

That would be enough

This has been issue 244 of *To Win Just Once*, published 1st June 2024. It incorporates *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, a game of *En Garde!*. Issues are published ten times a year, roughly every five weeks. © Paul Evans 2024

Deadlines

Orders for *Railway Rivals* to Mike by Friday 31st May 2024.

Orders for *LPBS*, Trophy Hunter entries and any other contributions to Pevans by 14th June 2024.

(Next deadlines: to be confirmed)

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 – Gerald Udowiczenko is on the list for a new four-player game: “Only three more needed for a game of *Railway Rivals!*”. (Working map and rules provided).

Star Trader – There’s room for one more player in the current game and the list is open for the next one. (Rules provided)

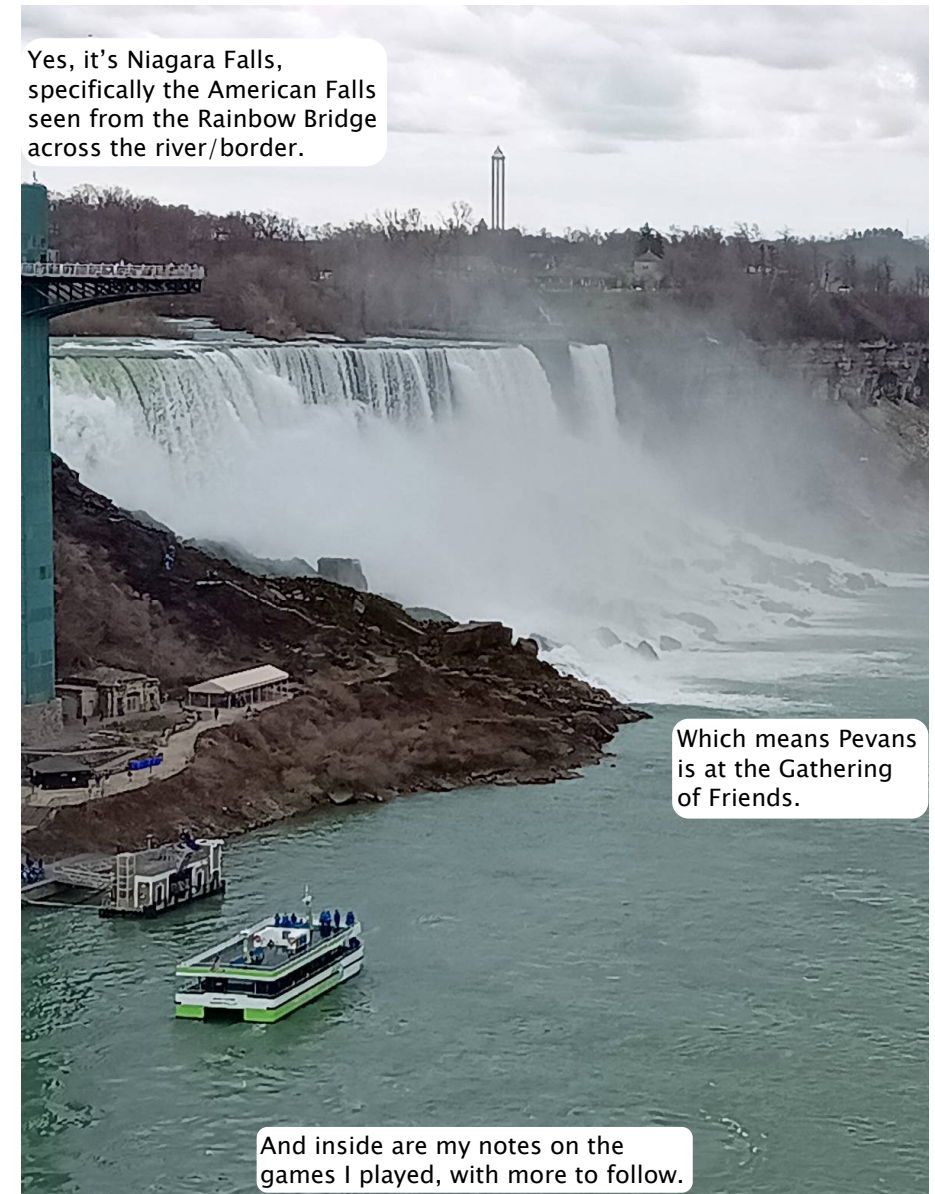
Credits

To Win Just Once issue 244 was written and edited by Pevans. The *LPBS* masthead (page 21) is by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, as are the drawings on pages 22, 26 and 31. Game and book artwork is courtesy of the publisher. Pevans took the photos, except where noted. and played with Photoshop.

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To Win Just Once

(incorporating *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*)



Yes, it's Niagara Falls, specifically the American Falls seen from the Rainbow Bridge across the river/border.

Which means Pevans is at the Gathering of Friends.

And inside are my notes on the games I played, with more to follow.

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ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank, Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
LJR	Louis Joseph Reignaoux	11	F	Poor	Lt.Colonel CC	4		Hunt	4	Peter Farrell
TTT	Tiny Thierry Toothpick	11+	40	Comfy	Captain RFG/LtGen's Aide (Fntr	5	Sue	Hunt	1	Jason Fazackarley
YS	Yve Stanbul	10	28	OK	Captain QOC/LtGen's Aide (Cav	5	Sheila	BG	4	Pam Udowiczzenko
SE	Stephane Etrange	10+	40	OK	Lt.Colonel CPC/Hvy Brigade Maj.	3	Thomasina	Hunt	4	Neil Packer
MCC	Michael Chevalier-Cavallier	9	RIP							Mark Cowper
CA	Come Asiouar	9+	39	Poor	Lt.Colonel QOC	3		BG	4	Jacob Andersson
BN	Beau Nidle	8+	28	OK	Major CPC/CPC Regt. Adjnt.	2		BG	3	Paul Murphy
TPN	Thibault Pinot-Noir	7+	25	Poor	Major CPC	5	Angelina	F&P	3	Tim Rattray
BLC	Botte Le Chimiste	7+	24	Poor	Major GDMD/Drgn Brigade Maj.	2		F&P	4	Tym Norris
JdA	Jean d'Aubergine	7+	22	OK	Colonel 4A	3	Freda	F&P	3	Paul Robbins
HF	Hugo Furst	6	16	OK	Major 13F	5		F&P	2	Graeme Morris
JPLM	Jean-Paul LeMon	6	11	OK	Captain DG	4		F&P	2	Terry Crook
EIF	Elroi le Flingue	6+	37	Poor	Major GDMD/GDMD Regt. Adjnt.	6		F&P	4	Daniel Racke
TB	Thierry Boule	6+	25	OK	Captain CPC	4	Belle	F&P	6	John Cooke
GdA	Grenville d'Arkrrite	5	12	Poor	Captain GDMD	4		F&P	5	Gerry Sutcliffe
AA	Armand Alsace	5	9	OK	Colonel 53F	8		F&P	4	Sebastian Emde
PPuf	Percival Puffington	5+	17	OK	Major PM	4	Viv	RP	5	Tony Taylor
OLS	Octo Lucretius Souris	4+	18	Poor	Private CPC	5		RP	5	Olaf Schmidt
GdBm	Gaston de Boum	3-	10	Poor	Captain Gscn	3		RP	5	Ray Vahey
ID	lan Dediette	3	3	Poor		2		RP	2	Nik Luker
X1		2	0	OK		5			3	Mike Clibborn-Dyer
JD	Jon Dichateme	1-	1	Poor	Subaltern 4A/BdGen's Aide (LSD)	6			1	Steven Malecek

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
BRJS	Count Beau Reese Jean Seine	25+	81	Fithy	B.Bdr-General	RFG/State Min.	13		Flr	4	Bill Hay
GdB	Count Greg de Bécqueur	24	58	Rich	B.Lt-General/Div	Commandr	13	Bette	Flr	5	Anthony Gilbert
JdG	Count Jacques de Gain	24	31	Fithy	General/Fld Army	Commandr	24			6	Ben Brown
BeV	Count Ben e'Volence	24	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General	CPC/War Minister	11		Flr	3	Ash Casey
PC	Count Pierre Cardigan	24	Ret								Matt Sheperd
CdP	Marquis Camille de Polignac	23	59	Comfy	Lt.Colonel	RFG/FMshl's Aide	4	Morgane	Flr	4	James McReynolds
JJ	Count Jean Jeanie	23	55	Fithy	General		32	Jacky	Flr	4	Andrew Kendall
BdLS	Count Bernard de Lur-Saluces	22	62	Fithy	Lt-General		19		Flr	3	Rob Pinkerton
TC	Count Terence Cuckpowder	22	58	Withy	B.Lt-General/City	Mil.Gov	7	Kathy	Flr	6	Mike Dommert
HDS	Earl Henri DuShite	21+	68	Rich	B.Bdr-General	RM/1 F Brigadier	15	Justine	Flr	4	Dave Marsden
RS	Marquis Rick Shaw	20	56	Withy	General/Chancellor		2	Therèse	Flr	6	Charles Burrows
ZUT	Baron Zavier Ulric Turenne	20+	63	Comfy	Lt-General/2nd	Div Commandr	4	Laura	Flr	1	Bob Blanchett
JIT	Viscount Justin Thyme	19	40	Rich	B.Bdr-General	QOC	16	Guinevere	Flr	2	Gerald Udowiczenko
LR	Baron Louis Renault	17	48	Rich	Lt-General/Cav	Div Commandr	3	Maggie	Both	4	Roy Bleasdale
CdN	Sir Claude de Nord	17	41	Withy	B.Bdr-General	KM/CPS	3	Madelaine	Flr	4	Andrew Larder
JH	Sir Jacques Hatt	15	36	Comfy	B.General		4	Cath	Both	3	Joel Halpern
NM	Sir Neville Moore	15	33	Withy	Captain	RFG/C.Prnce Aide	1		Hunt	2	Cameron Wood
LSD	Sir Louis Severin Descartes	15+	79	Rich	B.Bdr-Gen	GDMD/Fld Army QMG	4	Edna	Both	1	Chris Schotmann
ZvT	Sir Zeold von Tu	15+	47	Withy	B.Bdr-General	CG/Gds Brigadier	7	Lucy	Both	3	Tim Macaire
MdG	Martin de Garnache	14	36	Comfy	Major	RFG/Gds Brigade Maj.	3	Fifi	Both	4	Bill Howell
FS	Baron Felipe Savant	13	36	Comfy	Captain	RFG	5	Pet	Both	4	Brick Amundsen
AiCh	Baron Alvin Charles	13	36	Comfy	Lt.Colonel	GDMD	11		F&P	2	Graeme Wilson
HWB	Hector William Boone	13	30	Comfy	Major	RFG	5		Hunt	5	Paul Wilson
BS	Marquis Balzac Slapdash	12	F	Withy			19		Hunt	5	Matthew Wale
FXC	Frank X Change	12+	44	Comfy	Lt.Colonel	KM	6	Frances	Hunt	4	Nigel Monaghan
TdLL	Thomas de la Lune	11	34	OK	Bdr-General		4	Katy	Hunt	5	Peter Card
HJ	Hugh Jeneaux	11	F	OK	Major	ALC	6		Hunt	3	Bruno Giordan

Chatter

The big news is that Jason Fazackarley of this parish (“Tiny” Thierry Toothpick is his latest bonkers incarnation in *LPBS*) is now Lord Mayor of Portsmouth. For the second time. Who’d’ve thunk it!

Trotting through Ickenham churchyard a couple of weeks ago, it looks like I caught the last of the handkerchiefs this Spring.



Speaking of seasons, it’s definitely beginning to feel a lot like summer here. The vegetation isn’t as lush as it will be at the height of summer, but it’s getting there. In particular, there’s a fine crop of nettles along the lanes. And I’ve noticed a difference when I come back from a walk. A few weeks ago, the house felt warm and cosy when I got in. Now it’s feeling stuffy.

Popping into Sainsbury’s for something or other, my attention was caught by this sign. It’s not really the sort of foodstuff I was looking for. Or maybe this aisle’s all ultra-processed food.



Subscription rates

For the first time in several years (since 2015, apparently), I’ve reviewed the cost of printing *TWJO* and, unsurprisingly, it’s up substantially. As has postage cost. So I have revised the annual subscription rates – for paper copies – to match. Yep, the UK rate has gone up by a third. ☹️ This will only apply when you renew your subscription, of course.

Spiderwatch

My spidey senses are tingling. Yes, the eight-legged beasties are back! Number of large spiders prowling the living room floor one Thursday evening: 1. (Opinion is divided: I reckoned it was a good 1½ inches in diameter; Geraldine thinks I've got one-that-got-away syndrome.) Very small spiders rescued from a watery grave in the bath: 1. Very small spiders sadly found deceased in washbasin: 1. (I hope it wasn't the same one!) Dead large spiders removed from kitchen sink: 1. (Ditto.)

Online stats

To Win Just Once 243 was published on 12th April and the PDFs had been downloaded 128 times by the end of April – about 2½ weeks. The previous issue, 242, racked up a further 55 downloads, taking it to 215 in two months. And *TWJO* 241 was downloaded 39 times to bring it to 216 downloads since publication.

I'm still seeing a lot of attempts to find WordPress on my website and now people (though bots are more likely) are looking for a folder called "well-known". Who knows? (Well, a quick search suggests this is used for metadata about the site, but I can't see anything I'd have there.)

Letters

Eddy Richards has spotted something.

In a cosmic coincidence, I was half way through Terminal World when TWJO 243 popped into my inbox, luckily there were no spoilers. One of Reynolds' best efforts, lots of imagination, and an ever-evolving cast of good characters and factions. Good stuff.

I agree. Meanwhile: Spring madness, meet Tim Macaire.

*Spring is sprung,
The grass is riz,
I wonder where dem boidies is?
De littel boids is on de wing.
Ain't dat absoid?
De little wings is on de boid!*

My father always recites a version of this each year. In his best New York (Bronx?) accent. Googling it turned up lots of versions and I was particularly taken with this 'rye' one: "Spring has sprung, the grass has riz, where last year's reckless driver is."

Femmes Fatales

No	Name	SL	Attr	Lover
66	Morgane Le Fay	24	B	CdP
67	Justine Caisse	22	I	HDS
65	Therèse Le Vert	21	B/W	RS
7	Chris Pacquette	19		
61	Bette Noire	19	I/W	GdB
64	Edna Bucquette	18	W	LSD
3	Kathy Pacific	17	B	TC
54	Madelaine de Proust	17		CdN
35	Katy Did	16	I	TdLL
42	Maggie Nifisent	16	B	LR
55	Jacky Tinne	16		JJ
52	Guinevere d'Arthur	15	B/W	JiT
10	Frances Forrin	14	B	FXC
48	Fifi	14	B/W	MdG
62	Alison Wunderlandt	14		
11	Laura de Land	13		ZUT
26	Ella Fant	13	B	
27	Lucy Fur	13	B	ZvT
45	Cath de Thousands	13		JH
8	Lotte Bottle	12	B	
17	Henrietta Carrotte	12	I/W	
28	Vera Cruz	12		
31	Bess Ottede	12	I/W	
1	Sue Briquet	11	B	TTT
4	Anne Tique	11	W	
23	Agnes Sorel	11	I/W	
40	Sheila Kiwi	11		YS
63	Carole Singeurs	11		
20	Emma Roides	10	I	
38	Pet Ulante	10	W	FS
43	Di Lemmere	10	I	
53	Angelina de Griz	10	B	TPN
6	Viv Ayschus	9		PPuf
59	May Banquot l'Idée	9		
19	Jenny Russe	8	W	
32	Sal Munella	8	W	
47	Eve Ningalle	8	I/W	
34	Freda de Ath	7	W	JdA
39	Thomasina Tancenjin	7	I	SE
5	Belle Epoque	6	B/I	TB
24	Violet Bott	6	I/W	
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.

Col	Regiments																	
	RFC	CG	CC	KM	DG	OOC	ALC	CPC	RM	CDMD	13F	PLLD	53F	27M	4A	69A	Gscn	
Col	BRJS	ZVT+		CdN		JiT		BeV	HDS+	LSD		N6		N1	AA	N7	JdA	
LCol	CdP	LJR	FXC		CA	N3	SE+	BN	ALCh					N1	N5		N6	
Maj 1	MdG+	N6	N4		N1+	HJ	TPN		BLC+					N1+	N5		N6	
Maj 2	HwB	N4	N4		N1*	N3	BLPuf							N2	N3		N4+	
Capt 1	NM	N5	N4		N5	N5	N3							N2	N1		N5	N5
Capt 2	FS	N3	N3		N4	N5	TD							N2	N4		N6	N3
Capt 3	TTT	N2*	N2		N3*	N4	N1							N1	N5		N5*	N3
Capt 4	N2	N2	N3*		N6*	N4*	N3							N6*	N5*		N5*	N3*
Capt 5					JPLM												N5*	N5*
Capt 6																		N5*

This table shows the ten senior positions in the 17 regiments by rank. Entries are Character abbreviations, N (+MA) 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.

Army Organisation and 1676's Summer Deployment

Field Army (Siege)	JdG/N/_/_/LSD
First Division (Siege)	GdB/_/_/N1
Guards Brigade (Siege) - RFG CG KM	
1st Foot Brigade (Siege) - RM PM	
Second Division (Siege)	ZUT/N/N5
2nd Foot Brigade (Siege) - 13F 53F	
3rd Foot Brigade (Siege) - 27M 4A	
Cavalry Division (Siege)	LR/YS/N2
Horse Guards Brigade (Siege) - DG QOC	
Heavy Brigade (Siege) - ALC CPC	
Frontier Division (Siege)	N1/TTT/N3
Frontier Regiments (Siege)	
Dragoon Brigade (Siege) - GDMD PLLD	

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

Brigade Positions

Guards Brigade	ZvT/BeV/MdG	Current CO/Aide/Brigade Major of each Brigade; entries are ID for player characters, "N" (+ MA if needed) for NPC, __ for vacant
Horse Guards Brigade	N4/N/N1	
Heavy Brigade	N6/N/SE	
Dragoon Brigade	N4/N/BLC	
First Foot Brigade	HDS/N/N1	
Second Foot Brigade	N3/N/N6	
Third Foot Brigade	N3/N/N4	
Fourth Foot Brigade	N2/N/_/_	

Frontier Regiments

				(Defence for Dec-Feb)	
Colonel	F1 N6	F2 N6	F3 N1	F4 N6	RNHB N6
Attached					
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.

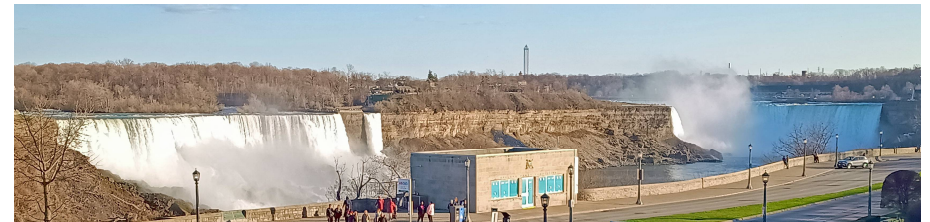
Battle Results

Cardinal's Guard: 5	Frontier regiment 1: 2
Crown Prince Cuirassiers: 1	Frontier regiment 2: 6
	Frontier regiment 3: 4
	Frontier regiment 4: 6
	RNHB regiment: 3

Back to the Falls

Pevans starts at the 2024 Gathering of Friends

Five years after I last visited, here I am on a plane across the Atlantic to Niagara Falls and the Gathering of Friends. I actually flew to Toronto, as this gets me to Niagara Falls a bit more quickly, without the need for a connecting flight. And gives me the opportunity to get the better view of the Falls from the Canadian side. Plus the walk across the Rainbow Bridge.



Canadian car park with American (l) and Horseshoe Falls (r) – the river's the border.

Arriving on Monday evening, I said hello to a few people and picked up my name badge before getting a beer in the Rainforest Cafe. No, really. The hotel has no in-house catering any more, but there are restaurant concessions within the building and this was the only one open. And with a bar, despite its child-friendly nature. I found my roommate (old friend Peter Card) on his return from dinner, but then got an early (US time)/late (UK time) night.

It was definitely an early start the following morning. After a bite of breakfast in Starbucks, Peter and I strolled into the main room to find there weren't many people around. We fell into a game of *It's a Wonderful World* with another Gathering regular, Mark. I have played this before – once, several years ago – so needed an extensive refresher. Essentially, you're playing cards to get resources to pay for cards that will give you more resources and victory points. It's a game I enjoy, but wouldn't go out of my way to play. Mark was clearly an old hand at this and won easily.

As there were three of us, I introduced the other two to *War of the 3 Sanchos*. This is the latest in the "Pocket Campaigns" series from Surprised Stare

A little background

The Gathering was started by Alan Moon over 30 years ago as a weekend get-together with games-playing friends, as the title suggests. Friends of friends were invited and, gradually, the event has grown to last nine days with a few hundred people attending. Given Alan's involvement in the games industry, a fair number of these are designers and publishers, but everybody is there to play games (though I'm sure a bit of business does go on behind the scenes). The venue has moved several times over the years, but has been in Niagara Falls for over a decade now. Alan retired as organiser a couple of years ago and the Gathering is now run by Bobby West and Craig Massey.



It's a Wonderful World in play. Mark's jazzed up his copy a bit.

and was designed by John Mortimer. It's about the wars between Castille, Aragon and Najera in the mid-11th century, when all three kingdoms had a ruler named Sancho. The small map board shows northern Spain divided into the three kingdoms plus some neutral territory. Each region within these has either a tower or castle worth 1-3 points to whoever occupies it. Anybody who hits 10 points wins outright, otherwise it's the player with the most points when the deck runs out.

The cards are the interesting part of the game. Each shows actions for each Sancho. Except that whoever plays it uses the 'Command' points on the card, not their kingdom's action. This gives them flexibility, as Command points can be used to recruit, deploy and move armies and start battles and sieges. The trick is not to hand your opponents an advantage – ideally giving them actions they can't use

The other intriguing bit is how battles are resolved. Players roll dice for their units and group the dice by number. Only numbers with a single die assigned have any effect: the die's owner removes an enemy unit and die – which may mean another number gets to take effect. It's an odd system and, even after playing a few times, I constantly feel I've missed something or am doing something wrong. Experience so far suggests battles are either carnage or inconclusive. Is this what was intended, I wonder.

As you can tell from the actions available, the game is about building armies to march around the map and fight battles and sieges. With the goal of occupying those castles and towers, of course. It takes a while to build up a force, so initial plays have seen small armies trotting around, grabbing things as and when the opportunity presents.

What can be a problem with three-player games (especially wargames) is that two players fight each other, allowing the third to win (as happened in my first game) or two gang up on one (Najera is at a disadvantage as it's sandwiched between the

have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Thomas de la Lune (Rapier, Seconds JdA, adv.) challenges Louis Renault (Rapier, Seconds ZUT & YS, 2 rests).

"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

Thomas de la Lune challenges Louis Renault for his ungentlemanly language towards a lady.

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.

New Characters

Mark Cowper gets the Second son of a Merchant: Init SL 3; Cash 150; MA 4; EC 3 (X2).

Tables

Other Appointments

King's Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Cardinal's Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Aides: to Crown Prince NM	to Field Marshal CdP
Provincial Military Governors: N/N/N/N/N	
City Military Governor TC	Adjutant-General N
Inspectors-General: of Cavalry __	of Infantry __
Commissioner of Public Safety CdN (until end December 1675)	
Chancellor of the Exchequer RS (until end August 1676)	
Minister of Justice __	
Minister of War BeV (until end February 1676)	
Minister of State BRJS (until end January 1676)	

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

Duels

Results of November's duels

Jean-Paul LeMon didn't turn up to fight Yve Stanbul and lost SPs.

Hugh Jeneaux (with TB & BN, gains 1 Exp) beat Ian Dediette.

Come Asiouar (with ZvT, gains 1 Exp) killed his enemy Michael Chevalier-Cavalier.

Louis Joseph Reignaux declined to meet Claude de Nord as he was under half Endurance.

Frank X Change (with CdN & LSD, gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Louis Joseph Reignaux (with ZvT).

Michael Chevalier-Cavalier was dead before duelling Justin Thyme.

Michael Chevalier-Cavalier (gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Yve Stanbul.

Thierry Boule (with SE & BN, gains 1 Exp) beat Jon Dichateme.

Alvin Charles didn't turn up to fight Hugh Jeneaux and lost SPs.

Hugh Jeneaux declined to meet Botte Le Chimiste as he was under half Endurance.

Elroi le Flingue (gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Hugh Jeneaux (with TB & BN).

Hugh Jeneaux declined to meet Grenville d'Arkrite as he was under half Endurance.

Grudges to settle next month

Gaston de Boum (Sabre, adv.) and Hugh Jeneaux (Sabre, Seconds TB & BN) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Belle.

Gaston de Boum (Sabre, adv.) and Ian Dediette (Rapier, 1 rests) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Belle.

Beau Nidle (Sabre, Seconds SE & TB, adv.) and Hugo Furst (Sabre, 3 rests) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Lois.

Hugo Furst (Sabre, adv.) and Ian Dediette (Rapier) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Lois.

Hugo Furst (Sabre, adv.) and Jon Dichateme (Rapier) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Lois.

Ian Dediette (Rapier, adv.) and Jon Dichateme (Rapier) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Lois.

Come Asiouar (Sabre, Seconds ZvT, adv.) and Jean-Paul LeMon (Sabre, 3 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Justin Thyme (Sabre, Seconds ZUT & RS, adv.) and Jean-Paul LeMon (Sabre, 3 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Jean-Paul LeMon (Sabre, 5 rests) has cause with Thomas de la Lune (Rapier, Seconds JdA, adv.) as he's not Noble but higher SL.

Jean-Paul LeMon (Sabre) and Yve Stanbul (Sabre, Seconds LR, adv.)

other two), after which it's a two-player game. I haven't spotted anything specific that mitigates against these outcomes. However, subsequent games have seen players keeping a careful eye on each other and intervening to prevent either opponent hitting the magic 10 points. Which Peter achieved with the deck down to a single card and the game about to end.

As far as I'm concerned, the jury's still out on *War of the 3 Sanchos*. It's not immediately grabbing me like *The Cousins' War* or *The Ming Voyages*, so that's a 6/10 on my highly subjective scale.

(*War of the 3 Sanchos* is a board game designed by David J Mortimer and published by Surprised Stare Games – www.surprisedstaregames.co.uk. It is for 1-3 players, aged 12+, and takes 30-45 minutes to play – more like 60-90 in my experience.)



Early on in *War of the 3 Sanchos*: Aragon and Castille are disputing neutral territory, while Najera (me) builds up its forces.

After a break for lunch, I found a whole bunch of old friends (James, Maryl and Nick, Cheryl and Stance) who insisted I made a sixth player for *Pioneer Rails* (it'll take up to 80, apparently). This is a flip-and-write where players are drawing railway lines across a hex grid on a Wild West landscape – the same board for each player. Put enough lines around a feature on the map and it will score – and each scores in a different way, of course. Thus, gold mines are worth a point each, while banks score for the amount of gold you've collected at that point. Ranches need to be fenced off and score according to how many you've got at the end. And so on.

The flip bit comes from a reduced deck of playing cards: A, 10 and court cards in each suit. Players choose one card each turn from a few options. The suit determines the quadrant of their board they must draw on. The value of the card is written down and, after every five turns, players get points for the best Poker hand from their five cards – doubled if they've collected a casino. The game lasts a total of 20 turns (four Poker hands), after which you tot up and most points wins.

I'm not sure what to say about this. Roll/flip-and-write games all feel much of a muchness to me, but this one does have some different features. I enjoyed the



Getting started at *Pioneer Rails* – I've picked the Queen of Hearts. (And, yes, I'm cheating by reading the rules on my tablet.) 😊

theme and the scoring opportunities are clever, but it rather over-stayed its welcome at two hours. That's a provisional 6/10 on my highly subjective scale.

(*Pioneer Rails* is a flip-and-write game designed by Jeffrey Allers and Matthew Dunstan and published by Dranda Games – www.drandagames.co.uk. It is for 1-80 players, aged 10+, and takes 30-45 minutes to play.)

While the rest headed off to other things, James's other half, Sheila, joined him and me with *Let's Go! To Japan*. This is a candidate for most played game of the con, judging by how many times I saw it on tables (and I played it three times). The story of the game is that you're visiting Japan and have to plan a six-day itinerary around Tokyo and Kyoto using large-format cards showing events, attractions and landmarks. The bulk of the game is playing cards to build up your itinerary, followed by a coda where you tell the tale of your visit and score up.

Players have their own board with six sections along the bottom edge for each day's cards, one or two at a time. A day is completed when it has three cards and players get a bonus when they do this. What they get depends on how many icons on the cards they played match the one assigned to that day (at the start of the game). The icons reflect aspects of the visit (shopping, eating, culture et al).

A particularly important bonus seems to be taking a luxury train ticket. When players resolve their visit, they must take a train whenever they move between cities. Standard trains are -2 points (they're crowded!), but the luxury trains are +2. Those points add up after a while.

The other important point is that each card has a scoring section. The only one that takes effect, however, is the one at the bottom of your set for a day. Hence,

be fought. Any vacant appointments not taken by player characters will be filled by NPCs. A player character with an appointment that lets him appoint another post chooses who gets this – which may be a player character, an NPC or left vacant. So, if you hold or have applied for an appointment – or a rank – that allows you to make other appointments, don't forget to do so (or NPCs get the jobs).

Next month is December and mistresses' influence will be renewed at the end of the month. A good reason to court a new mistress next month and gain twice as much influence. 😊

Farewell

Goodbye to Matt Shepherd, who's decided not to take a new character – I even offered him the Bastard Son of a Peasant, too! This is something of a landmark as Matt has been in *LPBS* longer than most. You're always welcome to return, Matt.

Absent friends

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

Announcements

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

Hugh Jeneaux asks NPC Lt.Colonel of Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers to resign

Louis Severin Descartes asks these to volunteer: ALC - Regt;

This is entertaining: if HJ gets the Lt-Col to resign, he will take charge of the regiment and LSD's request will have no effect...

GdBm Gaston de Boum (Ray Vahey) has NMR'd. Total now 1

X1 (Mike Clibborn-Dyer) 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.

Note attached to a parcel delivered to His Majesty:

“This is the first sabre I purchased when I joined your armed forces many years ago. It is the same sabre that I have used in every campaign I have been on in your name.

“Both times I was prevented from going on campaign as your Field Marshal it has stood at my side hilted when it wished to sing.

“It has never been used without your order or in your name.

“It has and always will belong to you.

Yours faithfully,

† Pierre Cardigan”

Poetry Corner

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

The staff at Fleur will only greet
And admit the French elite.

If you are a man of taste,
Then to Bothwell’s you should hasten.
QOC or Dragoons’ Tabard?

You’ll find a welcome in the Horse
Guards.

Blue Gables out of reach?
Maybe join the Frog and Peach,
Or Red Philips may accept your sub.
Failing that you’ll have no club.

In that case, should you wish to
carouse,

You’ll need to attend a bawdyhouse.

† FXC

Points Arising

Next deadline is 14th June

As you’ll have seen, my new approach means inserting some of the reports I use to produce the narrative. The key thing this does is relieve me of typing lists of character names for parties and practising. Comments and suggestions please.

I’m using the fixed-space Courier font for these, which is the way they are presented to me (and to ensure the columns line up since I’m copying from a text document with spaces between the columns rather than tabs). I’ll look at producing a mail-merge file from which I can generate something prettier – like the existing tables.

Thanks to those who provided input for the trial. Yes, that’s mostly Jason.

Claude de Nord’s term as Commissioner of Public Safety runs out at the end of December. Anyone who wants to apply for this job should do so with their December orders. However, Beau Reese Jean Seine makes the appointment, so you’ll need to make your case to Bill.

We haven’t had anyone issue a challenge for a while (see the Duels listing), so let me remind you that all characters may vote whether TdL has cause – apart from regimental colleagues and friends of the two characters. Only if a majority votes for the duel will it take place (House rules 13.14-13.17).

Next month is the start of a new season. **All characters start the month in Paris and all duels must**

when you’re adding cards to your tableau, it’s not just about matching the icon for the day and sticking to the same city (or not). You’re also looking at scoring options and picking one you think you’ll be able to score when you evaluate that day.

Each turn has a slightly different formula, but generally involves picking up 2-4 cards, playing 1-2 and passing the remainder to a neighbour. Every now and then, those passed cards are picked up, otherwise cards come from the separate Kyoto and Tokyo decks. One wrinkle is that you can play a card face-down as a ‘walk’ – usually because your cards are just rubbish. When you evaluate your visit, you draw a random card that can replace the walk (if useful) or just remain as a walk.

After 13 turns, everybody will have three cards under each day on their board. Time to score! One day at a time. First, you move markers along the track on your board according to the icons on the cards for that day. Next, most cards are worth points on their own. Then you look at the scoring part of the bottom card and see what it’s worth – often according to how many of specific icons you’ve marked on your track. Plus or minus points for trains and any other bonuses.

Let’s Go! To Japan is not a particularly deep game, but it is entertaining. And the decisions are tricky – not least because the random nature of the cards means you’re trying to plan without knowing what cards you’re going to get in the future. I seemed to get lucky in this game as the cards fell nicely and I won. And this despite not realising quite how the trains worked – luckily, I’d minimised my movement between cities. It gets 8/10 on my highly subjective scale.

(*Let’s Go! To Japan* was designed by Josh Wood and published by AEG – www.alderac.com. It’s a card game for 1-5 players, aged 10+, and takes 45-60 minutes to play – this game took quite a bit longer, but each game I played took less time.)



Ready to score my first trip to Japan. I need two red and two pink icons to score Monday’s card. The wild token will give me the second pink – I put my bonuses on the day I got them for (3+ red icons for Monday). And I’m going to need more trains...

Time for dinner, with James and Sheila on chauffeur duty. And an opportunity to indulge my other hobby: drinking beer! Our venue was the Griffon gastropub a few miles away with its 30+ craft beers on tap. I do like to get there at least once during the Gathering. I thought I'd start with a wheat beer and ordered the 'Huge Hefe Nerd'. This is what I got:



My first thought was, "Custard!?" Wheat beers are often cloudy and craft beers can be 'hazy', but this? It tasted fine, though, with the spicy notes I expect from wheat beer.

Next up, an IPA. Which looked like this:



Yes, much the same, only a bit browner. And also a decent beer with plenty of citrus in the nose and mouth.



I ordered my third beer, 'Dark Side of the Moon Pie', a 'pastry' stout, with some trepidation. It looked much more conventional and tasted absolutely wonderful. Gorgeously smooth with chocolate and vanilla elements and definite overtones of sweet pastry. 10/10 on my highly subjective scale!

Back to the games, where designer Chip Beauvais, who we'd met at dinner, introduced Peter and me to his *Universal Rule*. This is an 18-card, SF-themed 4X (explore, expand, exploit, exterminate) game. The cards are the planets that the players discover, exploit and fight over. And, as you'd expect, most of the game is in the cards.

Each turn, the first player decides what they're going to do and the other players may do the same. At a cost. Which is set (within limits) by the start player, who gets the payments. That's a very clever mechanism. Clearly, following is the way to take lots of actions, but you're paying your opponents when you do so!

What you're doing is buying cards, paying to play them and generating cash from the cards you've played. Another neat touch is that you can also upgrade cards, turning them round to use the other end. Which can be quite different from the initial end.

Plus, of course, attacking another player's planet. This uses cards from hand plus a (secret) amount of cash from both sides. Other players can join in, too, choosing to support either side – often to stop someone winning. The game has a sudden-death end when one player's planets reach the points target.

I really enjoyed this. Game play is clever and requires careful jockeying for position from the players. *Universal Rule* gets a provisional 9/10 on my highly subjective scale.

Scene jokingly mentioned to Colonel at breakfast while Grenville was out of earshot...

"That Arkrite fellow... My groom said to me this morning he went into the stables at Sparrow's Fart... wherever that is... almost gave the grooms a heart attack; got them together thus..."

"Listen up O servants of Equus, I know some of you may think of yourselves as near the least important of the Regiment; but there is a race to be run and here is a chance for you to add honour to her and to yourselves."

"I, and thereby you, are responsible for the Horses and stables. It is not for me to teach you your trade but there will be a reward in real as well as in terms of honour for each well-kept stable, immaculately turned-out steed and dutiful team."

"I will be keeping watch and leave nearby a corporal and some troopers to assist if necessary. See that the stalls are clean and tidy, that all water, straw and hay are fresh. Check each time you feed for any odd contents. Observe carefully any strangers and report anything suspicious to the officer in charge of security."

"I want each team to cooperate and turn out the best possible looking horses. Brushed in the right direction, cleanly washed eyes, snout and underneath, tails and main properly oiled and platted. All tack shiny clean and supple. Numnahs and horse blankets of uniform colour, Hooves checked and cleaned out... No missing nails, please, and use the right shoes. Head groom to check the ground and see any needed adjustments are made. Report to me any gossip you hear from

the other stables but don't give anything away. Make sure the gentlemen riders know the state of the ground and nature of the competition.

"I will be inspecting prior to the race and award 5 crowns for each well turned-out horse and rider. After the race there will be another award for horses placed. So be a party to the Honour of the Regiment."

"That is all for now."

"Well, what do you think of that then?"

"Fellow must be mad."

My Dear Count e'volence

I must apologise for the behaviour of my son Micheal. The poor boy is suffering, according to my experts including the revered Dr Coin-Coin, from some sort of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. I suspect he is refusing to attach the leeches again. He has always been a fantasist; as a boy he and his cousin Kit were convinced that a cart could transform itself into a self-propelled black metallic tube on wheels that could travel at incredible speeds and talk to them. He has always had a strong allergy to cheese after an unfortunate incident with an over-ripe Camembert that I need not bore you with the details of. I fear his PSD has only made things worse.

I will give him a stern telling off when he returns home.

Yours,

† Baron Devon Miles Chevalier-Cavalier

Lord Percy Percy says, as fashion tends towards the uniformed, Thomas de la Lune is particularly fashionable.

Dear Captain Yve Stanbul,
I heard of your confrontation with Lt.Colonel Chevalier-Cavalier. I hope your cuts were only superficial and that you will recuperate soon. You should not be engaging with these boorish brutes from the Dragoon Guards alone. I offer you my rapier and to act as your second. I would prefer you to survive long enough to serve as my aide against the Spanish this summer.

Regards,
† Lieutenant-General Louis Renault

While Baron Rental can chirrup and whistle peevishly as he chooses, it really will not do to insult a lady. “Prize Sow” indeed! I think that chastisement is called for. My friends will call on your friends. Or at least, people you have met.

† TdIL

Dear Lieutenant-General Renault,
Thank you so much for your kind offer to be my Second. May I return the favour?

Yours Etc,

† Captain Yve Stanbul

Personal

Primus: You know this treason thingy?

Secundus: Yes.

Primus: Have you noticed how the CPS – supposedly a force for justice – accuses upright citizens?

Secundus: Yes.

Jean D'Aubergine had perched at the doorstep of the lady Freda de Ath for over an hour, his face obscured by a towering bouquet, two boxes of finery, and a silver statuette of a deer with an only slightly misshapen front left hoof. He had only glimpsed the lady from a distance earlier that week but had appraised her sturdy and slow enough in step that he might keep up with her, should they ever be seen in public strolling together. These, he had concluded, were sufficient qualities of character to wager the investment into the armloads of gifts he had hauled to her door, through the otherwise silent streets, that early October morning.

That de Ath had proved receptive was a profound astonishment for the slow-witted Breton, but more so her refusal to accept his overflowing heap of offerings. That the lady came from a family far better equipped with land and larder than that of even his own father had not occurred to the bastard lad when he sought Freda's ardour, and now he found himself quite surprisingly in the company of a woman who was not only smarter, for this was indeed quite usual, but far wealthier than he. “Wherever shall I sell this benighted silver deer” he mused to himself, as he shuffled along after Freda on their way to the Frog and Peach. “And who in the devil would purchase second-hand flowers?”

Dear Claude de Nord,
Please let me know if you wish me to find a cure for the treasonous Chevalier-Cavalier, as suggested by Dr. Antoine Faquin.

Yours, † Justin Thyme



Three planets in play and two cash – I'm not quite ruling the Universe. Yet...

(*Universal Rule* was designed by Chip Beauvais and published by Button Shy – www.buttonshy.com. It's a 4X card game for 3-5 players, aged 12+, and takes under an hour to play.)

Peter and I finished off with a quick game of *Dogfight!* using the basic planes and set-up – it was new to Peter and a while since I'd played. Peter got on my tail early and inflicted some damage, but I zipped round the circuit to catch him and won on points (amount of damage when the tiles ran out).

Dogfight! is a relatively simple two-player game of WW1 aerial combat. Players manoeuvre round a circuit, trying to out-guess their opponent and get close enough to shoot them down (or complete a mission/prevent this in the more advanced scenarios). Actions depend on the tiles players have available (giving a speed and any possible shots), drawing more from their bag after each turn.

There's still a lot to explore in this game and it gets a provisional 6/10 on my highly subjective scale for the time being.

(*Dogfight!: Rule The Skies in 20 Minutes!*, to give its full title, was designed by Carlo Rossi and published by PSC Games, RIP. It's a board game of WW1 aerial warfare for 1-2 players, aged 10+, and takes around half an hour to play.)

That was the end of my evening as I really needed my bed by now.

Wednesday morning started with another Starbucks breakfast – my name was “Pal” today – where Peter and I bumped into an old friend, Martin Wallace – also one of my favourite game designers. As Martin now lives in Australia, some catching up was required. We also set up a date for the following day.

As Peter didn't play *Let's Go! To Japan* the day before, we set up a game with Aaron and Josh. This time the game went more smoothly than the previous day's stop and start affair. And we got the rules right! Probably. While I found my first game plain sailing, this time it was a little trickier. The cards just didn't come out the way I wanted them to! Yes, it's not as simple as I first thought. A fine itinerary from Josh won the day.



DerrocAr and President Saa (left) wins as one set of debts (centre) is paid off.

Peter and I were found by another of our Gathering buddies, the irrepressible Walter, who insisted we try a game that had clearly grabbed him, *DerrocAr*. Subtitled “The Week of Five Presidents”, the game is about the Argentinian political crisis of 2001. The aim is to be President when the music stops by showing disillusioned voters that you’re the least worst candidate. (*DerrocAr*, by the way, is a Spanish verb meaning to depose or overthrow. The capitalised A is because this is happening in Argentina – AR in international country codes.)

To start each round, players get to take an action on one of the central boards representing different aspects of the Argentinian state. Thus they can embezzle from the bank, pass a decree if President or, more constructively, pay off the country’s creditors (and gain a useful ‘Lobby’ card). Yes, with their own money! (Mind you, if the last debt is settled, the current President wins.) Then they can buy cards into their hand.

In the second phase, players play sets of cards to do more things. Such as gaining support – and becoming President if they now have more support than the incumbent – raising funds, making a public appearance or interfering with an opponent’s operations.

It may sound like there’s a lot to consider, but our game played pretty quickly with the office of President switching between players at quite a pace as support levels went up and down. In fact, it went so quickly we played a second game, joined by a fourth player, Eric, who’d been observing the first game. All in all, it was a fun piece of nonsense (despite the serious topic) that I enjoyed. I’ll give it 7/10 on my highly subjective scale.

(*DerrocAr* was designed by Bruss Brussco and is published by Ion Game Design. It’s a board/card game of fast-paced political machinations for 1-5 players, aged 14+, and should take around an hour to play.)

Press

Announcements

Lt General’s Aide sought for the upcoming campaign.

Bullet Dodgers need not apply.

Siege Operations Experience preferred but not mandatory.

Shovels Supplied.

Apply immediately.

† Lt Gen Turenne

Officers and Men sought for France’s Finest Regiment. Financial assistance available for the deserving.

† BRJS

** 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.

† Viscount Thyme

Aide sought by Brigadier-General. Apply RFG HQ.

† BRJS

** Aide Required **

I am looking for a competent aide.

Please contact me with your credentials.

† (Brevet) Bdr-General Viscount Thyme

Social

Party at my club in week 1 of December for Ministers and members of the Guards Brigade.

† BRJS

Gentlemen of Paris,
During week one, Miss Nifisent and I will attend mass to commemorate the Feast Day of Saint Nicholas of Myra. We cordially invite you to join us in our devotions to this beloved patron saint of children. After the service, we will have a small gathering at my club, where we will serve a delectable array of traditional dishes and drinks to celebrate this occasion. We would be honoured if you and your ladies would join us as our guests.

Unfortunately, this invitation does not include members of the Dragoon Guards, who insist on trying to put holes in my aide, Captain Stanbul.

Regards, † Baron Louis Renault

Military Missives

Subaltern Dichateme,

If you are still interested, I would be happy to take you on as Aide to Br General this month.

I can also provide you with a loan if you want, and enable you to join my horse race.

Sometimes we have to help those young newcomers to get started.

Let me know,

† Louis Severin Descartes, Br Brig-Gen GDMD, QMG Field Army

Matters of Honour

To LSD and AICH

Gentlemen,

I hope it is not too much of an imposition for me to ask you to be my seconds.

† BLC

Who was where - round & about

Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Bawdy houses	JPLM + FC BIC + FC BRJS (G-3) AA + FC: Mug 0 ID + FC	BN + FC BdLS + FC	HF + FC HWB + FC OLS + FC: Mug-3 ALCh + FC CA + FC	JD
Practising	NM - Rapier TC - Sabre FS - Rapier JdG - Rapier ELF - Sabre CA - Sabre	NM - Rapier JJ - Rapier TC - Sabre TB - Sabre ZvT - Rapier FXC - Rapier BLC - Sabre JdG - Rapier BRJS - Rapier AA - Rapier RS - Sabre JH - Sabre	NM - Rapier BN - Sabre JPLM - Sabre JiT - Sabre FXC - Rapier BLC - Sabre JdG - Rapier AA - Rapier ELF - Sabre MdG - Rapier RS - Sabre LSD - Sabre GdA - Sabre JH - Sabre BdLS - Dagger	NM - Rapier TC - Sabre ZvT - Rapier FXC - Rapier JdG - Rapier BRJS - Rapier AA - Rapier RS - Sabre JH - Sabre BdLS - Dagger
Duties	OLS (Reg't) JD (Reg't)	OLS (Reg't)		
Riding practice	TPN	TPN	TPN	

Shows everybody else: FC = Female Companionship; Mug n = Mugged & amount lost;
(G+n) = Gambled and winnings/loss; Weapon = Weapon practised with.
For those doing nothing: -club = not in a club; -Cash = insufficient funds;
-SL = insufficient Social Level.

I'd mentioned earlier that one of the games I wanted to try was *Nucleum* and Walter offered to teach it. This took a while as it's a wonderfully complex game. The idea is that nuclear power has been discovered in Victorian times and we're using this (and coal) to provide electricity to the cities of Saxony.

The main board shows the cities, linked by potential railway routes and printed with icons indicating what can be built there. Players have their own board, on which their building tiles start, with tracks showing their current income of money, workers and victory points. Players also have a starting set of little 'Action' tiles which they'll play to take actions - either or both of those shown.

As you'd expect, players take an action by using one of their tiles. These go into a space at the top of their board where they form a limit on the player's income. Hence, you want to play enough actions to ensure you get your full income. Action tiles can also be flipped over and placed on the board as railway lines. An important action is thus gaining more tiles. Alternatively, you can 'recharge', taking back your Action tiles and gaining your income.

Apart from adding Action tiles, players can add buildings to the map, place railways, fulfil contracts (to gain bonuses) or Energize! Energizing is how you power up buildings, flipping them to their victory point side. Doing this means



Nucleum main board at the end of the game - boy, it's busy!

shipping coal and/or uranium by rail to a power plant that's connected to the cities you want to power.

There are some bells and whistles on top of this that give you a lot of things to manage, starting with your action tiles. You need to think ahead so that you don't get rid of an action that you're going to need. Another game I thoroughly enjoyed and want to play again. It gets a provisional 7/10 on my highly subjective scale.

(*Nucleum* was designed by Simone Luciani and David Turczi and is published by Board & Dice – boardanddice.com. It's a board game of railway and industry building in a steampunk Saxony for 1-4 players, aged 14+, and takes 60-150 minutes to play – I'd give it at least 2½ hours.)

With a lot of time spent puzzling out how to play, *Nucleum* took us nicely to dinnertime and a visit to one of the several Indian buffets in walking distance of the hotel (this one is Walter's favourite). Not my preferred kind of place to eat, but the food was decent.

Returning to the hotel, we bumped into another familiar face, Brian, who was looking for more players for *Dune: Imperium*. Peter and I jumped at the chance



The main board – and add-ons – for *Dune: Imperium*. There's a battle happening at the bottom right.

and joined him and Dan. The theme is what else but Frank Herbert's *Dune* books and, probably more relevant, the recent films. Each player is a character from the story and has a couple of special abilities. I took on 'Beast' Rabban, which was particularly entertaining as Baron Harkonnen was also in play (I now see the rules suggest only having one leader from each House).

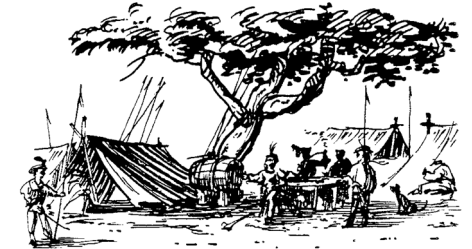
The game is driven by the cards in good old *Dominion* style: draw five from your personal deck, play some, then reveal the rest to buy more cards. However, much of what you do with cards is place 'Agents' (worker pawns) on board

tiny cocktail sabres for those who favour fancy drinks. The race-goers are encouraged to fire their champagne corks at effigies dressed in captured enemy uniforms. "Fun for the whole family!" insists Elroi. As the only representative of the Dragoon Guards, Jean-Paul LeMon finds himself the target of three Queen's Own Carabiniers: Come Asiouar, Justin Thyme and Yve Stanbul. He gives as good as he gets though.

Thomas de la Lune takes Katy Did to investigate the Prix d'Or's tables. He places a series of 100-crown wagers. He's not put off by losing his first, which is good as he wins the next four. His sixth is a loss, so he gives up while he's ahead, walking away a couple of hundred crowns better off. It turns out the Minister of State, Beau Reese Jean Seine, did the same earlier in the month. He just bet one crown at a time, winning three, losing five and cutting one. That doesn't get him anywhere with the gambling crowd. Still, at least he wasn't mugged on the way home. Unlike Octo Lucretius Souris, who loses the few crowns left in his pocket after a visit to the Bawdyhouses.

Cavalry versus wall

Somewhere in the Low Countries, the French troops continue their assault on a Dutch fort. They are bolstered by the Cardinal's Guard and a couple of Cuirassier squadrons. Though how the cavalymen will attack the ramparts isn't clear.



As it is, Lt-Colonel Louis Joseph Reignaux has a torrid time leading the Cardinal's men. Battered by enemy fire, they retire from the fray to lick their wounds. There's a brief Mention in Despatches for Reignaux ("Reignaux"). Sensing an opportunity, a strong Dutch force sallies in pursuit of the Cardinal's Guard.

They are met by First Frontier regiment along with Hugh Jeneaux's squadron of the Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers. The Dutch halt in the face of the cavalry, giving the frontier troops an easy target. Under fire, they back away and Ben e'Volence leads his squadron of Crown Prince Cuirassiers into the fray to rout the Dutch force, capturing a lot of useful equipment into the bargain.

Both e'Volence and Jeneaux are Mentioned in Despatches and get to keep a decent share of the loot. That's nearly a thousand crowns' worth for Jeneaux and over fifteen hundred for e'Volence.

Having been busted to Private last month, Balzac Slapdash is serving with Frontier regiment 3. This regiment's attack is inconclusive, but Slapdash does enough – though nobody's sure quite what – to redeem his disgrace. ❖

Who was where - with the ladies

Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Violet		Elf at home		
Lois			JD fails	
Lois's doorstep	BN HF	HF JD ID		
Bess		CA fails		
Edna	Out	Out	FS fails	Out
Justine	HDS succeeds	Out	Out	Out

Shows who was with a mistress or on a doorstep; Out = Mistress with current lover; I = Indiscreet (+ mistress name); EX-id = Pinched from former lover.

group of four: Botte Le Chimiste, Hector William Boone, Stephane Etrange (still clutching a bottle of wine – he’s consuming conspicuously!) and Thierry.

More bruises are accumulated as the racers round the final bend. The dash for the line sees Zavier get the most from his mount and pull ahead to cross the line first. Alvin can’t maintain his pace, but stays on Zavier’s tail to finish just half a length behind. Unfortunately, he’s joined on the line by the fast-charging Elroi and Tiny. Race sponsor Louis comes in fifth, just out of winning his own prize. Beau and Come are just behind him, Hugo, Justin, Jean and Thibault bunched closely together as joint 8th. Jean’s horse is clearly in trouble to have fallen this far behind. As the group slows and separates, it collapses to the ground.

Twelfth place is shared by the faltering Jean-Paul and sprinting Claude. Botte, Greg and Yve are just half a length behind. Then there’s a bit of a gap before Grenville, Hector and Thomas cross the line in that order. There’s then a trail of the last four runners, each half a length down on the man in front: Felipe, Thierry, Stephane and, dead last, Octo.

Race concluded, the muddy riders join the pristine spectators for a glass or three, courtesy of Louis SD. Regimental Adjutant Elroi le Flingue is in charge of this and has been having fun. So we have: a punch fountain that pours from the mouth of a 12-pounder cannon, souvenir wine flacons shaped like cavalry boots, and

spaces to take the action shown. It’s a clever combination of deck-building and worker placement.

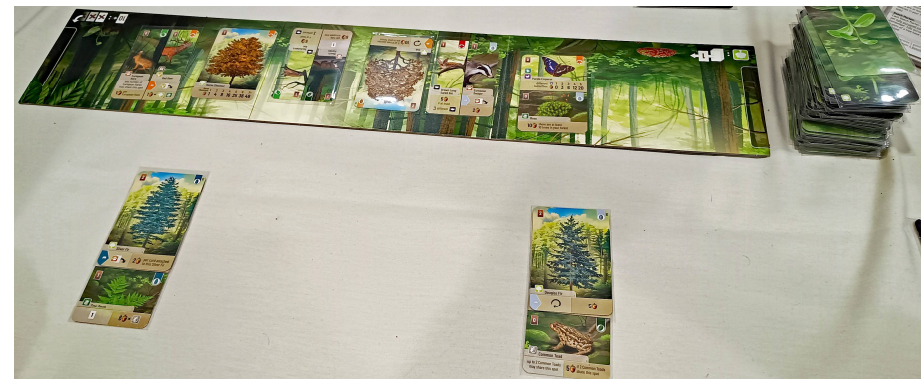
Many of the board spaces give you resources – money, water, spice – or troops. Some also increase your influence with one of the factions: the Bene Gesserit, the Emperor, the Fremen and the Spacing Guild. And a major part of the game is fighting battles with one or several of your opponents – in a four-player game, there are rewards for first, second and third places!

There are lots of things to think about and lots of ways to improve your position and win the game. I did quite nicely out of picking up ‘Intrigue’ cards early on to use later in the game. I also had a handy Alliance with the Fremen – bizarre, given I was Rabban. Once I’d got to grips with the game, I was completely engrossed. It helps that I came second, Brian suffering the teacher’s fate of coming last after explaining the game. This gets a provisional 9/10 on my highly subjective scale and I think I’ll be looking to pick up a copy for myself...

(*Dune: Imperium* was designed by Paul Dennen and is published by Dire Wolf – www.direwolfdigital.com. It is a board and card game for 1-4 players, aged 14+, and takes 1-2 hours to play.)

Dan had things to do, but the remaining three of us wound down for the evening with *Forest Shuffle*, Brian in the teaching role again. I’ve heard quite a bit about this game, but not played it until now. It is relatively simple: you draw cards or you play cards. The nicely illustrated cards show trees, plants and animals. Drawn cards either come face-down from the top of the deck or face-up from the ‘forest clearing’ of discarded cards.

Trees are played into your tableau at a cost of discarding other cards from hand. Animals and plants are tucked under the top, bottom, left or right of your trees. Cards often provide a bonus when played, but they are also worth points. Cards



Forest Shuffle gets started. No Horse Chestnuts played yet, but there’s one to pick up.

score in different ways, often in combination with other cards, so you're always looking to build these combinations. And, once you know the game, sabotaging your opponent's attempts to do the same.

Forest Shuffle is a nice little game that I'm sure I will play from time to time, but I can't see what the fuss is about. (Mind you, I said the same about *Magic: the Gathering* thirty-odd years ago...) As usual with this type of game, players find particular combinations of cards very powerful. My own game-winning strategy was to draw lots of Horse Chestnut trees (I had two in my starting hand and quickly gained another). It gets a provisional 7/10 on my highly subjective scale.

(*Forest Shuffle* was designed by 'Kosch' and is published by Lookout – www.lookout-spiele.de. It's a card game for 2-5 players, aged 10+, and takes about an hour to play.)

And I've run out of space! More to come in next issue...

Games Events

The next Raiders of the Game Cupboard games day is on 22nd June 2024 at the Waterside Community Centre in Burton-upon-Trent. It's simply a day of open gaming in convivial company. For more details, see the website at: www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk

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

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It's not a good month for Grenville as he was left outside the Fleur de Lys the week before. His expected host, Beau Reese Jean Seine, simply isn't there. Joining him in the street is "Tiny" Thierry Toothpick, whose boss, CPS Claude de Nord, is not accepting guests whatever the diminutive one wants.

A couple of weeks later, Tiny tries again, but is still not welcome. This time he's standing around with Jean Jeanie, who was expecting Zavier Ulric Turenne to admit him. However, Zavier is Toadying to Greg de Bécqueur this week and thus not in a position to accept guests.

Horses, horses, everywhere

And so to the race. Sponsored to the tune of 1,000 crowns by the commander of the Grand Duke Max's Dragoons, Louis Severin Descartes, the race is being run not just for the prize money, but for the Grand Duke Max Trophy. It attracts a total of 23 entrants, including Louis himself, and a few spectators: Jean d'Aubergine, Louis Renault and Martin de Garnache with their respective ladies. Louis has marshalled the members of his regiment to keep an eye on things before the race. Thus, Alvin Charles is making sure none of Archduke Leo's men show their faces. Botte Le Chimiste keeps an eye on the horses to ensure no doping.

Joint favourites before the race starts are Alvin Charles and Justin Thyme. Both are lightweight cavalymen with some decent skills. Bottom of the rankings is the CPS, Claude de Nord, despite his bright pink silks. He's really not a horseman, which may be why he's called his mount "Nourriture pour chien". Edna Bucquette starts the race and the riders sprint for the first corner in a pretty tight bunch. A deal of jostling follows as they round the turn. First onto the back straight are indeed Alvin and Charles. Louis Severin Descartes and Tiny Thierry are just behind them, with Beau Nidle, Jean Jeanie and Zavier Ulric Turenne on their tails. Elroi le Flingue, Hugo Furst and Jean-Paul LeMon make up the next group. Then it's Come Asiouar, Greg de Bécqueur, Thibault Pinot-Noir (on his new horse, Sailing Away) and Yve Stanbul. They're just ahead of Felipe Savant and Thierry Boule with seven more bunched behind them at the back.

The gallop down the back straight sees the horses spread out more. Alvin is first into the final bend, with Jean now just half a length behind, his horse spraying froth as it gives its all. Louis SD and Tiny maintain their places a length down on the leader and have been joined by Zavier. Justin's horse doesn't seem to realise it's in a race and he's fallen back to be caught by Elroi, Jean-Paul and Yve – another whose horse is at peak gallop.

Beau is struggling, too, and now has Come, Greg and Thibault alongside him. Hugo and the speedy Thomas de la Lune are just behind them. Then it's Felipe and the swift Grenville d'Arkrite. Claude is half a length down on them. Octo Lucretius Souris is really struggling and is on his own at the back, behind the almost-last

Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Frog & Peach	TB + Belle JdA + Freda	JPLM JdA + Freda	TB + Belle	
Red Phillips	PPuf + Viv	PPuf + Viv	PPuf + Viv	PPuf + Viv
Prix d' Or	BRJS (G-3)			
				LSD + Edna . ZUT + Laura . TPN + Angelina . BN . JJ + Jacky . HF . FS + Pet . JPLM . TdLL(G+200) + Katy . JiT + Guinevere . TB + Belle . TTT + Sue . YS + Sheila . HWB . OLS . SE . AlCh . BLC . JdA + Freda . Elf . MdG + Fifi . GdB + Bette . CdN + Madelaine . GdA . CA . LR + Maggie

Shows who was in or outside a club: . = Toadying to character above;
 (G+n) = Gambled and winnings/loss; CP = Crown Prince; (id) = expected host.

Trophy Hunter

Turn 7

This turn's shots

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

Scores

Player	Shots	This turn	Total
Alex Bardy	L9, M9	0	11
Colin Bruce	L11	.71	7.79
Charles Burrows	D15, S9	4	3.83
Mark Cowper	L11	.71	12.54
Mike Dommett	C17, R8	0	5
Anthony Gilbert	L9, L11	.71	8.71
William Hay	L4, L9	0	-6.7
Andrew Kendall	M14, O14	0	8
Andrew Larder	Q12, R12	0	0
Nik Luker	J12	2	14
Tim Macaire	K13, L9	0	4
Brad Martin	D16	4	11.33
Graeme Morris	E9, E10	0	3.5
Rob Pinkerton	L11	.71	9.71
Mike Pollard	L11	.71	8.79
Eddy Richards	E12	4	10.5
Chris Rudram			-3.5
Pam Udowiczenko	S8, D7	0	12.5
Ray Vahey			5
Matthew Wale	J12	2	11.75
John Watson	K10, L11	.71	4.21
Graeme Wilson	L9, L11	.71	1.96
Paul Wilson	M10, E18	0	5

Mike Pollard claims he's "Back to reliable point scorers after my gorilla disaster." He's just one of many going for the Lion in the middle.

While Charles Burrows is "Hoping for better luck" and finds an Antelope. And Tim Macaire is "using science" to find empty air.

Eddy Richards is shooting "in the hope of bagging a new animal". It's a Monkey!

The Antelopes take a pasting this turn with Nik Luker and Matthew Wale finding number two and Brad Martin a third.

All Pam Udowiczenko hits is a bush.

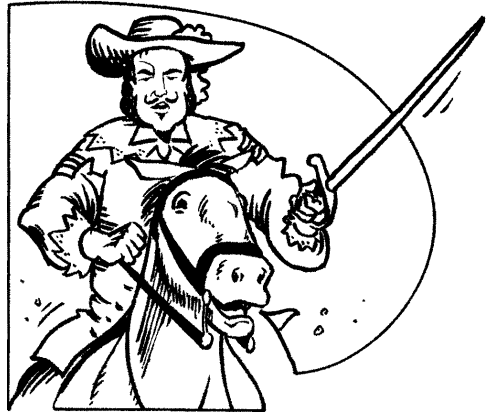
Plenty of targets for next turn...

d'Arkrite is refused entry as he doesn't have the minimum social standing that Louis expects.

Who was where - in the clubs

Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Fleur de Iys	JJ + Jacky JiT + Guinevere RS + Therèse GdB + Bette CdN + Madelaine CdP + Morgane BdLS . ZUT + Laura	HDS + Justine CdP + Morgane	TC + Kathy HDS + Justine BRJS GdB + Bette . ZUT + Laura CdN + Madelaine CdP	HDS + Justine CdP + Morgane
Outside Fleur	GdA (BRJS) TTT (CdN)		JJ (ZUT) TTT (CdN)	
Bothwell's	ZvT + Lucy . MdG + Fifi LSD + Edna JH + Cath LR + Maggie	LR + Maggie . ZUT + Laura . FS + Pet . JiT + Guinevere . TTT + Sue . YS + Sheila . HWB . SE + Thomasina . AlCh . MdG + Fifi . LSD + Edna . GdB + Bette . CdN + Madelaine	ZvT + Lucy LR + Maggie	
Outside Bothwell's		GdA (LR)		
Hunter's	TdLL + Katy HWB . AlCh FXC + Frances SE + Thomasina	TdLL + Katy	TdLL + Katy SE + Thomasina	
Blue Gables	YS + Sheila			YS + Sheila

gallops off towards the Louvre. The rest of the men assist their leader into a sleek launch and then man the oars. In a matter of minutes, they are boarding a ship midstream that's already unfurling its sails. The launch is set adrift, the ship slips its anchor and gathers speed downstream...



Cuirassiers on the march

Hugo Furst decides it's time to start a military career and applies to the Picardy Musketeers. They turn him down. He strides down the road to the 13th Fusiliers' barracks where he is signed up immediately. With cash to spare, he buys himself the rank of Major.

Octo Lucretius Souris has no such trouble as Ben e'Volence admits him to the Crown Prince Cuirassiers. He's just a trooper, though. He's

assigned to 1st squadron, which means he gets to stay in Paris when the CO takes 3rd squadron to join the action.

First squadron of the other Cuirassier regiment, Archduke Leopold's, is also on the march, led by squadron commander Major Hugh Jeneaux. Jeneaux had hoped to be commanding the whole regiment, but there's a Lt-Colonel in the way.

Louis Joseph Reignaux does command a regiment, the Cardinal's Guard, and volunteers it for a month's active service.

Further up the chain of command, Guards Brigadier Zeold von Tu appoints Martin de Garnache as Brigade Major.

And Brigadier-General Louis Severin Descartes makes 4th Arquebusier Subaltern Jon Dichateme his Aide.

To the races

The big event this month is unquestionably the horse race sponsored by Louis Severin Descartes at the end of the month. Though Louis is to be found in the Fleur at the start of the month, entertaining the lovely (okay, rich) Edna Bucquette. The quality of the entertainment is somewhat in doubt as others in the club overhear comments about "reverse head-and-shoulders patterns", "Chancellor speak" and speculation where the interest rate of the treasury bonds may be going next year.

Also in November, we have Louis Renault and Maggie Nifisent's bash at Bothwell's. Billed as "polite discussion and Whist", it lives up to this – until some fool leads the Queen of Spades. Despite the generally genteel ambience, Grenville

Key

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

Other symbols

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

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

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

animal at the same time, they get the points for the square they hit.

Once an animal has been identified, subsequent shots share the points of new squares hit (no more points for the first square/s). So if players A and B hit the second square of that lion and C gets the third, C gets 5 points, A and B 2½.

An animal is dead when all its squares have been hit. No more points can be scored for this animal.

After 10 turns or when the board is clear (except for any snakes), the player with the most points wins.

Send your shots to Pevans at 180 Aylsham Drive, Uxbridge UB10 8UF or TWJO@pevans.co.uk by 7th June 2024.

What's this all about?

This game is essentially a *Battleships* variant and is open to all readers of *TWJO*. The 20 x 20 grid represents a safari park that needs to cull some of its animals (except the gorillas). The players are hunters who've paid to bag trophies.

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

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

Troodos (*Railway Rivals* game 18 – RR2528CY)

Turn 5

MEDITRAINEAN consolidated its position along the south coast and connected to Paphos. ALL GREEK TO ME built through the mountains and added a connection to the south coast. CANTERBURY RAILWAYS connected to the northeastern end of Cyprus, then returned to building expensively South from Troodos. INLAND IRONHORSE INTERNATIONAL built along the north coast of Cyprus.

Builds and Points

MediTrainean (MT), Anthony Gilbert – Red

Starts: Larnaca

Builds:

a)(Athna) – B69; (3 to CR, 1 to AGTM) (Kilana) – K13

b)(Dhali) – F59 – G60 (5 to AGTM, 1 to CR)

c)(H5) – Paphos; (+6) (B69) – B70 – C71

Points: 59 +7 -10 = 56

Canterbury Railways (CR), Rob Pinkerton – Blue

Starts: Famagusta

Builds:

a)(H67) – I67 – Akanthou (+6)

b)(M13) – Troodos

c)(Troodos) – K13 – I12 (2 to AGTM, 7 to MT)

Points: 53 +6 +4 -9 = 54

All Greek To Me (AGTM), Mike Dyer – Black

Starts: Kyrenia

Builds:

a)(Troodos) – K13 – J13

b)(J13) – G15 – F14

c)(Paleokhoro) – N14; (C64) – B64

Points: 26 +8 = 34

Inland Ironhorse International (III), Chris Rudram – Green

Starts: Lapithos

Builds:

a)(Kyrenia) – J62

b)(J62) – J65; (A45) (Polis) – N4

c)(J65) – J66

Points: 64 +0 = 64

GM Notes

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

The Races start with turn 7 so, from next turn, you will receive a list of the races for the following turn. Any races not entered will be carried over.

Building rolls for next turn: 5, 3, 6

**Orders to Mike Dommert, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommert@yahoo.co.uk
by 31st May 2024**

good Marquis’s blood whom HE,” Toothpick’s shrill voice rises as he shrieks. “HE, that despicable rogue, never gave a chance in a duel. No he didn’t. And in a duel where the Marquis’s second was not present, having just been killed at the Front, this swine took advantage of said fact while, at the same time, sticking two fingers up at the etiquette of duelling itself that dictates a duellist should not kill an opponent who has offered a surrender. I read all about it in a book that I found at the Bastille, this book here.” He produces a red, leather-bound book marked ‘Evidence for the arrest of Pierre Cardigan’ and continues. “A book compiled by another previous CPS, one Commissioner Fluff-Bunny, who was in the stages of bringing an arrest of the prisoner when he, too, was killed and thus prevented from doing so. That very fact extremely suspicious in itself, if you ask me! Then along came another advocate for the law, my own predecessor as Deputy Commissioner, former Lt Colonel Tarquin le Hatter, who the prisoner is well known for leading a campaign of gross bullying against, seeking to duel him virtually every month as he knew, without doubt, that le Hatter had found the same book detailing the prisoner’s crimes.

“All this further goes to show the nature of this villain. He’s rotten to the core and will only continue to taint Paris with his presence as long as he remains alive... and that’s where you come in Your Grace,” says Toothpick, bowing respectfully towards MoS Seine. “It is in your hands to put quill to paper and pop your signature on the old dotted line at the bottom, after the bit where it says ‘And the Sentence is Death’ and let me take care of the rest. You’re known across Paris to be a Just man, Your Grace, very respected, although I’m sad to report that there have been certain rumblings of discontent following the trial of the Rent Boy Chevalier, or whatever his name is, last month and certain persons were mentioning too lenient, starting to lose it a bit, should chop a few more heads off etc. Of course that’s all nonsense, as I know that you’re the best and, by being the best, you know when it’s time to make an example. I’m sure you realise there can be no better time than today to show you’ve still got it, as they say: DEATH, Your Grace... DEEEEEAAATTTTHHHH.” Spittle flies from his little lips as his face flushes red and Deputy Toothpick jumps up and down upon the table and the band begins its funeral dirge music again.

“The Prosecution rests its case and may the Almighty have mercy upon the prisoner’s soul, but not too much”!

The sudden silence sees Beau Reese Jean Seine start and look up from his rapier sharpening. He quickly gathers himself. “His Majesty recently indicated to me,” he observes, “that there had been too few executions in Paris recently. Given the timing, I can only think he was referring to this case. The accused is therefore found guilty. The sentence is death. Should he ever show his face in France again.”

Meanwhile, its path cleared by armed horsemen, an unmarked coach has arrived at a riverside wharf. A finely-dressed man descends from the vehicle and hands a long, narrow package to one of the escort. They exchange bows and the horseman

The arrival of an empty coach at the prisoners' entrance of the court tells officials that something is amiss. A hasty conference between prosecution and judge ("I wondered why there were no defence lawyers") brings agreement to proceed with the defendant *in absentia*. Commissioner de Nord returns to the courtroom, followed, moments later, by Minister of State Count Seine and both take up their respective seats. However, there is no Deputy Toothpick...

Then the sound of a funeral dirge drifts in, the doors are flung open and a host of people make entrance. First through the doors comes a six-piece band, comprised of short people dressed in black mourning garb but with glimpses of orange uniforms peeping out from underneath their costumes. Behind them come five other short people, four of these are bare-chested and painted red with small horns sticking out of the sides of their heads, forked tails attached to their black shorts and each clutching a small pitchfork. The fifth is dressed as the Grim Reaper and carries a mini scythe. Finally, born upon the shoulders of a couple of tall men in orange uniforms and making care to properly duck his head as he enters, appears Deputy Commissioner of Public Safety Captain Tiny Thierry Toothpick of His Majesty's Royal Foot Guards.

"Make way, make way," cry the pair of tall bearers, "for Deputy Commissioner Toothpick." They carry the Deputy over to the Prosecutors' Table and make him comfortable on the seat next to actual Commissioner de Nord, ensuring a suitable pile of cushions are in situ to assist his elevation to the table's edge.

Commissioner de Nord stands to address the Court. He bows towards MoS Seine and says, "Your Grace, today's case is that of one Count Pierre Cardigan, a man with a long history in Paris, but a history that is besmirched by numerous judicial infringements that have finally caught up with him. He faces the heinous and most serious charge of Treason, namely for the murder of past Commissioner of Public Safety, Marquis Sheikh Yadik al-Abowt, a loyal servant of His Majesty. For the Prosecution, I will be passing over today's proceedings to my extremely keen Deputy, Captain Toothpick. An officer from your own regiment, if I may add, Your Grace, and a fellow who has spent many hours researching the crimes of Count Cardigan". At this CPS de Nord retakes his seat and all eyes fall upon his diminutive Deputy, whose forehead, eyes and nose can be seen peeking above the tabletop.

At a click of his fingers, Toothpick is attended to by his bearers who lift him up onto the table itself, "Minister Seine, Commissioner de Nord, Court Officials and people in the public gallery", he begins. "This is an open and shut case. It is probably the most straightforward case ever to come before this Court, for there is no doubt, no question, no contest that the defendant," he turns to glare at the empty dock/coffin, "was responsible for the death, the murder, of His Majesty's former Commissioner of Public Safety, Marquis al-Abowt. Neither the passage of time nor any subsequent lies or excuses that the prisoner may seek to give in evidence can alter the truth. The fact that his hands are forever stained red by the

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 December 1675 to Pevans
at 180 Aylsham Drive, UXBRIDGE
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by 7th June 2024**



November 1675 (381)

As Autumn draws to an end, the days are noticeably shorter and mornings are chilly. Though not everybody huddling themselves in a cloak is just feeling the cold – some are concealing the weaponry they're taking to a clandestine conference. Yes, there are duels to be fought.

Let us start with Captain Yve Stanbul of the Queen's Own Carabiniers. He expects a meeting with Jean-Paul LeMon, Captain of the Dragoon Guards and thus Stanbul's enemy. However, LeMon has found the temperature too low (or something) and is absent. Never mind, Stanbul has another Dragoon Guard to meet: Lieutenant-Colonel Michael Chevalier-Cavalier. There is not much to choose between the two combatants wielding their regimental sabres. Chevalier-Cavalier attacks from the off, launching into a full-throated furious slash. Stanbul waits a beat and then does the same, ensuring that his opponent will always strike first. They exchange slashes and C-C lands his cut. Stanbul concedes the fight.

Energised by that exchange, Chevalier-Cavalier cleans his blade and awaits his next opponent, and Stanbul's colleague, Captain Come Asiouar. This Carabinier comes with an escort: Guards Brigadier Zeold von Tu is his second. Again, it seems an even fight, though Asiouar has the greater swordsmanship. Again, the fight is hard and fast with an exchange of furious slashes. This time Asiouar's skill enables him to strike first. Hit by the slash, Chevalier-Cavalier immediately knows his adversary's strength, but does not falter in his attack. Asiouar's cut is truly a mighty blow and Chevalier-Cavalier falls lifeless to the ground.

Justin Thyme, commander of the Queen's Own, was next in line to take on Chevalier-Cavalier and is left with conflicting emotions. Dismay that he does not

get to use the witty repartee he had prepared and delight at his junior officer's proficiency.

Hugh Jeneaux may not have been in Paris very long, but the new Major in Archduke Leopold's Cuirassiers has a knack for antagonising people and a long list of duel opponents. However, he also has friends: both Beau Nidle and Thierry



Boule (of the other Cuirassier regiment) are his seconds. For his first bout, Jeneaux chooses the lightly-built Ian Dediette, who has neither the skill nor the seconds of the Cuirassier. And he plies a rapier against the cavalry sabre. Jeneaux appears to go easy on this underdog, lunging with the blunt tip of his rapier to match Dediette's lunge with his rapier point. Both men hit, but Dediette surrenders.

Pressing business (or some such) has kept Dediette's second opponent, Gaston de Boum, away from their meeting so this is re-scheduled for December.

Jeneaux's next should be Alvin Charles, but the Grand Duke Max's Lt-Colonel is not interested in taking him on.

Hence it is Elroi le Flingue, a mere Captain in the GDMD, who squares up to Jeneaux next. The difference in size is now the other way round as Flingue easily out-bulks the Cuirassier. And he uses a sabre to match Jeneaux, though he has no seconds. Strangely, Jeneaux opts to lunge again, an attack that Flingue dodges with ease. The two exchange slashes; Jeneaux's being just the start of a furious slash. His cut strikes next, but Flingue shrugs off the blow and slashes again. Jeneaux decides enough is enough and concedes.

Given his injuries, Jeneaux declines to meet either Botte Le Chimiste or Grenville d'Arkrite. His appointment with Gaston de Boum is postponed to December.

The best-known regimental rivalry in Paris is that between the Cardinal's Guard and the King's Musketeers. Thus it is no surprise that members of these regiments have duels this month. Lt-Col Louis Joseph Reignaux represents the Cardinal's men and has two Musketeers to fight. He opts to face KM Lt-Col Frank X Change first: two beefy men going at each other with rapiers. It turns out that Change has the superior expertise as well as two seconds (KM CO Claude de Nord and GDMD CO Louis Severin Descartes) against Reignaux's one (CG CO Zeold von Tu). Change is conventional, going for a straightforward lunge. He is surprised to find Reignaux's boot approaching his midriff with speed. His sideways stance saves him from the full impact of the kick even as his rapier opens a large gash in Reignaux's thigh. As Reignaux hops about to regain his balance and stop the bleeding, Change runs him through. Reignaux has had enough. He surrenders and goes in search of

a surgeon, leaving Claude de Nord without an opponent – though he does have an impatient second, "Tiny" Thierry Toothpick: "We've Cardigan to convict!"

The final bout this month is between Subaltern Jon Dichateme of the Fourth Arquebusiers and Subaltern Thierry Boule of the Crown Prince Cuirassiers. It's the biggest mis-match of all: man-mountain Boule versus titchy Dichateme. To make things worse for the little man, Boule is more skilled with his sabre than Dichateme is with his rapier. What's more, Dichateme has no support while Major Beau Nidle and Lt-Col Stephane Etrange second their colleague. Trying to put a brave face on it, Dichateme braces himself and concedes as soon as Boule hits him with a slash.

Pipe and slippers, but no Cardigan

Excitement builds in Paris as the trial of the esteemed Count Pierre Cardigan approaches. A large crowd gathers outside the courthouse, but spaces in the public gallery are limited. Inside, the prosecution gets itself organised and sends guards to make sure the witnesses can get through the throng. Those of the public who do get in, including Frank X Change and Henri DuShite, are surprised by the recent work that's gone on. The prisoner's dock has been transformed into a large upright coffin, draped in black ribbon and funereal accoutrements including a brass plaque with the words "Here rests Pierre Cardigan, a Cad and a Count. RIP 1st November 1675". Word quickly spreads (because he's telling everyone) that the 'Deputy Commissioner' has financed this.

Since the defendant is a man of no little standing in Paris, it is no surprise when an elegant, but unmarked coach arrives at the Bastille gates: "Collecting Count Cardigan," the driver growls at the guards, gesturing at his mounted escort. The officer of the day is informed and appears with the prisoner – unshackled and well-dressed as befits his rank. "You're a bit early," he remarks. "Traffic's terrible in the centre," responds the driver. "Got to allow for delays." The prisoner is duly bundled into the coach, the driver cracks his whip and the whole party trots off.

The officer of the day watches the coach speed out of sight. As he turns to re-enter the fortress, another fine coach appears. This one bears the crest of the Commissioner of Public Safety and has a black-clad escort. It pulls up in front of the puzzled guards and an official jumps out: "We're here for Cardigan..."

Back at the courthouse, Minister of State Beau Reese Jean Seine has arrived and is ~~relaxing~~ preparing in the judge's chambers. The caterers have laid on a decent spread. Inside the packed courtroom an excited murmuring goes around the public gallery. Rumour has it that the Commissioner of Public Safety, Sir Claude de Nord, is to pass over prosecuting duties to his diminutive underling, Deputy Commissioner Captain Tiny Thierry Toothpick, a fellow short in stature but large in enthusiasm for the task at hand. Or so he says.