

That would be enough

This has been issue 249 of *To Win Just Once*, published 30th November 2024 It incorporates *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, a game of *En Garde!*. Issues are published ten times a year, roughly every five weeks. © Paul Evans 2024

Deadlines

Orders for *Railway Rivals* and *Star Trader* to Mike by Friday 6th December 2024.

Orders for *LPBS* and any other contributions to Pevans by 6th December 2024.

(Next deadlines: 3rd/10th January 2025)

Waiting lists

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

Railway Rivals – Gerald Udowiczenko and Mike Dyer are on the list for a new four-player game: “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. (Rules provided)

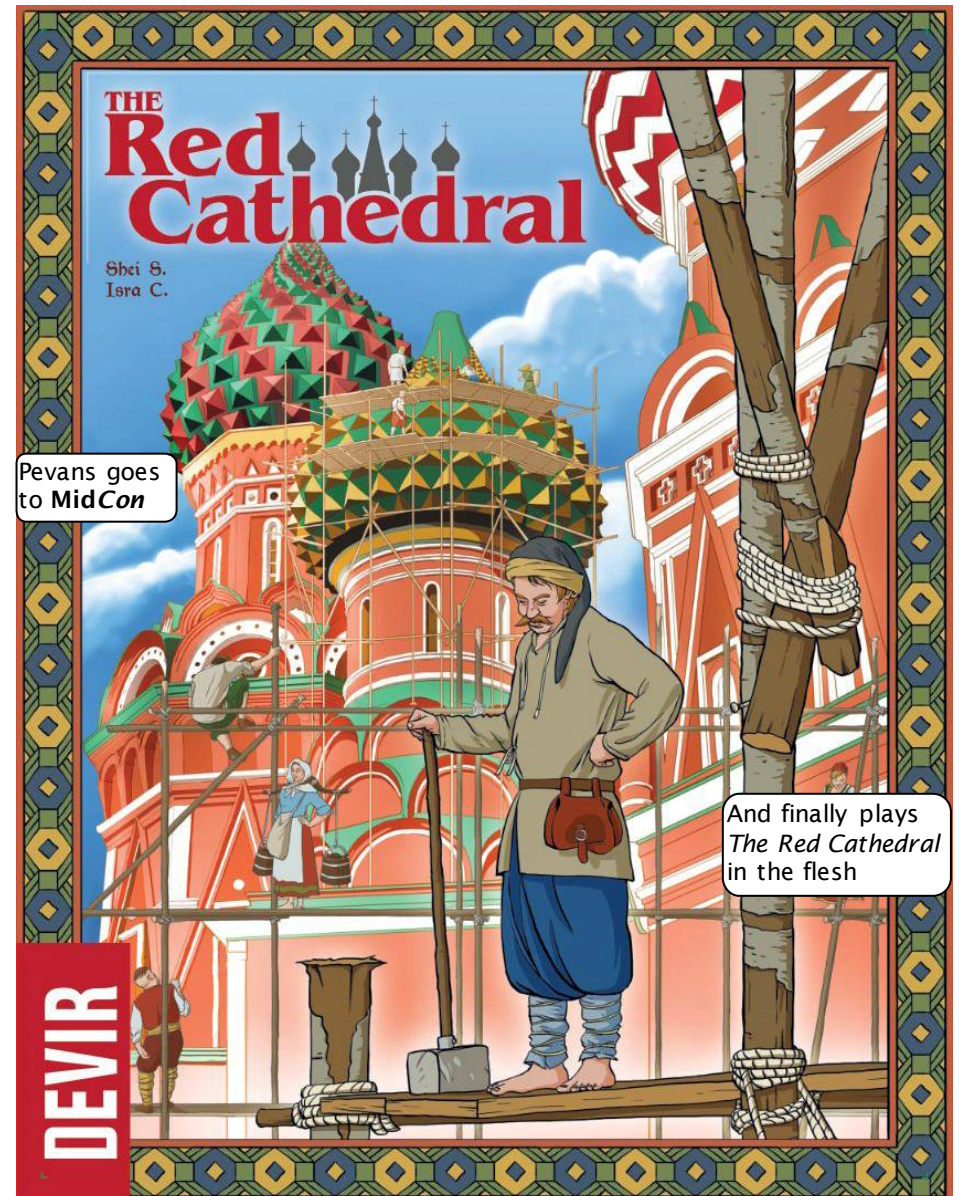
Credits

To Win Just Once issue 249 was written and edited by Pevans. The *LPBS* masthead (page 24) is by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood as is the drawings on pages 19 and 31. The illustration on page 26 is by Tim Wiseman. Game and book artwork is courtesy of the publisher. Pevans took the photos, except where noted, and played with Photoshop.

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To Win Just Once

(incorporating *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*)



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Contents

Chatter	3
Letters	5
MidCon 2024	6
Pevans plays games near Derby.....	6
Reading Matter	17
Games Events	18
The Wizard of Anharitte (<i>Star Trader</i> game 12)	19
Turn 7.....	19
Star systems map.....	21
Troodos (<i>Railway Rivals</i> game 18 – RR2528CY)	22
Turn 8.....	22
Subscribing to TWJO	23
Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses	24
April 1676 (385).....	24
Press.....	32
Points Arising.....	33
Announcements.....	34
Duels.....	34
New Characters.....	35
Tables.....	35
Army Organisation and 1676's Summer Deployment.....	35
Brigade Positions.....	36
Frontier Regiments.....	36
Battle Results.....	36
Other Appointments.....	36
Femmes Fatales.....	37
Regiments.....	37
The Greasy Pole.....	38
That would be enough	40
Deadlines.....	40
Waiting lists.....	40
Credits.....	40

Chatter

Autumn has definitely arrived, judging by the piles of yellow leaves I'm tramping through at the moment. This always reminds me of the Spiel games fair as I have an abiding memory of kicking through heaps of leaves on the footpath after leaving the Messe in the evening. Of course, that was when Spiel happened at the end of October (I've even been there on the weekend the clocks went back), not right at the start as it did this year.

So, no, I wasn't at Spiel this year – the new management badge it as “Spiel Essen” these days, from which I infer there may be Spiels in other places at some point. While I miss meeting the people and playing a few games, there's just so much information available online, that I'm overwhelmed (BGG lists 1,229 new titles this year) without going!

However, where I did go was Derby (well, Mickleover, to be precise) at the start of November for this year's **MidCon**. My notes follow.

Life continues to be disrupted by the presence of youngest nephew, but we're kind of settling into the different routine. I've also tested my DIY skills again, putting up a blind in the spare bedroom. Yes, it meant drilling holes in the wall. The tricky bit was getting them lined up so that, with the brackets screwed in, the blind holder would just click into place. The outfit we bought the blind from had useful instruction videos on their website, but these did not include how to line up the holes. I'm guessing they don't need to be that exact.

Flushed with success, I then re-attached the doorstop that's been lying inside the front door for... a while. Another two holes drilled and it's screwed into place. However, I know my limitations. So I left replacing the shower pump to our friendly local plumber.

'Tis the season

If it's the end of September, it must be time for a mince pie¹. Or six. As we were in Norn Iron at that point, my first of the season came from Asda. Specifically, Asda's 'Exceptional' luxury mince pies “infused with sweet ruby port, Valencian orange oil and Cognac”. The pastry looked a bit anaemic, but was okay. On biting into them, the first thing is a big hit of alcohol and then they're very, very sweet. In an innovation this year, I tried them heated up with a dash (ahem) of cream. The cream pacified the filling quite a bit. Verdict: over the top.



¹ *The Guardian* looked into how early mince pies are available in supermarkets and found that the 'average' this year was 8th September, compared to 28th last year.

Sainsbury's is our first choice of supermarket at home, so next up were their 'Taste the Difference' mince pies with all butter pastry, "infused with brandy". These at least looked like they'd been baked – the pastry was a light golden colour. Again, decent pastry, but the dominant taste was cinnamon. With no hint of any alcohol. Verdict: too much cinnamon.

Apart from their boxed offerings, Sainsbury's bakery also does mince pies. Minimal packaging here, just good-looking mince pies in foil and no pretensions – in fact, they looked almost homemade. They were a decent colour and the pastry was good. The filling was tasty enough and a little bit boozy, but there was a lot of air between the lid and the mincemeat. Verdict: not enough filling.



The supermarket in Ickenham village is a Co-op, so their "Irresistible All Butter Pastry Luxury" mince pies. Again, these were quite pale with the pie lid an eight-pointed star (stars or snowflakes seem to be obligatory on mass-produced mince pies). Despite this, the pastry was crisp. The filling was tasty with a good hit of brandy and not too sweet. Verdict: best so far.

Being a sensible local bakery chain, Wenzel's did not have mince pies on offer until November. And then not their usual baked-in-the-store offering, but packs that had clearly come from some central bakery. These were "deep-filled Luxury" mince pies. They had solid lids but the pastry was pale again. It was also really short – almost shortbread – and, boy, were they deep-filled! No air in these, just some really tangy (orangey?) mincemeat. With all that filling, they were very rich. Even more so after being zapped in the air-fryer and having a dollop of cream applied (no, don't count the calories!). Verdict: gloriously over the top.

In the meantime, consumer organisation Which? has published the results of their blind tasting of supermarket mince pies. Top of the heap with 77% overall are Waitrose's "No 1 Brown Butter Mince Pies with Cognac". Second are Aldi's "Specially Selected All Butter Mince Pies", which are also the cheapest. Sainsbury's came in 7th and the Co-op 9th (on 64%). Like me, Which? commented on the paleness of the pastry on most of these.

Spiderwatch

All quiet on the eight-legged front.

Online stats

TWJO 248 was published mid-October and the PDFs were downloaded 84 times in the rest of the month. There were 37 downloads for issue 247, taking it to 188 in two months. And TWJO 246 was downloaded 30 times in October for a total of 189 since publication.

Letters

Jonathan Palfrey picks up on last issue's Reading Matter.

I'm pleased that for once you review a book that I know and like, Zelazny's Lord of Light. I first read it long ago, and haven't reread it often, but I liked it better than I expected the last time I read it (in 2019), and gave it 4 stars out of 5 in Goodreads. Perhaps I don't like it quite as much as you do, but I do like it. I comment that, although much of what goes on is explicable in terms of advanced technology, there are also hints of paranormal powers-of-the-mind here and there, in Yama for example.

Absolutely: powers that have been trained and technologically enhanced.

What I don't like in this story (nor in the "Amber" series) is the power struggle between heroes with special powers, who call up hordes of mere mortals to do battle for them: the mere mortals die in large numbers and never seem to matter. It seems ugly to me. The Lord of the Rings does something similar, but Tolkien managed to make it seem somewhat less ugly.

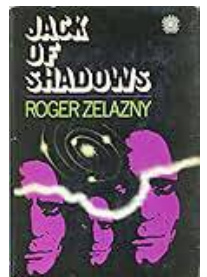
Possibly because Tolkien is more clearly fantasy, while Zelazny's hordes are humans – and he does humanise them for us.

My favourites from Zelazny are Doorways in the Sand and Roadmarks, both of them lighter and less ambitious novels than Lord of Light, but agreeable to read. They're quirky and amusing. I've read that he took the chapters of Roadmarks and shuffled them into random order, although I think an editor or publisher put his foot down and modified the random order to make a bit more sense. Anyway, the chapters are not in chronological order. Also, for much of the book there are two different characters whose stories are told in separate chapters.

Today We Choose Faces is an interesting though somewhat flawed book, that dates from 1973 but seems somehow older in style than that. I have occasionally reread This Immortal, his first novel.

I'm not sure that I've ever read Jack of Shadows, although the title is familiar.

I haven't read it for a long time, but Jack is a trickster figure (okay, thief) in a fantasy world. He always hears his name when it said in shadows and can pass between shadows to get from place to place. This on a world with one side fixed facing the sun (a tidally-locked, far-future Earth?). I always remember the paralysed giant, Morningstar, eternally looking into the sunrise, who is Jack's only (?) friend. I've always wished Zelazny had written more adventures for Jack.



MidCon 2024

Pevans plays games near Derby

Halloween saw me heading towards Derby for this year's *MidCon*, right at the beginning of November. This was only my second time since the event moved to the Derby Mickleover Hotel in Mickleover – a few miles outside Derby itself. This year I was joined by Paul and Veronica from my local games group. They had not been to a games convention before, so it was great to see their reaction to the number and variety of games around and the friendliness of the people.

We ended up staying in an AirBnB rental just five minutes' walk from the hotel. This was certainly convenient, but the place was pretty basic, despite being a newly-built house. Checking on the website, I see it's let by a company, so I suspect it's just an investment for them. I was particularly surprised that the main bathroom didn't have a shower – bath, yes; shower, no. First time for years I've had a bath in the morning. ☺ And the lack of care was obvious by the hole in the wall where a toilet roll holder used to be! Luckily, we were only there to sleep, so we coped.

Arriving late on Thursday evening after stopping for an unexpectedly good pub meal on the way, we still squeezed in a game. This was my recently acquired *Fishing*, one of Friedemann Friese's new games this year. It's a trick-taking card game with a fishy theme. It starts off pretty basic: the initial deck is cards in four suits (differentiated by colour and creature). Just enough cards for the players' starting hands. The first round is standard trick-taking: follow the suit led if possible, highest card of that suit wins the trick. Players' score for each round is the number of cards they win.

Then it gets interesting. Each player shuffles the cards they've won and deals themselves a new hand. If they don't have enough cards, they take extra cards from the deck. Which can be higher values in the four suits, cards of a trump suit or cards with a special effect. The zero card in each suit, for example, lets whoever played it take a card from the trick before the winner collects the remaining cards. Again, cards won are what players score for.

What this means is that you're constantly torn between winning tricks – getting cards and scoring points – and losing them. The latter reduces your deck so that you get some new, more powerful cards, but at the cost of not scoring points that round. It quickly became clear that scoring lots of points in a round means not scoring many in the next.

There are a couple of wrinkles to add to this. First, hand size goes up as the game progresses, so there are usually more cards entering the game each round. And, second, cards a player won in a round go under any cards left over from previous rounds before they deal their next hand. Hence newly acquired cards can take a

while to appear in your hand, while any cards you get from the deck go straight into your hand.

Each trick you are calculating not just who's got the cards that could win it, you're also pondering whether they **want** to win it. On top of deciding whether you want to win tricks yourself. It's a clever little game that we enjoyed. My only quibble is that, at eight rounds, it's a bit longer than I'd prefer. (A more recent game collapsed in hysterics when we discovered, during round 4, that one player had three cards left, two had four and one had five!)

Fishing (Fischen) was designed by Friedemann Friese and is published (in a bilingual English/German edition) by 2F-Spiele (www.2f-spiele.de). It's a trick-taking card game for 3-5 players, aged 8+, and takes 40-60 minutes to play. It gets a provisional 7/10 on my highly subjective scale.

Friday (1st Nov) was the first day of the con and we rolled up to check in soon after the start. While Paul and Veronica fortified themselves with a cooked breakfast in the hotel restaurant, I took a stroll round and said hello to people. The other two re-appeared as I was chatting to Mark and Marianne. After introductions, we suggested we play *Fishing*. Knowing how the game had gone the evening before, the three of us were a bit more careful about when we won tricks.

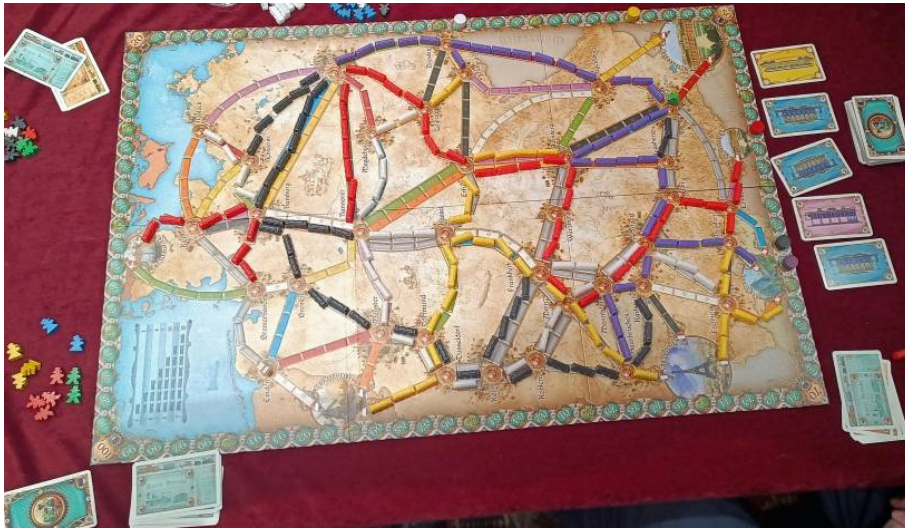
We still found that the scores swung all over the place from round to round. I think several of us were lining up for a big score in the last round – lose tricks in the seventh round to draw some of the most powerful cards into hand for the eighth. However, when I dealt out the new cards for the final round, the deck ran out. A quick check of the rules and... the game ends immediately! That's another factor to bear in mind next time I play. This was in Veronica's favour as she scored well on what we expected to be the penultimate round and won the game.

Casting around for another five-player game, we lighted on *Ticket to Ride: Germany*. Paul and Veronica had played *Ticket to Ride* before, but not this specific game. The core of the game is standard *TtR*: draw cards or play cards to claim links between cities, scoring points for these connections. You're aiming to complete the



Round 4 in *Fishing*. I've got some old cards left on my boat, but my fisherman hasn't caught anything yet.

routes (“Tickets”) you have in hand for big points at the end, losing points for unfinished routes.



Almost the end in *TtR Germany* and I (black) am just one point behind purple (Marianne), but note my pile of Tickets (bottom left) for the game-end scoring.

The wrinkle in this one is that cities start with coloured meeples (“Passengers”) on them. When players claim a link, they take a Passenger from the two cities they’ve connected. At the end of the game there are bonus points for the players with most and second-most Passengers of each colour. This gives players an extra incentive for connecting certain cities, especially once they’ve got a few Passengers.

This is one of the *Ticket to Ride* versions that I really enjoy (yes, it’s on my shelves) and I had a good game, completing all 10 of the Tickets I’d taken. (Carefully selected for synergy between the routes on them.) As expected, points for the passengers were useful, but didn’t decide the game – Mark did best out of them and came in second. However, all those tickets saw a convincing win for me.

Paul and Veronica fancied getting their teeth into a meaty game for the rest of the afternoon, though Mark and Marianne had other plans. I dug out *Pilgrim* and we started setting it up, trying to entice a fourth player from those passing by. We had no takers, so it was a three-player game – probably a good number for a learning game. This does mean I’ve played *Pilgrim* solitaire (see *TWJO* 230), twice with two players (see *TWJO* 247) and now once with three.

To recap, *Pilgrim* is played over 26 turns and looks like it will last quite a while. However, as Tom D noted after our first two-player game, “it’s less than half as complicated as the rules make it seem” and plays surprisingly briskly. Players

have ‘Acolyte’ meeples that they move Mancala-style to take the actions they want. As you’d expect, the actions let you develop your personal position and/or improve your points scoring. There are several ways of scoring points, so a good idea is to choose something other players aren’t doing.

Having been nudged by designer Nick Case (on BGG) that adding buildings to your personal board is important, I passed this on to the other two. However, while we did add a few buildings, we didn’t see much advantage in those available in this game (it’s a random selection each game from the full set).

With a couple of two-player games under my belt (it didn’t feel any different with three players), I finally got my calculations right and completed a satisfyingly crooked (and high-scoring) Pilgrimage Trail – the tricky bit is having enough cash and piety to connect to your chosen Pilgrimage site. Veronica went really big on Piety. She also gave the most Alms and built the most Buildings, but struggled with her Pilgrimage Trail. Paul, like me, completed a valuable Trail, but didn’t score well on anything else.

We played with the standard/beginners’ sequence of the action tiles around the board. This was probably an advantage for me, having played this sequence before. When they’re distributed randomly, the first thing to do is work out which actions are going to be tricky to get to (because of the way moving Acolytes works) and plan accordingly. It’s a definite 8/10 on my highly subjective scale.

By now it was time for a bite to eat, so we headed for the hotel restaurant. I was hoping the standard menu would be available, but the hotel was only serving the



Pilgrim finale: that’s my (white) Trail at the bottom of the board, Paul’s to the left. Veronica (yellow) has three buildings and rather more Piety (track at the bottom).

special **MidCon** buffet that they, commendably, lay on for us gamers. I think cheap and cheerful is the best description of the limited selection of dishes on offer.



Lost Ruins of Arnak, where my handicap is having the board upside down.

Returning to the games, the three of us cast around for something else to play and I spotted a copy of *Lost Ruins of Arnak*. I was able to borrow this and introduce the others to this game. It's in a category that is a recent development for me: games I've only played online. In the past, the online games I've signed up for have been things I've already experienced on a tabletop. However, there's an increasing number that I've played online, but not in the flesh.

Anyway, it was completely new to the other two and I had to get to grips with the physical layout and components. The idea of the game is that you're exploring a jungle, looking for the titular ruins. To this end, you send your archaeologists (meeples) to sites on the board to unearth items. The items then power your research, moving up a track on one side of the board. Reach the top of this track and you've found the ruins (that is, scored a bundle of points).

Central to the game is a deck management mechanism – the traditional draw five cards and use them for actions or to buy things each turn. This is neatly married to the placement of player's archaeologists, as one function of the cards is as transport to an exploration site. Cards are also used to provide resources for research or buying equipment (the usual things an archaeologist needs – slouch hat, whip, pistol...) or relics. Both equipment and relics are cards that go into your deck for later use.

One final element is that progressing up the research track lets you get a couple of 'Assistants'. These are tiles that you can use once a turn for extra resources or actions and I find them very useful. Almost everything you do provides points, so there's more than one way of playing this game. I tend to emphasise research, but concentrating on exploration seems equally effective.

We all enjoyed the game – I particularly appreciated playing with the physical components – but experience gave me the advantage. *Lost Ruins of Arnak* was designed by 'Elwen' and 'Mín' and is published by Czech Games Edition. It's a board game for 1-4 players, aged 12+, and takes 30-120 minutes to play – it certainly took us a couple of hours. It gets 8/10 on my highly subjective scale.

Paul and Veronica headed off after this, but I hung around to play *Forest Shuffle* with my old friend Peter. (I've since realised that the only other time I've played this was also with Peter! My notes from this game are in *TWJO 244*.) The copy we borrowed had the *Alpine* and *Woodland Edge* expansions, so there was plenty of new stuff for us to explore.

To summarise, you build a tableau from the cards in your hand, paying for what you place by discarding other cards from hand. You start with trees and then add plants and animals, tucking them above, below or to one side of the tree, as appropriate. Cards provide scoring opportunities in lots of different ways and you're trying to amass a collection that outscores your opponents.

At 90 minutes, it was a significantly longer game than our previous one (60 minutes with three players), possibly because we didn't have an experienced player guiding us. Or just because it was late in the evening. Anyway, it was good fun and Peter ran away with it when we totted up the scores. (Though he later spotted some clarifications that suggested his score was much less than we thought!) It remains a 7/10 on my highly subjective scale.

Day Two

The con was really busy on Saturday – additional tables were set up and people were playing in other parts of the hotel. Old friend Richard (from the Swiggers games group) was setting up a game of *Root* and needed two more players. It's a game my group has played, so I introduced Paul and Veronica to Richard and left them to it.

I hooked up with some other old friends, Jennie and (another) Richard (also ex-Swiggers), plus Andy, who I've played quite a few games with online. We had a makeshift table in the bar area and set out a blast from the past: *Louis XIV* (a Rüdiger Dorn design published by alea back in 2005). While we'd all played this back in the day, we were very rusty and an initial rules refresher was required.

It's a nicely complicated game where the goal is to complete 'Missions' by collecting the appropriate chips over four rounds. You do this by gradually placing 'Influence' markers on tiles that show personages from the Sun King's court (his wife, his



Louis XIV in play. Spot the Cardinal...

mother, his mistress, the Cardinal and so on). At the end of each round, the player with the most influence on a personage gains (or buys) whichever chip that person grants. If it's a case of buying, other players may be able to buy as well. Then it's a question of trading in chips to complete Missions – which also provide bonuses during the game.

Players also need to manage their stock of markers and where they

place them depends on the cards in their hand. So there's a lot to think about and it took us a while to get back into the groove. What was clear pretty quickly is that this is a game that has stood the test of time. It's clever, challenging and good fun. Still 8/10 on my highly subjective scale.

Andy then suggested *The Red Cathedral*, which I was keen to play in the flesh – I've played two or three games online (at yucata.de/en) after discovering the same designers' (and publisher's) *The White Castle* at the Gathering. The idea here is that players are architects competing to finish St Basil's Cathedral (that's the one with the multi-coloured onion domes in Moscow) for Tsar Ivan. That's Ivan "the Terrible", a client you probably don't want to be late (or over-budget) for.

The game starts with a random blueprint that sets out how many towers of what heights are being built. The corresponding section tiles – doorway at the bottom, onion dome on top – are set out on the board. As their turn, a player can claim a section, putting a banner of their colour on it. It's then up to them to construct it, so it makes sense to go for sections you know you can build. Except other players may get there first, so maybe you want to claim sections first and then worry about getting the materials needed.

The other consideration is that each section starts with a 'Workshop' chip on it. When you claim a section, you put the Workshop on your player board and may pay for it to be active. If it's active then, in the right circumstances, it provides a bonus of some sort (extra materials, maybe). Hence, you're looking for useful chips.

However, most of the time players will be taking an action from the large roundel of actions on the board. Dice are scattered round this: you move a die as many

spaces as its value (you may be able to move more, but never less, annoyingly), then take the action it lands on as many times as the number of dice now on that action. Then re-roll the dice (as we kept forgetting to do – it's much simpler online, the computer does it for you!). These actions will generate materials (though you have limited storage space) or cash, let you move materials to the building site or score 'Recognition' points.

When you move materials to the cathedral, you add them to your section/s. If a section is then complete, you flip it over and gain Recognition and cash. If you're able to deliver extra stuff, you can add an 'Ornamentation' (like a nice gold cross on top of the dome) for 'Prestige' points. You can actually add ornamentation to any completed section whenever you want, but doing so when you complete it stops anyone else getting in on the action. Though it's difficult to pull off.



Jennie makes a move on the roundel with *The Red Cathedral* in the foreground.

One of the things that wasn't clear to me playing *The Red Cathedral* online was the relationship between Recognition and Prestige points – the latter are what count when it comes to winning. Once you see the board, it's quite clear. The track shows Recognition points and this is what you move your scoring marker along. Every so often, there's a Prestige point alongside, showing how many your Recognition is worth. Thus, you need 5 Recognition to get your first Prestige, but need fewer the further along the track you go. (While it's a clever idea, there's some ambiguity in the wording of the rules – particularly when losing points – and much discussion on BGG as a result.)

There's another thing to consider when choosing what to move on the roundel. The track is divided into quadrants and a 'Guild' is assigned to each of these. The Guilds provide additional actions (such as swapping your materials) for players to use when they move a die to that quadrant. So you've got two actions to consider when deciding what to move where.

The game ends when someone has completed six cathedral sections; there's some end-game scoring (notably extra points for Ornamentations) and most points wins. I have suggested that *The Red Cathedral* is not as complex as *The White Castle* and been poo-pooed for this. I still think the rules to the first are simpler and easier to grasp than those of the latter. However, gameplay is probably just as challenging – only different!

Andy won our game – no surprise as he was the experienced player – but I found it great fun and will certainly be playing again.

The Red Cathedral was designed by Isra C and Shei S and is published by Devir (devirgames.com). It's a dice-powered strategy board game for 1-4 players, aged 10+, and takes 80 minutes to play (ours took three hours in all!). It gets 8/10 on my highly subjective scale.

Next up was Jennie and Richard's suggestion, *Tycoon* – another blast from the past. I remember it being launched back in 1998 by Jumbo (www.jumbo.eu) but, given the publisher, assumed it was a family game and passed. I should have spotted that it was co-designed by Wolfgang Kramer (with Horst-Rainer Rösner).

The board shows a grid of nine cities around the world where players can build hotels and factories. First, they have to fly to a city using either a 'scheduled flight' ticket or a 'charter flight'. Both cost money, but the more flexible charter flights are more expensive. Then they can build in that city, which again costs money.



Tycoon in play: hotels are on the tracks around the cities, factories at the top. Available tickets are on the left and Andy's got a couple saved (bottom right).

Where does all this money come from? Well, players can take out loans. However, to do so they must be 'home' – off the board. And then need a flight back to a city.

Everybody starts the game with six hotels in their stock and the round ends when someone has no more to place. Then it's payday: players get the income from their hotels and factories. Usually more than it cost to fly there and build – the money did seem to go up all the time. At this point, players can either pay off their loans (+ interest) or extend them (increasing the interest eventually due). I made a point of paying off my loans each round, but noticed the more experienced two extended theirs. Everybody gets six more hotels and starts the next round.

After three rounds (at least one person will have played 18 hotels) and the final payday, the winner is the player with most money after paying off their loans.

There are, of course, all sorts of constraints and choices on what players can do. First off, the cities they can move to are limited by the available tickets – unless you want to buy those expensive charter flights. What's more, a maximum of two players can be in a city at a time (and it costs the second player more to build!).

Next, only the players with the most and second-most hotels in a city get income (ties broken by who built earlier). So there's an area-majority effect that players need to take into account. In our game this meant some tussles for control of cities and players concentrating on a few cities, rather than building in all nine.

Each city has a track that hotels are placed on and this determines what is paid out. The more hotels in a city, the higher the payout... until it starts going down. At a particular point on a track, income starts to fall (the city's got too many hotels!). What's more, as the track fills up, the earliest hotels get old and tired and no longer generate income (they can be refurbished). Factories also generate income, depending on the number of hotels in the city – with more for the city with the most hotels (a reason to keep adding hotels).

After the rules explanation, the game seemed relatively straightforward. Since you can stock up on plane tickets, there was a flurry of buying at the start. They're taken from an open market, so you get an idea of where other players are going and can go somewhere else. I planned my first few turns, took out enough loans and set off. This worked out nicely, building up a decent income in the first round.

In the second round, things got tighter as we jockeyed for position. And even more so in the third round. With established positions, we were looking at ways of gaining the bigger share of income, even if that total was lower. The fight for the available tickets got fierce and there was more use of charter flights – even cheapskate me used one to get to New York for a crucial move.

At the end of the game, Andy had by far the biggest pile of cash. I came a creditable second with the two experienced players, Jennie and Richard, rather adrift. As mentioned earlier, both of them had extended their loans during the game, something Andy and I didn't do. But then, we had the income to pay off our loans

after the first and second rounds and then run without them in the third! All in all, that was a good little game. Not the deepest, but an interesting contest that depends a lot on what the other players are up to. It gets a provisional 7/10 on my highly subjective scale.

It was dinner time by now and I'd booked a table at the Binary Bar and Restaurant in Mickleover as I'd really enjoyed my meal (and Espresso Martini!) there last year. Paul, Veronica and I were joined by Peter and by James, another ex-Swigger. Like me, James stopped frequenting the game group when he retired and didn't go into central London in the week. We hadn't seen each other for some years and it was good to catch up. The restaurant was packed, so I was glad I'd booked and we had an excellent meal (and Espresso Martini).

After which, there was only one thing to do: the **MidCon** quiz! Run, as usual, in his own style by the inimitable David Norman. The five of us made a team and had a fun couple of hours wrestling with David's tricky conundrums. A particular favourite of mine was the "Short lyrics" round: name the song and performer from just a few words. "Allow me to introduce myself" was one and another was just the word "Scaramouche". Mind you, everybody got that last one.

We did not do well, ending as '7 of 9' – yes, placed seventh out of the nine teams. James was particularly disappointed as he claims he usually finishes 6th in quizzes. No prizes for us, but it was time for bed.

Sunday was the scheduled day for a mammoth game of *Commands & Colors: Napoleonic*. But this will have to wait for next issue.

MidCon beer

One of the features of the con is that the committee gets the hotel to add some real ale to the bar. This comes in the form of several 20-litre "Bag in a box" from the local Dancing Duck Brewery (www.dancingduckbrewery.com). There were three different brews on offer this year and, as usual, they started running out on Saturday evening.



Ay Up is a "Generously Hopped Pale Ale" at 3.9% alcohol-by-volume – what I'd call a session beer (which is how it was described last year!). The hops were certainly generous and it was more yellow than brown in the glass with little head. It was hoppy and dry to taste and went down a treat. As I said last year.

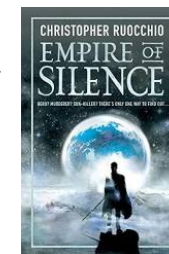
Dcuk is a "Fashionable Pale Hoppy Ale" at 4.3% abv. It was definitely pale and nicely hoppy, but I preferred the Ay Up.

I missed out on 22, "Beautifully Balanced Best Bitter" (4.3%), which other people were clearly keen on. I was a bit disappointed that the boxes did not include Dancing Duck's Dark Drake, "Deep, Rich, Oatmeal Stout" (4.5%). I missed out on

this last year and it was only available in bottles this year. The bottled beer was nice enough, but I didn't get the richness I expected.

Reading Matter

As well as being a gamer, nephew Tom shares my love of science fiction and fantasy (he has my "Song of Ice and Fire" volumes secreted somewhere...). He recently lobbed his copy of *Empire of Silence* by Christopher Ruocchio at me and told me to read it. I have done so and I'm not sure what to make of it.



From the blurb, we know that our hero, Hadrian Marlowe, has destroyed a sun, killed billions of humans and wiped out an entire sentient alien race (though a relentlessly hostile one that humanity had been at war with for decades at least, judging by what we learn in this book). Sounds like a nice guy. Starting to read, we are told this is his autobiography, written to record his side of the story while he awaits judgement. And so he starts, introducing himself as a young man and us to this universe.

We have a galaxy-spanning human empire with aristocratic lords ruling over its planets in a hierarchy from the Emperor down. However, there is no faster-than-light technology, so space travel takes decades with travellers in suspended animation. Luckily, technology and breeding has extended the lives of the aristocracy, allowing them to maintain their rule. There is something of a Roman feel to this empire as gladiatorial combat in the arena is an entertainment for the masses – though these gladiators are privileged and protected, unlike the 'fodder' they fight.

We meet young Hadrian at duelling practice with his weapons master. Yes, fighting with swords (other pointed and bladed weapons are available) using techniques that allow them to penetrate the personal shields their opponents will be wearing. They are interrupted by the family ~~Mentat~~ Scholiast, who wants a word with his Lordship's heir. I was getting real déjà vu at this point, but before it gets too *Dune*-like, there's a twist: Hadrian has a younger brother!

As we quickly discover, Hadrian is intelligent and academic and would like to be a Scholiast. While his brother is a crude thug in their father's image. Cut to Hadrian being disinherited in favour of his brother. His fate is to join the quasi-religious Chantry – a twist on the traditional British aristocratic norm where the eldest son inherits, the second goes into the army and the third into the church. However, the way Ruocchio describes this organisation it's essentially the Inquisition writ large. Its job is to suppress any hint of thinking machines – though computers (and game consoles) are in evidence.

So Hadrian runs away (it's not much of a spoiler – this is less than 20% of the way through the book), only to end up at the other end of the social scale on an

unfamiliar planet. (Exactly how this happens isn't clear and this intrigued me, so I'm hoping we'll learn more in later volumes.) His breeding and training allow him to start clawing his way back up until his identity is discovered and everything changes again.

The book runs to nearly 600 pages and I'm sure my mother would have said Ruocchio needed a good editor (she felt this way about John le Carré's later novels). It certainly dragged in parts, but Ruocchio has come up with some fascinating aspects to the universe he has created. Such as the human societies outside the Empire, the hints of extinct alien civilizations, the alien Cielcin (humanity's foes), the bizarre structure of the Empire itself. And just how Hadrian becomes the monster he is introduced as. I think these will keep me reading the series (apparently there are 12 books in this, including some short story collections). Next volume please, Tom!

Games Events

I can't find anything happening in December. There's usually Dragonmeet (dragonmeet.co.uk), but it was the last Saturday in November this year.

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: 30th May – 1st June 2025 at the NEC. This is a public event that showcases games of all sorts with a huge trade hall plus demonstration and participation games and guests. For gamers there are lots of tournaments and open gaming. For details see www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk

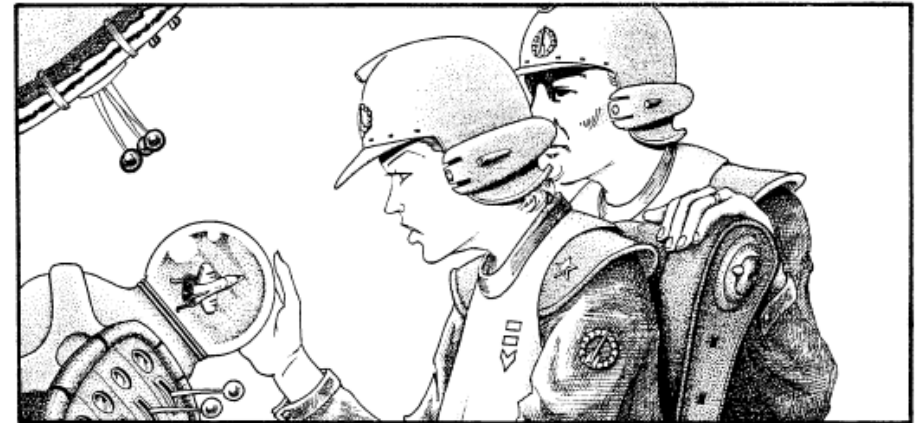
Spiel: *the* board games event of the year. October 2025, at the Messe (Exhibition Centre) in Essen. Contact Friedhelm Merz Verlag, Postfach 210250, Bonn, 53157 Germany or see www.spiel-messe.com/en

MidCon: early November 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

The Wizard of Anharitte (*Star Trader* game 12)

Turn 7

The blockade by MADNESS & MAYHEM has now definitely shifted to Tau Ceti, where planetary Defence Forces are almost certain that's the mystery ship around the system.



Trading was dominated by ROCKET TRADERS this quarter. Starting with their selling 6 Spice for 8 HTs each at Epsilon Eridani.

ROCKET TRADERS used their Market Manager position at Tau Ceti, buying 7 Units for 6 HTs apiece, and then using the Contract position to add a further 5 at the same price.

At Mu Herculis, ROCKET TRADERS sold 10 Isotopes for 15 HTs each and gained a Dealership. COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE's attempt to sell at the same price went unrewarded. SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS sold Monopoles on Contract using their agent, but only after COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE sold 4 for 10 HTs each and ROCKET TRADERS bought 10 at 14 HTs apiece, taking a second Dealership.

ROCKET TRADERS bought 5 Isotopes on Contract at Sigma Draconis and TREKBOER brought 5 Spice for 8 HTs each.

At Beta Hydri ROCKET TRADERS sold 3 Isotopes for 7 HTs each. The price still rose, though, meaning TREKBOER's attempt to buy at 7 went empty-handed.

TREKBOER improved their Reputation and laid down a Phoenix hull with cargo pods and A class crew at Beta Hydri Shipyards, named ORCA.

ROCKET TRADERS loaded Passengers for three spaceports and kept their new ship, MARINER, at Tau Ceti Spaceport while it loaded Isotopes.

COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE INC bought Warehouses at Gamma Leporis and Mu Herculis, improved their Reputation and laid down a Phoenix Hull at Beta Hydri Shipyards.

MADNESS & MAYHEM took further comfort from Planetary Defence Forces not intercepting their ship in Tau Ceti System Space, though it's luck that can't last forever.

SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS loaded passengers, improved its Reputation and laid down a new Piccolo Hull with A crew at Tau Ceti Shipyards.

Corporation Table

Corporation letter and name	Connections Bus/Crim/Pol	Init'v Bid	Turn order	Cash Rep	Player
A Costa Nostra Coffee	9 0 1	0	4th	130 26	Mark Cowper
B Madness & Mayhem	7 5 0	0	3rd	27 19	Anthony Gilbert
C Solar Spice & Liquors	5 3 4	0	5th	300 40	Paul Evans
D TrekBoer	2 7 2	0	2nd	88 30	Mike Dyer
E Rocket Traders	10 0 8	5	1st	47 40	Przemek Orwat

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

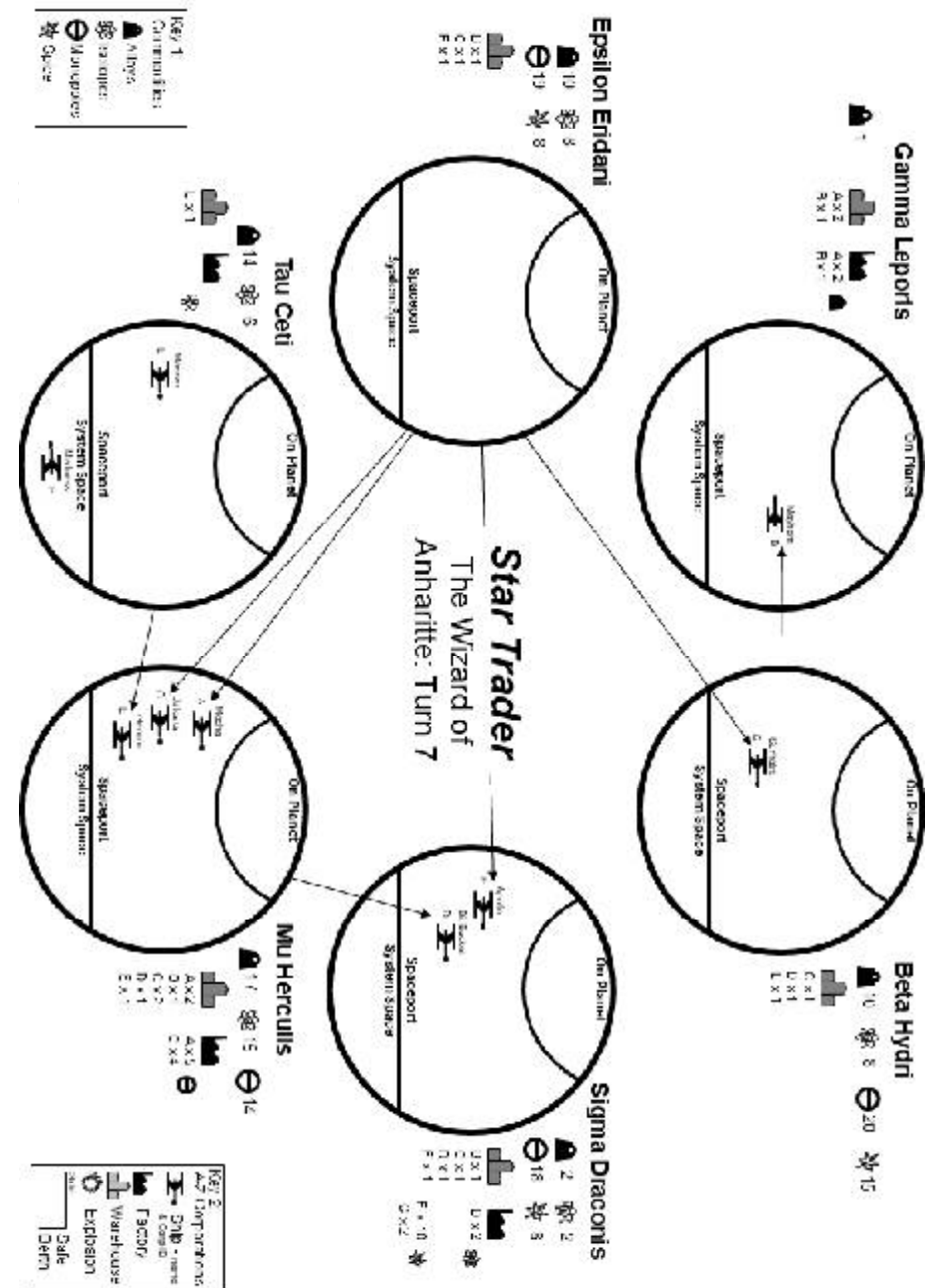
News

There is one new News chit this turn. (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.)
 The current list (new chits in **bold**) is:
 Turn 8 P4, C4
 Turn 9 C4, B10
 Turn 10 B9, C3

GM Notes

If you want to take an illegal chit – such as Slaves, Weapons, or Tempus – you have to land ON PLANET. Being in the Spaceport or System Space doesn't cut it.

Orders to Mike Dommert, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ or by e-mail to mike_dommert@yahoo.co.uk by 6th December 2024



Troodos (*Railway Rivals* game 18 – RR2528CY)

Turn 8

Race results

Race	From	To	MT	CR	AGTM	III		
7	16	Limassol	23	Evrykhou	20-5+3	5-4+5	5	
8	24	Pedhoulas	36	Larnaca	10-2+1		20-3	+4
9	65	Theodoros	41	Morphou		20+3		10-3
10	54	Kythrea	44	Nicosia	0-1	10	20+1	
11	66	NE Cyprus	13	Kilana		10		20
12	34	Zyyi	53	Kyrenia	20-2		+3	
TOTAL			44	49	46	31		

JR = Joint Run; ERP = Exchange of Running Powers

MEDITRAINEAN have kept their lead, even increasing it slightly. And built into the town that was changed as a destination. ALL GREEK TO ME continued to spend to break into MT's southern preserve. CANTERBURY RAILWAYS scored best this round by a small margin and INLAND IRONHORSE INTERNATIONAL made no builds whatsoever.

Builds and Points

MediTrainean (MT), Anthony Gilbert – Red
Starts: Larnaca
Builds:
 (F67) – F63 – Kythrea
 (H5) – L3 (1 to III)

Points: 112 -10 +44 +1 = **147**

Canterbury Railways (CR), Rob Pinkerton – Blue

Starts: Famagusta
Builds:

(G23) – F22 – Zyyi
 (N12) – Pedhoulas

Points: 61 -8 +49 = **102**

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

Starts: Kyrenia

Builds:

(D14) – D12 – Episkopi
 (E16) – E19 – F19 (1 to MT)

Points: 43 -10 +46 = **79**

Inland Ironhorse International (III), Chris Rudram – Green

Starts: Lapithos

Builds:

None

Points: 102 +1 +31 = **134**

Next turn's races

Race	From	To
13	62	Famagusta
14	54	Kythrea
15	33	Lefkara
16	14	Episkopi
17	55	Akanthou
18	64	Trikomo

GM Notes

You may enter up to **four** of the six races – any that nobody enters will be held over to next turn. If working with another player, please make it clear whether it's a JOINT RUN or EXCHANGE OF RUNNING POWERS and state what route is to be taken (which might be "accept MT's route", for example).

After the races, you may spend up to 8 from your points (**including payments to others**) to build track.

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

Orders to Mike Dommett, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommett@yahoo.co.uk
by 6th December 2024

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	UK	Rest of World	Games only
10-issue (1 year) subscription	£39.00	£50.50	£5.00

To subscribe, send your name, address and payment to *To Win Just Once*, 180

Aylsham Drive, Uxbridge UB10 8UF, UK or TWJO@pevans.co.uk. You can pay by bank transfer (contact me for the account details), by UK cheque (payable to Margam Evans Ltd) or by PayPal to Games@pevans.co.uk. Or subscribe online at www.pevans.co.uk/TWJO, where you can pay by credit card or PayPal.

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

Orders for May 1676 to Pevans at 180 Aylsham Drive, UXBRIDGE UB10 8UF, UK or lpbsorders@pevans.co.uk by 6th December 2024



April 1676 (385)

This Spring is proving to be cold and dry – not an April shower in sight. All the better for a brisk workout with one's favourite sword, then. But not for Alvin Charles or Hugh Jeneaux as neither shows up for their scheduled duel. In fact Hugh doesn't appear at any of his meetings, leaving Grenville d'Arkrite and Louis Severin Descartes disappointed.

At least Balzac Slapdash and Come Asiouar turn up for theirs, representing the Dragoon Guards and Queen's Own Carabiniers, respectively. Given both men are in the cavalry, you'd expect this to be a sabre duel. However, Balzac is still sticking to the rapier he's familiar with. Not least as he has considerably more skill with it than Come has with his sabre. Come does have Zeold von Tu as his second, but that may not be much help in the fight. A lunge from Balzac meets a slash from Come, who follows up with a cut. This heavy blow is too much for Balzac and he unexpectedly surrenders. What's more, Balzac cries off his duels with Ian Dediette, Justin Thyme and Yve Stanbul due to his injuries.

Time for another regimental quarrel: Armand Alsace of the 53rd versus François de Blanchefort of the Crown Prince's. Hence it's rapier versus sabre again and, again, the sabre-wielder is less proficient. Eschewing his blade, François attacks with his boot. Just as Armand slashes – a blow that doesn't do much damage when coming from a rapier. The same is true of the cut that follows, while François's slash hits hard. Armand concedes and withdraws, on medical advice, from his meetings with Ben e'Volence and Octo Lucretius Souris. Not that Ben shows up.

The third regimental set-to is between King's Musketeer Claude de Nord and Cardinal's Guardsman Zeold von Tu. "Tiny" Thierry Toothpick turns up to second Claude, but Claude draws his sword and chases him off! Come Asiouar is Zeold's

Who was where – at the Fleur de Lys				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	
Fleur de Lys	RS + Thérèse . ZUT + Laura . JJ + Jacky . TC + Katy . JIT + Guinevere . LSD + Edna . CdP(G) + Morgane . LR + Maggie	RS + Thérèse CdP(G) + Morgane LR + Maggie . ZUT + Laura . FdB + Freda . NM + Vera . BN . JJ + Jacky . HF + Violet . FS + Fifi . TdIL . JIT + Guinevere . TB + Belle . TTT + Madelaine . ZvT + Lucy . YS + Sheila . HWB . AH . AlCh . BLC + Eve . JdA + Carole . EIF . MdG + Chris . LSD + Edna . GdB + Bette . CdN + Kathy	BRJS . ZUT + Laura . LSD + Edna RS + Thérèse GdB + Bette CdP(G) + Morgane	Week 4
Outside Fleur de Lys	HWB (BRJS) AlCh (BRJS) GdB (LR)			

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

second and they are heartily amused at this. This time we have an infantryman (Claude) who uses a sabre, while Zeold sticks with his regimental rapier. This time it's the man with the sabre who is more skilled. Despite this, Zeold draws first blood with a lunge and dodges Claude's slash. Then he steps back and hurls his rapier. It passes Claude harmlessly and he smacks his opponent with a slash. Zeold surrenders after this.

And, finally, we have two members of the Royal Foot Guards fighting each other after Major Martin de Garnache stole CO Beau Reese Jean Seine's mistress! Such disgraceful behaviour is compounded when neither turns up. Though this may be the more sensible option.

Not going anywhere

Greg de Bécqueur throws his influence behind Hugo Furst's request that the 13th Fusilier Colonel resign and manages to make this happen. This gives Hugo command of the regiment, even though he doesn't buy the Colonelcy.

Thierry Toothpick wants the Colonel of the Cardinal's Guard to quit as well, but Zeold von Tu is not to be moved. Even though Claude de Nord would have used his influence to persuade him to stay. Thierry does call in a favour against the Lieutenant-Colonel of the CGs, but no-one's suggested this fellow should leave.

The titchy one has also asked the senior Major of the King's Musketeers to go, but Frank X Change and Claude de Nord back the man and he stays in place. Not so Thierry, who resigns from the Royal Foot Guards and applies to join the King's Musketeers. CO Claude de Nord slams the door in his face.



The Brigadier of the Heavy cavalry, Ben e'Votence, decides it's time for the Brigade to go into action. Well, Archduke Leopold's boys (including Major Hugh Jeneaux), anyway – the Crown Prince's team gets to stay in Paris. Apart from Stephane Etrange: he's Brigade Major and thus joins Brigade HQ. Henri DuShite doesn't pull his punches: both regiments of First Foot Brigade are mobilised. Picardy Musketeers commander Percival Puffington tries to send the regiment's three battalions into action separately. However, since they're part of First Foot, the regiment marches as a whole with a

reluctant Percival at its head. Come Asiouar joins the volunteers with his squadron of the Queen's Own, dragging Ian Dediette with him. And Pierre Mignon joins his new squadron of the Princess Louisa's.

Not the Minister's party

A few Parisians are still expecting Beau Reese Jean Seine to be hosting at the start of April and are disappointed. Though Zavier and Louis SD do get to attend on him later in the month. (As QMG of the Field Army, Louis upbraids the Minister of State about funding for the army.) Instead, it's Rick Shaw's celebration of the Resurrection that attracts people to the Fleur. Camille uses this opportunity to hit the gambling tables for his usual five 600-crown wagers. After winning the first two, he cuts the next and then wins again before cutting the last. That's a healthy profit on the week's activity.

Camille is back throwing dice the following week when he is one of many attending Louis Renault's salon. Host Louis is conspicuously flaunting his new lace and silk attire. Attendees discuss the finer points of horse racing and chess gambits (Justin takes his host at face value and engages him in a discussion of the Queen's Gambit). Or just drink themselves silly. (Greg looks a bit shame-faced after turning up a week early.) Camille wins his first two bets again. He loses the third, though, and then cuts the remaining wagers to end the week level on cash terms. Meanwhile, there's a discordant note at the party as Claude and Zeold renew their regimental rivalry.

The third week sees Camille not Toadying, but he's still in the club as a member. This week he loses two bets, wins two and cuts one to lose a little cash. Still that's a decent profit for the month.

Who was where: the other clubs

Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Bothwell's	TTT + Madelaine		TTT + Madelaine	
	YS + Sheila		YS + Sheila	
	MdG + Chris		MdG + Chris	
	JH + Cath			
Hunter's		HF + Violet		HF + Violet
Blue Gables		TPN + Angelina		

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

Back to the Races

And so to the Jacques As Memorial Stakes, hosted by the Crown Prince at the Prix d'Or – the one week a year when the place is free of riff-raff. Ahem. His Highness is pleased with the turnout, though less pleased with Louis Renault, the one Parisian who thinks he can Toady to the Prince without participating in the race. Early favourites for the race are Alvin Charles (who has bought a spare horse as well as replacing the one he lost in last month's race) and Justin Thyme, with Neville Moore the least favoured jockey. He may have the diminutive stature, but he has no discernible skill.

It is the two favourites who take the lead from the start and into the first corner. Only half a length down are Louis Severin Descartes (still smarting from losing his own race last month) and "Tiny" Thierry Toothpick, the latter cheered on by his entourage – the orange-painted 'Tangerines'. Beau Nidle and Zavier Ulric Turenne are right behind this pair, with Arent Hayes, Elroi le Flingue and Hugo Furst on their tails. (Hugo dreams he will "ride brilliantly, win, accept prize, bathe in the glory...") The main pack is in three groups. The first comprises Balzac Slapdash, Greg de Bécqueur, Jacques Hatt, Yve Stanbul (his entry fee paid by his CO, which is why he's wearing Louis Renault's colours) and Zeold von Tu. In the middle are Felipe Savant, Neville Moore, Thierry Boule, Terence Cuckpowder and Thomas de la Lune. And bringing up the rear are Botte La Chimiste, Camille de Polignac (riding his "trusty steed, Horsey McHorseFace"), François de Blanchefort, Hector William Boone and Jean d'Aubergine (whose pre-race rituals are published in the Press). However, there are still two laggards trailing behind the pack: Martin de Garnache leading Rick Shaw.

The riders give their horses their head down the back straight with consequent changes in positions. Alvin now has a clear lead and behind him is "Tiny" Thierry with Justin now third, having been caught by a bunch of rockets: Arent, Balzac, Hugo and Jacques. Beau has fallen behind this group, but is still ahead of the pack.

Who was at the Prix d'Or	
Where	Week 4
Prix d'Or	CP ZUT + Laura CP FdB + Freda CP NM + Vera CP BN CP BS + Alison CP TC CP HF + Violet CP FS + Fifi CP TdIL CP JiT + Guinevere CP TB + Belle CP TTT + Madelaine CP ZvT CP YS + Sheila CP HWB CP AH CP AICH CP BLC + Eve CP JdA + Carole CP EIF + May CP MdG + Chris CP RS + Thérèse CP LSD + Edna CP GdB + Bette CP CdP + Morgane CP JH
Outside	LR (Prinny)
Shows who was in or outside a club: CP = Toadying to Crown Prince; (id) = expected host.	

Who was where – with the ladies

Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Bawdy houses	TdIL + FC AH + FC: Mug 0 AA + FC: Mug 0		BN + FC: Mug 0 HWB + FC AICH + FC	
Kathy	CdN succeeds	Out		TdIL succeeds ex-TC
Katy	Out			
Shows who was with a mistress or on a doorstep: Out = Mistress with current lover; I = Indiscreet (+ mistress name); EX-id = Pinched from former lover.				
FC = Female Company; Mug n = Mugged & amount lost; (G) = Gambled.				

This has spread out a bit. Elroi, Louis and Zavier are at the front. Greg, Martin (showing an amazing turn of speed) and Neville are the next echelon. Then it's Felipe, Terence, Thomas and Yve. The back four are François, Rick, Thierry B and Zavier. Camille and Jean are the tail with Botte and Hector the tuft on the end.

Jostling around the final bend gives way to the last gallop for the finishing line. Alvin retains his lead to cross the line first and take the thousand crown top prize. Justin's horse has finally woken up and he's second, albeit a good length down. Balzac has maintained his pace to take a surprise third. Arent and Hugo (Incredulous that he's come so close to his dream) are just half a length behind the prize money. Then it's a faltering "Tiny" Thierry alongside Jacques and Louis, who's picked up the pace after a terrible first half of the race. There's clear air from these three to the 9th equal finishers, Felipe and Martin. Beau, Elroi and Neville are just behind and 11th equal. Another gap separates them from François, Thierry B, Zavier and Zeold. A bigger interval is followed by Greg and Rick crossing the line, Terence hanging on to their tails. Almost last are Botte, Jean, Thomas and Yve and right at the back are Camille and Hector. Botte's horse has been at a trot since the corner and collapses at the finish. A pistol shot signals its demise. Convivial drinks with the Dauphin are enlivened by the two Queen's Own (Justin and Yve) exchanging words with the sole Dragoon Guard, Balzac.

Elsewhere, it's been a busy month for the Parisian footpads, but they don't find a victim with any cash about them. They missed Thomas de la Lune this month – he was carrying a few crowns specifically to buy them off, though this is just a small part of what he borrowed earlier.

Where	Practising	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
	FdB - Sabre NIM - Rapier TPN - Sabre BN - Sabre BS - Rapier FS - Rapier TB - Sabre ZvT - Rapier BLC - Sabre JdG - Rapier JdA - Rapier BRJS - Rapier EIF - Sabre BdLS - Cutlass	BS - Rapier TC - Sabre JdG - Rapier BRJS - Rapier AA - Rapier JH - Sabre BdLS - Cutlass	FdB - Sabre NM - Rapier TPN - Sabre JJ - Rapier BS - Rapier TC - Sabre FS - Rapier JIT - Sabre TB - Sabre ZvT - Rapier AH - Sabre BLC - Sabre JdG - Rapier JdA - Rapier AA - Rapier EIF - Sabre CdN - Sabre JH - Sabre BdLS - Cutlass LR - Rapier	TPN - Sabre JJ - Rapier JdG - Rapier BRJS - Rapier AA - Rapier CdN - Sabre BdLS - Cutlass	

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.

Who was where – round and about

And, finally, Octo Lucretius Souris has bought a passage to the West Indies and is off to seek his fortune overseas.

Reinforcements on assault

The arrival of reinforcements in the Netherlands is opportune as First Foot adds its weight to the Frontier regiments’ attacks. Brigadier Henri DuShite is generously Mentioned in Despatches (“Look at those Marines go! And the Picardies, too!”) and picks up nearly two thousand crowns worth of loot. Brigadier-General Puffington, leading the Picardy Musketeers, survives close contact with an enemy halberd, but nobody seems to notice. And he’s too busy being bandaged to grab any booty.

The half of the Heavy Brigade that’s in action (aka Archduke Leopold’s Cuirassiers) adds to the fun by chasing down fleeing Dutch troops. Brigadier Ben e’Volence has his brevet rank made permanent. He collects well over a thousand crowns worth of plunder. His Brigade Major, Stephane Etrange, gets by with just under a thousand crowns for himself. Promotion takes him to the Colonelcy of the Crown Prince’s Cuirassiers.

The death of the Lieutenant-Colonel of the Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers enables the promotion of Major Hugh Jeneaux to that rank. A brief Mention in Despatches (“Promotion for Etrange”) leads to the award of a Barony. Plus some fifteen hundred crowns worth of loot to go with the gift from his Brigadier. It all mitigates what the bailiffs extracted from him – with extra interest – earlier this month.

Frontier regiment 1 spectacularly fails in its attack. However, the demoralised Frontier troops are rallied by Come Asiouar’s squadron of the Queen’s Own. This brings a MiD for Lt-Col Asiouar (“Stout fellow!”). Captain Ian Dediette gains promotion to Major and will take command of second squadron next month. He has the cash to buy the horses he needs for his new rank.

Victory for Fronter regiment 2 is helped by the attached squadron of Princess Louisa’s Light Dragoons. Major Charles PiedLuminaire is first to start the looting and profits by over two thousand crowns. However, the price of this is the death of Captain Pierre Mignon, whose horse outruns the rest of the squadron, making him easy meat for the enemy guns. RIP.

Frank X Change is attached to Frontier regiment 3 with his King’s Musketeers battalion. This is a tougher fight, but Lt-Col Change receives two MiDs (“Fine work with that musket! And sword!”) and plunders an extra thousand crowns for his war chest. That’s a lot more than Claude de Nord gave him before leaving Paris. ❖



Press

Social

Gentlemen of Paris,
During week 2, I invite all gentlemen and their ladies to join Miss Nifisent and me for a special dinner to honour my recent appointment as a minister. This is a momentous occasion that we will celebrate together, along with a discussion on the upcoming Jacques As Memorial Stakes. Refreshments will be provided at my expense. Please note, this invitation does not include members of the Dragoon Guards. † Marquis Louis Renault

Umm, isn't this April's party again?
† Le Roi

I will be hosting a party at the Fleur in week 4 of May to wish our troops Bon Voyage. All members of the military are welcome and drinks will be provided.

† Beau Reese Jean Seine

Announcements

Beau Reese Jean Seine requests that Major N4 of the Royal Foot Guards resign to make way for men of a more distinguished character.

**** Join the QOC ****

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

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

† Viscount Thyme

Brigadier General seeks Aide.

† Beau Resse Jean Seine

May I mention, in passing, how strained my Colonel is looking and how he would benefit from a (permanent) holiday from the stresses of command and, just on the off chance that anybody does what I cannot (i.e. influence the Colonel of the 13F to resign), I may apply for the Colonelship myself (but won't hold my breath – it's bad for one).

Officers and men sought for France's premier regiment. Apply RFG HQ.

† Beau Reese Jean Seine, officer
commanding RFG

Personal

After stirring up enmity between the Royal Foot Guards and the King's Musketeers, Toothpick has been seeking to remove Senior Officers in the Guards Regiment. He has been attempting to get his personal army into social events attended by Government Ministers. It now seems that he may have links to the Dutch, too. Given that the rascal is a Captain in the Minister of State's own Regiment, there are reasons to worry until such time as this fellow is investigated. People are wondering why the Minister of State has not appointed a Commissioner of Public Safety to investigate this fellow and his Tangerines.

Lord Percy Percy says, as stupidity is becoming fashionable, Toothpick is very fashionable.

“Upon which side am I intended to seek to mount?” Jean D'Aubergine mumbled to himself, fumbling to recall the advice of his Groom, Alain. “I suppose it matters little, just as my mismatched gloves are one as good as the other,” he continued, a faint smile appearing on his face, the likes of which he imagined sported by every philosophical sort. After spinning several times clockwise and then counterclockwise in turn, he looked forward with determination. “Surely this is how every great rider begins their career, surveying the full domain of their efforts. Off to the races...”

Advertisement

Parisian Toothpick Company
Something small irritating you?
Had a festering problem for a while?
We may have the answer:
A Toothpick.
Made of 100% wood, so easily discarded. When you decide it is of no further use, just throw it in the fire.

Points Arising

Next deadline is 6th December

The vacancy for Minister of War will be filled (by an NPC if no-one else gets it) at the start of June. Anyone who wants to apply for the appointment should do so with their orders for May.

Poetry Corner

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

1 Beware the phrase turned deftly
Slight like lightning
Poisoned writing
2 Without wit though
Thunderous bluster
Harmlessly passes wind. † TdLL

Notes from the 1676 Minister of State's debate (there must be a hidden meaning somewhere)

In Paris
They're eating the frogs...
The people that came in
They're eating baguettes.
They're eating, they're eating the breads
Of the people who live there.
And this is what's happening in our city.
And it's a shame. † LSD

1 When men are short,
And not that tall,
They plot and scheme,
But often fall.
2 Compensating is their game,
We know the truth about one soldier,
One feature causes his pain:
Thierry Toothpick's Tiny Todger.

Farewell

Olaf Schmidt reports that he's “currently extremely busy” and something has to give. Hence he's retired OLS. Sorry to see you go, Olaf, and you're very welcome to re-join us when real life calms down.

Brigade Positions

Guards Brigade	ZvT/__/MdG
Horse Guards Brigade	N4/N/N1
Heavy Brigade	BeV/__/SE
Dragoon Brigade	N4/N/BLC
First Foot Brigade	HDS/N/N3
Second Foot Brigade	N3/N/N6
Third Foot Brigade	N3/N/N4
Fourth Foot Brigade	N2/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	F4	RNHB	(Assault for Mar-May)
Colonel	N5	N5	N3	N4	N5	
Attached	1 Sqn QOC	1 Sqn PLLD	1 Bn KM			
Also at the Front	Heavy Brigade (Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers)					
	1st Foot Brigade (Royal Marines, 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

Heavy Brigade: 1	Frontier regiment 1: 5
Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers: 2	Frontier regiment 2: 2
1st Foot Brigade: 2	Frontier regiment 3: 3
Royal Marines: 2	Frontier regiment 4: 3
Picardy Musketeers: 4	RNHB regiment: 4

Other Appointments

King's Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Cardinal's Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Aides: to Crown Prince NM	to Field Marshal CdP
Provincial Military Governors: N/N/N/N/N	
City Military Governor TC	Adjutant-General N
Inspectors-General: of Cavalry N	of Infantry N
Commissioner of Public Safety __	
Chancellor of the Exchequer RS (until end August 1676)	
Minister of Justice __	
Minister of War __	
Minister of State BRJS (until end January 1677)	

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

Femmes Fatales

No	Name	SL	Attr	Lover
66	Morgane Le Fay	24	B	CdP
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	CdN
54	Madelaine de Proust	17		TTT
35	Katy Did	16	I	TC
42	Maggie Nifisent	16	B	LR
55	Jacky Tinne	16		JJ
52	Guinevere d'Arthur	15	B/W	JiT
10	Frances Forrin	14	B	
48	Fifi	14	B/W	FS
62	Alison Wunderlandt	14		BS
11	Laura de Land	13		ZUT
26	Ella Fant	13	B	
27	Lucy Fur	13	B	ZvT
45	Cath de Thousands	13		JH
8	Lotte Bottle	12	B	
17	Henrietta Carrotte	12	I/W	
28	Vera Cruz	12		NM
31	Bess Ottede	12	I/W	
1	Sue Briquet	11	B	
4	Anne Tique	11	W	
23	Agnes Sorel	11	I/W	
40	Sheila Kiwi	11		YS
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	TPN
6	Viv Ayschus	9		
59	May Banquot l'Idée	9		EIF
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	TB
24	Violet Bott	6	I/W	HF
25	Lois de Lô	5	B	

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

Regiments

Col	RFG	CG	KM	DG	OOC	AIC	CPC	RM	CDMDPM	13F	PLLD	53F	27M	4A	69A	Gscn
LCol	BRJS	ZvT+	CdN	BS	JiT	CA	SE+		LSD	PPuf	HF	AA	N7	JdA		
Maj 1	MdG+	N6	N4	N6	N1+	N5	N3+	BLC+	EIF*	N2	N6	N6+	N3	N6		
Maj 2	NM	N1	N3	N5	ID	N4*	BN	N3	N6	N1	N6	N3	N2	N4+		
Capt 1	FS	N6	N6*	N4	N4	N5	TPN	N5	N6	N4	N2*	N1	N2	N5	N5	N2
Capt 2	N4	N1	N5	N6	YD+	N5	TB	N5	N6	N4	N2*	N1	N3	N4	N3	N4
Capt 3		N1*	N5	N4	ID+	N5	N1	N1	N6	N4	N2*	N1	N5	N6	N3	N5
Capt 4			N5	N4	N5*	N5	N1	N1	N2	N6	N2*	N1	N5	N6	N3	N5
Capt 5				N6*	N2	N5	AH	N2	N6	N4	N2*	N1	N5	N6	N3	N5
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.

The Greasy Pole

ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank	Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
GdB	Count Greg de Bécqueur	24	57	Rich	B.Lt-General/1st Div Commandr	13	Bette	Flr	5	Anthony Gilbert	
BRJS	Count Beau Reese Jean Seine	24	45	Rich	B.Bdr-General RFG/State Min.	14		Flr	4	Bill Hay	
BeV	Count Ben e'Volence	24	F	Comfy	Bdr-General/Hvy Brigadier	11		Flr	3	Ash Casey	
CdP	Marquis Camille de Polignac	23	62	Comfy	Lt.Colonel RFG/FMshl's Aide	4	Morgane	Flr	4	James McReynolds	
JJ	Count Jean Jeanie	23	56	Flthy	General	32	Jacky	Flr	4	Andrew Kendall	
JdG	Count Jacques de Gain	22-21	Flthy	General/Fld Army Commndr		24		Flr	6	Ben Brown	
BdLS	Count Bernard de Lur-Saluces	22	61	Flthy	Lt-General	19		Flr	3	Rob Pinkerton	
TC	Count Terence Cuckpowder	22	50	Comfy	B.Lt-General/City Mil.Gov	7	Katy	Flr	6	Mike Dommett	
RS	Marquis Rick Shaw	22+71	Withy	General/Chancellor		2	Therèse	Flr	6	Charles Burrows	
HDS	Viscount Henri DuShite	21	F	Rich	B.Lt-General/1 F Brigadier	16		Flr	4	Dave Marsden	
ZUT	Baron Xavier Ulric Turenne	20	43	Comfy	Lt-General/2nd Div Commandr	4	Laura	Flr	1	Bob Blanchett	
JIT	Viscount Justin Thyme	19	40	Rich	B.Bdr-General QOC	16	Guinevere	Flr	2	Gerald Udowiczenko	
LR	Marquis Louis Renault	19+58	Withy	Lt-General/Min w/o Port		3	Maggie	Flr	4	Roy Bleasdale	
LSD	Sir Louis Severin Descartes	18+60	Withy	B.Bdr-Gen GDMD/Fld Army QMG		4	Edna	Both	1	Chris Schotmann	
CdN	Sir Claude de Nord	17	45	Withy	B.Bdr-General KM	4	Kathy	Both	4	Andrew Larder	
NM	Sir Neville Moore	15	46	Withy	Captain RFG/C.Prnce Aide	1	Vera	Hunt	2	Cameron Wood	
ZvT	Sir Zeold von Tu	15	45	Comfy	B.Bdr-General CC/Gds Brigadier	7	Lucy	Both	3	Tim Maccaire	
JH	Sir Jacques Hatt	15	33	Comfy	B.General	4	Cath	Both	3	Joel Halpern	
MdG	Martin de Garnache	15	32	Comfy	Major RFG/Gds Brigade Maj.	3	Chris	Both	4	Bill Howell	
AiCh	Marquis Alvin Charles	15+60	Comfy	Lt.Colonel GDMD		12		Both	2	Graeme Wilson	
FXC	Sir Frank X Change	14	F	Comfy	Lt.Colonel KM	7		Both	4	Nigel Monaghan	
FS	Baron Felipe Savant	13	38	Comfy	Captain RFG	5	Fifi	Both	4	Brick Amundsen	
TTT	Tiny Thierry Toothpick	13	36	Comfy	LtGen's Aide (Fnr)	5	Madelaine	Both	1	Jason Fazackarley	
HWB	Hector William Boone	13	34	Withy	Major RFG	5		Both	5	Paul Wilson	
BS	Marquis Balzac Slapdash	13	26	Withy	Colonel DG	19	Alison	Both	5	Matthew Wale	
HJ	Baron Hugh Jeneaux	13	F	Comfy	Lt.Colonel ALC/Gen's Aide	8		Hunt	3	Bruno Giordan	

ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank	Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
YS	Yve Stanbul	12	33	OK	Captain QOC/LtGen's Aide (LR)	5	Sheila	Both	4	Pam Udowiczenko	
TdLL	Sir Thomas de la Lune	12+52	Poor	Bdr-General		7		Hunt	5	Peter Card	
BN	Sir Beau Nidle	12+46	OK	Major CPC/CPC Regt. Adjnt.		2		Hunt	3	Paul Murphy	
CA	Come Asiouar	11	F	OK Lt.Colonel QOC		5		Hunt	4	Jacob Andersson	
SE	Stephane Etrange	11	F	Comfy Colonel CPC/Hvy Brigade Maj.		3		Hunt	4	Neil Packer	
JdA	Jean d'Aubergine	10	30	OK Colonel 4A		3	Carole	Hunt	3	Paul Robbins	
BLC	Botte Le Chimiste	10+39	OK	Major GDMD/Drgn Brigade Maj.		2	Eve	Hunt	4	Tym Norris	
HF	Hugo Furst	10+32	OK	Lt.Colonel 13F		5	Violet	Hunt	2	Graeme Morris	
EIF	Elroi le Flingue	10+32	OK	Major GDMD/GDMD Regt. Adjnt.		6	May	BG	4	Daniel Racke	
TPN	Thibault Pinot-Noir	9	20	Comfy Major CPC		5	Angelina	BG	3	Tim Rattray	
TB	Thierry Boule	9+38	OK	Captain CPC		4	Belle	F&P	6	John Cooke	
FdB	François de Blanchefort	8+44	OK	Captain CPC		3	Freda	BG	4	Peter Farrell	
AA	Armand Alsace	7	10	Comfy B.Bdr-General 53F		8		F&P	4	Sebastian Emde	
PPuf	Percival Puffington	7	F	OK B.Bdr-General PM		4		F&P	5	Tony Taylor	
AH	Arent Hayes	7+37	OK	Captain CPC		4		F&P	3	Mark Cowper	
GdA	Grenville d'Arkrite	6-5	Poor	Captain GDMD		4		F&P	5	Gerry Sutcliffe	
OLS	Octo Lucretius Souris	6	Ret							Olaf Schmidt	
ID	Ian Dedlette	6	F	OK B.Major QOC		2		RP	2	Nik Luker	
CPL	Charles PiedLuminaire	4	F	Comfy Major PLLD		5		RP	3	Nick Tyrrell	
X1		3	0	Poor		1			4	Ray Vahey	
PM	Pierre Mignon	3	RIP							Steven Malecek	

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

Cash: Poor = <500, OK = 500-1500, Comfy = 1500-5000, Withy = 5000-10000, Rich = 10000-25000, Flthy = 25000+
 Last seen is the lady the character was last seen with in public.

EC is Endurance Class: 1 = <60, 2 = 60-90, 3 = 91-120, 4 = 121-159, 5 = 160-200, 6 = 201+