

That would be enough

This has been issue 268 of *To Win Just Once*, published 14th September 2026. It incorporates *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, a game of *En Garde!*. Issues are published ten times a year, roughly every five weeks. © Paul Evans 2026

Deadlines

Orders for *Railway Rivals* to Mike by Friday 9th October 2026.

Orders for *LPBS* and By Popular Demand entries to Pevans by 16th October, 2026.

(Probable next deadlines: 13th/20th November, 18th/25th (!) December)

Waiting lists

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

Railway Rivals – Anyone want to start a waiting list for the next game? (Working map and rules provided).

Star Trader – The list for the next game starts with Pevans, Mark Cowper, Anthony Gilbert and Jovan Bogdanovic. At least one more needed – and room for up to eight. (Rules provided)

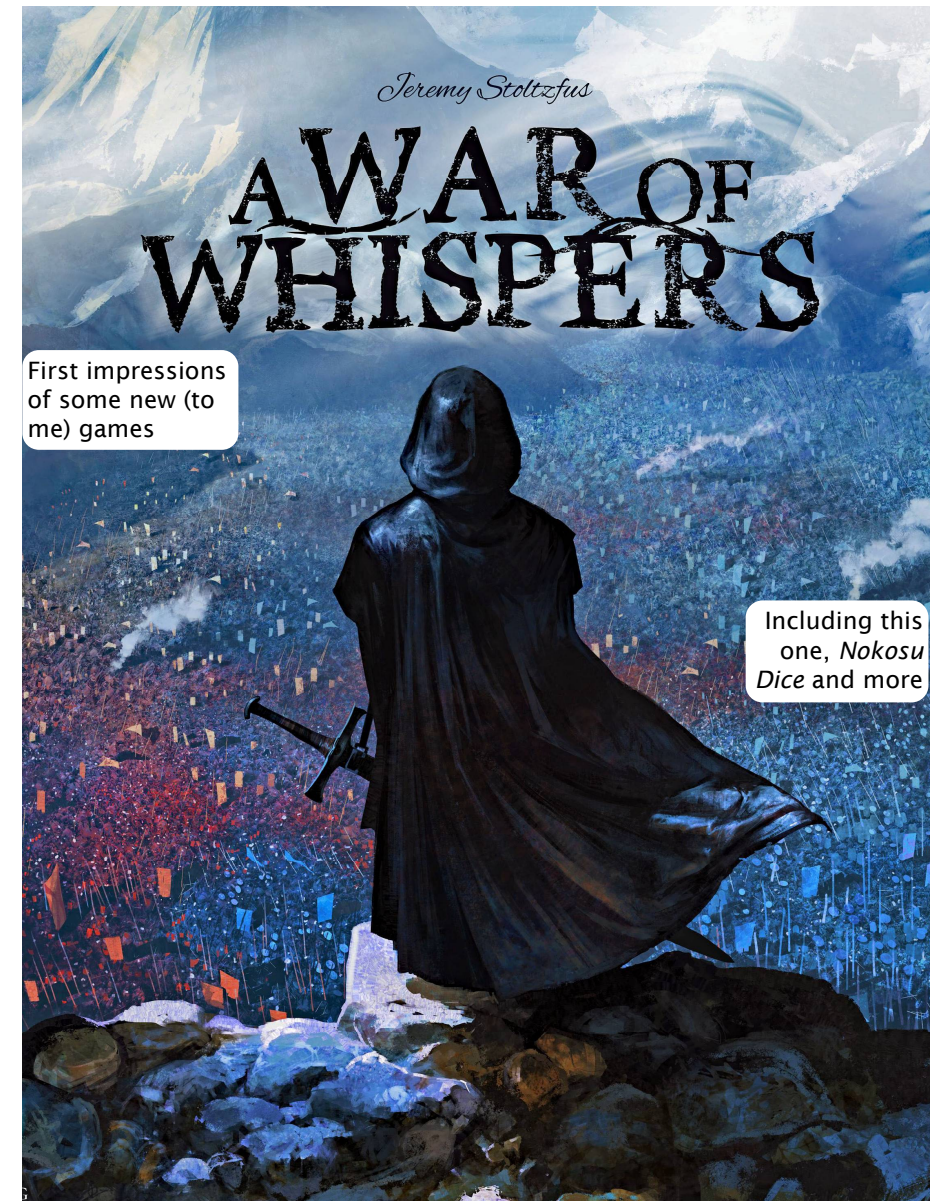
Credits

To Win Just Once issue 268 was written and edited by Pevans with contributions from Mike Dommett. The *LPBS* masthead (page 24) is by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood as are the drawings on pages 25, 28 and 30. The illustration on page 33 is by Bryan Lea. Game and book artwork is courtesy of the publisher. Pevans took the photos and played with Photoshop.

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To Win Just Once

(incorporating *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*)



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(LPBS 406: December 1677)

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ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank, Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
ID	Sir Ian Dediette	14	17	Comfy	Major QOC	4		Both	2	Nik Luker
HJ	Earl Hugh Jeneaux	14	F	Rich	B.Bdr-General ALC	12		Both	3	Bruno Giordan
EIF	Baron Elroi le Flingue	14+	49	OK	Lt.Colonel GDMC/Cav Div Adjutant	9	Lucy	Both	4	Daniel Racke
AA	Sir Armand Alsace	13	38	OK	Bdr-General/1 F Brigadier	14	Pet	Both	4	Sebastian Emde
AH	Arent Hayes	13	31	Poor	Lt.Colonel CPC/FMshl's Aide	6		Both	3	Mark Cowper
CPL	Baron Charles PiedLuminaire	13+	41	Withy	B.Lt-General/2nd Div Commandr	9	Agnes	Hunt	3	Nick Tyrrell
CdF	Chemin de Fer	12	25	Comfy	Captain KM	5	Henrietta	Both	3	Rod MacDonald
SDS	Sir Steve De Sade	11+	62	Comfy	Major GDMC/Gen's Aide (JH)	7	Laura	Hunt	5	Jon Dean
SBC	Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux	10	17	OK	Colonel PM	2		Hunt	2	Peter Card
VdF	Vaux de Fon	9	21	Poor	Captain CPC	2	Belle	BG	4	John Cooke
DJA	Dee Jean Aise	8	18	Withy	B.Bdr-General PLLD	5		BG	3	Jovan Bogdanovic
BdV	Beaumes de Venise	8	F	OK	Subaltern CG	6		BG	6	Jeremy Tullett
MAD	Marc-Antoine Descartes	8+	31	OK	Captain GDMC/LtCen's Aide (2nd	5	Bess	BG	2	Chris Schotmann
CE	Charles Erfeevor	8+	26	Comfy	B.Bdr-General 1 3F/2 F Brigadier	4		F&P	4	Andrew Kendall
BT	Beau Taux	7-	2	OK	Colonel 53F	5	Angelina	BG	4	Paul Robbins
HdB	Henri de Boudelle	6	18	OK	Major PLLD	6		RP	4	Eric Henderson
LAL	Lance A Little	6	F	Comfy	Lt.Colonel PM	1		4	Manoj Nair	
CBL	Claude B'Limey	6+	33	Poor	Captain GDMC/BdGen's Aide (BLC)	6	Violet	F&P	2	Peter Jenkins
AdO	Achille d'Orbigny	6+	20	Poor	Captain CPC	4		RP	3	Oscar Stanley
PAM	Pierre Aux-Manique	6+	19	Comfy	Colonel Gscn	6	May	F&P	2	Peter McNamara
DBT	Dwight B'Tard	5	16	Poor		4		RP	1	Gerry Sutcliffe
MdP	Maximilien de Piquemaire	5	F	Withy	Major GDMC	8		RP	2	Max Pleksma
GG	Gilbert Grumiaux	2	F	Poor		6			4	Hunter Charest
PN	Pierre Newkirk	2	F	Comfy	B.Captain PM	3			3	Wayne Clingman

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
BeV	Count Ben e'Volence	25	77	Rich	Fld Marshal	Chancellor	11		Flr	3	Ash Casey
GdB	Count Greg de Bécqueur	25	57	Withy	General/Fld Army	Commdr	13	Bette	Flr	5	Anthony Gilbert
CdP	Viscount Camille de Polignac	25	57	OK	B.Bdr-General	RFG/Fld Army	QMG	8	Therèse	Flr	4 James McReynolds
TC	Count Terence Cuckpowder	25	55	Withy	B.Lt-General/1st Div	Commandr	10	Frances	Flr	6	Mike Dommett
FXC	Count Frank X Change	24+	94	Rich	B.Bdr-General	CG/War Minister	14	Edna	Flr	4	Nigel Monaghan
RS	Earl Rick Shaw	23	60	Rich	General/State	Min.	3	Justine	Flr	6	Charles Burrows
JH	Marquis Jacques Hatt	21	46	Withy	General/Min	w/o Port	4	Cath	Flr	4	Joel Halpern
JdG	Count Jacques de Gain	20	58	Fithy	General		24		Flr	6	Ben Brown
JiT	Count Justin Thyme	20	42	Rich	Colonel	QOC	19	Guinevere	Flr	2	Gerald Udowiczenko
ZUT	Marquis Xavier Ulric Turenne	20	Ret	Withy	Lt-General		4		Flr	1	Bob Blanchett
ZvT	Marquis Zeold von Tu	19	40	Withy	B.General		8	Morgane	Flr	3	Tim Macaire
CdN	Earl Claude de Nord	19	37	Rich	B.Bdr-General	KM/CPS	5	Jacky	Flr	4	Andrew Larder
LR	Marquis Louis Renault	18	43	Comfy	Lt-General/Insp.	Gen.Cav	5	Maggie	Flr	4	Roy Bleasdale
CA	Viscount Come Asiouar	18	F	Withy	Lt.Colonel	CG/Justice Min.	11		Both	4	Jacob Andersson
MdG	Martin de Garnache	17	37	Comfy	Lt.Colonel	RFG/1st Div	Adjutant	3	Chris	Both	4 Bill Howell
BS	Viscount Balzac Slapdash	16-	15	Rich	B.Lt-General		24		Both	5	Matthew Wale
HF	Sir Hugo Furst	16	50	Comfy	B.Lt-General/Adjutant	Gen	6	Ella	Both	2	Graeme Morris
TCdS	Sir Thibault Chanson de Skye	16	37	Comfy	B.General		8	Katy	Flr	5	Bill Hay
HWB	Baron Hector William Boone	16	36	Withy	Major	RFG	9		Both	5	Paul Wilson
NM	Baron Neville Moore	16	34	Rich	Major	RFG	1	Vera	Hunt	2	Cameron Wood
TTT	Marquis Tiny Thierry Toothpick	16	F	Withy	B.Bdr-General	DG	9		Both	1	Jason Fazackarley
PPuf	Baron Percival Puffington	16+	50	Comfy	B.Lt-General/Insp.	Gen.Inf	9	Viv	Both	5	Tony Taylor
CS	Sir Con Stantinople	15	43	Withy	Lt.Colonel	QOC/2nd Div	Adjutant	6	Anne	Both	1 Pam Udowiczenko
FdB	Sir François de Blanchefort	15	41	Comfy	B.Bdr-General	CPC	6	Freda	Both	4	Peter Farrell
MD	Maurice Danseur	15+	50	Poor	Major	DG/HGds	Brigade Maj.	7	Madeline	Both	5 Andrew Whiteley
HS	Sir Hugo Serre	14	43	Withy	Major	KM	6	Kathy	Both	3	Paul Murphy
FS	Baron Felipe Savant	14	42	Rich	Captain	RFG/Capt.K's Esc	5	Fifi	Both	4	Brick Amundsen
BLC	Sir Botte Le Chimiste	14	29	Comfy	B.Bdr-General	GDMD	2	Eve	Both	4	Tym Norris
MHD	Sir Marcel Hatch Dupree	14	23	Withy	Colonel	RM	8		Hunt	4	Graeme Wilson

Chatter

I was looking at our yellow, straw-like lawn under the drought conditions and realised there were some very green patches. Closer inspection revealed: dandelions! Clearly they're managing to pick up some water.

A few days later, after a bit of rain, and suddenly the lawn's going green again. Or, as Graeme Morris puts it: "how quickly things change from "Good, it's hot!" to "MORE bloody rain?!" Anyway, I'm impressed by the resilience of grass.

Meanwhile, on *Babylon 5*... The end of season 3 sees Sheridan's prophesied death, taking a whole bunch of the enemy with him. And he is dead, as he keeps being told by the mysterious Lorien (pronounce all three syllables!) in the early episodes of season 4. Then he returns to lead the allies to victory over the Shadows. And over the Vorlons: "Get the hell out of our galaxy!"

The Shadow war ends in episode 6 (of 22). Presumably because writer/creator J Michael Straczynski had to pack the final two years of his five-year story 'arc' into one after the show was cancelled. (Only for TNT to pick it up for a fifth season, which is why the final episode of season 5 was actually filmed as part of season 4.)

We also get a moment of true heroism from Londo Mollari. The Vorlons are destroying anything tainted by the Shadows and have the Centauri home world in their sights. Londo destroys the Shadows' spaceships on the planet and executes their representative, Mr Morden (thus allowing Vir to achieve his ambition of waving at Mr Morden's head on a pike). Then Vir points out that Londo is also tainted from his long association with the Shadows. As the Vorlon planet-killer occludes the sun, Londo tells Vir to kill him. He's come a long way from the hedonist playboy.

And season 4 continues as the Babylon 5 team opposes the repressive, autocratic regime in charge on Earth. I think the idea is that nothing is ever really over. The Shadows themselves may have gone, but the after-effects of their work remain.

Spiderwatch

The arrival of Autumn means more eight-legged beasties, as Tim Macaire pointed out to me. So, number of small orange spiders trying to look inconspicuous on the white kitchen door: 1. Number of small dark spiders patrolling the ceiling: 1.

Subscription costs

I recently re-stocked pretty much everything I need to produce the paper copies of *TWJO* (paper, card, envelopes, printer toner), which has enabled me to do a detailed analysis of the cost. And it's remarkably similar to the last time I did this (toner is actually cheaper for my current printer). So, no need to change the subscription rates. Well, not until the next time postage goes up, anyway (hopefully not before April 2027).

UK Games 'Zine Poll

- Alex Richardson has announced this year’s poll and here are the rules.
- a) WHO MAY VOTE? Anybody who sees at least one eligible zine, whether as an editor or a subscriber. Editors may vote for their own zines.
- b) WHICH ZINES ARE ELIGIBLE? Any zine published in the British Isles which has produced an issue in 2026 (up to and including the Poll deadline); is distributed by post, as an e-mail, as an attachment to an e-mail or as a download from a website; and runs games that we would recognise as ‘postal’ ones (e.g. *Diplomacy*, *Railway Rivals*, 18xx, *En Garde!* or *United*, among many others). Please note: the zines should be UK ones, but the voters may come from anywhere in the world – all that matters is that you are a regular reader.
- c) HOW TO VOTE. List the eligible zines that you see and mark each one between 1.0 (low) and 10.0 (high), to one decimal place if you wish. Votes should be sent by e-mail from the voter's own account to alex.bokmal@googlemail.com. The Poll deadline will be midnight on SATURDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2026. Results will be e-mailed to each voter and published in *Obsidian* [Alex’s own ‘zine’], as well as maybe one or two other zines after that.

Online stats

The PDFs of *TWJO* 267 went online on the evening of 21st August and were downloaded 109 times in the last 10 days of August. The month saw 96 more downloads for issue 266 for a total of 223 in about six weeks. And *TWJO* 265 was downloaded 69 times in August, making 428 since publication.

Intriguingly, the most downloaded document (125 times) in August was *TWJO* 130 from December 2012. This has my review of *Vanuatu*, but I can’t see why this is an attraction (there was a second edition of the game, but that was in 2016).

Letters

Jonathan Palfrey corrects me.

It’s strange that you interpreted my initial mention of Jodi Taylor as a ‘recommendation’: I think I made it clear that I was in two minds about her and her books, although I’ve bought and read a number of them.

She seems to be fairly popular, so quite a few people must like her books more than I do, and for all I know you could be one of them. But I’m not a big fan. I like her “Time Police” and “Frogmorton Farm” books just about well enough to read all of them and to reread them occasionally, which translates to a 3 or 3½ rating out of 5. To give a 4 rating, I’d have to be more enthusiastic and to reread them on a more regular basis.

Femmes Fatales

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

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

Regiments																
Col	RFC	CG	KM	DG	QOC	ALC	CPC	RM	CDMDPM	13F	PLLD	53F	27M	4A	69A	Gscn
MdG	FXC	CA	CdN	TTT	JiT	HJ	FdF	MHD	BLC	CE+	DJA	BT				PAM
LCol	MdG	CA	N1	HS	MD+	N3	N4		EIF	N5	N3+	N4	N5	N3+		
Maj 1	HWB	N2	N5	N1+	N3	N6	VdF		SDS	N1	N5	N3	N4	N3+		
Maj 2	NM	N5	N2	N3	N4	N2	N6		MdP	N5	N3	N3	N5	N3+		
Capt 1	FS	N4	N2	N2	N4	N2	N6			N5	N2	N3	N4	N1	N3	N2
Capt 2	N2	N6	N5	N6	N2	N3	N4			N5	N3	N1	N2	N5	N5	N2
Capt 3	N1	N2*	N4	N6*	N2	N2*	N1*			N5	N1*	N2*	N6*	N6*	N1*	N1*
Capt 4	N4*	N2	N6*	N6	N3*	N2*	N1*			N5	N1*	N2*	N6*	N6*	N1*	N1*
Capt 5			CdF				AdO									
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	___/___/N1	Current CO/Aide/Brigade Major of each Brigade; entries are ID for player characters, “N” (+ MA if needed) for NPC, ___ for vacant
Horse Guards Brigade	N6/___/MD	
Heavy Brigade	N5/N/N6	
Dragoon Brigade	___/___/N3	
First Foot Brigade	AA/N/___	
Second Foot Brigade	CE/N/N3	
Third Foot Brigade	___/___/N3	
Fourth Foot Brigade	___/___/___	

Frontier Regiments

	F1	F2	F3	(Defence for Dec-Feb)	
Colonel	N5	N2	N2	F4 N2	RNHB N7
Attached	MdP	HJ	1 Bn CG 1 Bn PM		GG
Also at the Front		Dragoon Guards			

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

Battle Results

Dragoon Guards: 3
Frontier regiment 1: 4
Frontier regiment 2: 6
Frontier regiment 3: 4
Frontier regiment 4: 5
RNHB regiment: 1

Other Appointments

King’s Escort: Ensign N	Captain FS
Cardinal’s Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Aides: to Crown Prince N	to Field Marshal AH
Provincial Military Governors: N/N/N/N/N	
City Military Governor N	Adjutant-General HF
Inspectors-General: of Cavalry LR	of Infantry PPuf
Commissioner of Public Safety CdN (until end August 1678)	
Chancellor of the Exchequer BeV (until end August 1678)	
Minister of Justice CA (until end May 1678)	
Minister of War FXC (until end October 1678)	
Minister of State RS (until end February 1678)	

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

I think I read six of her “St Mary’s” novels before deciding that they’re not for me (slow reactions!), so I’ve marked them all down to 2; perhaps that should be 2½ in some cases?

Okay, maybe not a ‘recommendation’, but enough to intrigue me – and I certainly then had recommendations from other readers.

Jonathan continues with his recent reading.

- Brigands & Breadknives (Travis Baldree, 2025), third in a series of cosy fantasies. I wasn’t expecting anything of this one as the previous two were hardly worth reading; I bought it only because it was very cheap; but this one was actually a bit better (and a bit less cosy) and I gave it 3½ points for now.
- Ice, Iron and Gold (S. M. Stirling, 2007), a collection of short stories, both sf and fantasy. He’s generally better at novels. These stories are readable enough but not great. I liked best “The Apotheosis of Martin Padway”, a belated sequel to Lest Darkness Fall (L. Sprague de Camp, 1941). Overall 3 points.
- A Trade of Blood (Robert Jackson Bennett, 2026). I was looking forward to this third book in the series, and I’ve still given it 4 points for now, but I’m beginning to think that I like the first in the series (The Tainted Cup) the best so far. Although I’m sure I’ll buy the fourth whenever it appears.
- Swordheart (T. Kingfisher, 2018). I reread this because the sequel’s due out on the 25th. It’s rather light fantasy but I find it congenial and quite amusing. 4 points. Less ambitious than R. J. Bennett but more fun. I’ve read a few other Kingfisher books but liked them less than this series.
- The Demon Overlord’s Retirement Plan (M. H. Foster, 2025 or 2026). Disappointing, 2 points. Gets an unaccountably high average rating in Goodreads, but seems like a fairy story for children.
- Only You Can Save Mankind and Johnny and the Dead (Terry Pratchett, 1992 & 1993). Somewhat amusing children’s books from Pratchett. Definitely not as good as the nome trilogy (starting with Truckers). 3 points.

Phew! That’s a lot more than the couple of books I’ve (re-)read since last issue. Of that list, only the Pratchett is familiar. I have fond memories of the nome books.

Brad Martin’s eye was caught by something else.

When you mentioned that one of the characters in Tales of the Arthurian Knights was Dame Enid, I immediately thought of Barry Humphries, although his character was Dame Edna.

For the avoidance of doubt: Brad is Australian. While, for me, Enid is my aunt. Colin Bruce spotted something else.

I love the idea of a game that has Villainy Points!

Eddy Richards takes us back to reading matter.

I read Just One Damned Thing After Another some time ago but wasn't overly impressed. It just all seemed very chaotic. Put it this way, it went onto my charity shop pile, and I didn't look out for others in the series.

Speaking of books, I recently finished designing a database of my books (or rather, entering the data). Mainly because I wanted to know where they were shelved in the house and so that I didn't accidentally buy a second copy of something. As a side effect I did find about 2 dozen duplicates already acquired. Total number of books is 3,600-ish, with 1,100 different authors. I'm probably the only weirdo who would bother to complete this task but it did give me some satisfaction and I have a PDF of the output on my phone which is very helpful when scouring the shelves in charity shops!

I started listening to a podcast about books to keep me entertained on car journeys; it's been pretty interesting so far and has inspired me to read some of those they've reviewed – at the moment I'm reading Emma by Jane Austen, although that is also because my daughter thought I should. Not my usual fare but it's good to try different things from time to time.

Whereas my acquaintance with Jane Austen is only via film and TV adaptations...

Three months of games

What I've been playing recently

One of the things I brought back from my trip to America in April (see TWJO 264 and 265) was a vintage copy of RoboRally that I'd picked up second-hand. With seven players coming to the Ruislip group's last meeting in April, this seemed an ideal opportunity for some robot mayhem. Given the number, I stuck to a simple layout – one board, two checkpoints – though the numerous short conveyor belts made for some confusion.

And, yes, it really was mayhem. Abby got a good start and made the early running, clearing checkpoint 1 quickly. However, as she tried to get to number two, everybody else caught up and it was a free-for-all in the centre of the board. Lasers were firing



All seven bots are on the board, but the conveyor belts are pushing them all over the place. It looks like Hammerbot (top) needs to shut down...

Frank X Change (Rapier, Seconds GdB, adv.) and Hugo Serre (Rapier, Seconds BeV, 4 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Justin Thyme (Sabre, Seconds ZUT & RS, 1 rests) and Maurice Danseur (Sabre, adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Steve De Sade (Sabre, Seconds CBL, 4 rests) has cause with Maurice

Danseur (Sabre, adv.) as he's not Noble but higher SL.

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

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

New Characters

None needed.

Tables

Army Organisation and 1678's Summer Deployment

Field Army (Field Ops)	GdB/N/N6/CdP
First Division (Field Ops)	TC/N/MdG
Guards Brigade (Field Ops) - RFG CG KM	
RNHB Regiment (Field Ops)	
Second Division (Field Ops)	CPL/MAD/CS
1st Foot Brigade (Field Ops) - RM PM	
2nd Foot Brigade (Field Ops) - 13F 53F	
Third Division (Field Ops)	__/_/_/N1
3rd Foot Brigade (Field Ops) - 27M 4A	
4th Foot Brigade (Field Ops) - 69A Gscn	
Cavalry Division (Field Ops)	__/_/_/EIF
Horse Guards Brigade (Field Ops) - DG QOC	
Heavy Brigade (Field Ops) - ALC CPC	
Frontier Division (Field Ops)	__/_/_/N1
Frontier Regiments (Field Ops)	
Dragoon Brigade (Field Ops) - GDMD PLLD	

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

Hugh Jeneaux applies for Minister without Portfolio

Hugo Serre asks NPC Lt.Colonel of King's Musketeers to resign

Duels

Results of December's duels

Tiny Thierry Toothpick didn't turn up to fight Justin Thyme and lost SPs.

Beaumes de Venise (with CA & FXC, gains 1 Exp) beat Charles Pied-Luminaire (with DJA & MAD).

Frank X Change (with CA & GdB, gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Hugo Serre (with BeV & HJ).

Maurice Danseur (gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Ian Dediette (with GdB & BT).

Maurice Danseur (gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Justin Thyme (with RS).

Beaumes de Venise (with CA & FXC, gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Claude de Nord (with HS).

Beaumes de Venise (with CA & FXC, gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Hugo Serre (with BeV & HJ, no Expertise).

Frank X Change (with CA & GdB, no Expertise) beat his enemy Claude de Nord (with HS, losing 9 extra SPs).

Maurice Danseur (gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Con Stantinople (with TCdS).

Grudges to settle next month

Achille d'Orbigny (Sabre, 1 rests) and Beau Taux (Rapier, Seconds ID, adv.)

Tiny Thierry Toothpick applies for Commnr. of Public Safety

Tiny Thierry Toothpick applies for Minister without Portfolio

have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Beau Taux (Rapier, Seconds ID) has cause with Chemin de Fer (Cutlass, Seconds CdN & MHD, adv.) as he's not Noble but higher SL.

Beau Taux (Rapier, Seconds ID) and François de Blanchefort (Sabre, Seconds AH) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Beau Taux (Rapier, Seconds ID, 4 rests) has cause with Maurice Danseur (Sabre, adv.) as he's not Noble but higher SL.

Beau Taux (Rapier, Seconds ID) and Vaux de Fon (Sabre, Seconds HS, adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Chemin de Fer (Cutlass, Seconds CdN & MHD, 2 rests) and Frank X Change (Rapier, Seconds GdB, adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Claude de Nord (Sabre, Seconds CdF & HS, adv.) and Frank X Change (Rapier, Seconds GdB, 3 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Con Stantinople (Sabre, Seconds TCdS, 4 rests) and Maurice Danseur (Sabre, adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.



We're scattered across the 'verse and someone's conveniently moved the Reavers (the red ship bottom right) out of the way.

in all directions; robots were pushed down pits just about every turn and some headed off in strange directions. I messed up gloriously: down a pit, off the board and out. (I'm sure I used to be good at this game.) Despite complaining about being shot up a lot, Veronica came through for the win.

I can't resist a game of *Firefly* and Paul and Veronica enjoy it, too. So, when it was suggested for our first meeting in May, I was quick to agree. We ended up with five players (which the special edition supports), but two of these – Sandra and Tom – were new to the game. Hence we stuck to the “First Time in the Captain's Chair” scenario. This requires players to become ‘solid’ with two Contacts (that is, complete jobs for them), amass \$5,000 and pay off the loan that let them buy a ship in the first place (by visiting planet Ezra and handing the cash to Niska).

As the most experienced player I thought I should take the Artful Dodger as my ship – a break from my personal tradition of having the Serenity (and Mal). This is the fifth ship and is a different model of Firefly from the others: less cargo space, but a bigger engine and room for an extra crewmember. I went with Monty (“Smuggler Extraordinaire”) as my Captain. However, I wasn't going too far from my usual set-up as Monty is a Moral Captain too. I still tried to recruit the TV show's crew, though. I found Shepherd Book early on and added Kaylee later.

Paul did better than me in that regard, adding both Simon and River Tam to his ship along with Wash as his pilot (I had the lucky dinosaurs, though!). An encounter with the Alliance Cruiser saw Simon Tam get arrested and the Reavers took Wash – a run of bad luck for Paul that saw him lagging behind the rest of us.

Veronica tried her usual trick of Misbehavin' a lot. She has made this work in the past, picking up cards that she could handle. But it's also backfired before, landing her in increasing trouble. This time was a bit of a mixture, so she was doing okay.



And here is Artful Dodger and its crew – including Shepherd Book and Kaylee. I'm solid with Amnon Duul, so need to complete a second job.

First-timer Sandra got rather hung up on wanting to complete a particular job and hunting in vain for the crew and equipment that would let her do so. The other newbie, Tom, found a good strategy for this scenario. He stuck to low-risk, Legal jobs, and got away with not hiring any crew or buying equipment! He was quickly solid with two Contacts and then collected the necessary cash – not having to pay crew probably helped. Then it was just a short flight to Ezra to pay off Niska. Having built up my crew for a longer game, I was caught out by the quick end.

I've already written about my experiences with *Tales of the Arthurian Knights* (see last issue) which also happened in May.

The other second-hand game I bought at the Gathering in April was the 10th anniversary edition of *Homesteaders* (you'll find my first impressions of the original in TWJO 105). This includes the *New Beginnings* expansion that allows a fifth player, something I've not tried before, and adds some new buildings. Just right, then, for an evening when five of us gathered for games.

Everybody starts with a Homestead tile and a worker who can be placed on the tile to produce, in this case, wood. (Or a Victory Point, but that's not important right now.) With what they produce from their tiles, players can build more building tiles, adding extra production (iron, food, gold, cattle...) to their growing settlement. Most of these will need workers in order to produce.

However, not everybody will get the chance to build something every round. That's because players have to win an auction in order to build and there's one less auction than players. What's more, each auction is for one or two specific types of

Points Arising

Next deadline is 16th October

A nice long deadline this time so I can relax while I'm away. :-)

I've heard nothing from Bob Blanchett since January (when he said "I'm in hospital for the foreseeable") and I'm getting no reply to my emails. So I've decided to mothball his character, Xavier Ulric Turenne, until he can, hopefully, rejoin the game.

Absent friends

No orders from Max Pieksma – 3 turns missed, so MdP is sent to a Frontier regiment.

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.

Trials

Botte Le Chimiste is on trial at the start of next month (after duels, but before anything else) on charges that have yet to be published.

CPS Claude de Nord will prosecute and Minister of State Rick Shaw will sit in judgement.

Players are welcome to contribute testimony, gossip or goings-on in the courtroom, but should send them to the Minister if they want them to affect the verdict.

If BLC is found guilty, Level 9 favours (or bribes, His Majesty's not proud) may be used for (or against) the sentence being commuted.

Announcements

Chemin de Fer asks NPC Lt.Colonel of King's Musketeers to resign

Charles Etfeevor asks NPC Lt.Colonel of 13th Fusiliers to resign

Chemin de Fer asks NPC Major 2 of King's Musketeers to resign

Elroi le Flingue asks NPC Aide to Crown Prince to resign

“Glory Doesn’t Pay the Tailor”

1 They tell us that glory’s a currency too,

That honour’s worth more than a crown or a sou —

Well, honour won’t patch up a coat gone to rags,

Nor argue with landlords who’re counting their bags.

Chorus

Oh we bleed for the King and we bleed for the flag,

While the Colonel’s new coach makes the paymaster brag.

We’re rich, so they say, in the coin of good fame —

Try spending your fame, friend, it’s not quite the same.

2 The siege drags on slow and the mud’s turned to stone,

The Colonel dines well on a fortune his own.

Us Captains make do with the scraps left behind —

A “comfortable sum”, if you’re feeling so kind.

3 I’m told that the ladies of Paris adore

A man who’s seen glory and come back for more.

I’d trade every ounce of my hard-won renown

For a purse with real weight when I next see the town.

Written still at the Front, richer in reputation than in coin, and no less muddy than last time.

† Bt. Captain Pierre Newkirk,
Picardy Musketeers, at the Front

“Save Me a Sword in Paris”

1 Let others cross bayonets, let others take walls,

I’d rather cross rapiers in well-lit halls.

There’s men back in Paris I’d gladly run through

For sport, and for honour, and old debts still due.

Chorus

So save me a sword, and save me a name,

A foe with a grudge and a taste for the game.

I’ll trade you a siege for a much smaller fight —

One man, and one blade, by a good salon light.

2 I’ve stood in the mud while the cannon-fire roared

And dreamt, I confess, of a much sharper sword —

Not aimed at some Empire I’ve no quarrel with,

But at certain gentlemen back in my Sixth.

3 So keep my name warm on the lists, if you please,

I’ll settle those scores the day siege duty frees

This Captain from mud, from the cold and the rain —

Then Paris will learn why they feared me again.

Still at the Front, still counting debts owed on the field of honour.

† Bt. Captain Pierre Newkirk,
Picardy Musketeers, at the Front

building, constraining players’ options. Hence there’s a need for cash (‘Silver’) to bid in the auctions — your Homestead produces some, but you’ll need more (especially to pay your workers). Though you can take loans. But have to pay these back (with interest) at the end of the game or lose points. Lots of points.

Losing out on the auctions isn’t all bad, as you do get to acquire something useful instead. Just not a building. And players can trade what they’ve got to get what they need. However, each trade means spending a ‘Trade’ token. In effect, these are another currency, so producing them is another priority. The game runs for 10 rounds with new buildings appearing from time to time, followed by a final opportunity to trade and repay loans before scoring up.

The auctions are the key mechanism in *Homesteaders*, something I tried to instil in the newbies at our game. However, they were all rather cautious about taking on debts and bidding was low, with people passing more than I expected. I had intended trying something different, but ended up with the Foundry (produces iron) and then the Gold Mine (needs iron, produces gold, which can be used as cash or traded for other valuable things) as usual. Veronica got the Bank, which automatically repays the owner’s loans, but I hadn’t needed many loans this game, so this was not a big deal.

It was a win for the experienced player (me) in the end, but the game went down well with everyone. (So well that Veronica’s now bought her own copy!) And we’re playing online.



My *Homesteaders* city at the end of a later game – more workers than I usually have, but I do like me a Railroad Station (not to mention the Bank).

After a six-player (!) *Power Grid* towards the end of June, we had enough time to try Tom D's latest trick-taking acquisition, *Nokosu Dice*. It starts as a pretty standard trick-taking card game. You have a hand of cards numbered 1-7 in five suits/colours, one of which will be trumps for the hand, and score a point for each trick won.

However, notice the "Dice" bit in the name? You also have a set of dice (1-6 in five suits/colours) which you play as if they were cards. So having no green cards is not so useful if you've got green dice! And, since players' dice are not hidden, everybody can see some of your 'hand'.

With the dice come several wrinkles. First off, you never play your last die. Instead it becomes your 'bid' for the number of tricks you're going to win. Argh! It can be so tricky to keep the right die until last – especially as you have to follow suit if you can and may thus have to play the die you wanted to keep. (Been there!) Making your 'bid' scores you points for each player who didn't make theirs, so it's often lucrative.

Secondly, players draft their dice at the start of the hand, after getting their cards. This gives you some chance of tuning your hand. However, there is one die left over after drafting. The colour of this sets the trump suit. It also sets the trump **number**. So a blue three means all blue cards and dice are trumps. And so are all 3's – and are considered to be blue for this hand. What's more, any blue three (at least one card and possibly several dice) is a super-trump and automatically wins any hand it's played on.



Starting a hand of *Nokosu Dice* and I've bagged a super-trump die.

One effect of this is that the game is trump-heavy. There are way more trumps than you'd expect in a standard trick-taking card game. And it does mess with your head. We found we were having to check each trick carefully to be sure who'd won it. Early on, it's straightforward. Then you get to the stage where somebody's led with green 5, the next player's discarded red 1, the third player's chucked in a green die 2, and then there's a green 3. Which is a trump (and thus blue, so only works if the player has no green dice or cards) and thus wins the trick. Ow, there go some brain cells.

Somehow the game was a runaway victory for me as I got my 'bid' right in the first two hands. It is a really clever

The Play What I Wrote

'The multicoloured coat'

With his house burnt down by bandits in orange uniforms, a poor ex-soldier is forced to roam the countryside seeking shelter.

To keep warm he makes a coat by sewing together scraps of cloth which he begs, steals and borrows on his travels.

The love and care which he instils into his craft attracts the attention of angels who secretly bless it.

Returning to his village, he encounters the bandits who laugh at him. Their leader, foaming at the mouth, demands he gives them the coat. All he has is the coat and his dignity. So he draws his rusty sword and, despite the odds, is determined to fight. His attackers are dismayed to find the coat acts like armour, protecting him from their weapons.

They turn to flee and run into a troop of His Majesty's cavalry returning from the front.

† Rick Shaw

Scoop: Further developments on upcoming Play of the season "Diable et L'Eau Sombre" by Director Arent Hayes from our theatrical reporter Monsieur Sy Cophant.

SY "My sources tell me that things have not gone to plan in the last weeks leading up to Christmas – can you tell our readers what happened?"

AH "How can you know about that Sy? I swore the cast and backstage staff to secrecy!"

SY "I cannot reveal my sources – freedom of press, etc, but is this play cursed?"

AH "Nonsense – classic case of Noises Off. The accident with Mademoiselle Le Grange (Sara Wassall) was a faulty safety rope – she only fell 10 feet into the water. Madame Fifi Whiplash (Creesjie Jens) is recovering nicely after that scene with the pig went a bit squiffy and Sammy Phipps has always been wheelchair bound. Ex-CPS Baron Toothpick is too busy playing horses. Finally, this is a serious play about redemption, justice and consequences, not a pantomime about ghosts, lepers and vengeful villains getting what they deserve. " SY "All publicity helps – I understand Ticket sales are going well." AH "Yes, I just hope we have a cast left standing for opening Night."

What about closing Night?

† Le Roi

Poetry Corner

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

1 Welcome to Christmas, the Yuletide draws near,
'Tis a time for to drink and to be of good cheer,
To eat festive foods and be merry with friends:
Let's all celebrate as the aged Year ends.
2 The Old Year is past – so let's on with the New!
Let us drink to the Honours now coming in view:
When we ride to the front with our hearts full of joy,
When we draw forth our swords and all cry "Vive le Roi!"

† Major Maurice Danseur

To all the Gentlemen of Paris.
In Week 2 of January, Camille de Polignac will host a party at the Fleur. Everyone and their mistresses are welcome. Carousing expenses paid. We will have some of those shrimp canapés that everybody likes. Life has been good to me so far, and 1678 will, I hope, be the best year ever. Please feel free to come share in my good fortune.

Apologies to all those who were disappointed by my regrettable absence last month: a replacement party (SL 13+) will take place in the second week of January. Fortunately I succeeded in liberating some quite tolerable Dutch jenever, so carousing costs will be paid for those who were inconvenienced. † ZvT

The lovely Vera Cruz and I are inviting all gentlemen of Paris and their partners to join us at our club and ring in the New Year in the first week of January. All expenses paid. Also make a note in your social calendars that I will once again host a chess tournament with prizes for the top three players in the third week of February! † Neville Moore

Any surviving officers and troopers of the Picardy Musketeers are requested to join me at my club in week 1 to bring in the New Year. † SBC

Overheard at Greg de Bécqueur's early Christmas party:
"I say, he's not having Christmas early because he's secretly a member of some odd sect that sets its religious

festivals by a weird 'non-French' calendar, is he?"
"No, he just likes pre-loading."

Personal

In my social engagements I hear whispers of people seeking government appointments, but then receive no letters of application. Is my mail being intercepted? Is this further sedition organised by the former CPS? Unfortunately the mental asylums of Paris are fully of people in tangerine uniforms, but whilst tomfoolery can be indulged, treason against the King and state cannot be allowed. His Majesty's government will remain vigilant.

† Rick Shaw, MoS

Worried about indulging a bit too much over the festive season?
Scared of suffering from an upset stomach after too much rich food?
Afraid of getting a hangover that just won't go away?
Don't be concerned, Botte Le Chimiste has just the thing for you. His patented "Elixir of Recovery" will restore you to full vim and vigour within minutes of taking it.
Buy it now before stocks run out!
Only 5 Cr for a pack of 20 pills.
(Not recommended for ladies or the small of stature.)

Dear Gentlemen of Paris,
Such a sad day for our country and King, when Frenchman turns against Frenchman.
I have no choice but to act after the slanderous and treacherous behaviour of TTT. † CdN

game and I'm beginning to see Tom D's attraction to these trick-taking card games. *Nokosu Dice* gets a provisional 8/10 on my highly subjective scale.

We were down to three for the last week in June, so I inflicted (ahem) their second game of *Dune: Imperium – Uprising* on Alex and Sandra (with the *Bloodlines* expansion largely integrated, apart from the 'Tech' cards). Sandra (red) took Feyd-Rautha as her leader again, hoping to capitalise on familiarity with the character. Alex went for Gurney Hallek (and took the opportunity of Veronica's absence to play yellow). While I played blue and tried Liet Kynes, despite this meaning I wouldn't be able to deploy any sandworms to the conflicts.

It was a close game throughout, though we ran out of time just after I'd taken a 3-point lead. Alex demanded a stewards' inquiry as he would have played that turn differently had he known it was the last one. This would probably have taken him to 5 points, tying with Sandra, and I'd have had just 6. As it was, he was rather adrift on 3. It's a cracking game and I'm finally learning to manage my deck.



The photo shows the final positions. On the left you'll see that Alex (yellow) is thick with the Emperor, using the Sardaukar action to drop troops into his garrison. Sandra (red) is in cahoots with the Bene Gesserit witches. While I've been currying favour with all the factions (such a tart!) – this is half my points. Across the top you'll see that I'm the only player with a seat on the High Council (extra points to

buy cards) and the only player to have added my third Agent (it's a worker placement game – always take more workers!). At the bottom, I've won the last conflict (Alex's sore point as he has plenty of troops available), which is how I've hit 8 points.

We started July with *A War of Whispers*, which Tom D brought along. I was immediately impressed by it having a circular board – you don't see many of those. Circling the edge of the board is a track that shows the actions available, subdivided into five sections, one for each of the noble 'Empires' (colours) whose territory is shown on the map in the centre of the board. A marker moves round the board to show which action is taken next. By the player whose 'Agent' is on that position, not by the particular Empire.

Before this starts, the initial action is to place Agents. More Agents are placed at the start of each round, so what begins as a sparse sprinkling of Agents becomes full by the end of the game. The actions for each Empire include adding troops (wooden cubes) in various ways to areas that Empire controls, attacking an adjacent area belonging to another Empire and drawing Empire cards. There's a different deck for each Empire, but the cards can generally be used to boost any Empire – at a cost.

After four rounds, each Empire is worth the number of cities it controls on the board. The crucial part of the game, though, are the 'Loyalty' tokens each player

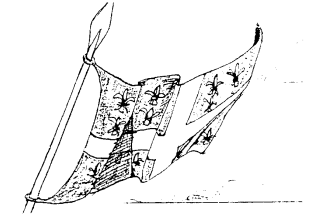


We're about halfway through round 3 of *War of Whispers* and there are a lot of Agents in play. Blue has expanded to grab a second city (from Brown). Brown has taken one from Yellow to make up for this. But who has which Empire where in their Loyalty row?

Near miss

French forces are on the defensive this season, keeping a careful eye on the Dutch, Imperial and Spanish troops that might try to re-take the territory recently acquired from them. And guard against possible English intervention. Detachments of Thierry Toothpick's Dragoon Guards are essentially on patrol the whole time. He is Mentioned in Despatches ("where's the race?") and picks up a little loot from obviously Spanish peasants.

Hugh Jeneaux is assigned to Frontier regiment 2 where life is rather more dangerous than he's used to with Archduke Leo's men. He survives and is even Mentioned in Despatches ("On his own?!").



Frontier regiment 3 is bolstered by both First Battalion of the Cardinal's Guard and First Battalion of the Picardy Musketeers. CG Lt-Colonel Come Asiouar gains a MiD and picks up a little loot in a clash with Imperial Fusiliers. CG Subaltern Beaumes de Venise survives comfortably. Lt-Col Lance A Little commands the Picardy detachment and sees no reward. Neither does PM Captain Pierre Newkirk. Only two more months, gentlemen.

Gilbert Grumiaux is accepted into the RNHB as a Private. He survives a close encounter with a Spanish musketball to be Mentioned in Despatches ("He should duck faster").

Press

Announcements

To all members of the GDMG, Just to give you some advance warning, I will be taking the regiment to the Front in FEBRUARY. This gives you all of January to get your affairs in order. Anyone wishing to remain in Paris should let me know before then.

† (bvt) Bdr-Gen. Sir Le Chimiste

I say, does anybody recognise this regiment?

† Le Roi

Social

All Gentlemen are invited during week 2 to bring their favourite rapier and join Marquis Louis Renault and his fencing master to discuss Gerard Thibault's "On the timing of attacks and counters" from his treatise, *The Academy of the Sword*. This will be followed by an opportunity for some light sparring. Afterwards, we will retire to Fleur de Lys, where Miss Nifisent will arrange for some well-earned refreshments for our swordsmen and their ladies, at the Marquis's expense.

Who was where – round and about

Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
In jail		BLC		
Practising	ZvT - Rapier JdG - Rapier PAM - Rapier BeV - Sabre DJA - Sabre	NM - Rapier TC - Sabre FS - Rapier VdF - Sabre MHD - Cutlass AH - Sabre JdG - Rapier EIF - Sabre MdG - Rapier CdF - Rapier BeV - Sabre LR - Rapier	NM - Rapier CE - Rapier TC - Sabre FS - Rapier JiT - Sabre VdF - Sabre ZvT - Rapier BT - Rapier AH - Sabre CBL - Sabre MAD - Sabre BLC - Sabre JdG - Rapier DBT - Rapier MdG - Rapier CdF - Rapier BeV - Sabre GdB - Sabre ID - Sabre CdN - Sabre JH - Sabre SDS - Sabre HdB - Sabre LR - Rapier	NM - Rapier TC - Sabre FS - Rapier BT - Rapier AH - Sabre CBL - Sabre JdG - Rapier BeV - Sabre ID - Sabre MD - Sabre JH - Sabre AdO - Sabre
Regimental Duties		AdO		
Busy doing nothing				
Scribbling furiously		RS	RS	RS
Strolling in the Tuileries			EIF + Lucy	
Shows everybody else; Weapon = Weapon practised with; For those doing nothing: -club = not a member of a club; -Cash = insufficient funds; -SL = insufficient Social Level; ??? = unknown host.				

has – one for each Empire. At the start of the game, these are distributed randomly, face-down on the player’s personal board. This allocates each Empire to a multiplier which will give that player’s score. The multipliers range from +4 to -1.

Players are, of course, allowed to look at their own Loyalties. Now they know which Empires they want to beef up and which to do down. Carefully, as they don’t want everybody else to know which Empires they favour – though with only four rounds to play this is likely to become obvious. They do have opportunities to change their Loyalties. At the end of each round, players can swap two of their tokens. But these are then face-up. It was no surprise that this only happened on the last round in our game.

I found it a clever game that does give the feeling of working behind the scenes to influence things. Crying out for a *Game of Thrones* theme, was my thought – strengthened by the fact that the blue Empire, which starts in the snowy area of the board, has a wolf’s head on its banner. Could their “words” be “Winter is coming”? When I looked up the designer, Jeremy Stoltzfus, on BoardGameGeek, I found he’d said this about the game: “This one stemmed from my love of *Game of Thrones* and is my attempt to approach a traditional conflict area control game from the perspective of Varys or Littlefinger.” Brilliant.

My one issue with the game is the random distribution of Loyalty tokens at the start. Gameplay is heavily influenced by the geography of the board and it’s noticeable that the blue Empire starts with only one city, while brown has four. I suspect blue is going to end up at the bottom of most players’ loyalty by the end. However, *A War of Whispers* gets a provisional 8/10 on my highly subjective scale.

The middle of July saw six of us again and a couple of well-known games. Having said that, this was actually the first time I’ve played *Camel Up*. I knew it was about camel racing, but quickly discovered that it’s actually about betting on camel races!



They're off! The *Camel Up* race starts with Blue taking the lead by getting on top of the others. Blue has to be the way to bet for the win, surely?!

In their turn, players can either bet on a camel or move a camel (there are a couple of wrinkles, but that's essentially it). However, moving a camel depends on a random die, so it could be any camel for any distance – though a camel won't move again until all the others have moved. And the earlier you bet, the bigger the bet. Some luck involved, then.

Once all the camels have moved, there's a payout based on their positions and the bets placed. Then the bets and dice are re-set and another round played. The game ends when the first camel crosses the finish line. There's a final payout based on the camels' positions and then further points based on the overall winner and loser.

I can see why *Camel Up* won the *Spiel des Jahres* prize – it's a light game, but with some tactical niceties. I enjoyed it and would be happy playing again. That's a provisional 6/10 on my highly subjective scale.

We followed this with a six-player (*Settlers of*) *Catan* (it'll always be "Settlers" as far as I'm concerned). It turned out neither Alex nor Sandra had played this before, so some instruction was required. As expected, the experienced players did better with Veronica winning by stealing the "Longest Road" points from Paul, while "Largest Army" contributed to my second place. Good fun, despite the usual frustrations (roll more 8's, will you!).



You can just about make out the Sloths as they're a different shape from the discs of the ordinary animals. The crocodiles in the river were particularly useful for me.

The following week I brought in *Fast Sloths* which was new to everybody else – you can read my review in *TWJO* 216 (where I give it a "solid 8/10"). The aim of the game is to collect the 'leaves' of your colour from the trees scattered around the board. However, you can't move your sloth playing piece, you have to move the other animals so that your sloth can hitch a ride. Each animal works differently (the elephant can actually throw a sloth!) and can move in different terrain. You need sets of cards to move an animal, but draw cards for different ones.

The key issue facing players is not how to move their sloth, but how to cope with other players moving the animals they

At the same time, Hugo Furst turns up at the Prix d'Or on horseback in full riding gear. "The race is next week," say the staff. "No," responds Hugo, "there are two – one this week, one next." Only the complete lack of any other competitors or spectators finally convinces him.

Returning to the current crop of plays, Arent Hayes seems to be hiding in the gym as "Le Diable et l'eau Sombre" continues to attract few people. Because of this, it will finish at the end of the month, long before Arent sees any return on his investment. Felipe Savant might also be hiding, but this is because of the success of his play, "M Forgeron va a Paris". He is the second playwright to be honoured with a call to the Louvre for a command performance. Now, if only he'd put some money into it...



Starting (?) pistol

When he turns up at the Prix d'Or again the following week, Hugo is reassured that there are plenty of people about. That is plenty of would-be competitors and spectators. But no host. "Race is off," say the tangerine-tunicked types trying to appease the angry assembly. They offer wine, cheese and the promised miniatures of the "fornicating effigy" and the news that "BECAUSE of Cuckpowder & Shaw and that buffoon de Nord, Marquis (should be Count) Toothpick is unable to attend due to their intended skullduggery!" And that the race will be re-scheduled for "a future date, yet to be confirmed".

Balzac Slapdash is particularly piqued. It's the final failure after several weeks spent trying to a court a woman who's out with her current beau all the time. Greg de Bécqueur wasn't happy with his host to begin with and this affront leads him to be careless handling his mount. "Sorry, didn't see you down there," he sneers at the Tangerines he accidentally tramples. Elroi le Flingue arrives riding an ass and asserts "It seemed like the most appropriate mount, given the race's host." Meanwhile, Chemin de Fer is left in the Prix d'Or's bar wondering what happened to this week's race and fingering the scroll tucked behind his jacket.

Maurice Danseur is determinedly not at the races: he's busy practising. "I certainly am not going to a horse race the title of which insults a noble gentleman," he asserts. "If Toothpick has a grudge against Cuckpowder he merely has to issue a challenge in the usual manner."

Sebastian Blanc-Chevaux is not to be seen in society this month. He is, apparently, being brave. This may involve posturing in front of mirrors... While Minister of State Rick Shaw is very busy at his desk for much of the month. No, not affairs of state, he's writing another play. The huge success of "D'Artagnan" has prompted him to put quill to parchment again before "D'Artagnan" is performed for the King and court next month. And Henri de Boudeille places his six 10-crown wagers at the Bawdyhouses again, winning three, losing three and ending where he started.

Who was where – with the ladies				
Who	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Angelina	Out ID fails	Out		
Bess	MAD succeeds	Out DJA fails		Out
Di	CE succeeds	Out		ZvT at home
Morgane		AA at home	Out	
Pet		Out	Out	
Therèse	Out BS fails	BS fails	BS fails	
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.				
Who was where – in the red light district				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Bawdy houses	MHD + FC AH + FC	CE + FC HWB + FC DBT + FC ID + FC HdB(G 60) + FC	DJA + FC: Mug 0 AdO + FC: Mug 0	
Shows those indulging: FC = Female Companionship; Mug n = Mugged & amount lost; (G) = Gambled				

wanted! Some explanation was needed – particularly for the ants who work as a chain to ferry a sloth – but the reference cards are very useful in keeping people on track. It was the usual mayhem as animals scurried around the board and sloths were carried hither and thither. I (just!) won out in the end, despite Tom D messing with the ants I was relying on for my final move. Great fun!

We finished July with Tom D’s nice new copy of *Container*. This is the third edition of the game since it launched in 2007, but a game I’d never played – nor had the others. And a strange game it is. The central element of the game is the containers, which come in several different colours. Players produce them in their factories and place them in the warehouses along the bottom edge of their personal board. Each warehouse shows the asking price for those containers.

As this suggests, all you can do with the containers on your board is sell them (or move them around to get different prices). To get containers onto your harbour, you have to buy them from someone else’s warehouses. Your harbour storage shows what price you’re asking for the containers which, again, you want to sell to other players. This time, though, they have to move their ship (nice models that carefully hold the container pieces) to dock in your harbour. And you have to do the same to buy other players’ containers.

Finally, you move your ship to the central island and unload the containers. However, they’re not yours, oh no. Instead they are auctioned off with the other players making a secret bid (money cards – which can include zeroes – placed face down) to buy them. Then you can either buy them yourself, paying the amount of the highest bid to the bank, or sell them. In the latter case, the highest bidder pays for the containers and you get the same amount from the bank. A great way of getting cash, but it’s containers on the island that count for your score.



Container island is at the top with a couple of ships docked. The other island (Bank?) allows players to get cash for containers or vice versa, but wasn't used that much.

The final twist is that, when scoring, you don't count the containers in the colour you have most of. Depending on the scoring card you got at the start of the game, the colours of container are worth different amounts. Hence, you really don't want to have most containers in your most valuable colour! I decided the thing to do is end up with the same number of most and least valuable colours so that I could choose which to discard. Well, that was the plan...

The game ends when two colours of container have run out. Players reveal their scoring cards and take the cash for these. They also add their cash in hand and some money for leftover containers and most money wins.

My first thought was, what a strange game! Clearly you want to get lots of your most valuable colour of container into play. However, you also need to generate plenty of others so that you can have at least as many of a less valuable colour. Plus, creating lots of one colour hastens the end of the game... You then need other players to buy your containers, so that you get some cash, and then somebody to ship them to the island. Where you then need to win the auction. Wow! Thinking about this, I'm coming round to the idea that you actually have very little control unless you're the person delivering containers to the island.

Apart from Tom, I don't think any of us had much idea how to play this. We produced, bought and sold containers. Alex built up the biggest pile of containers on the island, so triggered the end of the game. At which point Tom's game collapsed as he couldn't repay his loans. (A loan is for \$10, you pay interest of \$1 at the start of your turn and can repay it, for \$10, at any time – and must at the end of the game.) Tom's problem was that he'd invested what he'd borrowed in containers and didn't get his money back.



Here's my player board. I have three factories on the left, meaning I produce white, green and blue containers, and the stripy-roofed warehouses on the right restrict how many containers I can score. And I have some containers I've produced for sale.

I don't really know what to say about this game, apart from repeating how bizarre it is. I think I'd play it again and it would probably make more sense second time around. But do I want to? *Container* gets a provisional 6/10 on my highly subjective scale. And I should mention that the production is terrific: the containers look like containers, the ships are chunky and everything else is solid and brightly illustrated.

Who was where – the other clubs				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Bothwell's		PPuf + Viv MD + Madelaine	HWB . MHD PPuf + Viv AA + Pet MD + Madelaine	HWB . MHD PPuf + Viv AA MdG + Chris
Hunter's		CPL + Agnes		
Blue Gables		BT + Angelina		MAD + Bess
Frog & Peach		CBL + Violet PAM(G) + May	PAM(G) + May	CE PAM(G) + May
Prix d' Or				CdF
Outside Prix d' Or			HF -Toady to TTT	BS -Toady to TTT HF -Toady to TTT VdF -Toady to TTT DBT -Toady to TTT ELF -Toady to TTT GdB -Toady to TTT CdN -Toady to TTT CdP -Toady to TTT SDS -Toady to TTT HdB -Toady to TTT DJA -Toady to TTT

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



escorted from the building by some burly fellows for his sojourn in the Bastille. However, Claude is silent on the precise charges against Botte.

Amusingly, Marc-Antoine's success courting at the start of the month is the reason Dee gets nowhere the following week. Bess is living it up in the Fleur with Marc-Antoine as guests of Jacques Hatt – as are Steve De Sade and Laura de Land (is she entranced by the Eau de Parfum Steve bought from Botte?). Charles Etfeevor is another successful suitor, but nobody notices as his recent disgrace renders him all but invisible to society.

After this excitement, things are calmer the following week. Though this doesn't stop two of his challengers repeating the exchange of insults with Frank. Greg de Bécqueur entertains a few in the Fleur and the normally low-key Jacques Hatt has two guests by personal invitation. Visiting his new club, the Frog & Peach, Pierre Aux-Manique tests their gaming tables. Despite losing his first 100-crown bet, he continues and wins the next two, retiring while he's ahead.

Charles PiedLuminaire takes Agnes Sorel to his acclaimed play, "Carry on Canoodling", and enjoys the audience's applause before celebrating at Hunter's. Even His Majesty has taken notice and Charles will be at the Louvre next month for a command performance. And his bank balance has certainly noticed this success. Louis Renault's investment in the play is also rewarded.

The last week before Christmas seems to be an opportune time to practice with the weapon of their choice for many Parisians. However, Thibault sees more people joining him in the Fleur (Hugo and Frank exchange challenges for the third time). And Hector William Boone hosts young Marcel Hatch Dupree in Bothwell's. Pierre has another flutter while in the Frog & Peach. This time he wins his first two wagers at 100 crowns a time and calls it quits. Having profited from his gambling so far, he doesn't feel like risking any more.

It's Christmaaas!

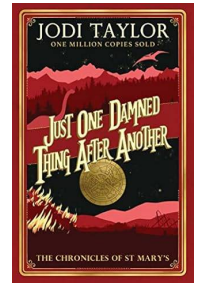
Taking a stroll in the Tuileries, Elroi le Flingue and Lucy peruse the "fornicating effigy" that was erected last month and, strangely, has not yet been blown up, chopped to bits or dumped in the Seine. Despite the orange-liveried guards around the statue, Elroi scoffs at "the political tripe that passes for art nowadays". Sadly, this also seems to be Paris's verdict on his play, "Pandaemonium", which has already closed its doors.

We concluded the evening with a quick *Love Letter* using all the roles in the expanded edition. It was a second win for Alex today, but Tom demonstrated another way of using the Chancellor effectively. He placed the Princess on the bottom of the deck and drew her as the last card to win that hand.

A slightly longer version of this article is on my BGG blog (in several parts): boardgamegeek.com/blog/8392

Reading Matter

As I've already mentioned, I have picked up Jodi Taylor's *Just One Damned Thing After Another*, the first of her "Chronicles of St Mary's" series. St Mary's Institute of Historical Research is an academic institution, attached to and financed by Thirsk University (which is just as fictional). The historians at St Mary's "investigate major historical events in contemporary time", providing incredible insights to all manner of historical events. And suffering a high casualty rate. That's because they're going back in time. And things go wrong. All the time. (Is the universe trying to tell them something?)



I have to say that the internal life of our protagonist, Doctor Madeleine "Max" Maxwell (I'm sure at some point someone's going to call her Mad Max), feels more like that of a teenager. Yet she has a doctorate and several years' experience as an archaeologist, so must be in her thirties. And the trauma the poor woman goes through! How she's not a basket case, I don't know.

Anyway, we start with Max being recruited by St Mary's because of her academic and research record. She is pushed by one of her teachers in much the same way that Oxbridge undergraduates were purportedly tapped on the shoulder as recruits for the Intelligence Services. Having passed her initial interview and committed to the level of secrecy involved, Max is told what St Mary's really does.

Along with a cohort of fellow oddballs Max embarks on what can only be described as basic training. A mixture of learning how to use the equipment (time-travelling 'pods' – that definitely do not look like police boxes), how to conform in different historical periods, weapons training, assault courses... At the same time, there's a distinct whiff of children at boarding school about the whole set-up: the lessons, the teachers, the infirmary, the dodging lessons. I don't think there was a tuck shop, though.

It all starts going wrong even before Max goes on her first mission. A fellow trainee is killed on their first trip after a close encounter with a cavalry sabre. So much for observing and not getting involved. On top of all this, Max has to cope with the politics within the organisation (hey, it's academia!), personal likes and dislikes (not least the – older? – bloke she fancies) and the idiosyncrasies of her fellow trainees and the surviving experienced Historians (St Mary's is under-staffed).

As things continue to go wrong, Max’s energy and resourcefulness see her through, but it becomes clear that some (all?) of the bad stuff is enemy action rather than happenstance. Cue some really bad stuff, leaving Max at a very low ebb – this is a very dark part of the book. (And the details in the book make me wonder if this is drawn from the author’s own experience.) I don’t think it’s much of a spoiler to say that things then get better again. There are not only bad guys working behind the scenes, but good ones too.

Back to St Mary’s, Max finds an innovative way for the Institute to flourish. This is triggered by the serendipitous discovery that, contrary to the organisation’s received wisdom, it is possible to bring things forward in time. If the conditions are just right. Which she then leads St Mary’s to exploit by... not bringing things forward in time. Umm, have I missed something? Anyway, by the end of the book, it’s all set up nicely for the next in the series.

I can see Mr Palfrey’s point that the things-going-wrong element is relentless. Taylor is clearly a believer in Sod’s Law. However, I found that I, like Max, could cope with the chaos. And it certainly makes for drama – not to mention the cliffhanger or revelation at the end of each chapter that just keeps you turning the pages. I think I’ll be moving on to the second book in due course.

Games Events

Don’t forget that Tringcon is on 3rd October at the usual venue of the Millennium Hall in the village of Marsworth, just north of Tring. Details online at www.fwtwr.com/tringcon

The next HandyCon is 30th October-1st November at the Staverton Park Hotel in Daventry. This is the first event at a new location after the closure of the Milton Keynes hotel the event had been using. This is a larger venue where “you can ... roll out of bed and be placing workers while the cockerels haven't even considered vocal warm-ups.” HandyCon is largely an open gaming event, fuelled by a substantial games library, and is well regarded by my gaming friends that have attended. Full details (and booking) on the website: www.handycon.co.uk

The following weekend (6th-8th November) is my regular engagement: **MidCon**. This is also at a new venue, albeit one that the organisers have now used twice for **MidSummerCon**: the Holiday Inn in Kenilworth. It’s an open gaming event, but games can be organised in advance on the website – very useful if you’re thinking of an obscure 6-hour, 7-person game. There’s the quiz on Saturday evening and a well-organised bring ’n’ buy as well. Details at midcon.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

Who was where – the Fleur				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Fleur de Lys	TC + Frances	TCdS + Katy	TCdS + Katy	TCdS + Katy
	TCdS + Katy	. HS + Kathy	. FdS + Freda	. FdS + Freda
	. FdS + Freda	. FXC + Edna	. HS + Kathy	. HS + Kathy
	FXC + Edna	GdS + Bette	. CS + Anne	. CS + Anne
	RS + Justine	. FdS + Freda	. CPL + Agnes	. CPL + Agnes
	CdP + Thérèse	. HF + Ella	FXC + Edna	JIT + Guinevere
	JH + Cath	. JIT + Guinevere	CdP + Thérèse	FXC + Edna
	LR + Maggie	. ZVT + Morgane	CdP + Thérèse	LR + Maggie
	. NM + Vera	. CS + Anne		
	. HF + Ella	CdN + Jacky		
	. FS + Fifi	CdP + Thérèse		
	. HS + Kathy	JH + Cath		
	. JIT + Guinevere	. MAD + Bess		
	. VdF + Belle	. SDS + Laura		
	. HWB			
	. BT + Angelina			
	. CBL + Violet			
	. PPuf + Viv			
	. BLC + Eve			
	. DBT			
	. AA			
	. EIF + Lucy			
	. MdG + Chris			
	. Cdf + Henrietta			
	. GdS + Bette			
	. CS + Anne			
	. CdN			
	. MD + Madelaine			
	. SDS + Laura			
	. HdB			
	. AdO			

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 seen in public with this beau.

Chemin de Fer gives up his perfectly good rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Marines to apply to the King’s Musketeers. His application is accepted by the regiment’s commander, Claude de Nord, and he buys a Captaincy.

Achille d’Orbigny elevates himself by buying a Captaincy in his regiment, the CPCs. However, the habit of supervising the troopers can’t be shaken off and he insists on doing a week’s duties despite his new rank.

Then Paris is shocked. Shocked to find that “Tiny” Thierry Toothpick is volunteering the Dragoon Guards for another season on active service. The man’s supposed to be hosting a horse race later this month!

Joining the cavalry on the road to the front are First Battalion of the Cardinal’s Guard, led by Come Asiouar, and First Battalion of the Picardy Musketeers, headed by Lance a Little. PM Captain Pierre Newkirk is expecting this. CG Subaltern Beaumes de Venise is not. Bang go his plans for Christmas. And the New Year.

Hugh Jeneaux is CO of Archduke Leopold’s Cuirassiers, but chooses to leave them in Paris and join a Frontier regiment on his own. While a fresh-faced arrival, Gilbert Grumiaux, is in Paris only long enough to sign up for the Highlanders – death or glory seems to be the plan.

December parties

Louis Renault and Maggie Nifisent find several of their fellow socialites joining them for Mass on the Feast Day of St Nicholas of Myra. And even more joining them in the Fleur de Lys afterwards. Those feeling spiritual are Chemin de Fer, Claude de Nord, Dwight B’Tard, Henri de Boudeille, Hugo Furst and Maurice Danseur (though he’s not feeling charitable towards the burly fellows who forced him to settle his debts earlier – plus double interest). Of course, such a large gathering means several sets of regimental enemies are in attendance. These and other slights lead to challenges being made.

Big man Maurice Danseur is the object of many challenges. Both Beau Taux and Steve De Sade are incensed that a commoner such as he should be preferred in society and challenge him as riff-raff. Beau goes further and slaps Chemin de Fer around the chops as well. And then has an exchange with Vaux de Fon of the CPC (he’s in the 53rd himself). None of this elevates him in society’s regard – especially as his recent cowardice finally comes home to roost. At least he’s cleared his debts, though. Vaux enlists the support of François de Blanchefort, who’s Toadying to Thibault Chanson de Skye elsewhere in the Fleur.

As a Dragoon Guard, Maurice receives the familiar insults from the Queen’s Own in attendance: Con Stantinople and Justin Thyme. He gives as good as he gets. Newly minted King’s Musketeer Chemin must also swap challenges. In his case with Frank X Change, commander of the Cardinal’s Guard. Chemin gets support from his regimental colleagues, Claude de Nord and Hugo Serre.

UK Games Expo: the biggest UK event is 4th-6th June 2027 (a few days later than usual) at the National Exhibition Centre. It has huge trade halls, lots of tournaments (continuing into the night), organised events, demos and plenty of space for open gaming. www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk is where to find out more.

Spiel: *the* board games event of the year. 22nd-25th October 2026, at the Messe (Exhibition Centre) in Essen, Germany. Publishers from around the world show off their latest games and, importantly, let people play them. And buy them. See www.spiel-essen.de/en

MidCon: 6th-8th November 2026 at a new venue: the Holiday Inn in Kenilworth (Warwickshire). **MidCon** is a friendly board games convention. 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

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Barringer Crater (*Railway Rivals* game 20 – RR2584C)

Turn 4

WUSS and TACO close in on Sacramento and the west coast, while BALLROOM is just north of the mountains. WOAAH and FAKENEWS are building networks in the Mid-West.

Builds and Points

Freight And Key Engineered Nuclear Energy Waste Services

(FAKENEWS), Mark Cowper – Blue

Starts: New Orleans

Builds:

a) (G16) – G13

b) (G13) – F12 – Phoenix;

(G18) – H18 – H19

c) (H19) – J20 – K20 – L20

Points: 38 = 38

Western US Steam (WUSS),

Anthony Gilbert – Orange

Starts: Chicago

Builds:

a) (Salt Lake City) – B51 – C51 – C50 – B49

b) (B49) – B45

c) (B45) – A45 – N4

Points: 58 = 58

Bow Along Light Lines Rail Over On Milwaukee

(BALLROOM), Rob

Pinkerton – Red

Starts: Milwaukee

Builds:

a) (Spokane) – J47 – J45

GM Notes

Remember: it costs three points to build into a mountain hex, five to build from one mountain hex to another and three to build from a mountain into a clear hex.

Next turn's die rolls: 6, 3, 4

**Orders to Mike Dommett, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommett@yahoo.co.uk by 9th October 2026**

b) (J45) – Portland – G43 (+6)

c) (G43) – F43 – D42;

(Minneapolis) – J72

Points: 50 +6 = 56

Western Overland And Haulage (WOAH), Chris Rudram – Green

Starts: Memphis

Builds:

a) (F58) – I57 – Billings;

(D59) – D58

b) (D58) – D57;

(Omaha) – F70

c) (D57) – D55

Points: 18 = 18

Trains Across Contoured Obstructions (TACO), Gerald

Udowiczenko – Black

Starts: New Orleans

Builds:

a) (D8) – D7;

(D8) – F7

b) (F7) – H6

c) (H6) – J5

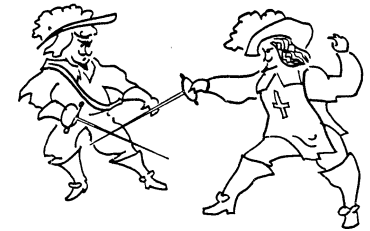
Points: 44 = 44

season, it will contain warm mince pies and mulled, spiced wine rather than the usual chicken and Chablis." Yum.

Meanwhile Frank X Change and Hugo Serre find they are top of each other's list of duels. Come Asiouar and Greg are Frank's seconds with Hugh Jeneaux (but not Ben e'Volence) supporting Hugo. This time it's rapier versus rapier with Frank having the dual advantages of size and skill. A (furious) lunge from Hugo is the first blow. Frank ignores it to land a lunge of his own and that's enough for Hugo.

Frank must wait for his next duel, but is on hand – along with Come – to second Beames de Venise. Beames is Hugo's next opponent, despite his injury. Beames is the biggest man on the field this month and is more practised with a rapier than Hugo. Their lunges are simultaneous, but nobody's shocked when Hugo throws in the towel.

Next for Beames is Charles PiedLuminaire. Charles mixes things up by bringing his sabre to take on Beames's rapier and by having the greater skill. His seconds are Dee Jean Aise and Marc-Antoine Descartes. Beames opens with a lunge again, but Charles demonstrates his expertise by parrying it. He strikes back with a slash only to be hit by a fierce cut from the rapier. That's enough for him and he surrenders.



Claude de Nord follows, putting Frank in the interesting position of being asked to second both principals. He sticks with Beames, but Hugo Serre is there to support Claude. Beames's first lunge is enough to win this fight.

And then Frank gets to take on Claude. Coming on top of still-healing wounds from last month, the blow he's received from Beames would allow Claude to decline this meeting without prejudice. Instead, he squares up to Frank, only to surrender without a blow being struck. This does not do his social standing any good.

No Minister

The resumption of routine business in Parisian society sees several – notably Thierry Toothpick – petitioning the Minister of State for preferment. Rick Shaw refuses them all. Hugh Jeneaux is determined to be a Minister, though, and immediately re-submits his application. The Adjutant-General and Inspectors-General leave Division and Brigade commands empty. In fact, Inspector-General of Cavalry Louis Renault goes further, pressurising the Heavy Brigadier to quit. With Greg de Bécqueur and Rick Shaw throwing their influence behind Louis, it is no wonder the man resigns.

Further down the military hierarchy, Arent Hayes calls in a favour to force out the senior Major in the Crown Prince Cuirassiers. This creates a vacancy that no-one takes up immediately.

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

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December 1677 (406)

The new season arrives in Paris much like the one departing: cold, grey and full of people hiding sharp steel beneath long cloaks as they scurry about just after dawn. It is no surprise to anyone that “Tiny” Thierry Toothpick is not one of these. Maurice Danseur loyally turns up to second his small friend, just in case. Claude de Nord not so much. Thierry’s opponent, Justin Thyme, comes along, though, with his second, Rick Shaw.

This is convenient as the second duel on Justin’s schedule is with Maurice. No second for the beefy Maurice, but he doesn’t look threatened by the slight Justin. Their sabres cross and then slash. Justin opts for a furious slash and thus strikes first. Maurice shrugs off the wound and strikes back. Justin surrenders.

Pausing only to apply a bandage, Maurice moves on to his second meeting. This is with another small fellow, Con Stantinople. Thibault Chanson de Skye is there to second Con, who’s disadvantaged by his lower expertise as well as size. This is another sabre duel and looks very much like the first one. Con’s furious slash strikes first; Maurice shrugs it off and strikes back with his own slash. Con surrenders, but is then fortified by the “full Scottish breakfast” he provides for himself and Thibault as usual.

Next up for Maurice is Ian Dediette, another sabre wielder of slight build and inferior skill. Beau Taux and Greg de Bécqueur are Ian’s seconds. His two wounds haven’t slowed Maurice down at all. This time, however, the slashes are exchanged at the same time. It doesn’t alter the result: Ian concedes. His duels concluded, Maurice offers “my usual hamper of food and drink to all those who braved the cold of a December morning to defend their honour. However, in recognition of the

By Popular Demand

Turn 7 answers

The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) was the theme of this round – possibly a little unfair on the non-Brits taking part. But Google and Wikipedia are very helpful. And our letter was F.

First up: a BBC sitcom. There are loads of these, of course, but beginning with F? Only two were voted for and there was a runaway winner – as Tim Macaire and Richard Salmon expected (and I should have done).

BBC sitcom	
The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin	2
Fawlty Towers	20

I thought more people would have gone for Reggie Perrin, though that’s not one I watched. Unlike Eddy Richards, who noted “*The Fall and Rise of Reggie Perrin*” would probably be my favourite” and then voted for *Fawlty Towers*. “I was going to choose Fools and Horses ... if Only” joked Anthony Gilbert, trying for another F.

BBC sitcom lead	
Dawn French	7
Derek Fowlds	1
Felicity Kendall	11
Martin Freeman	3

Next, a lead actor in a BBC sitcom and another clear favourite. I suddenly felt old when Anthony Gilbert mentions “my dad had a crush on her.” Graeme Morris puts us straight: “class totty’, or so I’ve heard others say. For my own part, even as a youth, I always regarded her dispassionately as an accomplished comic actor.” Here, here.

The Play for Today series of one-off dramas ran from 1974 to 1908. The plays were a starting point for so many writers, directors and actors and lots of the plays are still highly regarded today (*Abigail’s Party*, anyone?). I’m pleased so many others remembered *Flipside* (not forgetting its sequel, *Another Flip for Dominick*, as Nigel Monaghan pointed out).

BBC Play for Today	
The Factory	1
The Falklands Factor	1
The Fishing Party	1
The Flipside of Dominick Hide	10
The Foxtrot	2
Fugitive	1
Funny Farm	6

Playing the age card again, Anthony Gilbert reckons “I was too young to appreciate it, and remember it only as a yucky love story with silly hats.” Silly hats?! Peter Jenkins is proud that “I actually remembered this one!” while Jonathan Palfrey adds “I have it on DVD”. Mike Pollard demands “double points for 2 F’s please” when he nominates *The Falklands Factor*.

Our fourth category was costume drama, something else that the BBC has broadcast shedloads of. And a mixed bag of answers, not all of which I would class as costume dramas. In going for *Father Brown* Tim Macaire adds “though I don’t think the BBC knows much about the ‘costume’ of Catholic priests.” The odd episode I’ve seen makes me think he’s portrayed more like a Church of England priest – though without the requisite vicar’s wife (hello, mum), of course.

I'm sensing a theme to Anthony Gilbert's comments. He opts for *The Forsyte Saga*, but then says "Before my time! I was going to choose *Father Brown*, but your high-brow readers may not accept that as a costume drama." Two of them did... After backing the Forsytes as well, the ever-irreverent Graeme Morris notes "I preferred *The Fosdyke Saga* – the Daily Mirror cartoon spin-off."

Costume drama lead	
Anna Friel	1
Claire Foy	3
Colin Firth	17
Dawn French	1

A shorter list when it came to actors and an overwhelming winner. Colin Firth! Really? "Wet shirt and all," says Graeme Morris as Mark Cowper adds, "who can forget his Mr Darcy!" Eddy Richards is the lone voter for Dawn French, "though logically I should opt for Olivia Colman as she is always the right answer". Well put, Mr Richards, but wrong.

Finally, it's natural history series, a genre I don't watch. Otherwise I might have realised that almost the only answer would be *Frozen Planet*. Eddy Richards "remembers this was another of David Attenborough's."

Scores on the next page.

BBC costume drama	
The Falklands Play	1
Fall of Eagles	2
The Fall of the Roman Empire	1
Fanny Hill	2
Father Brown	2
Fingersmith	1
Flashman	1
Fleabag	1
The Forsyte Saga	11

BBC Natural History	
Fantastic Beasts	1
The First Eden	1
Flying Monsters	1
Frozen Planet	19

Turn 8 categories

Now sport is a topic that I don't know much about, so this could be fun. Give me:

- 1 A club that has played in the English Premier League (yes, it's football – I know nothing)
- 2 A current English County Cricket Club (Aha, that's a bit better)
- 3 A current British Rugby Union club (I'm a disgrace to my Welsh heritage)
- 4 A sport contested at the 2026 Winter Olympics
- 5 A sport to be contested at the 2028 Summer Olympics
- 6 A current NFL team (yes, it's American football, I still know nothing)

All beginning with the letter S, please. My answers have already been recorded.

Send your list to Pevans at 180 Aylsham Drive, Uxbridge UB10 8UF or to TWJO@pevans.co.uk by 16th October 2026.

The scores

Roy Bleasdale, young Anthony Gilbert and old Graeme Morris are joint top scorers this turn, but Richard Salmon retains his lead. He's only a few points ahead of Mark Cowper and Graeme Morris is third – the table's over the page.

What's this about?

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

Each turn the GM lists six categories and a letter. For each category, players name something that fits it and begins with the initial letter. They score points equal to the number of people who give the same answer. Most points at the end wins.

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

I suspect I've got the hardest job: deciding on the categories! So I'll cheat and use some of the same ones as last time. We'll run for 10 turns and see what happens.

The scores	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Roy Bleasdale	78	85	20	32	52	44	88	399
Colin Bruce	51	83	45	56	50	34	70	389
Charles Burrows	69	64	7	51	51	29	61	332
Mark Cowper	67	87	46	67	49	32	75	423
Mike Dommett	63	87	19	57	37	42	71	376
Paul Evans	70	75	48	40	52	34	70	395
Anthony Gilbert	74	33	39	43	45	42	88	364
William Hay	56	33	47	32	24	42	43	277
Peter Jenkins	79	77	31	53	29	41	78	388
Andrew Kendall	71	75	43	49	30	38	79	385
Andrew Larder	57	49	25	35	39	42	48	295
Nik Luker	52	82	23	50	33	41	70	351
Tim Macaire	59	68	34	36	-	23	53	273
Brad Martin	36	89	38	44	40	21	66	334
Nigel Monaghan	37	80	43	51	49	28	70	358
Graeme Morris	67	78	44	43	56	37	88	413
Jonathan Palfrey	52	91	25	57	34	47	70	376
Mike Pollard	66	85	48	59	38	42	65	403
Eddy Richards	74	87	37	49	43	42	54	386
Richard Salmon	78	80	48	61	43	43	76	429
Pam Udowiczenko	45	73	-	52	-	29	79	278
John Watson	57	89	42	49	44	43	68	392