murphy

Chatter

The bluebells were out in force at the beginning of May. They clearly prefer shade as they were to be found amongst the trees on my walks. Also appearing was the “handkerchief tree” (*Davidia involucrata*) in St Giles’ churchyard. So called because of the rectangular white bracts¹ that surround its flowers. I’m not sure they’re that clear in the photo, but they do look like pocket handkerchiefs festooned all over the tree.

I’ve ventured off the footpaths in Ickenham marsh and discovered that the fields are still squelchy as we near the end of Spring. The squelching has led me to spot things I haven’t noticed before. Like the little weir on Yeading Brook in the photo below. I also spotted that wooden panels shore up the far bank. Since that’s RAF Northolt on the far side, I presume this is to stop the brook eroding its way into the airfield or the airfield subsiding into the water.



¹ That’s a new one on me, too. Apparently a bract is a “modified or specialised leaf”.

While taking the photo I was aware of a whine behind me as a model helicopter took to the air. As I've discovered before, the local radio-controlled aircraft club rents one of the fields for their activities. And then the whine was drowned out by the roar in front of me as a real helicopter took off from RAF Northolt.

Online stats

I published *TWJO* 233 on 24th April so the PDFs were only available for a week in April. They were downloaded 144 times in that week. The previous issue was downloaded 75 times in the month, making 202 in two months. And *TWJO* 231 attracted 21 April downloads for a total of 338 since publication.

The stats also show a non-existent page, wp-login.php, was 'accessed' 260 times in the month. I guess this is attempts to hack the website on the assumption that it's built using WordPress. There are lots of references to other variations on WordPress and wp- file names, too, all of which also show up in the "Page not found" report. Tee hee.

Letters

Tim Macaire had this to say when he sent in his LPBS orders.

For once, this is a few days early, so that it does not get caught up in the Coronation. Though a monarchist. I can never hear Long Live the King! without thinking of Cowper's "now let us sing, Long live the King, and Gilpin long live he! And when he next does ride abroad. may I be there to see!" Over-exposed to poetry at a young age, no doubt.

Well it's lost on me. Under-exposed to poetry at a young age, I expect. Andrew Larder chips in on books.

I listened to the BBC Book of the Week reading of Piranesi and it was an interesting story that transferred really well. I might give the book a go. I agree with you about the ending.

But Jonathan Palfrey disagrees.

I'm afraid I'm not a fan of Susanna Clarke: I read the whole of Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell but wasn't keen, it's not my kind of fantasy and it also seemed long-winded.

If a story involves magic, I prefer it to operate by rules or laws of some kind, and to have known limitations. I'm dissatisfied by stories in which anything at all can happen, at the author's whim; I usually call that 'wild fantasy'.

That's an interesting distinction, Jonathan. I guess you see the "Rivers of London" books as having organised magic, then. Jonathan may not want to join in By Popular Demand, but he has sent answers for this turn as he knows the subject.

Femmes Fatales

No	Name	SL	Attr	Lover
66	Morgane Le Fay	24	B	TC
67	Justine Caisse	22	I	
65	Therèse Le Vert	21	B/W	
7	Chris Pacquette	19		
61	Bette Noire	19	I/W	GdB
64	Edna Bucquette	18	W	PC
3	Kathy Pacific	17	B	XM
54	Madelaine de Proust	17		CdN
35	Katy Did	16	I	LR
42	Maggie Nifisent	16	B	RS
55	Jacky Tinne	16		JJ
52	Guinevere d'Arthur	15	B/W	JiT
10	Frances Forrin	14	B	
48	Fifi	14	B/W	MdG
62	Alison Wunderlandt	14		BS
11	Laura de Land	13		ZUT
26	Ella Fant	13	B	AC
27	Lucy Fur	13	B	EdL
45	Cath de Thousands	13		JH
8	Lotte Bottle	12	B	BeV
17	Henrietta Carrotte	12	I/W	RdH
28	Vera Cruz	12		NM
31	Bess Ottede	12	I/W	LS
1	Sue Briquet	11	B	PaN
4	Anne Tique	11	W	GM
23	Agnes Sorel	11	I/W	
40	Sheila Kiwi	11		LSD
63	Carole Singeurs	11		Anon
20	Emma Roides	10	I	KCC
33	Anna Rexique	10	I	
38	Pet Ulante	10	W	FS
43	Di Lemmere	10	I	
53	Angelina de Griz	10	B	CdP
6	Viv Ayschus	9		JCE
19	Jenny Russe	8	W	TS
32	Sal Munella	8	W	
47	Eve Ningalle	8	I/W	FLV
34	Freda de Ath	7	W	PFL
39	Thomasina Tancenjin	7	I	FXF
5	Belle Epoque	6	B/I	ZvT
24	Violet Bott	6	I/W	TdIL
25	Lois de Lô	5	B	

Mistresses in Paris. Attr(IBUTES): B=Beautiful, I=Influential, W=Wealthy. Lover only if seen together in public this month.

Regiments

Col	RFG	CG	KM	DG	OOC	ALC	CPC	RM	GDMDPM	13F	PLLD	53F	27M	4A	69A	Gscn
LCol	BRJS	N6	CDN	PFL	JIT	AC	BeV	HDS	LSD	N5	BS	N5	N7	TdIL		
Maj 1	CdP			CO	RdH	PC	N1		TS+	N6	N6					
Maj 2	EdL+				N5+		N1+		AiCh	AdE+	FXF					
Capt 1	MdG						JCE		N5*	N2	N2					
Capt 2	NM								N2	N6*	N6					
Capt 3	LS								N3	N4	N6*					
Capt 4	PaN								N2	N6	N1					
Capt 5	FS								N2	N4	N1					
Capt 6	LV								N6	N4*	N1					
	HWB						FXC		FLV	CA						

This table shows the ten senior positions in the 17 regiments by rank. Entries are Character abbreviations, N (+MIA) for NPCs, blank for vacant. * shows the regiment adjutant; + indicates the reserve position of a character assigned elsewhere due to their appointment or brevet rank.

Brigade Positions

Guards Brigade	GdB/N/EdL
Horse Guards Brigade	TC/N/N5
Heavy Brigade	N2/N/N1
Dragoon Brigade	JH/N/TS
First Foot Brigade	N4/N/VdP
Second Foot Brigade	N5/N/AdE
Third Foot Brigade	N3/N/N5
Fourth Foot Brigade	N4/N/N5

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

Frontier Regiments

					(Siege for Dec-Feb)
Colonel	F1 N5	F2 N4	F3 N2	F4 N6	RNHB N8
Attached	TIH		LV	1 Sqn DG	LdH
Also at the Front					

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

Battle Results

Frontier regiment 1: 3
 Frontier regiment 2: 5
 Frontier regiment 3: 5
 Frontier regiment 4: 3
 RNHB regiment: 3

Other Appointments

King’s Escort: Ensign N	Captain PaN
Cardinal’s Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Aides: to Crown Prince LS	to Field Marshal LSD
Provincial Military Governors: N/N/N/N/N	
City Military Governor N	Adjutant-General RS
Inspectors-General: of Cavalry N	of Infantry N
Commissioner of Public Safety __	
Chancellor of the Exchequer __	
Minister of Justice CdP (until end September 1675)	
Minister of War N (until end February 1675)	
Minister of State BRJS (until end January 1675)	

Shows who holds appointments outside military units (except Aides): ID for Characters, “N” for NPC, __ for vacant, “CPS” for extra posts held by the CPS

1. British SF author. Well, Brian Stableford, Olaf Stapledon, Charles Sheffield, Mary Shelley – hard to tell who’ll be most chosen. Maybe Stapledon?
2. SF TV series. Oh dear, I don’t do television very much. Space: 1999? I don’t think I’d bet on The Sarah Jane Adventures being chosen.
3. SF film. I don’t do films very much, either. Offhand, the first that comes to mind is Serenity, which was recommended to me, but have yet to watch! More research brings up Silent Running (which I saw long ago), Soylent Green, Starship Troopers. I guess I’d choose Soylent Green as the best known of these; I haven’t seen it, but I’ve heard of it.
4. American SF author. No shortage of these. Saberhagen, Scalzi, Schmitz, Sheckley, Silverberg, Simak, Stephenson, Stirling, Sturgeon, and many others. I’d be tempted to go for Clifford Simak, although some will probably choose Silverberg or perhaps Stephenson.
5. Doctor Who companion. The obvious one is Sarah Jane Smith.
6. Hugo-winning novel. Slan, Shadow Over Mars, Starship Troopers (that again!), Stranger in a Strange Land, Stand on Zanzibar, Startide Rising, Speaker for the Dead, Spin. Hard to tell what people might go for, but maybe Stranger in a Strange Land.

And you can see how Jonathan would have fared by checking the results in a few pages time.

Circles of Hell

Pevans reviews *Aleph Null*

My latest excursion into solitaire games has been trying out Tony Boydell’s latest, *Aleph Null* (published by Frosted Games – www.frostedgames.de – in Europe and Capstone Games – www.capstone-games.com – in the US). The title comes from the third novel in James Blish’s “After Such Knowledge” sequence: *A Case of Conscience, Doctor Mirabilis, Black Easter or Faust Aleph-Null* and *The Day After Judgement*. I remember it being quite chilling when I read it as a teenager.

Be that as it may, the aim of the game is to ‘summon’ Baphomet – “the Sabbath Goat”, as it is described on the box. (A quick check on Wikipedia reveals some interesting stuff on the origins of the name and that Baphomet is “a symbol of balance in various occult and mystical traditions”.) In game terms, this means playing the Baphomet card into your tableau.

The tricky bit is that, if you have any cards left in the deck, the discard pile or your hand when you play Baphomet, you lose. This means all the other cards must be



in play (though these are penalties when assessing how well you've done) or have been 'sacrificed' (that is, removed from the game).

Each turn, you draw a hand of cards, play those you can or want to (forming a tableau in front of you) and discard the rest – a pretty familiar mechanism. Cards generally have a cost to play, either in 'magical power' or some special requirement (or both). Thus you start by playing zero cost cards that you can then discard/sacrifice to pay for other cards.

This can mean a turn doesn't last long as there isn't much you can do with the cards available. Turns like this are a pain, though, as there's a time element to the game. Each time you go through the deck moves you on to the next 'Hour' and you lose if you haven't summoned Baphomet by the end of the sixth hour. And the deck gets smaller all the time, so those Hours start zipping past.

The cost of playing Baphomet is sacrificing the three 'Key' cards, so these need to be in your tableau first. Hence, a perfect game is to have sacrificed the whole deck except the three Keys, which are in play, and Baphomet, in hand. Ye Gods and little fishes, this is tough!

To make things tougher, there are 'Interference' cards that are shuffled into the deck at the start of certain Hours. These cards must be played when drawn and

Announcements

All characters may use Influence (and/or a bribe) for or against these actions.

Antoine d'Eques asks NPC Colonel and NPC Lt.Colonel of 13th Fusiliers to resign

Roger d'Horne applies for Division Adjutant of First, Second, Cavalry and Frontier Divisions

Claude de Nord applies for Commnr. of Public Safety

Roger d'Horne applies for Aide to Field Marshal

Fouche La Vache applies for Aide to Lt. General

Rick Shaw asks NPC Division Commander of First Division to resign

Leonard de Hofstadt applies for Army Commander of First and Second Armies

Tables

Army Organisation and 1675's Summer Deployment

First Army (Defence)	--/--/N2/N
Cavalry Division (Defence)	N4/N/N2
Heavy Brigade (Defence) - ALC CPC	
Dragoon Brigade (Defence) - GDMD PLLD	
Frontier Division (Defence)	N1/N/N3
Frontier Regiments (Defence)	
Second Army (Siege)	--/--/N4/N
First Division (Assault)	N1/N/N4
Guards Brigade (Assault) - RFG CG KM	
1st Foot Brigade (Assault) - RM PM	
RNHB Regiment (Assault)	
Second Division (Siege)	N3/N/N2
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

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.

Duels

Results of December's duels

Thomas de la Lune (gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Maurice Pauvre (with LR).

Grudges to settle next month

Come Asiouar (Rapier, Seconds ZvT, adv.) and Fouche La Vache (Sabre, Seconds ZUT, 1 rests) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Eve.

Greg de Bécqueur (Rapier, 5 rests) and Pierre Cardigan (Sabre, Seconds BRJS, adv.) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Bette.

Claude de Nord (Sabre, adv.) and Zeold von Tu (Rapier, Seconds CA, 3 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Beau Reese Jean Seine (Rapier, Seconds JJ, adv.) has cause with Claude de Nord (Sabre, 1 rests) for pinching Madelaine.

Come Asiouar (Rapier, Seconds ZvT, 3 rests) and Thomas de la Lune (Rapier, adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Phillipe F'Loppe (Sabre, Seconds BeV, adv.) and Roger d'Horne (Sabre, 2 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Beau Reese Jean Seine (Rapier, Seconds JJ, 5 rests) and Pierre Cardigan (Sabre, Seconds BRJS, adv.) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Bette.

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

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.

impede your progress in various ways. They're also the way of setting the difficulty of the game according to which levels of Interference you select at the start. The Easy setting is three cards at random from levels I and II.

The photo to the left shows the game set up to start. The 'Grimoire Verum' is a set of cards that regulate the Hours: you turn over another card each time you shuffle the discards to form a new draw deck (on the right). Note the rather nice little wooden lectern-thing the Grimoire sits on. It is, of course, completely unnecessary and, I suspect, one reason the game's retail price is around £30.

The three Interference cards are at the top of the picture, waiting for their Hour to come. The tokens with the fire symbol are extra magical power points that you get in certain Hours. And the black tokens with the skull are 'Damage' points: take three and you lose! Some cards cause damage and you also take a damage token for every unspent magical power point at the end of an Hour.



So: lots of ways to lose (and I found some more in play); just one to win; and the option to make it harder on yourself!

My first game didn't get off to a good start: my initial hand contained 'Akhtoi' (aka that darn' cat – as seen on the cover). This is an Interference card, so must be summoned immediately. However, its cost is one magical power and you can't play any other cards first. Without any cards already in play that I could have used, I had to end the turn immediately. Pah!

The game ended ignominiously when I used the 'Vitriol' card to draw extra cards in an effort to generate enough magical power to play the 'Grand Circle' – the Key I was missing. This failed and Vitriol required me to sacrifice my hand. Getting rid of a Key (the Grand Circle in this case) is another way to lose!

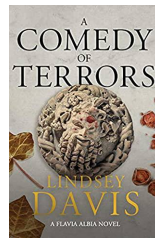
My second play saw me burning through the cards quickly as I tried to make sure I had enough Magical Power to summon the Grand Circle. Then, at the start of Hour IV, I drew the 'Succubus', the Interference card I'd just added to the deck. This required me to sacrifice, rather than discard, my hand at the end of my turn. Baphomet did not take kindly to being sacrificed. (Akhtoi, on the other hand, had gone down without even a scratch.)

Third play was almost a win. In the final hour I had all three Keys in play (see the photo on the previous page), but had one other card in hand (at the bottom of the picture) without the Magical Power to summon it. Dang! (Note the sacrificed cards to the left of the Grimoire and that I've only taken one Damage.) Had I been able to summon that last card, the other cards in my tableau meant my score would have been -1, which is still a loss...

Aleph Null is proving to be just the challenge I expected. After the first couple of plays, you're beginning to understand the cards and getting the hang of what you need to do. Then you can think about winning. It's also surprisingly atmospheric, helped by the artwork on the cards. I can feel the urge to play it again...

Reading matter

A Comedy of Terrors is my latest read in Lindsey Davis's "Flavia Albia" series. This one is set in and around Saturnalia, the Roman festival of feasting, fun and topsy-turviness – when slaves are in charge for a day. Davis set one of her "Falco" books in Saturnalia, too, but this gives us the woman's eye view of the holiday. That is, the person who organises the feasting and fun. And keeps the slaves in order. And cleans up the mess.



On top of this, Flavia Albia's latest case gets her tangled up with organised crime and the possible return of a figure from Falco's past. As with the previous Flavia Albia book, it looks like things could get desperate for Flavia as

Poetry Corner

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

While at my desk, that is antique,
For inspiration I do seek.
For some events or curiosity,
Some drama or amusing comedy,
That will provide a few lines of clever
verse
Which are yet quite witty but not too
perverse
And provide me with some literary
kudos,
Plus, of course, an extra point of
status.
If only, after writing the very last line,
I took the trouble my name to sign.

Whilst at the front I penned this
Christmas Poem for Tarquin Le
Hatter

*Last Christmas I gave you my horse,
The very next day you gave it away.
This year I'll give you a sneer
And a taste of my sabre's metal.*
Work in progress: stay fresh fromage,
mon amis.

God Save the King!!!

† Claude De Nord

Points Arising

Next deadline is 9th June

Beau Reese Jean Seine's appointment as Minister of State expires at the end of January. Anyone wishing to apply for the position (appointed by the King) should do so with their January orders.

Absent friends

I didn't receive orders from the following (No Move Received) and they suffered the consequences:

LV Lascar Vivrebras (Olaf Schmidt) has NMR'd. Total now 2 and is sent to a Frontier regiment

HDS (Dave Marsden) has been floated as Dave's been unwell.

X2 (Gerry Sutcliffe) has been floated at his request.

X4 (Jayson Elliot) has been floated as I haven't heard anything from Jayson.

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

Brigadier de Becqueur.
Thank you for the invitation.
I will bring Lucy.

† Baron De Lame

To: Count Beau Reese Jean Seine
Minister of State
Your Grace,

Can you believe it, what absolute rotten luck for me once again!

This time I managed to join an interim regiment – of course I had no real intention of remaining with those awful Cardinal's Guard fellows, simply a stepping-stone – but due to a misunderstanding I was cashiered for cowardice. It's dreadful your Grace, I was a hero. If it hadn't been for my superb tactical withdrawal to Maastricht then the regiment would have lost its pay chest and colours. Well, the pay chest certainly, as I may have regrettably dropped the colours on my way back, but the effort was there! Yet, what do I receive in return? Absolute injustice and I'm still of the same opinion that Cardigan and/or Capone are behind it. Of course, I appealed and argued my case, but the Prosecuting Officer then brought up some nonsense about past history, similar reports concerning alleged cowardice in other regiments, King's Musketeers, Frontier Regt etc but, naturally, it's all lies and part of the greater conspiracy against me.

If all that isn't annoying enough, I then get a military order which states I've got to remain at the Front until such time as I've erased the stain from my records. What a cheek, a total travesty!

Anyway, your Grace, I have a Plan C!! Another regiment of better stability to

ensure qualification for that vital CPS post you've kindly been keeping open for me. I do appreciate your faith and tolerance and I can assure you as soon as I'm appointed, you'll see the results coming flowing in.

Sincere and most loyal regards,

† Major Tarquin le Hatter
Deputy Commissioner of Public
Safety

A new arrival in Town

Kitt Chevalier-Cavalier, aka the Knight-Rider as he liked to be known, hopped off his father's coach outside of the Cardinal's Guard's Barracks. The death of his friend and childhood companion Petit Garson-Riche, who had lived with them for many years after the death of his own parents following an unfortunate incident with some shellfish at one of his Father's balls, weighed heavily on his mind. A cold fire burned in him. Once again, he pulled out his list:

Tarquin Le Hatter (Coward)

Roger d'Horne (Bully)

Ben E'volence (Bully's partner)

The Spanish Cavalry

First things first, settle Petit's affairs, then deliver this large bunch of flowers in the back of the coach to Petit's beloved Emma, comforting her in her own hour of need. Next, meet up with some real heroes in Hunter's to commemorate the life of Henri Tard, another of the fallen, and then let the fun and games begin!!

Davis makes Ancient Roman organised crime just as nasty as the modern day equivalent. I wouldn't particularly recommend this book, but anyone who's following the series will enjoy it.

Becky Chambers' *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* is just a delight. Nothing much happens (person meets robot, person and robot go for a hike through the forest), but it was pure pleasure to read. And it's clearly setting things up for more stories about this odd couple.

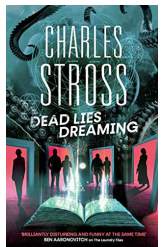
The setting is a post-industrial society on a moon, Panga. Occupying half of the only continent (so is Panga a reference to Pangæa?), the small human (?) population is scattered across the countryside in little villages (though there is one city). There has been no mechanical technology since the "robots" gained sentience and went their separate way. Instead, humanity tries to live in harmony with nature – the other half of the continent and the sea are left to nature.

Our monk, Sibling Dex, is essentially a tea-making therapist, travelling from village to village. No gender is given for Dex: they are "they" throughout the book (though other characters are he or she, so this is specific to Dex). No problem there, "they" is the pronoun I use when I want to write something gender neutral. However, I did find myself doing the occasional double-take once monk and robot are travelling together. Did that "they" refer to the monk or to the pair? Never mind, I'll be diving into the next volume as soon as I can.

Dead Lies Dreaming is the first of Charles Stross's new series set in the world of the "Laundry" stories. It follows on from what has happened in those, so we have a Britain ruled by an Elder God. I haven't been particularly happy with the most recent "Laundry" books as they have got further and further away from the real world and the nature of the Laundry has changed. However, I found the setting much less troubling as a starting point.

It also reminded me what Stross is good at: an interesting group of idiosyncratic characters, all with their own baggage and inter-relationships that only gradually become clear. The nastiness is still there, but is kept in the background as a threat. Mind you, when I read that their quest was taking the characters to Whitechapel in 1888, I jumped to the obvious conclusion. Stross initially appeared to be ignoring this, but characters do eventually mention "Leather Apron". It certainly makes an interesting setting for a showdown.

I'm tempted to call *Dead Lies Dreaming* a return to form, but I think my disappointment with the recent Laundry stories has been my bias, rather than Stross dropping the ball. I enjoyed this book and will be continuing with the rest of the "New Management" series (another two so far). Of course, what I'd really like is more in his "Merchant Princes" series...



Games Events

The start of June is, of course, time for the UK Games Expo. This year it takes place from 2nd-4th June and occupies halls 1-3 of the NEC (National Exhibition Centre) with additional events at the Hilton Metropole Hotel in the centre of the NEC. Halls 1 and 2 are mostly trade space with games to buy and games to try. Hall 3 is for tournaments and open gaming (there's a games library here), as is the Hotel. Even though I haven't been for several years, I still regard this as a must-see. For more information, see www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk

The next Raiders of the Game Cupboard event – essentially a day of open gaming – is scheduled for 17th June at the Waterside Community Centre in Burton-on-Trent. Details at www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk

The following box concentrates on events I usually attend.

Swiggers: games club that meets most Wednesday evenings (co-ordinated on WhatsApp) upstairs at The Shipwright's Arms, 88 Tooley Street, London SE1 2TF (next to London Bridge station) – though without me. We also play online at various websites on Wednesday evenings. 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 things have got in the way.

UK Games Expo: 2nd-4th June 2023 at the NEC. 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. 5th-8th October 2023, at the Messe (Exhibition Centre) in Essen. Contact Friedhelm Merz Verlag, Postfach 210250, Bonn, 53157 Germany or see www.spiel-messe.com/en

MidCon: November 2023 at the Mickleover Court Hotel in Mickleover (near Derby). **MidCon** is a friendly board games convention, but has been in a new venue since 2021 that I haven't been to. Expect mostly open gaming and a few organised events, including a Bring 'n' Buy and a quiz. 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

Personal

Baron Shaw:

Thank you for the invitation to your gathering at Bothwell's. Cath de Thousand and I are honoured to accept (along with, I am sure, many far more notable than us in Paris). While I doubt our costume will make an impression, we will come dressed in our best respect for fashion. I shall look for a suitable wig, and a justaucourt while Cath will wear a brocade looped-up overskirt with, of course, plenty of lace.

Yours, † Sir Jacques Hatt

Monsieur Tarquin le Hatter,

It is with great disappointment that I had to notice we had lost your service to my regiment already, after gracing us with your presence for a mere month.

The reports from the front seem to indicate your impressive equestrian skill! Although, while your speed on horseback is amazing, your sense of direction may need improvement.

We Dragoons tend to ride in the direction of the enemy, not the opposite way.

Best regards from Grand Duke Max's lot,

† Louis Severin Descartes,
Colonel GDMD

Will and Testament of Petit Garson_Riche (signed 1st November 1674)

I renounce my previous life of debauchery and leave all my worldly wealth to our "Enlightened Cardinal", including all my investments, to do with as he sees fit in the eyes of God.

Gentlemen of Paris

I will be holding a New Year's Party in my club for all gentlemen in week 1 of January all costs met.

Please note only gentlemen will be permitted.

† Baron De Lame

[OOC: SL 10+ and Guards Brigade Members.]

***** St Valentine's Day Party *****

Ladies and Gentlemen of Paris, you are invited to celebrate romance and join me at a St Valentine's Day Party, Week 2, February 1675. All Gentlemen social level 9+ welcome.

Costs paid. XM

Military Missives

Honoured sir,

Colonel Descartes has apparently forwarded my name to you as a candidate for the position of Aide to the Lieutenant-General. I am now purchasing a captaincy in the GDMD, and therefore humbly wish to place my name immediately before you as a candidate for the position.

I look forward to more glorious exploits with the Dragoon Brigade!

Fouche La Vache

Subaltern Fouche La Vache,

Re: Applying as aide to Lieutenant Colonel

I am glad to hear that you are able to advance to a captaincy in the GDMD, and I will tell staff that you will be serving as my aide.

Yours,

† B. Lt. General Jacques Hatt

Press

Announcements

Lieutenant-General N. Obody, First Division

The assault by your Division is crucial to our summer campaign. Your loyalty to the King and France is without question, but concerns have been expressed as to whether you have the necessary field experience to lead this vital attack. Therefore, I am reassigning you to the administrative division and you can stay in Paris this summer.

† Adjutant General, Bvt. Lieutenant-General Rick Shaw

The Picardy Musketeers are looking for fine young men, especially those with the qualities that would make them good Officers. Financial assistance available to those Officers that need it.

**** Join the QOC ****

Gentleman of Paris, if you are new to the city or are looking for a new Regiment, then you can do no better than join the Queen's Own Carabiniers.

Please contact me for more details, and some financial help is available.

† Marquis Thyme

**** Aide Required ****

I am looking for a competent aide.

Please contact me with your credentials.

† (Brevet) Bdr-General Marquis Thyme

Recruitment to the King's Musketeers is suspended until Feb 1675 whilst I attend to some matters.

Despatches from the Front

Last spoken words of Lt Colonel Gaston-Riche, Cardinal's Guard

"We're fine, Lads, hold the line. Major Le Hatter is guarding our flank. Hang on, where is he... oh mer..."

Social

To the Soldiers of the Dragoon Brigade;

From your Brigadier, B. Lt. General Sir Jacques Hatt

As we prepare to go to the front in February, I wish to invite all of you to join me at my club in the second week of January. We will briefly discuss the expected fighting, and then pay attention to more immediate concerns. Female companions are welcome, and all costs are on me.

Thank you, † JH

Gentlemen of Paris, to dispel the tedium of the long winter evenings. I have engaged the services of a renowned singer to entertain us at my club. Accordingly, please bring your ladies and join me during January week three for dinner and music. Refreshments at my expense for all gentlemen and their ladies.

† Sir Louis Renault

Seahill (Railway Rivals game 17 – RR2509I(N))

Turn 9

The IRISH RAILWAY ASSOCIATION is fighting it out with RUBBER BANDITS RAILWAY at the halfway point in the races and BIEN may well have died, being dropped off the back. The other three are not out of the races yet, though, and may come back.

This turn's races

Race results						Scores					
						IRA	RBR	BASH	CR	AGO	BIEN
15	12	Belfast	26	Portrush/ Ballycastle				20			
16	41	Ballina/ Westport	15	Larne/ Donaghadee	20 -7	JR 5 -2 +7	JR 5 -1			+3	
17	35	Killybegs/ Burton Port	S4	Ferry to GB		20 -5			+5		
18	22	Derry	33	Drumshambo/ Collooney				10	20		
19	63	Dublin	54	Carrickmacross/ Kingscourt	20	10					
20	S6	Shopping	56	Dundalk/ Monaghan	10	20					
21	65	Mullingar/ Drogheda	43	Claremorris/ Boyle					20		
TOTAL						43	55	4	30	45	3

JR = Joint Run; ERP = Exchange of Running Powers

Builds and Points

IRISH RAILWAY ASSOCIATION

(IRA), Anthony Gilbert – Green

Builds:

None

Points: 127 +55 = 182

RUBBER BANDIT RAILWAYS

(RBR), Mike Dyer – Black

Builds:

(C47) – B46 – A46

Points: 140 -8 +55 = 187

BALLINOKE ARMAGH STRAB-ANE HAULAGE (BASH), Bob

Blanchett – Red

Builds:

None

Points: 83 +4 = 87**CANTERBURY RAILS** (CR), Rob

Pinkerton – Blue

Builds:

None

Points: 10 +30 = 131**AW GO ON** (AGO), Gerald

Udowiczenko – Orange

Builds:

None

Points: 73 +45 = 118**BIEN'S INTERNATIONAL EXPRESS NETWORK** (BIEN),

Christian Bien – Purple

Builds:

None

Points: 45 +3 = 48**GM Notes**

Sadly, No Move Received from BIEN.

Maximum payment to another player is 15 in any turn.

You may enter up to five races in each turn (plus any held over from a previous turn – shown *in italics*.) Joint runs and exchanges of running powers are welcome.

After the races you may build up to 6 points worth, including known payments to others. (This allowance decreases by 2 each turn.)

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

Town Names for preference please.

Next turn's races

Race	From	To
22	S4 Ferry to GB	24 Carndonagh/Coleraine
23	12 Belfast	53 Cavan/Oldcastle
24	16 Newcastle/Greenore	35 Killybegs/Burton Port
25	46 Athlone	61 Dublin
26	S3 Ferry to GB	33 Drumshambo/Collooney
27	54 Carrickmacross/Kingscourt	64 Dublin
28	22 Derry	44 Ballinrobe/Castlebar

**Orders to Mike Dommatt, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommatt@yahoo.co.uk
by Friday 9th June 2023**

The man most likely to spend the entire month practising his sword is at it again: Jacques de Gain puts in four weeks with his rapier. Minister of State Beau Reese Jean Seine manages three weeks with his rapier, alongside his Ministerial duties, of course. Les Anonyme does the same, though he doesn't actually have a portfolio to go with this Ministerial position. It's three weeks with his rapier for Pierre a'Noyer, too.

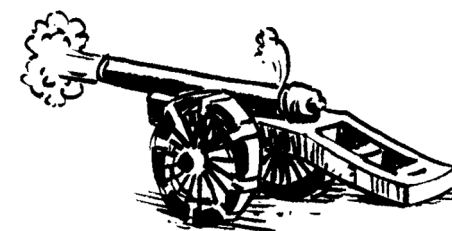
After his visit to the Fleur, Terence Cuckpowder takes to the gym with his sabre for the rest of the month. As a good Marine, Jean-Claude Etienne's practice is with his regimental cutlass. That's hard work, but not as gruelling as Bernard de Lur-Saluces's three weeks with a two-handed sword. After which, a boisterous visit to a bawdyhouse is very relaxing.

Balzac Slapdash puts in two weeks with his rapier. As do Jean Jeanie and Tomas de la Lune. Waving a sabre around for a couple of weeks are Alexandre Capone, Felipe Savant, François-Xavier Flamand and Phillipe F'loppe. Lots of other Parisians find time for a single visit to their gym.

Target le Hatter

Pressure on the French army is relieved a bit this month as the Brandenburger army heads home to see off an attack from the Swedish. Well, it's the least those Swedes could do after the amount they've been paid! The Frontier regiments are the only troops in action and their job is to keep Dutch fortresses under siege through the winter.

Frontier regiment 1 comes under heavy bombardment as its target is well stocked with both guns and ammunition. Private Tarquin le Hatter is chastised for repeatedly stationing himself out of cannon range. He does survive, though, which he wouldn't have done if he'd been at his post!



Claude Oppere has brought his squadron of the Dragoon Guards to support Frontier regiment 3. However, there's not much for the cavalry to do, so there's no reward for him.

Escaping from the meaningless job foisted on him by the King, Leonard de Hofstadt has volunteered to lead a battalion of the Royal North Highlanders. A narrow squeak sees his horse killed even as he's sitting on it. This brings him a substantial Mention in Despatches ("Well, they can hit a horse at least") and a good chunk of a thousand crowns worth of booty. Now, what about this messenger from the Louvre that's just arrived? ❖

places a series of 100-crown bets. He cuts the first, but wins the next to go ahead. He cuts the third and then loses two before a final win reduces his losses. Still, he earns a little kudos from this.

Blue Gables is a bit busier. This is where new member Tristand Sault starts his month with Jenny. And where Kitt Chevalier-Cavalier ends his, sampling his new club's facilities. With Emma Roides for company.

There are two members in the Horse Guards club, as well. At the same time, too. It's just a shame they're in enemy regiments. Representing the Dragoon Guards is Phillipe F'Loppe, who brings Freda de Ath. In the other corner is a Queen's Own Cuirassier, Roger d'Horne, along with Henrietta. Once the insults have subsided, Roger heads for the gaming tables to place half a dozen wagers at 250 crowns a pop. Seeing what the house rolls, he cuts his first bet. He wins the second, but then loses two in succession. Two wins to finish leave him in profit for the week and gaining brownie points amongst the gambling community.

Antoine d'Eques can be found in Hunter's, which he's just joined, alongside Louis Severin Descartes's second party. Neville Moore is there the same time with Vera.

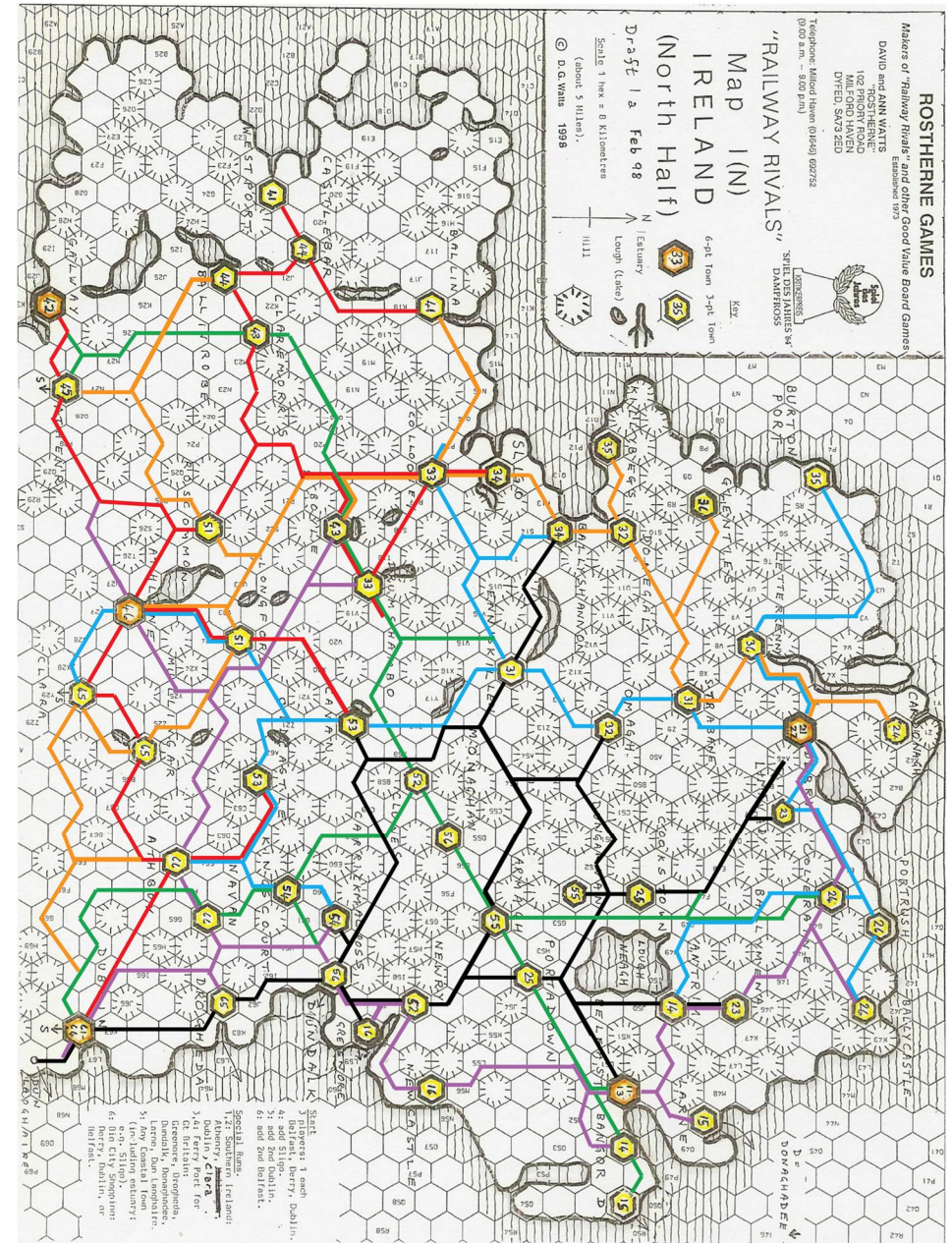
Louis Renault and Katy have Bothwell's to themselves after the parties and before they head off the Fleur.

Speaking of the Fleur, it is quite busy despite the lack of social events there in the first half of December. Having said that, Ben e'Volence and Lotte Bottle are holding open house and welcome Frank X Change and Phillipe F'Loppe as their Toadies in the first week. Les Anonyme is in the club that week as well and has Carole Singeurs on his arm. Camille de Polignac is at another table with Angelina. And Terence Cuckpowder is present with Morgane Le Fay as his companion.

Ben and Lotte are back for the rest of the month, but have no further guests. Unlike Pierre Cardigan, who pops in with Edna Bucquette to host Alexandre Capone and Ella Fant. Pierre has bought his way to Lieutenant-Colonel of the ALCs in the wake of Alexandre's progress to Colonel. Then it's back to his fruitless courting for Pierre (good job Edna doesn't catch on), leading to a confrontation with Beau Reese Jean Seine when neither will defer to the other.



Camille and Angelina spend the second half of December in the Fleur, while Lou Scannon and Bess attend on the Crown Prince just the once.



By Popular Demand

Turn 8 results and scores

Name	British author		TV series		Film	
Alex Bardy	Charles Stross	8	Space: 1999	8	Starship Troopers	5
Colin Bruce	Charles Stross	8	Stranger Things	6	Solaris	4
Charles Burrows	Mary Shelley	10	Stargate SG-1	5	Spiderman	1
Mike Clibborn-Dyer	Charles Stross	8	Stranger Things	6	Starship Troopers	5
Mark Cowper	Jonathan Stroud	1	Stranger Things	6	Solaris	4
Terry Crook	Mary Shelley	10	Space: 1999	8	Starship Troopers	5
Mike Dommett	Mary Shelley	10	Stranger Things	6	2001	2
Paul Evans	Charles Stross	8	Stargate SG-1	5	Soylent Green	1
Anthony Gilbert	Nevil Shute	2	Space: 1999	8	Silent Running	5
William Hay	Stephen Baxter	1	Star Cops	1	Singularity	1
Andrew Kendall	Mary Shelley	10	Sapphire & Steel	2	Silent Running	5
Andrew Larder	Mary Shelley	10	Space: 1999	8	Solaris	4
Nik Luker	Bob Shaw	1	Stargate SG-1	5	Serenity	1
Tim Macaire	Mary Shelley	10	Sapphire & Steel	2	Spaceballs	1
Brad Martin	Charles Stross	8	Stargate SG-1	5	Solaris	4
Nigel Monaghan	Mary Shelley	10	Stranger Things	6	2001	2
Graeme Morris	Mary Shelley	10	Stargate SG-1	5	Superman	1
Mike Pollard	Charles Stross	8	Space: 1999	8	Silent Running	5
Chris Rudram	Mary Shelley	10	Stranger Things	6	Starship Troopers	5
Richard Salmon	Charles Stross	8	Space: 1999	8	Silent Running	5
Pam Udowiczenko	Nevil Shute	2	Space: 1999	8	Silent Running	5
Matthew Wale	Mary Shelley	10	Sarah Jane Adv's	1	Starship Troopers	5
John Watson	Charles Stross	8	Space: 1999	8	Slaughterhouse-Five	1

into some footpads, but has already spent his cash on wine and women). While Louis heads for Sheila's place to admire Xavier Money's New Year fireworks from a distance.

There's competition for Louis again as Greg de Bécqueur has invited people to join him in the Fleur de Lys now he's back in Paris after a year. First, though, he has Bette Noire as his companion and hostess. He successfully wooed Bette after an initial confrontation with Pierre Cardigan. Joining Greg and Bette (while Pierre knocks fruitlessly on her door) are the following. Claude de Nord with his conquest, Madelaine de Proust (formerly on the arm of the Minister of State, so there's an interesting duel to come; maybe). Eclair de Lame brings Lucy. Gaz Moutarde escorts Anne. Justin Thyme is with Guinevere. Rick Shaw is the one without company (doesn't Maggie get to come to the Fleur?). Xavier Money accompanies Kathy. And Zavier Ulric Turenne has Laura.



December – and the year – ends with Xavier Money's customary New Year's Eve party. In the Fleur, of course.

Xavier and Kathy are there to receive their guests and, in due course, light the celebratory fireworks at midnight. Antoine d'Eques is their first; without any company as his courting failed and he had to make a trip to a bawdyhouse. Balzac Slapdash (and Alison) their second. Then it's Claude de Nord and Madelaine. Eclair de Lame brings Lucy. Gaz Moutarde escorts Anne. Jacques Hatt squires Cath. Justin Thyme's companion is Guinevere. Louis Renault is with Katy who's adorned with a magnificent tiara ("How Conspicuous is that?" asks Louis). Lou Scannon is accompanied by Bess. Martin de Garnache and Fifi are next. Maurice Pauvre remains determinedly single (apart from his visit to a bawdyhouse). Neville Moore arrives with Vera. Rick Shaw is on his own for the second time (it seems Maggie doesn't get to come to the Fleur). Zavier Ulric Turenne and Laura are last on the list. But there's no sign of Alexandre Capone this time.

Clubbing round-up

Apart from all this hospitality, Paris's clubs see various members within their walls at various times. Red Phillips sees new member Ray de Sofdelosdarc test its facilities for the middle half of December after he's paid a visit to the red light district. Fouche La Vache is there for a week, too, showing off that Eve Ningalle is on his arm. That's after he met Come Asiouar the first time he visited Eve. It's not Come's month as he chooses this week for another attempt to woo Eve. A call at a bawdyhouse is his last agenda item for the month.

Jean-Claude Etienne hits the Frog & Peach at the start of the month with Viv Ayschus in tow. The focus of their visit is the gaming tables where Jean-Claude

club's entrance is the ALC's new Colonel, Alexandre Capone. He thinks this is a good week to Toady to Xavier. Perhaps he should have words with his diary secretary. Or maybe he'll be back later when Xavier really is entertaining.



Lou and Bess are back in Bothwell's the following week to host their own "early Christmas party" and attract more guests than Rick and Louis put together. Indeed, most of them **were** guests of Rick or Louis the week before. We start with fresh faces, though: Camille de Polignac and Angelina di Griz. Eclair de Lame escorts Lucy Fur. Felipe Savant and Pet are next. Then there's Gaz Moutarde and Anne. Hector William Boone remains unaccompanied and is off to a bawdyhouse next. Jacques Hatt still has Cath on his arm. Justin Thyme brings Guinevere d'Arthur. Jean Jeanie escorts Jacky again. It's the turn of Louis Renault and Katy to be guests. Martin de Garnache is accompanied by Fifi. And Neville Moore by Vera. Pierre a'Noyer brings Sue Briquet. Rick Shaw and Maggie are guests this time. Xavier Money has Kathy on his arm as usual. Zavier Ulric Turenne brings Laura. And Zeold von Tu continues to have Belle for company.

There is actually some competition for Lou: Louis Severin Descartes is entertaining friends in Hunter's with Sheila. Quite a few turn up to celebrate the Dragoon Brigade's victory outside Maastricht last month, despite the rival attraction of Bothwell's. Regimental colleague Alvin Charles is top of the list (alphabetically). Come Asiouar, newly inducted into the Picardies, is next. Cuirassier Frank X Change arrives, followed by Dragoon François-Xavier Flamand, one of the few to bring a companion – Thomasina, in this case. Kitt Chevalier-Cavalier is solitaire, however, the white lilies having failed to sway the object of his courting. Arquebusier Thomas de la Lune brings Violet Bott, but starts an altercation with Come as the two have opposing regimental loyalties. Tristand Sault has Jenny Russe on his arm, while Vinne d'Pooh is unaccompanied, but has already been to a bawdyhouse. After commemorating the fallen of the campaign – especially Louis's friends Henri Tard and Francois Ciseaux-Soiseau – the wine flows freely.

It's Christmaas!

Louis and Sheila are back in Hunter's the following week, but with a reduced guest list. That's a shame as it means there's only a small audience for Louis when he gets outside a bottle of pastis and performs his skit, "Tarquin le Hatter fleeing the battle". Rolling up for a second time are Alvin, François-Xavier (plus Thomasina), Kitt, Thomas (and Violet), Tristand (with Jenny) and Vinne (whose courting the following week is not fruitful). Alvin's off to the red light district next (he bumps

Name	US author		Who Companion		Hugo novel		Σ
Alex Bardy	Robert Silverberg	5	Sarah Jane	19	Startide Rising	1	46
Colin Bruce	Theodore Sturgeon	2	Sarah Jane	19	Starship Troopers	9	48
Charles Burrows	Sanderson	1	Sunday	1	Slaughterhouse-Five	1	19
Mike Clibborn-Dyer	Robert Silverberg	5	Sarah Jane	19	Starship Troopers	9	52
Mark Cowper	Neal Stephenson	2	Sarah Jane	19	Starship Troopers	9	41
Terry Crook	Michael Stackpole	1	River Song	1	Starship Troopers	9	34
Mike Dommett	Clifford D Simak	3	Sarah Jane	19	Stranger...	8	48
Paul Evans	Robert Silverberg	5	Susan	2	Stranger...	8	29
Anthony Gilbert	Theodore Sturgeon	2	Sarah Jane	19	Starship Troopers	9	45
William Hay	Steven Barnes	1	Sarah Jane	19	Spin	2	25
Andrew Kendall	Dan Simmons	2	Sarah Jane	19	Saturn's Children	1	39
Andrew Larder	Stephen King	1	Sarah Jane	19	Stranger...	8	50
Nik Luker	Dan Simmons	2	Sarah Jane	19	She Who Became the Sun	1	29
Tim Macaire	Fred Saberhagen	2	Sarah Jane	19	Starship Troopers	9	43
Brad Martin	Clifford D Simak	3	Sarah Jane	19	Starship Troopers	9	48
Nigel Monaghan	Carl Sagan	1	Sarah Jane	19	Stranger...	8	46
Graeme Morris	Clifford D Simak	3	Sarah Jane	19	Stranger...	8	46
Mike Pollard	Robert Silverberg	5	Sarah Jane	19	Stranger...	8	53
Chris Rudram	Neal Stephenson	2	Sarah Jane	19	Starship Troopers	9	51
Richard Salmon	Fred Saberhagen	2	Sarah Jane	19	Stranger...	8	50
Pam Udowiczenko	Orson Scott Card	1	Susan	2	Spin	2	20
Matthew Wale	Pamela Sargent	1	Sarah Jane	19	Starship Troopers	9	45
John Watson	Robert Silverberg	5	Sarah Jane	19	Stranger...	8	49

As always, there are some interesting selections there. I expected Charles Stross to do best as British author, given that I review his stuff in these pages. However,

more people went for Mary Shelley, presumably agreeing with Brian Aldiss's argument (in *Billion Year Spree*) that she was the first science fiction author (Nigel Monaghan and Graeme Morris definitely agree). Anthony Gilbert's choice of Nevil Shute is interesting, especially as he "wondered about Mary Shelley".

Geraldine and I both enjoyed *Stargate SG-1*, but it let me down for TV series – I never watched *Space: 1999* or *Stranger Things*. Mark Cowper reckoned *Stranger Things* "will score more than *Space: 1999*. Oops. While Tim Macaire poses an interesting question re: *Sapphire and Steel*: "how did they get good actors in such rubbish? Did Joanna Lumley lose a bet with her agent?"

I'm very surprised I was the only person to go for *Soylent Green*.

A lot of different American authors there. Andrew Kendall protests that he: "was tempted by William Shatner, in protest at the anti-Trekist tone of the quiz!" No, Andrew, it's just that *Star Trek* or *Star Wars* would have been such easy answers. (Not to mention Smith as the answer to any question requiring a name.)

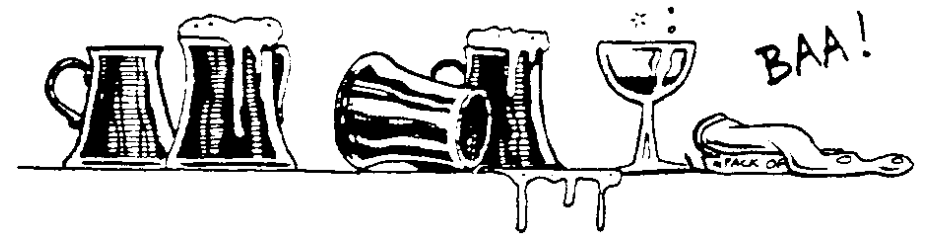
I'm kicking myself for not picking Sarah Jane as *Doctor Who* companion. But Susan (his 'grand-daughter') was the first! "Before my time," notes Mr Kendall.

And "Stranger..." is *Stranger in a Strange Land*, which I preferred to *Starship Troopers* as I'd written about re-reading it recently. Anthony Gilbert reveals some family history behind his choice of *Starship Troopers*: "My dad bought several copies when it was republished in the 80s, fearful that his worn-out copy would not survive to be passed onto the next generation. Did no one predict electronic book-readers?" Clearly not or I wouldn't be re-buying old books in a new format!

And take a look at Jonathan Palfrey's suggestions in the Letters column.

Scores

Player	Turn 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Martin Abrahams	33			37	67				137
Alex Bardy	48	37	68	53	86	43		46	381
Chris Baylis RIP		50	38	49	95				232
Bob Blanchett			43						43
Colin Bruce	54	55	77	47	92	51	50	48	474
Charles Burrows	57	60	84	69	99	61	52	19	501
Mike Clibborn-Dyer	46	57	61	63	81	64	52	52	476
Mark Cowper		58	78	78	97	62	52	41	466
Terry Crook		26	45	51	65	63	33	34	317
Mike Dommett	48	44	70	62	97	45	51	48	465



Partying in Bothwell's

December's parties start in Bothwell's with Rick Shaw and Louis Renault the hosts. Rick's "start of the Christmas festivities" attracts the bigger crowd, welcomed by Rick and Maggie Nifisent. Top of the guest list is Balzac Slapdash, accompanied by Alison Wunderlandt. Claude de Nord may be on his own, but has an elaborate costume. He's dressed as a baby with an orange wig and a nappy made from a Dutch flag. He throws dolls' heads at a lackey dressed as Prince William (a "macabre reference to the Dutch thunderstorms in August that produced hailstones the size of babies' heads"). Felipe Savant has Pet Ulante on his arm. They are dressed as the "erstwhile Snow King and Queen": Felipe in blue with an ermine cloak, his beard and hair frosted white; Pet in a blue dress decorated with tiny crystals while more crystals are braided into her hair. Jacques Hatt escorts Cath de Thousands. Jacky Tinne is on the arm of Jean Jeanie. Louis Severin Descartes, wearing a brand new uniform detailed in the latest fashion, brings Sheila Kiwi whose bright silver chain emphasises the décolletage of her dress. Martin de Garnache is with Fifi. Vera Cruz accompanies Neville Moore. Xavier Money has Kathy Pacific in tow. Zavier Ulric Turenne drags Laura de Land along. And Zeold von Tu brings up the rear with Belle Epoque. They are dressed as chess pieces: white King and red Queen. They take position near the hearth and insist they are "Chess nuts roasting by an open fire". However, the costume does not obscure that Zeold is now a member of the Cardinal's Guard. Claude is, of course, Colonel of the King's Musketeers, so words are exchanged. Heated words. And then challenges. Zavier makes an excursion to the gaming tables in order to lose a thousand crowns in just one bet. Okay, maybe that wasn't his intention, but that's certainly what happened. Rick awards the prize for best costume to Jacques Hatt.

At the quieter end of the club are Louis Renault and Katy Did, fresh from church after observing the feast day of Saint Nicholas of Myra. Joining them (first for the mass and then in Bothwell's) are Gaz Moutarde and Anne Tique. Hector William Boone catches up with them at the club. Maurice Pauvre made it to the church and comes along to Bothwell's too. And so do Roger d'Horne and Henrietta Carrotte. There are no arguments amongst this group, but then they are in a state of grace.

Also in Bothwell's are Lou Scannon and Bess Ottede, making last minute arrangements for Lou's bash the following week. And only getting as far as the

After his ejection from the Cardinal’s Guard last month, Tarquin le Hatter is without a regiment to call his own. He offers his services to the Queen’s Own Carabiniers, receiving a gift from regimental commander Justin Thyme, and volunteers for further active service in the expectation of having a squadron of cavalymen to provide protection. However, Hatter’s disgrace is such that no regiment is prepared to countenance his inclusion in their ranks. Until he’s redeemed himself with some heroic action, anyway. He will be assigned to a Frontier regiment when he arrives with the troops.

Joining the Cardinal’s Guard is the goal of Kitt Chevalier-Cavalier, while Royal Foot Guards Captain Zeold von Tu quits his regiment to apply to the Cardinal’s men as well. Von Tu makes it, Chevalier-Cavalier does not. The rank of Subaltern is sufficient for von Tu. Meanwhile Subaltern Hector William Boone buys a Captaincy in the RFG after Tu’s departure.

Minister of State Beau Reese Jean Seine continues to leave the posts of Commissioner of Public Safety and Chancellor of the Exchequer empty. Nor does he appoint a Regimental Adjutant for the RFG – despite being spoiled for choice with the number of Captains in his regiment. Similarly, Field Marshal Jacques de Gain declines to fill the positions commanding the Armies.

RFG Captain Neville Moore uses his influence to get himself a position as the Aide to a Lieutenant-General. Unfortunately, it’s not one who’s commanding a Division as they all have Aides already.



Lt-Gen Jacques Hatt makes Fouche La Vache his Aide after Vache buys himself a Captaincy in the Grand Duke Max’s.

There were no applications to become Minister of War, so His Majesty appoints one of his favourite Marquises to do the job for this season. He also has a job for Leonard de Hofstadt, in an effort to cut him down to size. As junior Keeper of the Royal Stool, Hofstadt is required to attend upon His Majesty for just one week every month. But Hofstadt volunteers for the Royal North Highlanders instead, a move that does not go down well in the Louvre.

Antoine d’Eques is senior Major (well, only Major) in the 13th Fusiliers and gets lucky this month: he is appointed as Brigade Major for Second Foot Brigade. The Brigade needed a new Brigade Major and there is only one Major in the Brigade!

Despite it being winter, Claude Oppere decides he’d like to spend the season on active service, He orders his squadron of the Dragoon Guards out of their nice warm barracks to march to the United Provinces and join the fray.

Player	Turn 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Paul Evans	53	46	67	78	100	68	52	29	493
Anthony Gilbert	51	50	77	60	79	67	53	45	482
Russell Harris						73			73
William Hay		57	59	47		49	49	25	286
Andrew Kendall	57	41	80	33	97	47	54	39	448
Andrew Larder	47	37			42			50	176
Nik Luker		40	73	36	92	56		29	326
Tim Macaire	57	46	90	65	86	70	39	43	496
Brad Martin	51	46	73	59	87	65	51	48	480
Nigel Monaghan	7	57	58	54	93	73	57	46	445
Graeme Morris	43	28	90	69	99	73	46	46	494
Mike Pollard	58	67	77	77	99	65	43	53	539
Chris Rudram	52	57	75	41	81	47		51	404
Richard Salmon	58	59	64	55	84	64	54	50	488
Pam Udowiczenko	31	30	55	52	97		32	20	317
Matthew Wale	30	30	63	21	62	46	40	45	337
John Watson					97	54	54	49	254
John Webley	44								44

And Mike Pollard is the top scorer that round, stretching his lead to 38 points – though it’s a close race behind him.

What’s this about?

I have cribbed these rules from the *Variable Pig* website. You can find the originals (with lots of variants) at: variablepig.org/rules/bypop.html

Each turn the GM lists six categories and an initial letter. All players have to do is find something that fits the category and begins with the initial letter; they score points equal to the number of people who offer the same answer. The winner is the person with the most points at the end (after a pre-determined number of turns).

Example: The initial letter is A and the category is cities in Holland. 13 people give Amsterdam as their answer and score 13 points each, 6 people suggest Alkmaar and score 6 points each, 3 suggest Arnhem and score 3 points each.

I suspect I’ve got the hardest job: deciding on the categories! Anyway, we’ll run this for 10 turns and see what happens.

Turn 9 categories

I've put my wargames hat on and would like famous battles or sieges from:

- 1 The Greco-Persian Wars
- 2 War of the Roses
- 3 American War of Independence
- 4 The Napoleonic Wars
- 5 World War One
- 6 World War Two

All beginning with the letter T please.

My answers have already been recorded.

Send your list to Pevans at 180 Aylsham Drive, Uxbridge UB10 8UF or to TWJO@pevans.co.uk by 9th June 2023.

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December 1674 (370)

The season of goodwill to all has the usual exception for those with matters of honour to settle. In this case, that's just Maurice Pauvre and Thomas de la Lune, members of enemy regiments. They're both infantrymen, so the weapon of choice is the rapier. La Lune is both the beefier of the two and the more skilled, so the odds are in his favour. He has no second, but Louis Renault is with Pauvre – there's no sign of Pauvre's other nominated second, Zavier Ulric Turenne. Presumably he has better things to do at the start of December.

His expertise allows la Lune to get the first blow in: a lunge that draws blood. Pauvre hits back with a less damaging slash and is run through by a second lunge. That was the first part of a furious slash from Pauvre and his cut evens things up. But it's la Lune who strikes next, as Pauvre recovers his stance, a third lunge bringing him victory.

Going up in the regiments

A fresh face in Paris, Come Asiouar, applies to join the Picardy Musketeers and is signed up the regiment's commander, Maurice Pauvre, who's trying not to drip blood on the paperwork. The promised “financial assistance” from Pauvre – as well as his own borrowings – allows Asiouar to buy his way to a Captaincy.

Frank X Change is another new man in Paris and the Crown Prince Cuirassiers is his regiment of choice. Colonel Ben e'Volence accepts him and hands over cash as well. Change becomes a Captain.