

That would be enough

This has been issue 255 of *To Win Just Once*, published 16th June 2025. It incorporates *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, a game of *En Garde!*. Issues are published ten times a year, roughly every five weeks. © Paul Evans 2025

Deadlines

Orders for *Railway Rivals* and *Star Trader* to Mike by Friday 27th June 2025.

Orders for *LPBS* and Fictionary Dictionary votes and definitions to Pevans by Friday 4th July 2025.

(Next deadlines: probably 1st/8th August then 5th/12th September.)

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 – A new game has started, but Mike can run a second four-player game if enough people are interested. So far that's Mark Cowper. "Only two more needed for a game of *Railway Rivals!*" (Working map and rules provided).

Star Trader – The list for the next game starts with Mike Dyer and Mark Cowper. (Rules provided)

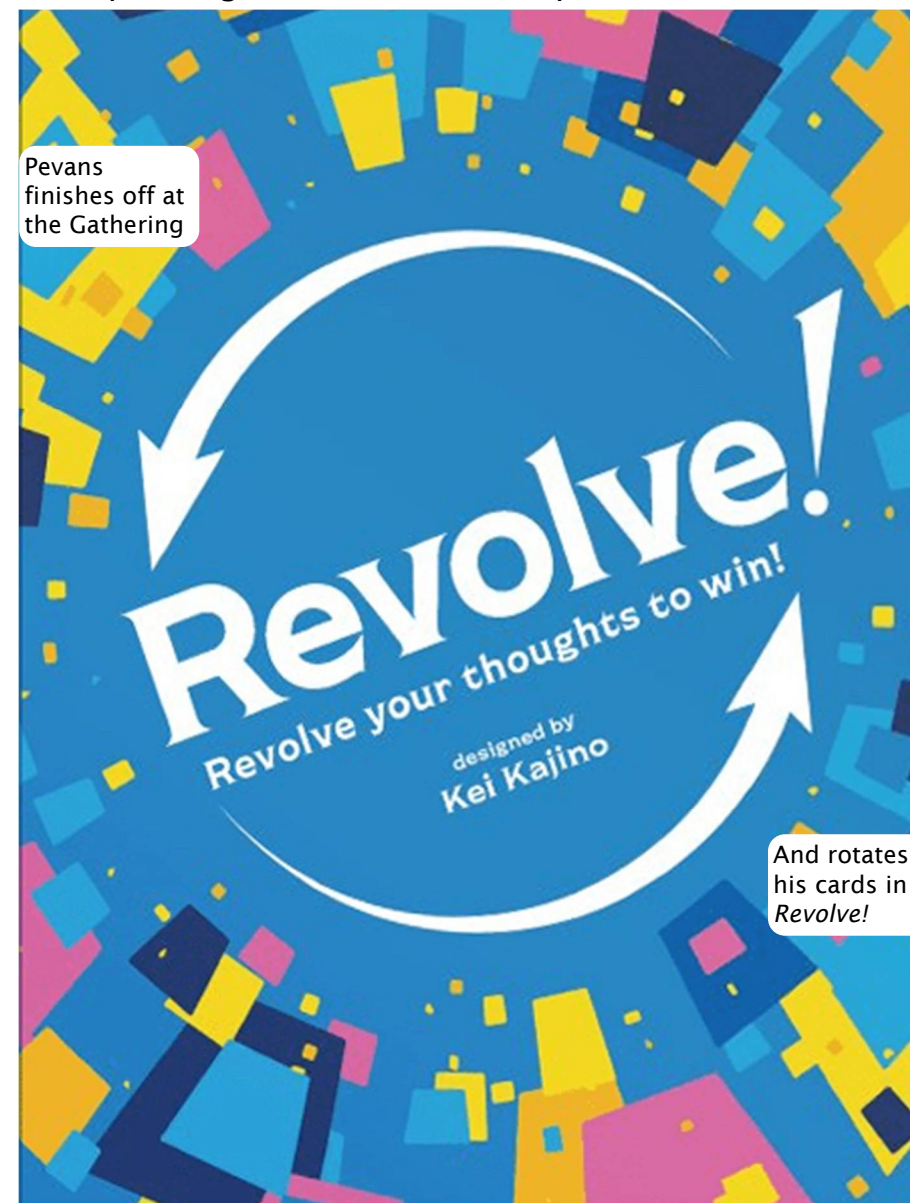
Credits

To Win Just Once issue 254 was written and edited by Pevans. The *LPBS* masthead (page 22) is by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, as are the drawings on pages 18, 24 and 27. The illustration on page 32 is by Nik Luker. Game and book artwork is courtesy of the publisher. Pevans took the photos, except where noted, and played with Photoshop.

Printed and published by Margam Evans Limited
(A company registered in England and Wales, number 05152842,
Registered office: 180 Aylsham Drive, Uxbridge UB10 8UF)
Tel: 020 7183 6256, E-mail: TWJO@pevans.co.uk,
Web: www.pevans.co.uk/TWJO

To Win Just Once

(incorporating *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*)



Issue 255: July 2025
(LPBS 392: Oct 1676)

£2.25 (where sold)
and online at www.pevans.co.uk/TWJO

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ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank, Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
PPuf	Sir Percival Puffington	11	F	OK	B.Bdr-General PM	6		Hunt	5	Tony Taylor
EIF	Sir Elroi le Flingue	11+38	Comfy	Major	GDMD		7	Lucy		Daniel Racke
JdA	Jean d'Aubergine	11+33	Comfy	B.Bdr-General	4A		4	Carole		Paul Robbins
HF	Hugo Furst	10	28	Comfy	B.Bdr-General 13F/2	F Brigadier	5	Ella		Graeme Morris
TCdS	Thibault Chanson de Skye	10	22	Poor	Major	69A	6			Bill Hay
CS	Con Stantinople	10+41	Comfy	Major	QOC/HGds Brigade Maj.		6	Anne		Pam Udowiczzenko
FdB	François de Blanchefort	9	F	OK	Lt.Colonel CPC		5			Peter Farrell
AH	Arant Hayes	9+	37	Poor	Major	CPC	4			Mark Cowper
AA	Armand Alsace	8+	28	Withy	Bdr-General		11			Sebastian Emde
JS	Justin Saad	7+	31	Poor			3			Gerry Sutcliff
HS	Hugo Serre	7+	25	OK			6	Sue		Paul Murphy
MD	Maurice Danseur	6+	38	Poor	Major	GDMD/Drgrn Brigade Maj.	6	Belle		Andrew Whiteley
CPL	Charles PiedLuminaire	6+	33	Comfy	Lt.Colonel PLLD/2nd Div Adjutant		8	Lois		Nick Tyrrell
SBC	Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux	6+	19	OK	Captain	53F	1			Peter Card
PDT	Pierre De Terre	5+	42	OK	Captain	GDMD		7	Sal	Manoj Nair
CdF	Chemin de Fer	5+	22	Comfy	Major	RM/1 F Brigade Maj.	5			Rod MacDonald
DJA	Dee Jean Aise	4+	33	OK			5			Jovan Bogdanovic
SDS	Steve De Sade	4+	25	Comfy	Subaltern	GDMD/BdGen Aide (Drgrn5				Jon Dean
IP	Ignace Pardailon	3-	1	OK	Subaltern	GDMD	5			Grégory Meurant
VdF	Vaux de Fon	3	F	Poor	B.Subaltern	CPC	1			John Cooke
RIR	Rusé le Renard	3	RIP							Tim Rattray
AC	Agaric Champignon	3	RIP							Richard Cronan
JC	Justin Cartier	2-	2	OK	Major	27M	1			Steven Malecek
X2		1-	2	Poor			6			Ray Vahey

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
JJ	Count Jean Jeanie	25	76	Flthy	General/War Minister	32	Jacky	Flr	4	Andrew Kendall
BeV	Count Ben e'Volence	24	70	Rich	B.General/2nd Army Commndr	11	Lotte	Flr	3	Ash Casey
GdB	Count Greg de Bécqueur	24	65	Rich	B.General/1st Army Commndr	13	Bette	Flr	5	Anthony Gilbert
HDS	Count Henri DuShite	23+ 79	Flthy	B.Lt-General		16		Flr	4	Dave Marsden
RS	Earl Rick Shaw	23+ 79	Rich	General/Min w/o Port		2	Therèse	Flr	6	Charles Burrows
BdLS	Count Bernard de Lur-Saluces	22	61	Flthy	Lt-General/Prov.Mil.Gov	19		Flr	3	Rob Pinkerton
TC	Count Terence Cuckpowder	22	37	Poor	Bdr-General/Gds Brigadier	7		Flr	6	Mike Dommett
CdP	Marquis Camille de Polignac	22	32	Comfy	Colonel RFG	5	Kathy	Flr	4	James McReynolds
JdG	Count Jacques de Gain	21	25	Flthy	Fld Marshal	24			6	Ben Brown
JiT	Count Justin Thyme	20	49	Rich	B.Bdr-General QOC	18	Guinevere	Flr	2	Gerald Udowiczenko
ZUT	Marquis Xavier Ulric Turenne	20	36	Wlthy	B.General	4	Laura	Flr	1	Bob Blanchett
LSD	Baron Louis Severin Descartes	20+ 80	Rich	B.Bdr-Gen GDMD/Drgn Brigadier		6	Edna	Flr	1	Chris Schotmann
LR	Marquis Louis Renault	18- 14	Wlthy	Lt-General/2nd Div Commandr		3	Maggie	Flr	4	Roy Bleasdale
CdN	Baron Claude de Nord	18	47	Wlthy	Colonel KM	4		Both	4	Andrew Larder
ZvT	Baron Zeold von Tu	18+ 55	Wlthy	B.Lt-General/1st Div Commandr		8	Lucy	Both	3	Tim Macaire
JH	Sir Jacques Hatt	17+ 58	Wlthy	B.General/3rd Army Commndr		4	Cath	Flr	3	Joel Halpern
FXC	Marquis Frank X Change	16+ 90	Wlthy	Colonel CG/Justice Min.		11	Frances	Flr	4	Nigel Monaghan
NM	Sir Neville Moore	15	45	Wlthy	Captain RFG/Capt.K's Esc	1	Vera	Hunt	2	Cameron Wood
MdG	Martin de Garnache	15	34	Comfy	Lt.Colonel RFG	3	Chris	Both	4	Bill Howell
BS	Earl Balzac Slapdash	14	43	Rich	B.Bdr-General DG	21	Alison	Both	5	Matthew Wale
FS	Baron Felipe Savant	14+ 49	Wlthy	Captain RFG		5	Fifi	Both	4	Brick Amundsen
TTT	Sir Tiny Thierry Toothpick	14+ 49	Comfy	Major RFG/CPS		5	Madelaine	Flr	1	Jason Fazackarley
HWB	Hector William Boone	13	35	Wlthy	Major RFG	6		Both	5	Paul Wilson
HJ	Baron Hugh Jeneaux	13	F	Wlthy	Colonel ALC/Chancellor	9		Hunt	3	Bruno Giordan
CA	Baron Come Asiouar	13+ 43	Comfy	Lt.Colonel QOC/FMshl's Aide		7		Hunt	4	Jacob Andersson
SE	Stephane Etrange	12+ 43	Wlthy	B.Bdr-General CPC		3	Thomasina	Hunt	4	Neil Packer
MHD	Sir Marcel Hatch Dupree	12+ 41	Comfy	Lt.Colonel RM		5		Hunt	4	Graeme Wilson
BLC	Botte Le Chimiste	12+ 40	Comfy	Lt.Colonel GDMD/Cav Div Adjutant		2	Eve	Hunt	4	Tym Norris
ID	Sir Ian Dediette	12+ 37	Comfy	Major QOC		3		Hunt	2	Nik Luker

Chatter

Hmm, I'm lacking a bit of preamble to stick in here... Maybe I'll just move on to some specific topics.

RIP John Boardman

As a science fiction fan, I subscribe to David Langford's *Ansible* 'zine (news.ansible.uk if you don't already see it). One of the features here is a list of recently departed people with a connection to SF – writers, illustrators, fans, actors and so on. The latest issue's list includes John Boardman, 1932-2025, "US fan active since 1950 in cons, clubs and APAs, and treasurer of the 1967 Worldcon." He was also a physics professor.

However, John is better known in gaming circles as the editor of *Graustark*, the first postal *Diplomacy* 'zine (it started in 1963). And anyone who's played 'postal' *Diplomacy* will know that games are catalogued by a "Boardman number". Something else John started.

He was still publishing *Graustark* (it ran to over 700 issues!) when I started *TWJO* and I traded 'zines with him for many years (continuing with his SF 'zine, *Dagon*, after *Graustark* finally folded). What I remember most about John was his pacifism. Is it possible to have an aggressive pacifist? If so, John was one.

I particularly remember his observation that the opposite of 'politically correct' is 'wrong'! I have missed his writing in recent years and will continue to do so.

Pet peeves

Have you noticed that it's no longer possible to meet someone? No, you have to meet **with** them. Even the BBC does this: "The Prime Minister is meeting with some big nobs", for example. Why?

The dictionary at www.britannica.com reckons "*Meet* means both to encounter someone or something for the first time and to come together in order to talk. *Meet with* only means the latter..." Hmph!

Spiderwatch

Number of large, spindly spiders migrating from the living room to the bathroom: 1. Number of huge metal spiders in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern: 1 (my sister sent a photo to prove it).

Online stats

TWJO 253 was published in 1st May and the PDFs attracted 148 downloads through the month. While issue 254 saw the light of day on 16th and was



downloaded 125 times in the rest of May. And there were 64 more downloads for issue 252, making a total of 317 since publication.

Letters



Tim Macaire has an urgent request.

Hope all is going well, and the Pinn has not burst its banks. (!) Engineers everywhere follow your updates with interest.

He's so taking the mick. But here's a photo of the River (?) Pinn still safely contained within its bed.

Andy Kendall sounds perplexed.

Who has stolen May?

When and where did you last see her, Andy?

Jonathan Palfrey has a feeble excuse for not eating stroopwafels.

I have tried stroopwafels in the past and quite liked them, though not enough to try to find a source of them here in Catalonia. I wouldn't place them over the top of my coffee cup in any case, 'cos I don't drink coffee (nor tea).

I agree with you about 'anymore', which seems an unwelcome innovation to me, and I don't use it.

Kindred spirits! Or are we just of an age?

Still in Niagara

Pevans completes his Gathering report

We pick up the story on Friday morning, which started with another stroll to the patisserie for croissants and coffee. When I later arrived in the main games room, I found old gaming buddy Stance setting up *Civolution* with Walter. I dived in immediately as I really wanted to see designer Stefan Feld's take on a civilization-development game. (I have mixed reactions to Feld's games: some I like, some I don't.) Leo joined us to make it a full game.

First job: read the rules and explain the game, something Walter had already started on. There's an awful lot of stuff to wade through – things that may or may not happen, but you need to know about in case you want to take advantage of them. Luckily, a passing Matthew Monin took pity on us and delayed his own game start to teach. Many thanks, Matthew.

Femmes Fatales

No	Name	SL	Attr	Lover
66	Morgane Le Fay	24	B	
67	Justine Caisse	22	I	
65	Therèse Le Vert	21	B/W	RS
7	Chris Pacquette	19		MdG
61	Bette Noire	19	I/W	GdB
64	Edna Bucquette	18	W	LSD
3	Kathy Pacific	17	B	CdP
54	Madeline de Proust	17		TTT
35	Katy Did	16	I	
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	FS
62	Alison Wunderlandt	14		BS
11	Laura de Land	13		ZUT
26	Ella Fant	13	B	HF
27	Lucy Fur	13	B	EIF
45	Cath de Thousands	13		JH
8	Lotte Bottle	12	B	BeV
17	Henrietta Carrotte	12	I/W	
28	Vera Cruz	12		NM
31	Bess Ottede	12	I/W	
1	Sue Briquet	11	B	HS
4	Anne Tique	11	W	CS
23	Agnes Sorel	11	I/W	
40	Sheila Kiwi	11		
63	Carole Singeurs	11		JdA
20	Emma Roides	10	I	
38	Pet Ulante	10	W	
43	Di Lemmere	10	I	
53	Angelina de Griz	10	B	
6	Viv Ayschus	9		
59	May Banquot l'Idée	9		
19	Jenny Russe	8	W	
32	Sal Munella	8	W	PDT
47	Eve Ningalle	8	I/W	BLC
34	Freda de Ath	7	W	
39	Thomasina Tancenjin	7	I	SE
5	Belle Epoque	6	B/I	MD
24	Violet Bott	6	I/W	HF
25	Lois de Lô	5	B	CPL

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

Regiments

	RFG	CG	KM	DC	OOC	ALC	CPC	RM	CDMDPM	13F	PLD	53F	27M	4A	69A	Gscn
Col	CdP	FXC	CdN	BS	JiT	HJ	SE	N6	LSD+	PPuf	HF+	N3	N8	JdA		
LCol	MdG				CA	N5	FdB	N1	BLC	N2			N3	N6		
Maj 1	HMB	N1	N4		ID	N2	AH	N1	EIF	N1	N4+		N4	N4+		
Maj 2	TTT		N3		CS+	N5*	N3+	CdF+	MD+	N3			JC	N5		TCdS
Capt 1	NM	N6	N1	N6	N4		N5	N2	PDT	N1	N6		N1	N5		
Capt 2	FS	N1	N4	N3	N4		N6	N2	N5	N4	N5		N5*	N5		
Capt 3	N5*	N1	N1	N2	N4		N4	N5	N3	N4*	N2		N6	N3		
Capt 4		N1*	N3*	N5*	N4*		N2*	N2*	N5*		N4*		N4*	N3*		
Capt 5																
Capt 6																

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.

Brigade Positions

Guards Brigade	TC/N/__
Horse Guards Brigade	N2/N/CS
Heavy Brigade	N3/__/N3
Dragoon Brigade	LSD/SDS/MD
First Foot Brigade	N4/N/CdF
Second Foot Brigade	HF/__/N4
Third Foot Brigade	N3/N/N4
Fourth Foot Brigade	N3/N/__

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

Frontier Regiments

	F1	F2	F3	(Defence for Sept-Nov)	
Colonel	N2	N3	N6	F4	RNHB
				N2	N8
Attached	1 Sqn CPC				
Also at the Front	Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers Picardy Musketeers				

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

Battle Results

Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers: 3	Frontier regiment 1: 3
Picardy Musketeers: 3	Frontier regiment 2: 6
	Frontier regiment 3: 5
	Frontier regiment 4: 3
	RNHB regiment: 2

Other Appointments

King’s Escort: Ensign N	Captain NM
Cardinal’s Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Aides: to Crown Prince N	to Field Marshal CA
Provincial Military Governors: BdLS/N/N/N/N	
City Military Governor N	Adjutant-General __
Inspectors-General: of Cavalry N	of Infantry N
Commissioner of Public Safety TTT (until end June 1677)	
Chancellor of the Exchequer HJ (until end August 1677)	
Minister of Justice FXC (until end May 1677)	
Minister of War JJ (until end May 1677)	
Minister of State __	

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



Civolution – the central boards with the land in the centre.

Where to start with this monster? Well, at the centre is the land we are exploring, exploiting and fighting over with our ‘Tribes’. This is made up of odd-shaped tiles that provide six different terrains plus water. To give you an idea of the complexity of this game, there are three different materials (wood, stone, sand) for each terrain type – yes, that’s 18 in all. And all of them are potentially useful. So it’s just a question of what you want to do and which material you require (it took me ages to track down the one I particularly wanted).

There’s a scoring track around the terrain tiles and other tracks, card spaces and aides-memoire alongside. Then each player has their own, substantial, dual-layer player board (or ‘Console’). The cut-away bit at the top lets players insert cards, tokens and tiles, scoring points when a row fills up (points for everything!). The two layers provide slots that are filled with ‘Module’ tiles, allowing three levels of each module. These show actions that players can take and improving their level gives players better actions.

The game is played in four ‘Eras’ and players get plenty of actions in each Era, using their dice to power these actions (every so often they’ll need to take a ‘Reset’ turn to re-roll their dice and the end of the Era is triggered after a given number of Resets). You actually need two dice to use a Module and take its action. Hence, the first thing you do is check what Modules you could use (dice values can be changed with the appropriate resource) and what order makes sense. Actions include exploring, moving your Tribes, adding new Tribes (‘Procreating’), producing and moving materials and so on.

This is:

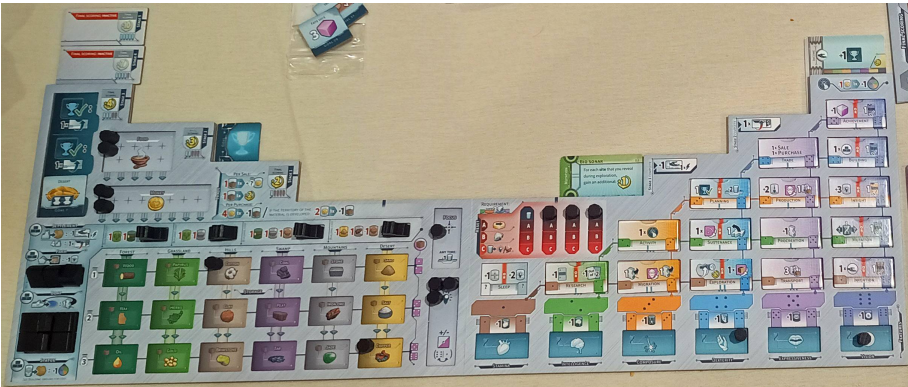
O At
P Great
E Intervals
R This
A Appears
T To
I Inflame
O Optic
N Nerves

TWJO 001¹

1 A tribute to John Boardman: this block was a recurring feature of *Graustark*. How he managed it on a manual typewriter, I don’t know.

At the end of an Era, players need to feed their Tribes, so finding food during the Era is a good idea. The Era's event then takes effect. Players score points for one 'Category' and get income. After the fourth Era, points are scored for all nine (!) scoring categories plus each player's board and players find out who's won. Did I mention it's complicated?

Anyway, as newbies we took the set starting hands which give each player a particular set-up and provide some direction in what they want to do. My cards gave me bonuses for exploring, so I spent the first Era happily exploring with both my Tribes and racking up a decent lead. However, what I wasn't doing was producing or procreating much. With help from the other players, I'd explored myself into a corner with no more bonuses in reach.



And here's my *Civolution* 'Console'. Modules are on the right; on the left are spaces for the 18 materials. Note I've started to fill the first row in the cut-out.

Time to do other things, which I proved not to be too good at. However, the second Era's Event came to my aid: the weather hit the top of the heat track, wiping out Tribes. Including both mine! What happens in this case is that you start with a new Tribe wherever you want. So I re-started in the middle of the unexplored area and racked up more bonus points to re-take the lead. The third and fourth Eras saw the heat repeatedly hit the top, with all players suffering – it wasn't just me who got wiped out.

Final scoring took Stance past me, but I hung on to second place. And that was five hours of concentration – learning and playing (and a break for lunch). Okay, I think this is a Stefan Feld game I like. A single play has barely scraped the surface as there are just so many things you can do. What it has done is give me a grounding in the game's mechanisms. It gets a provisional 9/10 on my highly subjective scale.

Sustenance was required and we were joined by a few others to visit a local Mexican restaurant. Seeing its address was on Niagara Falls Boulevard, which starts by the Falls, I thought it might be within walking distance. Then it was

Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux (Rapier) and Stephane Etrange (Sabre, adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Zeold von Tu (Rapier, Seconds CA, 1 rests) has cause with Elroi le Flingue (Sabre, Seconds LSD, adv.) for pinching Lucy.

“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. Orders conditional on a challenge being voted cause are acceptable.

Held over until December

Hugh Jeneaux versus Charles PiedLuminaire.

New Characters

Tim Rattray gets the Bastard son of a Merchant: Init SL 2; Cash 135; MA 1; EC 5 (X1).

Hunter Charest gets the Second son of a well-to-do Gentleman: Init SL 4; Cash 250; MA 5; EC 4 (X2).

Tables

Army Organisation and 1677's Summer Deployment

First Army (Field Ops)	GdB/N/N5/N
First Division (Field Ops)	ZvT/N/__
Guards Brigade (Field Ops) - RFG CG KM	
Dragoon Brigade (Field Ops) - GDMD PLLD	
Cavalry Division (Field Ops)	N1/N/BLC
Horse Guards Brigade (Field Ops) - DG QOC	
Heavy Brigade (Field Ops) - ALC CPC	
Second Army (Siege)	BeV/N/__/N
Frontier Division (Siege)	N1/N/N3
Frontier Regiments (Siege)	
Third Army (Defence)	JH/N/N3/N
Second Division (Defence)	LR/__/CPL
3rd Foot Brigade (Defence) - 27M 4A	
4th Foot Brigade (Defence) - 69A Gscn	
RNHB Regiment (Defence)	
Third Division (Defence)	N2/N/N3
1st Foot Brigade (Defence) - RM PM	
2nd Foot Brigade (Defence) - 13F 53F	

Organisation and Deployment for the Campaign Season
with Army and Division posts (Commander/Aide/Adjutant/QMG)
Entries are ID for player characters, “N” (+ MA if needed) for NPC, __ for vacant

Trials

Arent Hayes will be on trial at the start of October on the charge of “Daring to declare that Count Cuckpowder is both innocent and guilty, thereby seeking to create a state of confusion which must translate in some way to Treason.” CPS Thierry Toothpick will prosecute and an NPC Minister will stand in as judge.

As with this month, class 7 favours (and/or bribes) are needed to influence the verdict (class 9 to commute the sentence if AH is guilty). Witnesses may be called (AH has no employees for this purpose) and all players may contribute to the fun.

Duels

Results of September's duels

Come Asiouar (with ZvT, gains 1 Exp) beat Camille de Polignac (with BdLS).

Frank X Change (with LSD, gains 1 Exp) beat Elroi le Flingue (with LSD).

Neither Charles PiedLuminaire nor Justin Cartier turned up for their duel and both lost SPs.

Agaric Champignon didn't turn up to fight Steve De Sade and lost SPs.

Claude de Nord (with FXC, no Expertise) beat his friend Camille de Polignac (with BdLS, under half Endurance, losing 9 extra SPs).

Grudges to settle next month

Elroi le Flingue (Sabre, Seconds LSD, adv.) and Jean d'Aubergine (Rapier, 1 rests) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Lucy.

Chemin de Fer (Cutlass) and Justin Cartier (Rapier, adv.) have mutual cause over Freda.

Claude de Nord (Sabre, Seconds FXC, adv.) and Thibault Chanson de Skye (Rapier, 5 rests) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Jacky.

Ignace Pardaillon (Sabre, 1 rests) and Justin Cartier (Rapier, adv.) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Lois.

Arent Hayes (Sabre, adv.) and Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux (Rapier) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Balzac Slapdash (Rapier, adv.) and Con Stantinople (Rapier, 5 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Balzac Slapdash (Rapier, adv.) and Ian Dediette (Rapier, 5 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Balzac Slapdash (Rapier, adv.) and Justin Thyme (Sabre, Seconds ZUT & RS, 5 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Chemin de Fer (Cutlass, adv.) and Thibault Chanson de Skye (Rapier, 1 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Marcel Hatch Dupree (Cutlass, adv.) and Thibault Chanson de Skye (Rapier, 2 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

pointed out that it was number 8,600 and something and several miles away! So we loaded up a couple of cars to get some decent food. And somebody may have added a pitcher of Margaritas...

Returning, fortified, we went our separate ways for more games. Walter and I bumped into Gathering regulars Sharon and Warren Madden, who fancied a refresher game of *Obsession* and we were happy to oblige. It was great fun, as always, and the copy we played included the new guests from the *Characters* expansion.

Sharon and Warren were clearly rusty, but the game was a terrific struggle between Walter and me. It was nip and tuck at the end, with Walter winning by just one point. With our scores over 200, that's just so close. *Obsession* is a solid 9/10 on my highly subjective scale and has been since I played the first edition at the Gathering six years ago.

And that was enough for Friday.

Saturday: Overlord and a space station

The first order of business on Saturday (okay, after breakfast – Peter and I resorted to Starbucks this time) is the flea market. Lots of people hawking games, mostly second-hand, and a few other things. I find it mostly a nostalgia fest – “Oh, I remember this!” “Wow, that's the original edition!”. I did make a purchase. I couldn't resist \$10 for Philippe Keyaerts's *Vinci*, a game I have fond memories of and am surprisingly good at (according to my track record on Yucata.de), but which I didn't own. I'd guess many of my readers won't have heard of *Vinci*. But you may know its “re-implementation” (as BGG puts it) ten years later: *Small World*. *Vinci* doesn't have the fantasy theme of its descendant and is played over a map of Europe, but is much the same game. It's 10/10 on my highly subjective scale and now I actually own a copy.

And after the flea market comes the annual *Memoir '44* Overlord game organised by the lovely James and Sheila. To make set-up quicker we



Operation Lightfoot ready to go: Allies on the left (note the brown Russian models making up for the lack of Brits), Axis to the right. And I'm in charge of the nearest Axis positions.

played a printed scenario – put the map on the table, add the pieces in the marked positions and you're ready to play. The idea of Overlord is that both sides have three Field Generals, each commanding the troops in a third of the battlefield, and a Commander-in-Chief who dishes out the cards that let the Generals do things.

This year's scenario was Operation Lightfoot, aka the second battle of El Alamein. Sheila confided that she'd chosen this one so that Peter and I could play the Brits. However, the established team of Terry, Robert and Scott with Mario as their CinC camped on the Allied side of the map. So the Axis side comprised me, Peter and Leo with our commander, Frank diLorenzo – at least we were spared Frank's attempt at a Russian accent this year.



My command towards the end of the game with a tank battle on the left, British engineers approaching the minefields and my artillery blown away.

battered but still holding off Robert's attack. And my guys held their line behind the minefields, despite my artillery having been blown away. Mind you, Terry's units were all still there, even if many of them were pretty battered. That was a great fun, as always, and 12:15 was a close scoreline.

Peter and I grabbed lunch in the sandwich bar next to Starbucks. It does a mean Reuben, one of my favourites. And then it was time for my rendezvous with Brain Bankler for an introduction to *Stationfall* – organised before the event. What I wasn't expecting was a total of six players, all Gathering veterans and all, apart from me, experienced *Stationfall* players!

The idea of *Stationfall* is that the players are characters aboard a space station that's been knocked out of orbit and is about to burn up on re-entry to Earth's atmosphere. Each of the characters has their own goals – which do not necessarily

My command was the German left flank, opposite Terry, which was quiet for most of the game. The Brits' main geographical objectives are in the centre and Axis right, so Leo and Peter saw most of the action. Scott was quick to clear a way through the minefields in the centre and he and Leo then fought back and forth across the central ridge, victory medals swapping hands several times. Peter held off a fierce attack from the Allied armour while Terry and I traded pot-shots at each other.

There were heavy casualties on both sides, so the superior numbers of the Allies eventually told. With virtually no troops left to hold the central ridge, Leo had no answer to the final British attack. Meanwhile, Peter's force was

only commute it on a 7 on one die. Influence for commutation makes the die roll required 4, so it was 50:50 and I rolled 5. TC lives! For now...

Just to be clear, I do not add characters' signatures to their press items. If you want to claim responsibility, you should include your character name or ID as part of the press. Hence the unsigned invitations this month.

Another thing to be aware of is the sequence of what happens when each month (see section 2.5 in the house rules). In particular, borrowing money and the CPS issuing warrants both happen **after** trials are resolved.

Welcome

Joining us for a trial run is Hunter Charest who, as far as I know, is new to *En Garde!*. Welcome to *LPBS*, Hunter. You'll find the other players a helpful lot – some of them may even lend your character money!

Absent friends

The following didn't get orders to me in time and suffered the consequences.

Announcements

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

Camille de Polignac applies for Army Adjutant of First Army

Camille de Polignac applies for Army Adjutant of Second Army

Camille de Polignac applies for Army Adjutant of Third Army

No orders from Ray Vahey (X2) – I removed this character as I haven't had orders from Ray for some time..

Farewell

Richard Cronan has decided not to continue after his trial sub. "I have far too much going on right now and [it's not] the relaxing, contemplative, pastime it should be." Thanks for giving it a go, Richard and you're welcome back any time real life calms down a bit.

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.

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.

Poetry Corner

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

With a crack they're off – a rushing tide,
The race begun, side by side.
Hooves a-thunder, down the tracks,
To the glory of our Grand Duke Max
† SDS

The Sabre That Settled the Score

Oh Terence, so fierce and so cruel,
Made poor Beau look a bit of a fool.
One slash, then a cut,
The Minister was shut—
Now Paris must find a new rule!
† Baron Louis Severin Descartes

Was it an accident, or malign fate?
France has lost its Minister of State
In a tragedy on the duelling field,
Not knowing when to yield.
Gentlemen, remember when to pause
and surrender even though you have cause.
Remember Beau Reese Jean Seine –
We will not see his like again.
† Frank X Change

My Brigade needs an Aide!
Send CV to me!
(a poem by Hugo Furst)

Points Arising

Next deadline is 4th July

Thanks to all who contributed to the trial report – the framework is Jason's words from TTT's perspective. ☺

I thought it would be a good idea to show the mechanics of the trial. As TC

Ode to the Grand Duke Max's Trophy

1 It's time to saddle my favourite horse;
To gallop hard without a pause
And ride as best as I can because
I want to win this race.
2 Not for the lure of the gold doubloons,
Not just to beat some poor buffoons,
But the honour of Duke Max's Dragoons.
Oh, let me match the pace!
3 Now we just wait for the starting gun;
Now for the start of the racing fun;
We ride until the race is won;
Oh, where will be my place?
† MD

Ah Paris, what a city, so vibrant and pretty!
It does, however, cost a pretty penny,
Especially with a mistress who needs much upkeep,
Requiring you to have pockets that are rather deep.
There are parties, with events galore;
Sights that I have never seen before;
All in all, it's vibrant and pretty –
Paris, what a great city!
† PDT

is over SL 12, 11 on two dice is required to convict him. The witness (only CdP counts according to the rules) and Favours for the prosecution bring this down to -4! Influence for the defence take it back up to 3. So only a roll of 2 would save TC and I rolled 8. The sentence is Death, so the King will

include escaping – and players score points for those they have achieved at the end of the game. The twist is that who is playing which character is secret, players can use any character to do things and there are more characters than players.

So, in your turn you choose a character and carry out actions with them. These can be standard actions like moving around the station. Or actions specific to that character – there's a card for each character in play that shows what they can do. Or specific to the character's location – such as launching an escape pod from the Bridge. Oh yes, there are escape pods. And other ways to get off the station.

As a newbie then, I need to learn what can be done at each location, peruse the cards to absorb what each character can do and then work out how best to achieve my character's goals. Or, as I was advised, "Do stuff and see what happens." Great advice and that's what I did.

With mayhem all around the station, I surreptitiously manoeuvred my character towards the escape pods (my main goal was to escape) while using others to do stuff. My secondary goal was for a particular character not to escape. Early on this character was knocked out when some nutter (no, not me) chucked a fire-bomb into that room. Clearly this wasn't a player character as nobody mounted a rescue.



We're playing *Stationfall* on the neoprene mat with the (15!) characters laid out on the right. Pink areas are the zero gravity core.

Another early happening was a character shutting off the station's CCTV. In game terms, this means no character can be held responsible for what they've done (something that is in certain character's goals) as there's no evidence! As part of my 'do stuff' approach, I used one of the clone character to knock another character over the head. The clone was promptly gunned down by the Marshal, so I used another clone to take out the Marshal! Thus convincing at least one player that I was playing the clones.

In the end, my character was used by another player to drag his unconscious character into an escape pod and get away. Yay! Escaping while my target didn't garnered me a whole five points – my character had a selection of subsidiary goals that would have added more had I achieved any of them. With the two winners racking up a massive seven points each, I think I did pretty well.

Stationfall was completely bonkers and great fun – despite the initial paralysis when faced with something so open. I've introduced it to my local group and expect to be playing it again soon. It gets a provisional 9/10 on my highly subjective scale.



Mmm, ice cream...

We took a break in the game to indulge at another regular feature of the Gathering: the ice cream social. Sponsored by Rio Grande Games (thanks, Rio Grande), this is an opportunity to stuff your face with ice cream, cake and numerous toppings. And chat to other people as well – both while queuing for and eating your plateful. We just grabbed ours and returned to the game. With copious napkins.

Despite the ice cream, it was time to eat. Peter and I joined a group of our friends that was heading out.

And played the restaurant game. First rule of the restaurant game: you can't eat at the first restaurant you look at! So the gang led us towards the place they fancied. Then someone spotted the Anchor Bar – "Home of the original Buffalo wing" – just down the street and suggested going there instead. So we moseyed in that direction, into the teeth of a cold, cold wind (and two evenings before we'd been sitting out to eat). However, there was a 30-minute wait for a group of seven, which nobody fancied.

Back out, walking with the wind this time, we hit another place. This time Peter and I were the awkward customers as this was clearly a fast food joint rather than a place for a sit-down meal. The two of us returned to the Anchor Bar, only to find it was still a 30-minute wait for just two diners. Then Peter spotted seats at the bar, where there was no waiting. Result! The restaurant game always ends back at the first restaurant you visited.

We perched on bar stools and tucked in to our Buffalo wings (and beer). Well, what else were we going to order at the "Home of the original Buffalo wing"? Actually, I only had a half-dozen wings (not something I usually go for, but they were really

whatever influence is at your disposal, Do so to avenge our dear late Minister of State and friend, Count Beau Reese Jean Seine, who helped so many of us over the years, both through appointments awarded and wonderful party invites to the Fleur. NOW IS OUR TIME, Cuckpowder cannot avoid the trial.

Sincere regards to you all,

† Sir Tiny Thierry Toothpick
Commissioner of Public Safety
Captain, His Majesty's Royal Foot
Guards Regt

A not-so-private letter from Terence Cuckpowder, addressees unknown.

Gentlemen,

It appears our Commissioner of Public Safety has problems with honour.

Gentlemen cross swords honourably and no one enters the field of honour intent on killing.

Sadly, our esteemed Minister of State decided to continue to fight when wounded and walked into my second blow. None doubt his bravery and I will be holding a wake in his memory in week two next month. He died gloriously. Honour him

On our CPS's accusations of cowardice, I point merely to my military record. A year ago my post precluded military service in a regiment. Now I have a post leading France's premier brigade and will be off to war in the winter, once the men have relaxed and enjoyed their well-earned leave.

As to mistresses, those flowers we sip and adore, none are anything but transient. We dally, we love, but they are lilies of the field. No man in honour hates over a mistress shifting her

affections. I have lost more mistresses than most. I bear no ill will. We cross blades in honour, we move on. Had I attempted a dalliance with a man's wife, I would deserve the condemnation of all.

I respect our CPS's right to his opinions, I am saddened by his attempt to mar the honour of our deceased Minister of State by suggesting that such a honourable man would have sought my arrest after a duel. As I said, I think our Commissioner has problems with honour.

I will happily face him, wounded as I am, with one hand behind my back.

Gentlemen, I beg your consideration.

† Terence Cuckpowder

Cher Count Cuckpowder,

I understand your reasoning and have to say I agree.

I have never trusted Toothpick anyway. Unfortunately, I am not of high enough Status to appear as a witness on your behalf.

I wish you all the best in the trial. If you come out innocent, TTT will lose his CPS post, which would be highly appreciated!

Hope you find enough influence on your side.

† Baron Louis Severin Descartes
Dragoon Brigadier

To SDS and AC

Oi! Leave my lovely lady alone! Just because I've been away at His Majesty's Pleasure for 3 months does NOT mean I don't expect to see her on my return... quite the opposite, in fact.

† Stephane Etrange

All Gentlemen of the RFG and their ladies are welcome to attend at the Fleur on Week 4 of November, as my guest, to celebrate the life of our former Chef de Regiment, BRJS.

***** Guy Faulk's Party
November WEEK 1 *****
To celebrate that wonderful ally of France, Guy Faulk, I will be hosting a party at my club during Week 1 of November. Please bring your ladies. Open to own and friendly regiments, social level 5 and above.

Personal

Count Cuckpowder,
The following missive has reached my estate today.
Since I have the habit to listen to both sides of the story, I would like to hear your comment.

† Baron Louis Severin Descartes
Dragoon Brigadier

FRANCE NEEDS YOU!!

To: The Worthies of Paris,
Gentlemen, France and Paris need you!

Our great Minister of State, Count Seine, a friend and benefactor to so many of us, lays slain... murdered in a duel by the infamous lothario bully, and threat to all our future loving relationships,
TERENCE
CUCKPOWDER.

This is a man who for many years now has skulked back in Paris while our brave and gallant troops have marched off to the Front, risking, and often losing, their lives in defence of King and Country. In their absence the rogue Cuckpowder has targeted

numerous mistresses, tearing them away from their duty to serving soldiers and revelling in the fact that, to save their honour, such military gentlemen feel compelled to meet him upon the Duelling field. Unfortunately, Cuckpowder's sheer strength and the fact that he has had plenty of time to practice and hone his swordsmanship put many of those cuckold opponents at a disadvantage and many have died at the end of his blade.

This has gone on far too long. In the months before his tragic murder Count Seine had appointed me as Commissioner of Public Safety with the sole instruction of having Cuckpowder arrested and brought to trial, where justice would be served. Despite my having done as the good Count instructed, it appears that Cuckpowder caught wind of this and decided to strike before he could be attested before the MoS. We now find ourselves in the position where an unknown will sit in judgement, an unknown who may well be a confident of Cuckpowder himself!!

France needs rid of Cuckpowder, Paris needs rid of Cuckpowder, we all need rid of Cuckpowder before he steals any more of our ladies or murders more of us upon the cobblestones. He cannot, seemingly, be bested in a duel nor can we rely upon any foreign troops killing him on a distant battlefield since he consistently avoids the Front. Thus our only realistic option is in a Court Room and to do that we need your influence!

As Commissioner of Public Safety I beseech each of you to press the trial Judge for a GUILTY verdict, use

good) as I went for "Wings & Weck". The latter being another local delicacy: "juicy roast beef piled high on a freshly baked kimmelweck roll". Apparently the kimmelweck (or kummelweck) roll is baked with caraway seeds and topped with coarse salt. And very nice it was too.

After all that there was time for one more game before bed and that game was *Cat in the Box* with old friends Cheryl, Trisha and Wei-Hwa. The game's title is reference to Schrödinger's cat, the famous thought experiment devised to show the absurdity of quantum mechanics (the cat is both dead and alive at the same time!). Here, though, we have a deck of numbered cards. But cards that do not have a suit/colour. Which is interesting as we're about to play a trick-taking game, starting by each predicting (!) how many tricks we're going to win this hand.

The way this works is that whoever leads the trick states the colour/suit played, marking it on a central grid of numbers and colours. Which means that card is now identified and can't be played again. What's more, there are five cards of each number, but only four suits. Sooner or later, someone won't be able to play a card – a paradox! This triggers a premature end to the hand. Players score points for tricks won with a bonus if they correctly predicted this number.

There are some more wrinkles to this game, but it's a clever take on trick-taking. I enjoyed playing it, but I don't feel this is a game I need to own. So it gets a provisional 6/10 on my highly subjective scale.

Sunday: Can't Stop the card games

Sunday is the last day of the Gathering and usually something of an anti-climax: people have left, others are packing up and there's a general feeling of things winding down. However, there is one remnant of the tournaments that used to run through the week: the Sunday morning *Can't Stop* tournament. I was drawn in a threesome with two real Gathering veterans, Bruce and David (one of the guys I'd played *Stationfall* with the day before). David won our game in just four rounds: he went bust once, but topped out a row in each of his other turns. Wow! Bruce and I had only just got ourselves onto the board and it was all over. Oh well, plenty of time to play something else.

And that something else was *Transamerica*, a game I've not played for many a year. The game is a race to connect your cities: one in each region of the USA. What



This is the Deluxe edition of *Cat in the Box* and I'm stymied as I can't play either the 1 or the 8.

makes it a bit easier is that you can extend anywhere that's connected to your starting position, so you can capitalise on what others have built. We had a full six players with Peter, Leo, Jake, Josh and Carrie. I was definitely rusty, but the others were very much on the ball. Oh well, I blame the cards.



Cabanga!

Having lost Jake, Josh and Carrie introduced us to *Cabanga!* A card game where you throw cards at the other players? I'm in! We have a deck of numbered cards in four colours. (Hmm, sounds familiar...) Plus two discard piles for each colour. In turn we play a card from hand to one of the discard piles. However, if anybody else has card/s numbered between the card played and the card on the other discard pile, they throw them at the unlucky player, who adds them to their hand.

And the idea is to get rid of all your cards, of course. When someone achieves this, cards still held are penalty points for the others and we play a few hands until some is completely disgraced. *Cabanga!* is a neat little filler that is very satisfying to play. I give it a provisional 7/10 on my highly subjective scale.

One of the reasons there were people sitting around playing games on Sunday morning was the innovation that followed: Sunday morning brunch, courtesy of the organisers. I suspect this didn't encourage that many people to stay for Sunday, but it did bring together all those who were still there and prompt continued play.

And, having stuffed our faces, Peter and I were with some old friends to try *Revolve!*, a new card game from Kei Kajino, designer of *Scout*. As with *Scout*, we have a deck of cards that have two numbers – one at each end – and the aim is to get rid of your cards. Which you do by putting cards down in front of you. However many you put down, they must show the same number and you can't rotate your cards to achieve this. If you place the same **number** of cards as anyone already has in front of them, they must be a higher value and the other player must pick theirs back up, rotating the cards before putting them back in their hand.

Alternatively, you can add a card of the same number to someone else's set (don't rotate) or rotate the cards in your hand. And if you don't do any of those, you must pick up a set of cards (do rotate!). The first player to empty their hand gets two points, the second one. And first to four points wins. It's an elegant little game and another clever filler. That'll be a provisional 7/10 on my highly subjective scale.

Time to start my journey home with a stroll back across the Rainbow Bridge and a few questions from Canadian immigration. It was a surprisingly warm day again and the sun was beating through the bus windows. Then I discovered that the air

The Guards Brigade will be going to the front in the last month of the season. Those wishing exemption, apply to Brigadier Cuckpowder.

To: The Gentlemen of Paris
His Excellency, Commissioner of Public Safety, Major Sir Tiny Thierry Toothpick is seeking two dependable individuals who are interested in undertaking a role within Government, the Public Safety Ministry to be exact.
The roles are that of Ferret, reporting to the Commissioner and agreeing to serve any valid Arrest Warrant, as need arises.

A strong sense of patriotism, a keen eye and a willingness to do the Commissioner's bidding are essential requirements for the job, in return for which the successful applicants will receive -

- Immunity from Arrest while TTT is CPS.
- A generous salary of 30 crowns a month.
- The opportunity to join the Commissioner for drinks and nibbles at his club, the Fleur de Lys, once a month.
- A lovely orange uniform!

Please apply to Commissioner Toothpick, C/o The Public Safety Ministry, La Bastille, Paris

Matters of Honour

Sigh. Wishing to join a superior regiment but need to improve my standing a bit... Also like to gain a bit more experience in the duelling field. Who would find a second useful?

† JS

Monsieur le CPS – I Challenge you to a duel. I shall fight with one hand behind my back.

Despatches from the Front

Foxy Mr Fox (aka Rusé le Renard) is no longer bored. Still occasionally frightened, but excited too! "400 crowns! that's more money than I thought possible to be in one place!" And it's mine!, all mine! Mwah hah hah hah haaaaa!"

Such Hubris! And, strange to say, Nemesis often comes in the form of a cavalry sabre.
† Le Roi

Social

Gentlemen of Paris,

During week 2, Miss Nifisent and I will be dining at my club and be delighted to receive gentlemen and their ladies for polite discussion and whist; refreshments at my expense.

† Marquis Louis Renault

Party – November Week 2

Earl Rick Shaw invites all SL 15 and above (and their mistresses) to the Fleur de Lys to celebrate his recent elevation in the peerage.

Carousing costs will be paid and a prize of 100 crowns to the person with the most imaginative use of Ermine (remember there will be ladies present).

Week 2 a memorial for the memory of our gallant Minister of State, all invited.

Casualty of War

After the capture of Philippsburg by Imperial forces last month, the French troops consolidate their holdings and rely on their fortifications. This is no good for the Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers, who find limited opportunity to exercise their horses. Colonel Hugh Jeneaux is disgruntled.

The conditions are more suited to the freshly arrived Picardy Musketeers. They fend off reconnaissance attacks by the Spanish, bringing a Mention in Despatches to CO Percival Puffington (“Plenty of puff”). He picks up a hundred crowns or so in booty.

François de Blanchefort’s Cuirassier squadron is attached to Frontier regiment 2. Despite the defensive posture, François gets his men out into the countryside, which gets him a Mention. Then they run into a superior force of Dutch cavalry, but retire in good order, granting François a second MiD (“Good leadership”). Private Vaux de Fon survives a close encounter with a Dutch sabre to be brevetted a Subaltern.

Fed up with Third Frontier, Rusé le Renard tries to join the Royal North Highlanders, but is disappointed once again – “Bored and disappointed seems to be my default position,” he muses. His desire for loot clouds his judgment and he is slightly recklessly brave. Oh dear. He sticks his head up at the wrong moment and gets a musketball in the brain. RIP. ❖

Press

Announcements

**** Aide Required ****

I am looking for a competent aide. Please contact me with your credentials.

† (Brevet) Bdr-General Count Thyme

Soldiers of the Third Army:

I am not especially happy with my (NPC) Aide. If you find yourself qualified (Major, within the 3rd Army structure) then I would be happy to have a word with my current Aide and see about having you replace him.

Yours,

† B. General Jacques Hatt, 3rd Army
Commander

**** 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.

† Count Thyme

To all candidates for Minister of State Edna and I are very interested in the political future of our wonderful country and would be happy to hear your ideas.

We may have a word at court to support a candidate.

† Baron Louis Severin Descartes
Dragoon Brigadier

con was faulty and pumping hot air around my feet! It was a hot trip to the airport and I needed a good half an hour to cool down. Anyway, the flight was uneventful and on time and Heathrow’s baggage handlers were efficient, so I was home pretty much as expected. This year’s jet lag was surprisingly mild, only affecting me for a couple of days, and no post-con sniffles, which are also common. A vintage year!

Games Events

A new event this year is **MidSummerCon** – a trial run by the **MidCon** committee to see if a second event works. It’s at the Kenilworth Holiday Inn from 20th-22nd June and will be smaller than **MidCon**. Expect open gaming, though the website allows attendees to schedule games and look for players. Details at summer.midcon.org.uk

29th June sees a new event to me: the London Strategy Games Festival (by which they mean abstract strategy games – Chess, Go, *Othello*, *Abalone*, *Hive* et al) – at the Mind Sports Centre in Hammersmith. If that’s your bag, you’ll find the details at strategygamesfestival.com

And July means the long-running ManorCon: 18th-21st July at a new venue this year, Northampton University. Specifically, The Learning Hub on the University’s Waterside Campus. Accommodation is in the University’s Hall of Residence,. It’s been years since I attended, but ManorCon is essentially an open gaming event with plenty of room (and time) for playing games. There are a few organised events, including a *Diplomacy* tournament, Treasure Hunt and Pop Quiz this year. For full details and to book your place, see the website at manorcon.org.uk

Swiggers: games club that meets on 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 these days. For more info, see www.pevans.co.uk/Swiggers or the BGG Guild at boardgamegeek.com/guild/1672

UK Games Expo: 29th-31st May 2026 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 space. For details see www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk

Spiel: *the* board games event of the year. 23rd-26th October 2025, at the Messe (Exhibition Centre) in Essen. Contact Friedhelm Merz Verlag, Postfach 210250, Bonn, 53157 Germany or see www.spiel-messe.com/en

MidCon: 31st Oct–2nd Nov 2025 at the Derby Mickleover Hotel in Mickleover (two miles from Derby city centre). **MidCon** is a friendly board games convention, now in a comfortable modern hotel. It’s largely open gaming, but the new website allows games to be scheduled in advance – useful if you want lots of players for something. There’s also a Bring ’n’ Buy and a quiz on Saturday night. See midcon.org.uk

Fictionary Dictionary

First off, I have an apology to make. Somehow I wrongly stated that Jonathan Palfrey’s definition of Wrasse was the most popular – it was actually Mark Cowper’s entry – and then quoted Jonathan’s definition of Aspersorium. Sigh. Sorry, Jonathan – I blame incompetence.

Round 4 scores

A lexeme is, of course, “a minimal unit, such as a word or stem, in the vocabulary of a language.”

While partan is a Scots word for crab.

And Mike Pollard’s definition of partan (“Exactly the right amount of sunbathing”) was a clear favourite. He did give an alternative, as well: “an instruction from Henry VIII to his executioner.” Groan.

His score leaps as a result, but Mr Gilbert retains his lead despite not scoring this round.

Mike Dommsett suggests a new name for the game: Pictionary. I think that’s been taken, Mike.

The scores		
Player	This round	Total
Colin Bruce	4	12
Mark Cowper	0	7
Mike Dommsett	4	6
Anthony Gilbert	0	15
William Hay	6	10
Andrew Kendall	0	7
Andrew Larder	0	4
Nik Luker	3	12
Tim Macaire	0	6
Nigel Monaghan	0	1
Graeme Morris	0	5
Jonathan Palfrey	3	5
Mike Pollard	8	9
Pam Udowiczenko	0	4
Bruce Whitehill	0	3
Andrew Whiteley	0	2

Round 5 definitions

Here are the proposed definitions for the next two words. All you have to do (whether or not you submitted anything) is let me know your favourite definition for each word.

Bromate

1 Any close friend of Frank Skinner or Adrian Chiles.

2 The Australian male version of best friends. “He’s my mate, but we’re so close, we could be brothers”.

Who was where – round and about				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
In jail			AH	
Practising	ZUT - Rapier NM - Rapier BS - Rapier FS - Rapier HDS - Cutlass PDT - Sabre BLC - Sabre JdG - Rapier MdG - Rapier BeV - Sabre IP - Sabre BdLS - Cutlass LR - Rapier	FXC - Rapier HDS - Cutlass JdG - Rapier RS - Sabre CPL - Sabre MD - Sabre JH - Sabre BdLS - Cutlass	ZUT - Rapier JJ - Rapier HS - Rapier JIT - Sabre ZVT - Rapier HWB - Rapier SBC - Rapier JC - Rapier HDS - Cutlass PDT - Sabre BLC - Sabre JdG - Rapier MdG - Rapier RS - Sabre CdF - Cutlass BeV - Sabre MD - Sabre SDS - Sabre BdLS - Cutlass LR - Rapier	HS - Rapier SBC - Rapier JC - Rapier FXC - Rapier JdG - Rapier RS - Sabre BeV - Sabre JH - Sabre BdLS - Cutlass LR - Rapier
Regimental Duties	SDS			IP
Doing nothing		TC -club		TC -club
Visiting His Maj	JJ			
BRJS Memorial mass			FXC + Frances	
Shows everybody else: Weapon = Weapon practised with. For those doing nothing: -club = not in a club; -Cash = insufficient funds; -SL = insufficient Social Level.				

Who was where – with the ladies				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Kathy	Out CA fails	Out CA fails	Out CA fails	Out
Lois	CPL succeeds ex-HJ		Out IP fails	
Lois's doorstep		JC IP		
Ella		HF succeeds	Out ID fails	Out
Lucy Lucy's doorstep	ZvT at home JdA EIF	Out	EIF succeeds ex-ZvT	Out
Freda Freda's doorstep	JC CdF DJA st.down			CdF fails
Jacky Jacky's doorstep	TCdS CdN	Out		Out
Morgane	TC at home		with TC for walk	
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; st.down = stood down to rivals.				
Bawdy houses	JS + FC MHD + FC HWB + FC SBC + FC AH + FC: Mug 0 AA + FC: Mug 0 ID + FC	SDS(G 20) + FC	DJA + FC	HDS + FC CA + FC
FC = Female Companionship; Mug n = Mugged & amount lost; (G) = Gambled.				

- 3 Awkward conflation term used due to social dithering about which term of friendship is appropriate.

4 Bromance that has evolved into being just good friends.

5 Friend of a friend.

6 A humiliating defeat to West Bromwich Albion.

7 A man's best friend (used generally by over-confident and under-educated chaps in their twenties).

8 A noxiously aromatic compound formed by the combination of over-reactive elements. For example flatus (or trump as it is sometimes known) when bubbled through a tincture of musk produces dog-E, a particularly toxic bromate.

9 A South American cactus, possibly the only such that has no psychotropic properties (or none yet discovered).

10 A term for a best mate from youth.

11 To convert someone into a West Bromwich Albion supporter.

12 Your brother, who's also your lover.

13 Chemical similar to Bromide but makes you very chummy with members of same sex.

Transept

1 A devious attempt by a zine editor to get his readers cancelled for commenting publicly on trans issues.
- 2 An early design of aircraft to break the sound barrier.

3 A feature of church architecture – typically a pipe organ that has been converted into a Lady chapel.

4 A French train exactly seven coaches in length.

5 A group of seven people sharing a house and beds.

6 Holy Order of ex-male priests who have undergone surgery and now identify as Nuns.

7 Intermediate level of competence, typically between inept and adept.

8 A number which identifies as seven, but is considered by mathematicians to retain its original value.

9 Portmanteau word for 'Transsexual September', a new month-long celebration which involves everybody determining which toilet to use purely on the basis of a pre-visit die roll.

10 Someone who can change sex quickly and skilfully.

11 Someone who resents being described as inept by J K Rowling.

12 The precise moment September transitions into October.

13 A type of medieval arch in a church, usually made from stone.

Words for round 6

Divi-divi and Stravaig

What do you think they should mean? Send me your definitions.

What’s this all about?

This game is open to all readers and I guess most of you will have come across some variation of it. Each issue I will put up a couple of obscure (or not) words. Anybody who wants to participate writes in with a fictional definition for each word. (For example: “Geranium: a ceremonial dagger used by Aztec priests for human sacrifice.”) I publish the definitions, anonymously.

All readers (not just those who contributed) vote for their favourite/most plausible/most amusing definitions (any vote for yourself will be ignored). Players score points for the number of people who choose their definition. (In other versions of the game, the definitions include the correct one and players get points for spotting it. However, the internet makes this too easy, so I’ve left this bit out.)

We’ll run this for 10 rounds. The winner will be the player with the most points.

Send your votes and definitions to Pevans at
180 Aylsham Drive, UXBRIDGE UB10 8UF or
to TWJO@pevans.co.uk by 4th July 2025

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At the Races

Where	Week 4
Prix d’Or	LSD + Edna . ZUT + Laura . NM + Vera . JS . BS + Alison . FS + Fifi . TCdS . JiT + Guinevere . TTT + Madelaine . ZvT . MHD . HWB . AH . PDT + Sal . BLC + Eve . JdA . AA . EIF + <u>Lucy</u> . MdG + Chris . GdB + Bette . CS + Anne . ID . CdN . CPL . MD + Belle . SDS . DJA

Toadying to character above; (G) = Gambled; underline = first time mistress with new beau.

tail starts with Botte, Jean and Xavier, followed by Felipe, Steve and Thibault. Claude has been dropped and Martin is still a length adrift.

After the final corner, it’s a sprint for the finish. Louis’s turn of speed continues without faltering and his horse crosses the line two lengths ahead of his nearest rival, the not-quite-as-speedy Justin. This means he wins back half of the prize pot he put up! Thierry is third, just behind Justin, with plenty of clear air between him and fourth placed Zeold, despite him getting the most from his horse at the end. The rest of the pack has closed up. Arent, Botte, Charles and Ian are only a length behind as joint fifth. Equal ninth goes to Balzac, Con, Elroi and Maurice another length back. Then come Jean and Thibault, joint 13th. On their tails are Neville, Pierre and Steve as equal 15th. Dee, Greg and Xavier are together in joint 18th. Claude is 21st and Martin is only joint last, alongside Felipe.

The sad news is that a clash between Thibault and Steve’s horses at the final corner has left both knackered (despite their speed on the final straight – I blame adrenaline and spurs) and pistol shots signal their end.

Still covered in mud, the racers join their ladies and the spectators – Armand Alsace, Hector William Booth, Justin Saad and Marcel Hatch

Dupree – for drinks in the club. This allows regimental rivalries to rear their head again. Balzac has another set-to with Con, Ian and Justin, while Marcel and Thibault exchange insults for the third time. And Zeold has to suffer seeing his erstwhile mistress now on Elroi’s arm – a duel will follow.

As if braving the footpads wasn’t enough, Steve De Sade risks a couple of bets while he’s at a Bawdyhouse. The stakes are low – just 10 crowns – which is some relief when he loses both. Meanwhile Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux deliberately has an extra 10 crowns on him when he visits the red-light district “for any destitute wretches who shake me down.”

Stripped of his assets, Terence Cuckpowder has enough income to support himself. But the money runs out when it comes to paying his club dues and his membership of the Fleur lapses.

arms, declaring his intention to “fly like an eagle” from the top of the cathedral’s north tower to the ~~sea~~ Palais des Tuileries. It is assumed the unidentifiable body later found at the foot of the tower is his.

Later the Fleur sees Jacques Hatt hosting those serving with Third Army in a team-building exercise. Strangely, several Parisians who are not in Third Army present themselves at the club, only to be turned away. And Thibault and Marcel renew their dispute from their previous encounter.

The Dirty almost-two-dozen

October ends with Louis Severin Descartes sponsoring a horse race, The Grand Duke Max Trophy – in memory of Brigadier-General Chris P Bacon who led the GDMD back in 1662. (Louis is also sponsoring Ignace Pardaillon, it seems: “Poor lad came back empty-handed from the campaign and the GDMD look out for each other”.) The race attracts a good half of Parisian society – though those sniping from the outside note that it’s mostly drawn from the lower half of society. Including the host himself, 23 runners line up for the start of the race. The smart money has Balzac Slapdash and Justin Thyme as favourites. The rest of the field is close together, though all agree that Martin de Garnache (the new Lt-Colonel of the RFG) is the man least likely to win.

However, it’s Con Stantinople who takes the early lead, going into the first corner two lengths ahead of his nearest rivals. This gives him a clear run while Justin jostles with Louis Severin Descartes in second place. “Tiny” Thierry Toothpick is just behind them. At the front of the pack are Pierre De Terre, Xavier Ulric Turenne and Charles PiedLuminaire. The second rank comprises Balzac Slapdash, Elroi le Flingue, Maurice Danseur (looking natty in his latest outfit – possibly not the best choice for the race), Arent Hayes and Ian Dediette. Then it’s Greg de Bécqueur, Zeold von Tu and Dee Jean Aise. In the rearmost rank are Steve De Sade, Claude de Nord (riding Puffycloud, his “extremely flatulent” horse), Felipe Savant, Jean d’Aubergine and Neville Moore – apart from Thibault Chanson de Skye and Botte Le Chimiste, who are lagging behind a bit, but ahead of Martin.



The horses (and riders) clear the corner and thunder down the back straight, allowing the jockeys to show what they’re made of. Or, rather, how fast their horses are. The field has spread out by the time they arrive at the second (and final) corner and Louis is now in the lead, having got an amazing turn of speed out of his mount. Justin is not quite as fast, but is right on his tail and Thierry, just as speedy, is only just behind. Con’s horse (Pharlap) appears to be blown as he’s going backwards into the pack and is caught by the fast Charles and Maurice. Ian is right behind this group with Elroi just after him. Then it’s a languishing Pierre alongside Arent, Balzac, Dee, Greg, Zeold and an unexpectedly fast Neville. The

Brat’s Hill (Railway Rivals game 19 – RR2559LD)

Turn 1

Welsh Interstate Train Service connects some towns on the west coast to Whitehaven and sends an arm into a cross route towards Keswick. Seaside Railways builds south from Carlisle to Penrith and the other end of the route through Keswick. Locomotive Observation Steam Train Company builds south and west from Port Carlisle. And Cart and Barrow Rail builds north east to the lakes.

WELSH INTERSTATE TRAIN SERVICE (WITS), Mike Dyer – Red

Starts: Whitehaven

Builds:

- a)(Whitehaven) – C10 – Harrington – D8 – Workington – E7 (+12)
- b)(E7) – Maryport – H6 – H7 (+6)
- c)(H7) – I8 – Cockermouth – J9 – J10 (+6)

Points: 20 +24 +2 = 46

SEASIDE RAILWAYS (SR), Rob Pinkerton – Blue

Starts: Carlisle

- a)(Carlisle) – G49
- b)(G49) – G50 – G51 – G52 – G53
- c)(G53) – Penrith – H54 – H55 – H56 (+6)

Points: 20 +6 = 26

LOCOMOTIVE OBSERVATION STEAM TRAIN COMPANY (LOST), Gerald Udowiczzenko – Black

Starts: Port Carlisle

- a)(Port Carlisle) – B42 – B43 – Wigton – N5 (+6)
- b)(N5) – M6 – Aspatria – J5 (+6)
- c)(J5) – H6 – Maryport (2 to WITS) (N5) – N6

Points: 20 +12 -2 = 30

CART AND BARROW RAIL (CAB), Chris Rudram – Green

Starts: Barrow in Furness

- a)(Barrow-in-Furness) – C26 – E25 – F25 – Ulverston (+6)
- b)(E25) – E22 – D22
- c)(Ulverston) – H24 – I24

Points: 20 +6 = 26

GM Notes

Die rolls for the next turn are: **3, 6, 4**

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

The letters by the lakes are the initials of their names (U=Ullswater for example).

You cannot build over bodies of water, only rivers.

Shap is the name of the area and has no game effect. It does have standing stones mind!

**Orders to Mike Dommett, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommett@yahoo.co.uk
by 27th June 2025**

The Wizard of Anharitte (Star Trader game 12)

Turn 13

Two ships hovered in Epsilon Eridani System space all Quarter, yet showed no interest in attacking any ship that passed by inbound to the Spaceport. The planetary Defence Forces were out but were unable to intercept the orbiting strangers.

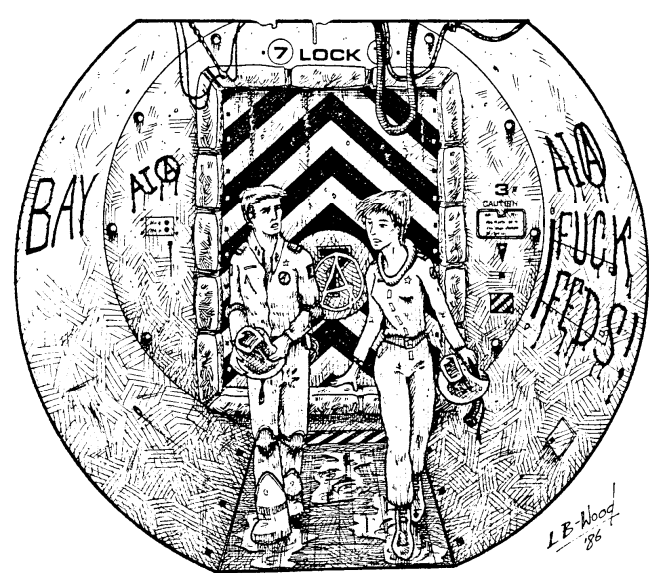
ROCKET TRADERS had no choice but to be last out of the blocks again and Vanguard at Tau Ceti stayed in Safe Berth.

Gamma Leporis saw Alloys rise in price as TREKBOER bought 13 units at 3 HTs apiece, gaining a Dealership as well.

Trading at Epsilon Eridani were ROCKET TRADERS, selling 3 Spice 5 HTs, after which COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE INC sold 12 Monopoles for 13 HTs each and took a Dealership.

Tau Ceti had a big delivery of Alloys from COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE INC – 12 units at a price of 10 HTs/unit gave them a Contractor’s position

COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE sold 10 Monopoles at Mu Herculis for 10 HTs each to gain a Contractor’s position. But this was after TREKBOER had bought 12 units at 13 HTs/unit to add a Contractors position. TREKBOER sold 10 Alloys for 10 HTs apiece as well and gained another Dealership.



Louis Renault’s memorial for Yve Stanbul at the Fleur in week two is very well attended. But with so many Parisians in one place, disagreements are inevitable – mostly over competing regimental uniforms. Thus, sole Dragoon Guard Balzac Slapdash has words with Con Stantinople, Ian Dediette and Justin Thyme of the Queen’s Own Carabiniers. Thibault Chanson de Skye discovers the down side of leading the 69th Arquebusiers – he exchanges challenges with Royal Marines Chemin de Fer and Marcel Hatch Dupree. And Sebastian Blanc-Chevaux of the 53rd takes on Arent Hayes and Stephane Etrange as they’re both in the Crown Prince’s.

However, the biggest excitement comes when the diminutive figure of Major (as he now is) Thierry Toothpick plucks at Arent’s sleeve. Arent ignores this intrusion into his argument with Sebastian, but turns round when he feels a sharp point prodding his backside. Thierry is backed by two large orange men who grab Arent by the arms while the broadly grinning CPS serves him with an arrest warrant.

There’s also some entertainment at the gaming tables to distract the guests. Jean Jeanie goes for a flutter, but his proposed 30-crown bets are disdained by the croupier. “Ze ’ouse minimum ees 200 crowns, Monsieur,” he sneers in a strange accent. In a quieter corner of the club, Ben e’Volence is willing to accept guests. No-one shows up.

A major topic of discussion is the fate of Agaric Champignon. He was last seen outside Notre Dame with feathery contraptions like wings strapped to his

Who was where – in the other clubs				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Bothwell's		CdN	CdN	
Hunter's	HF + Violet SE + Thomasina		HF + Ella JdA + Carole	HF + Ella SE + Thomasina
Blue Gables	CS + Anne	AA	AA CS + Anne	
Frog & Peach	HS + Sue MD + Belle		JS CPL + Lois	

Shows who was in or outside a club: . = Toadying to character above; (G) = Gambled; CP = Crown Prince; (id) = expected host; **bold** = first visit to new club; underline = first time mistress with new beau.

Who was where – in the Fleur				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Fleur de Lys	JIT + Guinevere TTT + Madelaine FXC + Frances RS + Therèse LSD + Edna . JH + Cath GdB + Bette CdP + Kathy	J(G) + Jacky BeV + Lotte CdP + Kathy LR + Maggie . ZUT + Laura . NM + Vera . JS . BS + Alison . FS + Fifi . TCdS . HS + Sue . JIT + Guinevere . TTT + Madelaine . ZvT + Lucy . MHD . HWB . SBC . AH . SE + Thomasina . PDT + Sal . BLC + Eve . JdA + Carole . EIF . MdG + Chris . CdF . LSD + Edna . GdB + Bette . CS + Anne . ID . DJA	TTT + Madelaine GdB + Bette CdP + Kathy JH + Cath . TCdS . MHD . SE + Thomasina . LSD + Edna	JJ + Jacky CdP + Kathy
Outside Fleur			NM (H) BS (H) FS (H)	

At Sigma Draconis TREKBOER bought 5 Isotopes on Contract.

At Beta Hydri ROCKET TRADERS sold 6 units of Isotopes for 6 HTs each and were made Contractors. SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS sold 8 Monopoles for 13 HTs apiece using their agent and shut ROCKET TRADERS out of selling. Though afterwards ROCKET TRADERS sold 3 Spice at 7 HTs/unit

TREKBOER suffered a small loss of Reputation as Pevans van Rijn led a campaign against them, but it was more than compensated by their sudden interest in trading and a big Reputation boost. They sold their Warehouse on Beta Hydri as well.

ROCKET TRADERS paid off their loan and took out another one for 480 HTs over four Quarters. Having loaded passengers, they bought five Isotope Factories at Sigma Draconis and laid down a Corco Mu Hull at Tau Ceti Shipyards with A class crew, 3 Light Weapons pods, 5 Cargo pods and one Passenger pod.

COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE INC were happy with their recent operations.

MADNESS & MAYHEM's new Phoenix Hull was launched at Epsilon Eridani Shipyard and was christened Mischief. It has an A class crew and 3 Light Weapon and 3 Cargo pods.

SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS loaded passengers on one ship and undermined TREKBOER's Reputation.

Corporation Table

Corporation letter and name	Connections Bus/Crim/Pol			Init'v Bid	Turn order	Cash Rep	Player
A Costa Nostra Coffee	10	0	1	6	4th	614 40	Mark Cowper
B Madness & Mayhem	9	5	0	12	2nd	11 21	Anthony Gilbert
C Solar Spice & Liquors	7	3	4	+4	3rd	1030 40	Paul Evans
D TrekBoer	9	7	2	9	1st	375 40	Mike Dyer
E Rocket Traders	10	0	8	2	5th	190 40	Przemek Orwat
N under Initiative Bid means No move received, F indicates the Corp was floated							

Press

By St Dismas! This I have not deserved! An honest merchant's wares exploded into space – may the miscreant miserables choke on them!

Has anyone seen my piano?
“I’ve never met a nice South African...”

Market Positions

System	Commodity	Positions
Gamma Leporis	Alloys	Dealers: A, D and E. Contractor: B.
Epsilon Eridani	Alloys	
	Isotopes	Dealers: A and E.
	Monopoles	Dealer: A and C.
	Spice	Dealer: E. Contractor: C.
Tau Ceti	Alloys	Dealer: E. Contractor: A.
	Isotopes	Market Manager: E.
Mu Herculis	Alloys	Dealers: D and E.
	Isotopes	Dealers: A and E.; Contractor: D.
	Monopoles	Dealers: B, D and E. Contractor: A.
Sigma Draconis	Alloys	Dealers: D and E.
	Isotopes	Dealer: B. Contractors: D and E.
	Monopoles	Dealers: D and E.
	Spice	Dealers: B and E. Contractor: C.
Beta Hydri	Alloys	Contractor: B.
	Isotopes	Contractor: E.
	Monopoles	Dealers: A and D.
	Spice	Dealers: B and C. Contractor: E.

News

There was one new News chit this turn. The current list (new chits in **bold**) is:
Turn 14 P6
Turn 15 P1
Turn 16 C3, B8

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

GM Notes

To he who asked: if you sell all your assets, which is added to your cash in hand and counts towards the winning total. However, if you are selling your ships, they may not reach the price you hoped for. It's a gamble. But warehouses, factories and ships can add up.

Orders to Mike Dommnett, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommnett@yahoo.co.uk
by 27th June 2025

the King's ear. Or, rather his mistress does. His plea is supported by Greg, another man whose lady friend has some pull. The King weighs up the pros and cons and orders the sentence commuted. Confiscation of his assets means Count Cuckpowder continues his life in Paris. Albeit without a crown to his name. While the Exchequer and the CPS are substantially better off.

Despite the improvement in his financial circumstances, this is too much for Toothpick. He explodes, "You English rogue, the whole thing has been a stitch-up! Well, you'll not outsmart Thierry Toothpick, oh no... not next time! And that goes for you, too, Major Arent Hayes! How dare you come into Court and seek to make an ass of the judicial system with your claims that he's guilty but he's innocent. You rascal, you anarchist, you villain!" And the small man starts scribbling furiously on fresh parchment...

An Officer and an Arquebusier

The excitement of the trial out of the way, more mundane matters are at hand. Cardinal's Guard Major Frank X Change uses his influence to persuade his superior to resign as Lieutenant-Colonel. And then he takes command of the regiment by buying his way to Colonel.

New arrival Dee Jean Aise applies to Stephane Etrange to join the Crown Prince Cuirassiers, but is rejected out of hand. And he's borrowed the funds to pay his way and all. There's better news for fellow newcomer Thibault Chanson de Skye (who's also taken out a loan). Accepted into the 69th Arquebusiers, he buys the rank of Major, making him the senior officer of the regiment.

Private Steve De Sade becomes a junior officer by buying the rank of Subaltern in Grand Duke Max's. This allows him to accept Brigadier-General Louis Severin Descartes's offer to be his Aide. "The unwashed wine mugs and unfiled documents in Dragoon Brigade Command are piling up to unhealthy levels," explains Louis. "De Sade did a great job with the stables last month, let him arise to higher responsibilities."

Further up the hierarchy, Second Army commander General Ben e'Volence asks Stephane Etrange to take on Quartermaster-General, but gets no reply.

Percival Puffington has had enough of Paris for this quarter and volunteers the Picardy Musketeers for active service. They are joined on the road north by the first squadron Crown Prince Cuirassiers, led by Lt-Colonel François de Blanchefort and containing reluctant troopers like Vaux de Fon.

Good Morning, Paris!

Stephane Etrange starts his month by taking Thomasina to Hunter's. Here he showers her with gifts as thanks for declining the nefarious advances of other 'men' during his absence. It's all very conspicuous. Shame there's such a small audience in Hunter's...

first, to find out if they were complicit in the death of Count Reese Jean Seine. Only after this full investigation, should Count Cuckpowder be on trial.”

“Tiny” Thierry Toothpick has been waiting impatiently through these interruptions. He waves aside Justin’s interjection and ~~regains his feet~~ clammers onto his box. “Your Most Esteemed Judgeness, you have heard the evidence outlined by the various Prosecution witnesses today, doubtless taking great heed of each and recognising the strength of the case against the prisoner. To any who have claimed the prisoner innocent and to the fiend himself, that despicable murderer Cuckpowder, I equally expect your thoughts were the same as mine: lies, lies and more damned lies. There couldn’t be a more open and shut case than this!

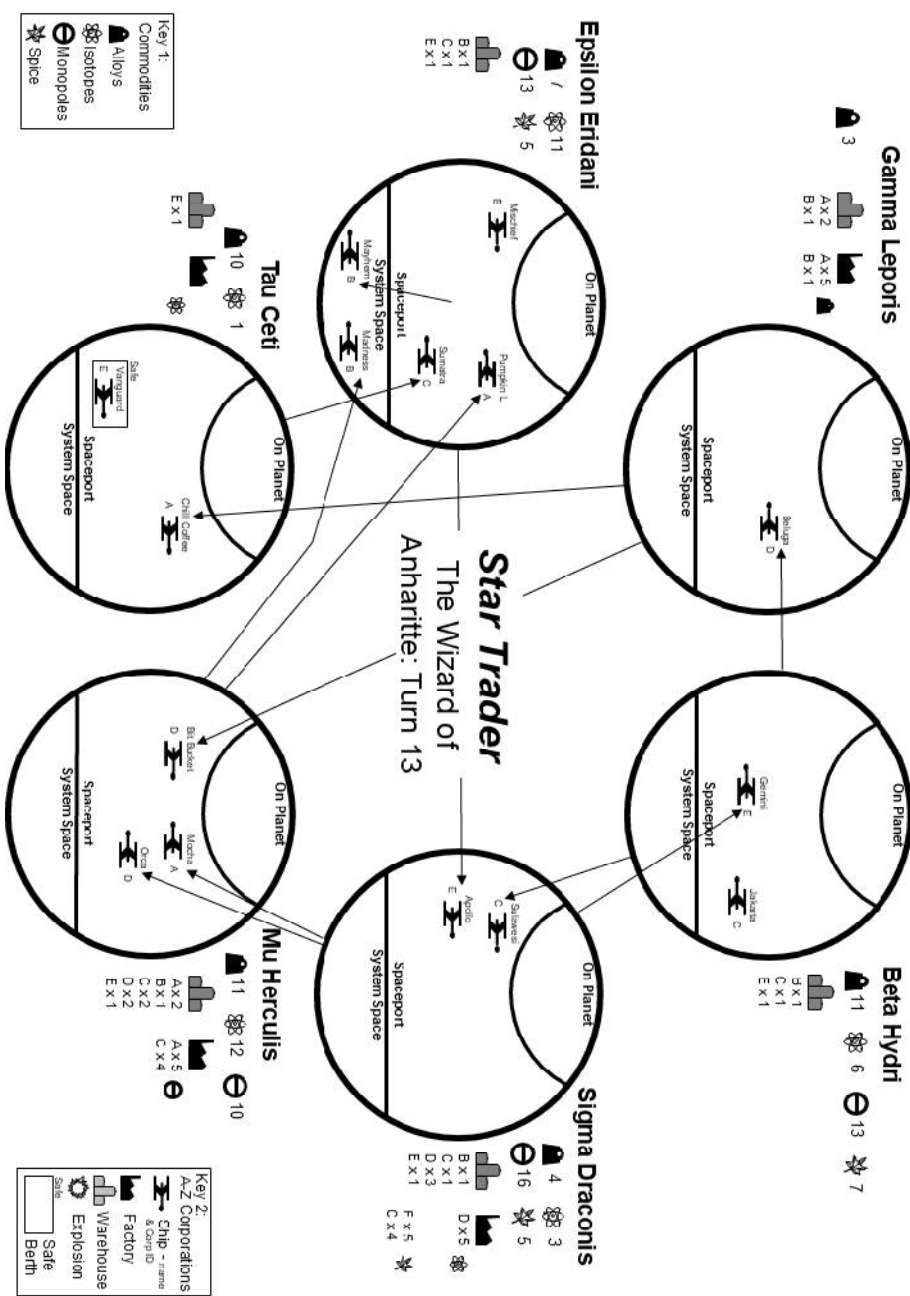
“At this juncture it’s right that I inform the court we have one final witness, in fact, not just any old final witness but a voice from the grave – a letter that was delivered to me the very morning that Count Seine lost his life. Allow me to read it. Ahem,” he coughs before starting to read. “My Dear Commissioner Toothpick, if you have received this letter, it means that I am now dead! Murdered, I suspect, by the snake within the bosom of Paris, Count Terence Cuckpowder. As you know I have been aware of his nefarious doings for some time: his involvement with England and how his English paymasters have tasked him with killing every Frenchman of merit upon the duelling field by stealing their women. It’s shocking, Commissioner, truly shocking. Hence why I needed you to arrest him. Unfortunately, it’s clear that he’s got to me before I could expose him in the Courts. I now leave that to you and my successor as Trial Judge, whoever that may be. Get him, Thierry, get the rogue, have him found guilty and then thrown into the Seine so at least a Seine can be his end!! Your dear friend and regimental Commander, plus MoS Count BRJS.’

“In summary I ask you to pronounce the only verdict justly awardable today: GUILTY! And the only sentence appropriate for the crimes of the prisoner: DEATH! This latter feel free to leave to me and my lads, we’ll sort it out while you retire to have a well-deserved glass or two from a couple of fine bottles of cognac that I’ve had left for you back in your chambers.”

As well as the witnesses’ testimony, the judge has received representations from prominent Parisians (and their ladies). Camille de Polignac, Jean Jeanie and Rick Shaw all support the CPS and lobby for Terence’s conviction. (Camille then borrows heavily to cover his lobbying costs...) So does Claude de Nord, but isn’t ‘noisy’ enough to affect the judge. Conversely, Greg de Bécqueur, Justin Thyme and Louis Renault support the accused and insist he is not guilty. Weighing up what he has heard, read and been paid, the judge can only come to one verdict. He reaches for his black cap before declaring, “Guilty!” And the sentence: “Death!”

The Great Escape

However, as the little orange men start to wheel the cage towards the riverbank, Terence calls on His Majesty to commute the sentence. And he is a man who has



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 November 1676 to Pevans
at 180 Aylsham Drive, UXBRIDGE
UB10 8UF, UK or
lpbsorders@pevans.co.uk
by 4th July 2025**



October 1676 (392)

As Autumn progresses, Paris is still in uproar over the unexpected death of the Minister of State, Beau Reese Jean Seine. And this continues as the trial of his killer, Terence Cuckpowder, approaches – even though this is on unrelated charges. However, there are affairs of honour to be settled first.

And first are Come Asiour and Camille de Polignac, who have come to blows over a lady's affections. Camille is the beefier of the two, but Come has a strong arm and wields a sabre against Camille's rapier. Zeold von Tu attends as Come's second; Bernard de Lur-Saluces fulfils the same role for Camille. Despite his inferior expertise, Camille shows some cleverness as he blocks Come's initial slash and dodgers the following cut. This means his lunge draws the first blood. Then his lack of skill shows as Come is able to hit him with a slash. The two men recover and strike together: another lunge from Camille, a second slash from Come. That is enough for Camille, who concedes.

After getting himself bandaged, Camille decides that he's not badly enough injured to cry off his second fight. Thus he squares up to Claude de Nord, his rapier against a sabre again. Frank X Change is Claude's interesting choice as second: "Claude, are you sure you want a member of your enemy regiment to second you in a duel against a member of your friendly regiment?" The answer seems to be yes, while Bernard is still with Camille. When the swords cross, Camille suddenly realises that he's not up to this and surrenders without a blow being struck. This does not improve his social standing.

Having dealt with his seconding duties, Frank moves on to his own duel, against Elroi le Flingue. Louis Severin Descartes has a quandary. Both men have called

"As to mistresses, those flowers we sip and adore, none are anything but transient. We dally, we love, but they are lilies of the field. No man in honour hates over a mistress shifting her affections. I have lost more mistresses than most, yet I bear no ill will. We cross blades in honour, we move on. Had I attempted a dalliance with a man's wife I would deserve the condemnation of all.

"Sirs, we have a duty to His Majesty to keep ourselves as fit as may be so when we serve His Majesty we do so honourably. Such is the reason many practice their weapons. I give to the less well off in Parisian society from my own funds. It is the honourable thing to do. I respect our CPS's right to his opinions, but I am saddened by his attempt to mar the honour of our deceased Minister of State by suggesting that such a honourable man would have sought my arrest after a duel. As I said, I think our Commissioner has problems with honour.

"Gentlemen, I beg your consideration, and ask that this charge be rejected. I remain His Majesty's servant, Terence Cuckpowder."

Then Arent Hayes strode into the witness box to give his evidence as a Witness for the Defence of Terence Cuckpowder. "Your Honour, Commissioner, my Lords, Ladies, common folk and tiny orange people, I bring some startling evidence. I have no doubt in my mind that Count Cuckpowder is guilty of all charges our worthy Commissioner levels against him – the evidence is all there, including the brutal slaying of our last Minister of State in cold blood. However, he is entirely Innocent!"

Arent waits patiently for the tumult in court to die down before proceeding. "I have been instructed by my mentor Sammy Phipps to look into occult practices being used by our enemies and the shadowy Hapsburg Secret Society, 'The Dominion'. My research has shown that they have perfected a procedure called 'manchuria candidate' in which the victim is coerced into a trance-like state at the utterance of a trigger word. The Count is testament to the success of their witchcraft – he, without any knowledge of what he is doing, carried out the deeds at the command of another, the real villain of the piece. I have submitted my evidence to the CPS last month and I now publicly name him as... **BARON CLAUDE DE NORD!** I think we know this is why the Commissioner resigned so hurriedly from the King's Musketeers – he was trying to be discreet and avoid a scandal."



"Ha! Ha! Poppycock!" interjects Baron Nord, now in the public gallery.

A further clamour in the gallery is Count Justin Thyme demanding to be heard. Given leave to address the court, he states "To me it seemed liked a fair duel, but unfortunately with only one survivor, we can never really know the truth. But I find it very suspicious that both of the seconds, Jean Jeanie and Xavier Ulric Turenne, did not attend the duel. Their innocence or guilt should be investigated

concerning Tiny Teeny Toothpick, I will tell the truth. Only a few days ago I was strolling the streets and avenues of Paris, taking in the sights, thanking the Lord that I survived at the front, and that I did my duty for France and the King. I am something of a flâneur at times. Wandering about, I noticed Terence Cuckpowder conversing with a weaselly-looking oik just outside Bank de Calais, a financial establishment known to have suspicious links to the English.

“I bid the defendant a good morning, he replied likewise. The weasel however spoke loud and clear, ‘Morning old chap.’ Was he English? He certainly sounded English. The defendant made a joke and the weasel scuttled into the bank. That was not all: just before that, the defendant thrust a large purse – almost certainly bulging gold as I could see some coinage protruding from the top – into the paws of the weasel.

“When I enquired what the defendant was about, he grew angry, his face bright red with rage. When he placed his hand on his sword I was surprised and concerned that he would attack me, so I withdrew immediately. I have no idea what he was doing outside that bank with that Englishman, with that money.”

From the dock Terence responded “Then you raise the tariffs? The incident is fabricated. As some Parisians are aware I donate large sums from my own pocket to the impecunious arrivals in Paris and have no need for money from others. Given that I don’t speak that detestable language from the land of warm beer, your suggestion that you speak it fluently might be thought to indicate your dubiousness, but I am sure you learned it in the service of his Majesty.”

A Few Good Men

A statement from Colonel Hugh Jeneaux, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and currently serving in the Netherlands, is read to the court. “I have met M Cuckpowder several times. I feel confident that I might be able to pick him out in a crowd if he was wearing something distinctive. From my knowledge of his character, I believe that he could be guilty of something or other. If not, he is probably innocent. This is a statement of truth.” Thierry glowers at this unhelpful intervention.

Grudgingly, the CPS allows the accused to present his defence. “Gentlemen, it appears our Commissioner of Public Safety has problems with honour. Gentlemen cross swords honourably, and no one enters the field of honour intent on killing. Sadly, our esteemed Minister of State decided to continue to fight when wounded and walked into my second blow. None doubt his bravery and I will be holding a wake in his memory in week two next month. He died gloriously: honour him.

“On our CPS’s accusations of cowardice, I point merely to my military record. A year ago my post precluded military service in a regiment, Now I have a position leading France’s premier Brigade. I can confirm that we will be off to war in the winter, once the men have relaxed and enjoyed their well-earned leave.

him as their second. He makes it clear that he will intervene against either side: “which won’t be necessary as you two will fight a fair and gentlemanly duel,” he tells them. As well as having the same second, the two men are of similar build and skill. Only Elroi’s use of a sabre versus Frank’s rapier sets them apart. Expecting a quick lunge, Elroi parries. He is taken by surprise when Frank applies his boot instead of his blade. Despite this, Elroi hits Frank twice with a slash and a cut. However, as Elroi regains his balance after his attack, Frank gets in two lunges in quick succession. This is enough for Elroi and he surrenders.

Neither Charles PiedLuminaire nor Justin Cartier turns up for their duel, despite their dispute over Mlle Bott. Steve De Sade, on the other hand, is ready and willing to cross swords with Agaric Champignon. But Agaric has better things to do.

The Cuckpowder Hunter

On a drab October morning, with a light smattering of rain falling upon the streets of Paris, a large crowd has gathered outside of the Court eager to gain entry to watch what many are calling the trial of the decade and others, somewhat diminutive others (!), are referring to as “Cuckpowder’s Come-uppance”!

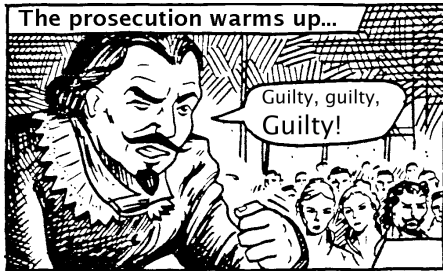
A number of gentlemen of prominence are also to be spotted amongst the general throng, clutching papers and looking intense as they push through the crowds into the Court building. This causes a mixture of reactions from the common folk: deference from some, indignation from others. Suddenly, from around the corner sound several loud trumpet blasts. There is a clatter of hooves and the rattling of a heavy cart upon the cobbles that bring the crowd to turn towards their rear. A moment later, a large black coach adorned with the crest of the Commissioner of Public Safety heralds the arrival of both said Commissioner and today’s prisoner, Count Terence Cuckpowder; The prisoner is held, heavily manacled, in a large cage at the rear of the coach.

Marching in ranks behind the Coach come the CPS’s Tangerine ‘Guards’: 12 orange-garbed midgets, carrying size-adapted halberds and sporting menacing looks at both the crowd and the prisoner. The doors to the Coach open and France’s vertically challenged Commissioner of Public Safety emerges. He barks orders and two tall aides, also dressed in orange uniforms, heft the CPS onto their shoulders and carry him into the Court. The prisoner follows swiftly behind, albeit still contained within the cage that has been lowered from the coach and wheeled into the building.

Once everyone has taken their respective places, with quiet ensured amongst the members of the general populace who were fortunate to secure a seat (including Henri DuShite and Louis Severin Descartes), Commissioner Toothpick wastes no time in addressing the trial judge.

“Your Most Esteemed Judgeness, may I begin by expressing my sincere thanks to you for presiding over today’s case which is no doubt a great surprise to you. To

be sitting there, in the chair of the late, much-lamented friend of King and people, undoubtedly a man who was a patron to you in the past, Count Beau Reese Jean Seine. The great Count Seine was MURDERED barely a month ago, slaughtered as he sought to defend his honour, by a notorious fiend who stands before you... over there, in that cage... Him, yes, that brute!



THEN we can get on to the Guilty verdict and tossing Cuckpowder into the Seine.”

The CPS calls several witnesses to back up his case. “M. le Judge,” begins the first. “I am [about to be] Colonel le Marquis Camille de Polignac. I am Chef du Regiment of the Royal Foot Guards, and have been Mentioned in Dispatches 13 times. I am here because our beloved Minister of State, Beau Reese Jean Seine, the former RFG commander, was killed. It is not in dispute that he was killed by Terence Cuckpowder. Count Cuckpowder says it was a matter of honour and, as such, not subject to Justice. I have evidence that honour has nothing to do with what the Count has done and why he did it.

“Cuckpowder came to my attention earlier this year, in April, when he killed a man in a duel involving a woman. He had been in Paris for many years and had risen in status and wealth, but he never seemed to actually do anything. His life appeared to consist of three activities:

1. Training, and there is no denying that he has become deadly in the context of the duelling ground;
2. Courting, yet he appeared to only court women who already had partners. A duel would then be fought, but he did not seem very interested in the “prize” he had won; and
3. Providing financial support to new men coming into Paris.

“What was missing from this resumé was meaningful service to France and a means by which this man could support his lifestyle and the network of grateful and dependant junior officers he was creating. What I saw was an individual who had access to the highest levels of French society and its government, money with no clear source, cultivating a network of supporters and the means to create, through “affairs of honour”, a pretext for attacks upon members of the government and senior military officers. The threat to France could not be ignored. As then second in command of the RFG, I had men under my command who could move

throughout Paris unnoticed and observe events. What is more common than a couple of soldiers in regimental uniform moving through the city? I instructed two privates of A Company, Privates Olivier De Crockett and Raymond de Tubbs, who commenced to follow Cuckpowder about his affairs in May. What they saw was disturbing, to say the least.

“Cuckpowder attended several times at the Embassy Quarter, but only went to one place: the park at the corner of Rue Hesupto and Chemin des Nogood, directly across from the English embassy. He met there a man who is known to work at the English embassy, the Ambassador’s Chief of Staff, Sir Winston Handler. On one occasion, Sir Winston gave Cuckpowder a bag. He then attended at La Banque du Monde, at the corner of Rue de Payoff and Chemin des Hesasp. He left a few minutes later, without the bag. I have here the sworn, witnessed, written statement of these two brave men, who sadly, were lost in action defending our beloved France this summer, while Cuckpowder was enjoying our cherished city.

“I decided to investigate further and attended at La Banque du Monde, where I met with M Theodore J. Mooney, a senior banking representative. He advised me that Cuckpowder had opened an account at the bank in May and deposited the sum of 5,000 Crowns into the bank. I have here M Mooney’s sworn, witnessed, written statement to this effect. M Mooney has since emigrated to New France, having expressed an interest in bringing modern banking techniques to the New World.

“Cuckpowder must have learned that the Guards were on to him, because in June, while we were at the Front fighting France’s enemies, he was in Paris, courting Minister Seine’s partner and then, two weeks later, discarding her and courting my own. Why would someone do such a thing? It does not appear that he was interested in Seine’s partner. He disregarded her almost immediately. What he did achieve was the pretext for *l’affaire d’honneur* with the Minister of State and the then Aide to the Field Marshal, persons necessary to the operation of the French government, under the direction of our brave and wise King, of course, and someone useful to the operation of our Army on campaign.

“There is a more sinister truth than that, even. Beau Reese Jean Seine was Minister of State. Part of his duties were to act as Judge in a trial of this nature. Cuckpowder knew he was under suspicion. He appeared to be taking money from the English government. So what did he do? He created a pretext to get close to the Minister of State with sword in hand and murderous intent. He killed the man who would act as his Judge. That’s right, Your Honour, the man on trial before you kills Judges. This was a strategy to avoid justice, not an *affaire d’honneur*. Not a duel, but an assassination under the pretext of a duel. Do not let him now escape his just punishment.”

Next into the witness box is Baron Claude de Nord. “Lords, Ladies and your honour. I am unsure exactly how I can assist the court but despite my reservations