

That would be enough

This has been issue 258 of *To Win Just Once*, published 6th October 2025. It incorporates *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, a game of *En Garde!*. Issues are published ten times a year, roughly every five weeks. © Paul Evans 2025

Deadlines

Orders for *Railway Rivals* and game end statements for *Star Trader* to Mike by Friday 17th October 2025.

Orders for *LPBS* and Fictionary Dictionary votes and definitions to Pevans by Friday 24th October 2025.

(Next deadlines: probably 21st/28th November, then 2nd/9th January 2026.)

Waiting lists

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

Railway Rivals – There's a game under way, but Mike can run a second four-player game if enough people are interested. So far that's Mark Cowper, Mike Dyer and Anthony Gilbert. "Only one 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, Mark Cowper and Anthony Gilbert. (Rules provided)

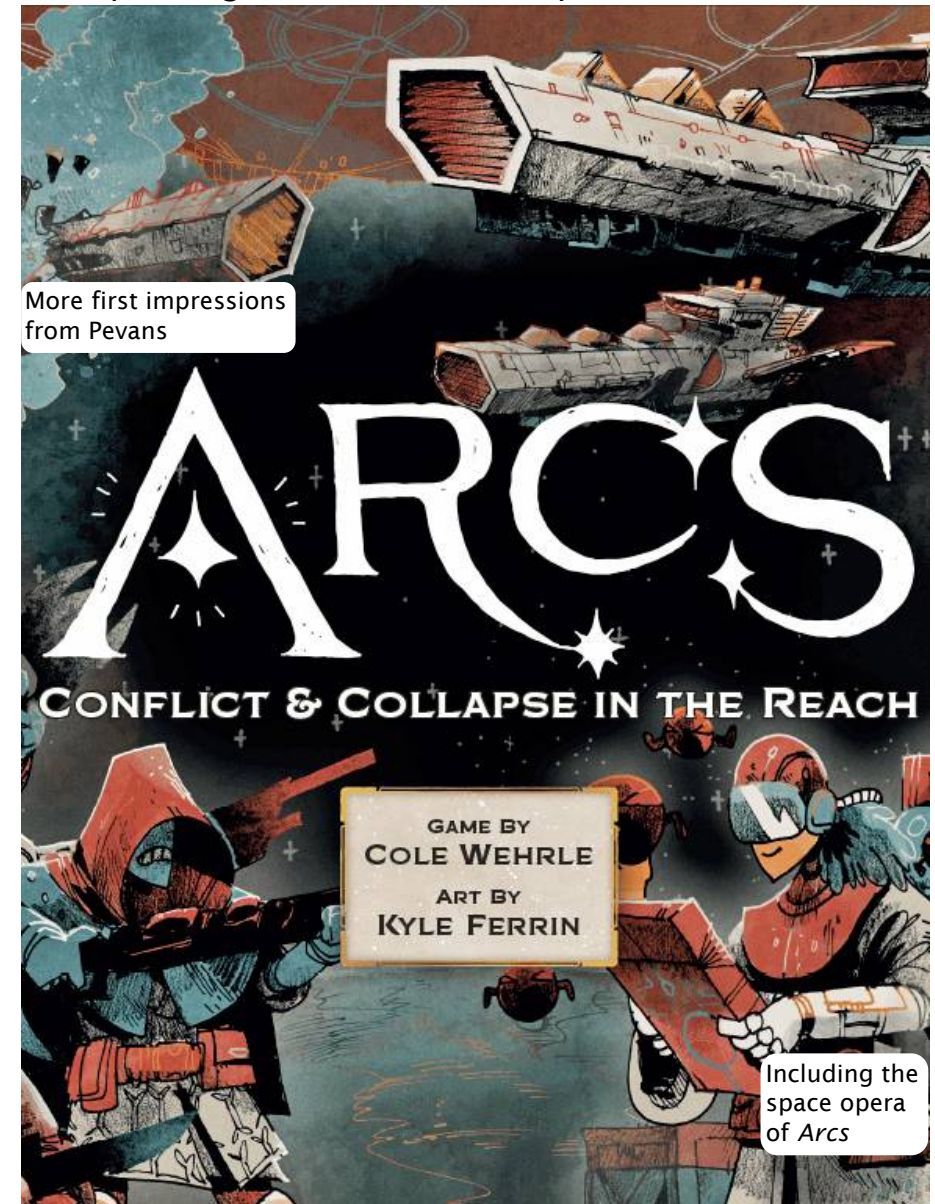
Credits

To Win Just Once issue 258 was written and edited by Pevans with contributions from Mike Dommett and Jonathan Palfrey. The *LPBS* masthead (page 21) is by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, as are the drawings on pages 23 and 26. The illustration on page 28 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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(LPBS 395: Jan 1677)

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ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank,	Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
EIF	Sir Elroi le Flingue	12	30	OK	Lt.Colonel	GDMD	7	Lucy	Both	4	Daniel Racke
CS	Con Stantinople	12+ 66	Comfy	Major	QOC/HGds	Brigade Maj.	6	Anne	Hunt	1	Pam Udowiczenko
TCdS	Thibault Chanson de Skye	12+ 40	Poor	B.Bdr-General	69A/4 F	Brigadier	6	Katy	Hunt	5	Bill Hay
PPuf	Sir Percival Puffington	11	F	OK	B.Bdr-General	PM	6		Hunt	5	Tony Taylor
JdA	Jean d'Aubergine	11	RIP								Paul Robbins
SE	Stephane Etrange	11	Ret								Neil Packer
FdB	Francois de Blanchefort	11+ 53	Comfy	Lt.Colonel	CPC		5	Freda	BG	4	Peter Farrell
AH	Arent Hayes	10	27	Poor	Major	CPC	4		Hunt	3	Mark Cowper
HS	Hugo Serre	10+ 34	OK					6	Sue		Paul Murphy
AA	Armand Alsace	9	24	Comfy	Bdr-General		11		Hunt	4	Sebastian Emde
MD	Maurice Danseur	8+ 31	Poor	Major	GDMD/Drgn	Brigade Maj.	6	Belle	BG	5	Andrew Whiteley
PDT	Pierre De Terre	8+ 37	Comfy	Captain	GDMD/LtGen's	Aide (2nd	7	Sal	F&P	2	Manoj Nair
CPL	Charles PiedLuminaire	8+ 30	Comfy	Colonel	PLLD/2nd	Div Adjutant	8	Violet	F&P	3	Nick Tyrrell
CdF	Chemin de Fer	8+ 27	Comfy	Major	RM/1 F	Brigade Maj.	5	Jenny	F&P	3	Rod MacDonald
JS	Justin Saad	7	18	Poor			3		F&P	3	Gerry Sutcliffe
CE	Charles Effeavor	6-	1	OK	Captain	13F	3			4	Andrew Kendall
SBC	Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux	6	16	OK	Captain	53F	1		RP	2	Peter Card
BC	Barthélemy Chifflet	5	F	OK	Major	PM	5			4	Hunter Charest
VdF	Vaux de Fon	5+ 51	OK	Subaltern	CPC		1		RP	4	John Cooke
SDS	Steve De Sade	5+ 41	Comfy	Captain	GDMD/BdGen's	Aide (LSD)	5		RP	5	Jon Dean
DJA	Dee Jean Aise	5+ 37	Poor	Major	PLLD		5			3	Jovan Bogdanovic
IP	Ignace Pardailion	3	1	OK	Subaltern	GDMD	5		RP	3	Grégory Meurant
JC	Justin Cartier	1	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+

The Greasy Pole

ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank	Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
HDS	Count Henri DuShite	24	55	Flthy	B.Lt-General		16		Flr	4	Dave Marsden
BeV	Count Ben e'Volence	24	54	Rich	B.General/2nd Army Commndr		11	Lotte	Flr	3	Ash Casey
GdB	Count Greg de Bécqueur	23	44	Rich	B.General/1st Army Commndr		13	Bette	Flr	5	Anthony Gilbert
RS	Earl Rick Shaw	23	F	Rich	General/Min w/o Port		2		Flr	6	Charles Burrows
BdLS	Count Bernard de Lur-Saluces	22	59	Flthy	Lt-General/Prov.Mil.Gov		19		Flr	3	Rob Pinkerton
TC	Count Terence Cuckpounder	22	F	Comfy	Bdr-General/Gds Brigadier		7		Flr	6	Mike Dommett
CdP	Marquis Camille de Polignac	22	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General RFG		6		Flr	4	James McReynolds
ZUT	Marquis Xavier Ulric Turenne	20	38	Withy	B.General		4	Laura	Flr	1	Bob Blanchett
JIT	Count Justin Thyme	20	36	Rich	B.Bdr-General QOC		18	Guinevere	Flr	2	Gerald Udowiczenko
LD	Marquis Louis Sev'n Descartes	20	30	Rich	Bdr-General/Min w/o Port		6	Edna	Flr	1	Chris Schotmann
JdG	Count Jacques de Gain	19-	8	Flthy	Fld Marshal		24			6	Ben Brown
ZvT	Baron Zeold von Tu	19	50	Withy	B.Lt-General/1st Div Commandr		8	Morgane	Flr	3	Tim Macaire
FXC	Marquis Frank X Change	19+	57	Comfy	Colonel CG/Justice Min.		11	Justine	Flr	4	Nigel Monaghan
JH	Sir Jacques Hatt	18	45	Withy	B.General/3rd Army Commndr		4	Cath	Flr	3	Joel Halpern
CdN	Baron Claude de Nord	18	37	Withy	Colonel KM		4	Jacky	Both	4	Andrew Larder
LR	Marquis Louis Renault	18	33	Withy	Lt-General/2nd Div Commandr		3	Maggie	Flr	4	Roy Bleasdale
BS	Earl Balzac Slapdash	16	21	Rich	B.Bdr-General DG		21	Alison		5	Matthew Wale
NM	Baron Neville Moore	15	F	Rich	Captain RFG/Capt.K's Esc		1		Hunt	2	Cameron Wood
MdG	Martin de Garnache	15	F	Withy	Lt.Colonel RFG/1st Div Adjutant		3		Both	4	Bill Howell
CA	Baron Come Asiouar	15	F	OK	Lt.Colonel CG/FMshi's Aide		8		Both	4	Jacob Andersson
FS	Baron Felipe Savant	14	F	Withy	Captain RFG		5		Both	4	Brick Amundsen
TTT	Sir Tiny Thierry Toothpick	14	F	Comfy	Major RFG/CPS		6		Flr	1	Jason Fazackarley
HJ	Baron Hugh Jeneaux	13	34	Withy	Colonel ALC/Chancellor		9		Hunt	3	Bruno Giordan
ID	Sir Ian Dediette	13	17	Comfy	Major QOC		3		Both	2	Nik Luker
MHD	Sir Marcel Hatch Dupree	13	16	Comfy	Lt.Colonel RM		5		Hunt	4	Graeme Wilson
HWB	Sir Hector William Boone	13	F	Rich	Major RFG		7		Both	5	Paul Wilson
HF	Hugo Furst	13+	51	OK	B.Bdr-General 13F/2 F Brigadier		5	Ella	Hunt	2	Graeme Morris
BLC	Botte Le Chimiste	13+	42	OK	Colonel GDMD/Cav Div Adjutant		2	Eve	Both	4	Tym Norris

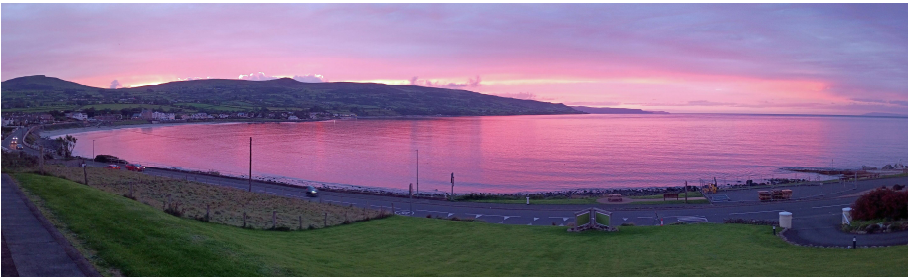
Chatter

We're just back from two weeks in the land of large portions and draught stout – known to its inhabitants as “Norn Iron”. As usual, we were in an apartment with picture windows that give a terrific view over Ballygally Bay. We had no rainbows rolling across the bay this year – we usually get several as squalls cross the sea, but they do need the sun to be in the right position as well.

Talking of the sun, it occurred to me that Ballygally village must be quite a dark place. It's got fairly high hills on three sides, with the open side facing north-east. So the sun only appears over the hills some time after the nominal sunrise and disappears before official sunset. At this time of year (around the autumnal equinox) there's still plenty of sunshine, but the shorter day must be particularly noticeable in winter when the sun is so much lower in the sky.



Looks like the Ballygally bear has had a fresh coat of paint this year.



A particularly spectacular (early) sunset over the bay (looking north-west).

In the beginning there was a car park (by the Bear and just down the hill from our apartment). And a sign warning us that work was starting 22nd September and would continue for ten weeks. Soon a lorry arrived and part of the car park was fenced off, a road roller being parked inside the fence (with a stack of empty pallets). The following day another, larger lorry deposited a digger (though with a



This is just begging for a caption. Any suggestions?

pneumatic drill fitment on the end of the arm, rather than a digging bucket) and a dumper truck. We feared the worst, but whatever work proceeded over the next 10 days took place out of sight. Though the equipment did disappear.

I didn't play many solitaire games this year (remind me not to time the *LPBS* deadline for just before I go away), but nephew Tom and his other half, Eleanor, visited and we got in a game of *Vantage*. There's a lot been written about this game (not least by designer Jamey Stegmaier) and expect my take on it in due course. (Spoiler: we didn't want to stop!)

Tom and I also had a go at the latest in the Commands & Colors family (Tom's another fan of these), *Battle of Hoth* (see *TWJO* 254 for my first impressions of



Geraldine has asked me several times whether I've seen the face in Ballygally Head. I finally spotted it this year by looking back at the Head from the other end of the village (where we're staying is just off the right edge of the photo, bottom right is the car park – before the equipment arrived).

Femmes Fatales

No	Name	SL	Attr	Lover
66	Morgane Le Fay	24	B	ZvT
67	Justine Caisse	22	I	FXC
65	Therèse Le Vert	21	B/W	
7	Chris Pacquette	19		
61	Bette Noire	19	I/W	GdB
64	Edna Bucquette	18	W	LSD
3	Kathy Pacific	17	B	
54	Madeline de Proust	17		
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	
48	Fifi	14	B/W	
62	Alison Wunderlandt	14		BS
11	Laura de Land	13		ZUT
26	Ella Fant	13	B	HF
27	Lucy Fur	13	B	EIF
45	Cath de Thousands	13		JH
8	Lotte Bottle	12	B	BeV
17	Henrietta Carrotte	12	I/W	
28	Vera Cruz	12		
31	Bess Ottede	12	I/W	
1	Sue Briquet	11	B	HS
4	Anne Tique	11	W	CS
23	Agnes Sorel	11	I/W	
40	Sheila Kiwi	11		
63	Carole Singeurs	11		
20	Emma Roides	10	I	
38	Pet Ulante	10	W	
43	Di Lemmere	10	I	
53	Angelina de Griz	10	B	
6	Viv Ayschus	9		
59	May Banquot l'Idée	9		
19	Jenny Russe	8	W	CdF
32	Sal Munella	8	W	PDT
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	MD
24	Violet Bott	6	I/W	CPL
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

	RFC	CG	KM	DG	OO	ALC	CPC	RM	CDMDPM	13F	PLD	53F	27M	4A	69A	Gscn
Col	CdP	FXC	CdN	BS	JiT	HJ	FdB	N6	BLC	PPuf	HF+	CPL	N8	N6	TCdS+	
LCol	MdG	CA			ID	N5*	AH	MHD	EIF	N2	N4+	N4*	N3	N4+	N3+	
Maj 1	HWB	N1*	N4		CS+	N1	N3+	N1	MD+	N3	N4	N4*	N4	N6	N3	
Maj 2	TBT	N6	N3			N1	N5	CdF+	PDT	BC	N6	DJA	N5	N5	N3	
Capt 1	NM	N6	N1		N4	N6	N4	N2	N5	N4*	N5	N6	N5*	N5	N4	
Capt 2	FS	N6	N4		N4	N5	N6	N2	N3	N4*	N2	N1	N3	N4*	N3	
Capt 3			N1		N4*	N5	N2*	N5	N5*	N4*	N2*	N5	N4*	N5	N5	
Capt 4			N3*			N1	N3	N2	SDS	N2*	CE	N2*	N6*	N5*	N5*	
Capt 5																
Capt 6																

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

Brigade Positions

Guards Brigade	TC/N/___	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	N2/N/CS	
Heavy Brigade	N3/N/N3	
Dragoon Brigade	___/___/MD	
First Foot Brigade	___/___/CdF	
Second Foot Brigade	HF/N/N4	
Third Foot Brigade	N3/N/N4	
Fourth Foot Brigade	TCdS/___/N3	

Frontier Regiments

	F1	F2	F3	F4	(Siege for Dec-Feb)
Colonel	N6	N1	N6	N1	RNHB N4
Attached				1 Bn CG	RS
Also at the Front	Guards Brigade (Royal Foot Guards) Picardy Musketeers 4th Arquebusiers				

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

Battle Results

Guards Brigade: 3	Frontier regiment 1: 3
Royal Foot Guards: 3	Frontier regiment 2: 3
Picardy Musketeers: 1	Frontier regiment 3: 2
4th Arquebusiers: 4	Frontier regiment 4: 3
	RNHB regiment: 1

Other Appointments

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

this). We played scenario 7, which I hadn’t tried before. Tom insisted on playing the Empire and duly beat me 3:5. That’s seven games now, all Imperial victories!

Northern Irish beer (it’s not just Guinness)



Knowing my taste in beer, brother-in-law Joe kindly laid in a selection from Knockout Brewing (www.knockoutbrewing.com) in Belfast. I started with their Session IPA at 4% alcohol-by-volume (that’s what was on the can, but it’s billed as 3.8% – the traditional strength for session beers – on the website). This was a pale yellow beer and slightly cloudy in the glass (I think ‘hazy’ is the technical term). It was tasty dry beer with some definite citrus notes. I can see it working for a drinking session: 7/10.

The Red Ale (4.2% abv) was a darker, amber colour. Oh, and hazy. Still nicely dry, but with some musty overtones – more malt in this one? I’ll give it 6/10. The standard IPA (4.4%) was between the other two in colour – that is, more orange than yellow – and hazy. The citrus smell and taste were more pronounced, as was the head. I didn’t enjoy it as much as the Session IPA, so that’s another 6/10.

Finally, the Citra Pale Ale (4.2%) was frothy, man – I had to let what I poured initially settle before I could empty the can. It’s another yellow beer, though not as pale as the Session IPA. And there was a real grapefruit kick to this, as expected, from the Citra (and only Citra) hops. A bit over the top for me, so that’s another 6/10. So I’m afraid I found the Knockout beers rather average.



Spiderwatch

Number of small spiders living precariously in the bathroom mid-September: 2.
Number of dead small spiders found in bathroom after two weeks away: 1.

Online stats

Last issue was published on 25th August and the PDFs were downloaded 66 times in that last week of the month and a further 103 in September. Through August as a whole, the PDFs of issue 256 were downloaded 134 times with a further 35 in September, taking this issue to 281 downloads in 2 months or so. *TWJO* 255 attracted 37 more downloads in August and 40 in September to make a total of 287 since publication.

Postal Games 'Zine Poll 2025

Alex Richardson has announced this year's 'zine poll and made a few changes for this year's ballot. Here's his notification.

a) WHO MAY VOTE? Anyone who sees at least one eligible zine, either as an editor or a subscriber. Editors may vote for their own zines.

b) WHICH ZINES ARE ELIGIBLE? In the first four categories, any zine published in the British Isles which has produced one issue in 2025 (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 recognised as "postal" ones (e.g. Diplomacy, Railway Rivals, 18xx, En Garde! or United, among many others).

The fifth category is a free-for-all open to similar "postal games" zines from around the world.

c) HOW TO VOTE. The five categories are: *Diplomacy* (and variants); Railway Games; Sports Leagues; Other Games; Overseas Zines.

This year, I'd like you to list up to five eligible zines, in any combination of tied or single spots, in as many of the categories for which they qualify as you wish.

Zines may be entered in more than one category and in different positions, if desired. For example, *Obsidian* might be listed in *Diplomacy*, Railway and Other Games categories, in the fourth, third and equal-fifth places, if that's your assessment of it.

You could send in full lists of candidates for all five categories, nominate your favourite in just one, or something in between these two extremes. The amount of time you want to spend on this and the level of detail you want to go into are up to you.

Votes should be sent by e-mail from the voter's own account to alex.bokmal@googlemail.com. The Poll deadline will midnight on FRIDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2025. Results will be e-mailed to each voter and published in *Obsidian*, along with perhaps one or two other zines after that.

I'm not sure how this will work – not least because voting in five categories, rather than simply ranking the 'zines you see, may well put people off. Anyway, *TWJO* placed 11th (of 25) last year when it was just a general vote. I wonder how well it will do now there's an 'Other games' category.

Thibault Chanson de Skye (Rapier, Seconds CS & JS) challenges Arent Hayes (Sabre, adv.).

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

Challenges to be voted on

Thibault Chanson de Skye challenges Arent Hayes for recirculating old invitations from de Becqueur.

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

Duels held over to March

Terence Cuckpowder versus Zeold von Tu.

Barthélemy Chifflet versus Charles PiedLuminaire.

Rick Shaw versus Balzac Slapdash.

New Characters

Steven Malecek gets the Second son of a well-to-do Gentleman: Init SL 4; Cash 250; MA 5; EC 4 (X1).

Paul Robbins gets the Bastard son of a well-to-do Knight: Init SL 5; Cash 225; MA 4; EC 4 (X2).

Tables

Army Organisation and 1677's Summer Deployment

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

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

Duels

Results of January's duels

Stephane Etrange didn't turn up to fight Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux.

Con Stantinople (with JS & TCdS, gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Balzac Slapdash.

Balzac Slapdash declined to meet Justin Thyme as he's under half End.

Arent Hayes (gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux.

Balzac Slapdash declined to meet Ian Dediette as he was under half End.

Neither Hugh Jeneaux nor Pierre De Terre turned up for their duel and both lost SPs.

Marcel Hatch Dupree didn't turn up to fight Thibault Chanson de Skye and lost SPs.

Vaux de Fon (gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux.

Barthélemy Chifflet (gains 1 Exp) beat Charles PiedLuminaire (DJA & LSD).

Percival Puffington (with BdLS, gains 1 Exp) beat Thibault Chanson de Skye (with CS & JS).

Grudges to settle next month

Botte Le Chimiste (Sabre, Seconds LSD) and Hugh Jeneaux (Sabre, adv.) have cause for enemy regiments.

Elroi le Flingue (Sabre, Seconds LSD, adv.) and Hugh Jeneaux (Sabre, 1 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Hugh Jeneaux (Sabre, 1 rests) and Maurice Danseur (Sabre, Seconds PDT & LSD, adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

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

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

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

Chemin de Fer (Cutlass, Seconds MHD, adv.) and Thibault Chanson de Skye (Rapier, Seconds CS & JS, 2 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

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

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

Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux (Rapier, 2 rests) and Vaux de Fon (Sabre, adv.) have cause for enemy regiments.

Marcel Hatch Dupree (Cutlass, Seconds CdF, adv.) and Thibault Chanson de Skye (Rapier, Seconds CS & JS, 1 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Letters

Brad Martin joins in Spiderwatch from down under.

Spiders living under the microwave: 1. It came out looking a bit frazzled as I microwaved my veggies, but revived when transferred to the garden.

And spiders are a whole different kettle of fish in Aus. Brad added.

I think you might have created a Save the Spiders movement.

Ah, you may be misunderstanding. I'm thinking it's more "Feed the birds" than "Save the spiders" when I release them into the garden...

Anthony Gilbert has a tale of woe.

I hope [my LPBS press is] not too late. It has been a bad week, what with a film crew knocking down the telegraph pole outside our house (still no landline, and Mobile coverage here is patchy) and my check-engine [alarm] illuminating on my way over the hill to work (I suspect ... enforced obsolescence - not like the good old days, when you could nurse a faithful steed through a couple more years, so long as you had jump leads and WD40). On a positive note, I survived the toughest Road race in the UK - the Langdale Marathon - though my son beat me by almost an hour and a half.

I think some of that was self-inflicted, Anthony.

Recent games and first impressions (cont'd)

Yes, this is carrying on from last issue's article and reflecting on what games I've been playing in recent months. And it was a few months ago that Tom D introduced me to *Arcs*. This is a space opera game from Cole Wehrle and Leder Games (as the four-letter, one-word name suggests). The circular playing area is split into segments around a blank circle with occasional rifts between the segments. I'm thinking arms of the galaxy around the central black hole. Ships can move past the rifts on the ring around the black hole.

Each segment shows a planet with the icon of the resource it produces and 1-2 spaces for the triangular city and spaceport pieces. Players can 'Tax' their cities to produce resources and 'Build' ships at their spaceports. There are tactical decisions, then, on where you want to be able to add ships and which resources you want. And you need to control a segment with your ships to be able to do either.

Players' actions are governed by the 'Action' cards they play and this is the heart of the game. The cards come in four suits/colours, each having a particular set of actions. They also have a value and a number of action 'pips' - how many times the player can take actions from this card after playing it. Maybe.

Whoever has the initiative (it's a rather ornate marker) plays a card first and gets to use all their action pips. The other players generally only get to do one action: in the suit of the card they play if it's face up, or the lead card's suit if they play face down. The exception is if they play a higher card of the lead player's suit. Then they use all their action pips (though the higher the value of the card, the fewer pips it has). What's more, they take the initiative marker.

Unless someone has seized the initiative by playing a second card (face down) in their turn. As I quickly discovered, getting the initiative is crucial if you want to be able to take more than one action per turn. But playing that second card on a turn means you'll run out of cards before everybody else, giving your opponents a free turn. Do it twice in a 'Chapter' and that's a serious problem.

Players start with a hand of six cards each. When all cards have been played, the Chapter ends and players score points. Which is a whole different part of the game. There are five 'Ambitions' which score for the most and second most of particular things players have collected through the chapter.

Each round, the player with the initiative can 'declare' an ambition. That is, activate it to score at the end of the chapter. A maximum of three ambitions can be declared in each chapter – another reason to get the initiative. And, of course, once an ambition has been declared, everybody knows what they need to collect to score points (players' holdings are open, so they also know how many to collect). Declaring an ambition drops the value of your card to zero, so someone else is very likely to take the initiative.

My first game was just me and Tom D. Tom concentrated on building cities and spaceports, while I tried out the combat rules. There's a lot going on in combat (a little sub-game of its own). For a start, players have a choice of three types of



Tom (Blue) storms to a dominant win at the end of Chapter 3 in our first Arcs game.

superstitious medieval peasants and is ridiculous in the modern age. Searching for period details revealed a Witchcraft case involving Madame Montvoisin, or just La Voisin, accused of being involved in black masses and providing love potions to Louis XIV's mistress, Madame de Montespan. As so often happens, real life outdoes fiction.

TTT did, of course, use influence to convict Morgane. JiT, LR, and ZvT used favours against conviction and the ladies of Paris contributed some funds. Ahem. Totting these up, the die roll required for conviction was 14 (on 2d6), a convincing not guilty!

Thanks to Jason Fazackarley, Charles Burrows and Tim Macaire for their contributions to the trial report.

It's been a while since there was a challenge to vote on, so let me recap. All characters except members of the principals' own and friendly regiments may vote for or against the challenge. If the majority of votes is in favour, the duel proceeds as normal. If not, the challenger (TCdS) loses some SPs.

The current (NPC) Minister of State's term expires at the end of February. Anyone who wants the job should apply with their February orders – ditto the Minister of War.

Farewell

It's the end of an era! Neil Packer apologises for missing the last couple

Announcements

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

Armand Alsace applies for Brigadier of 1st Foot Brigade

of turns. He writes that "Life is getting very busy ... and ... *En Garde!* and various other games have had to take a back seat." Noooo!

I don't have the archive to hand to check when Neil joined *LPBS*, but it was a good many ears ago. Your input will be missed, Neil, and please do come back to us when you feel able to.

Absent friends

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

HJ No orders from Bruno Giordan - 1 turn missed.

IP Grégory Meurant continues to be floated.

Notes

The *En Garde!* rules are available to *LPBS* players at a reduced rate: see any month's Points Arising page at www.pevans.co.uk/LPBS.

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.

Arriving in Paris, a bit of a hick,
To rise in society he did lick.
Bottom of the class – he is a bit thick –
Of his orange army we are now all
sick.

He uses them when he goes out to nick
The ladies who all consider him a
prick.

On Parisian Society, he's as welcome
as a tick.

It is sure that if you feel the same,
You'll have no trouble in guessing his
name.

1 The mighty Toothpick, squeaks his
rage,

A tiny tyrant in his cage.

He stamps his foot, his face turns red,
With foolish notions in his head.

2 They sent the wretch to join the
front,

A most judicious, timely stunt.

He'll shriek at shadows in the trench
And bore the enemy with his blench.

3 A safer place for France, it's true,
When he is not near me or you!

† Baron Descartes

*On recirculating last month's
invitations:*

1 The cardstock's thick, the ink
impressed,

A promise of a timely guest.

A simple time, a stated name,

The rules of every social game.

Points Arising

Next deadline is 24th October

Roy Bleasdale has a fascinating note
on his press item (for which many
thanks, Roy).

2 But now a sloppy, careless crime,
Recycling from a former time.

A nameless, vague, confusing scrawl—
The surest way to rankle all.

3 This is the fruit of failed command,
When no firm, steady hand's at hand.

A minor, yet a telling, sign

That order's no longer divine.

4 So let this lesson now be taught,
For which our firm support is bought.

The cur will learn his place again,
Beneath the boots of better men.

† Baron Descartes

Carefully he ties his fine cravat,
Upon his face a sneering pout,
Countless debtors he sends to the hat,
Knives and bullies, with nary a doubt.
Pleasure he takes in a frightened face,
Ordering servants to stand in line,
Whispering insults, with nary a trace,
Darkening all with his foul design.
Elegant clothes, but a rotten soul,
Revelling in his cruel control.

1 A trouble comes to city streets,
But here a heart of honour beats
Strong against the tide of crime,
Finding power in lines of rhyme.

2 Try not my patience, tiny men,
Lest sword be raised in place of pen.
Words may hurt your misplaced pride;
Sticks and stones will tan your hide.

† Greg

*Rather than a letter, I wrote Morgane
Le Fay's defence in the form of a
pamphlet. Curiously, my first attempt
was to use the 'The age of
enlightenment' approach, and propose
the idea that witchcraft belongs with*



Chapter 3 of the second game and it ain't over yet. In fact, I (White) am in the lead! (But not for much longer.)

combat dice, each with different odds of things happening. And they can mix 'n' match which dice they use. I played it safe, but the dice did me no favours.

I also discovered some of the tactical niceties. Tom parked the odd ship in the central ring to block my movement and I couldn't get to enough targets. However, my biggest problem was not being able to get the initiative. It felt like I never had the right suit in hand to beat Tom's lead and, when I did get the initiative, I immediately lost it again. However, we both managed to score from the Ambitions. It's just that Tom scored rather better than me!

Our second game added Veronica into the mix. The three-player game immediately felt more interesting with two others' actions to take into account and with more competition for the initiative and the ambitions. I still felt hampered by not being able to move my ships as freely as I wanted, but I wasn't planning on fighting so much in this game.

In fact, a lot of our competition was over an element of the game I haven't even mentioned yet: the Guild cards. Another sub-game. But, like combat, integral to the whole game. Players bid for these in one turn and can collect them in a later one – if they have the appropriate action and are still winning the bid. They go into the player's tableau and provide extra actions or bonuses. But can be stolen by their opponents.

Tom won this game, too, but I felt I had a better idea of what I was doing – and what I needed to do – and was just a few points behind. What I'm finding so far is

that the challenge with *Arcs* is figuring out how best to use its intertwined mechanisms. However, the key one is managing the card play. It gets a provisional 8/10 on my highly subjective scale and I need to play it some more.

Following on from my introduction to *Arcs*, Tom D and I finished that evening with *District Noir*, a little two-player card game that was new to me. Players take turns to add a card to the line in the middle. Once per round, they can pick up the five most recent cards – and must do so if they've played all of the five cards they started with. Once both have played their cards, the round ends and new hands are dealt..

After four hands, players' taken cards are assessed. Whoever has the most of a colour scores the value of that colour. Positive and negative modifier cards are added in and the highest score wins. Hence it's all about managing what cards you play when to minimize your opponent's scoring opportunities and maximise yours.

One wrinkle: the deck contains three 'City' cards. Pick up all of these and you win outright. *District Noir* is a clever filler and gets a provisional 6/10 on my highly subjective scale. We played twice – the first game seemed straightforward, but the second was more complicated (it's all down to what cards you draw). And the score was Pevans 2, Tom 0.

Tom and I were joined by Jim a week later for me to introduce them to *Stationfall*. We played the tutorial game, which does a good job of gradually introducing the different aspects of play while playing it. It's designed for three players, which was ideal. However, key to how the game goes is a fourth, non-player character, Lindsey, and what she is up to.



District Noir: Tom and I wait for the other guy to blink first and take cards.

recently that it has caused me to lose track of time and miss important events, such as the mass that you had mentioned. Please do accept my deepest and most sincere apologies, both to yourself and to your good lady, Miss Nifiscent. I have explained the situation to Sal and she is looking forward to meeting both of you.

I can assure you that I will be present for all your events moving forward, no matter how enchanting Sal proves to be. I will attend both the horse race as well as your musical evening at Fleur de Lys, in my dress uniform, at my own expense, accompanied by the delightful Sal Munella. I appreciate being given a second chance to prove that I am the right man for the job.

Sincerely,

† Captain Pierre de Terre

To: The People of Paris

Word reaches me that some women – unpatriotic and treasonous women – have made threats to their gentleman companions and declared that they are taking some kind of rebellious stance against our beloved Commissioner of Public Safety, Major Tiny Thierry Toothpick.

Do these females... subservients... women... not realise who Commissioner Toothpick is?! He is an appointed Minister of His Majesty the King, a true servant of the Crown AND any opposition to him is thus, by definition, TREASON.

TRRRREAAASSSOOONNN in its greatest form! Everyone knows what treason begets: DDDDDDEEEEEAAAAAATTTTHH HH! Terrible, agonising, tortuous DDDDEEEAAAATTTTHHHH! It's

coming women. Defy me, defy Commissioner Toothpick at your own peril – don't say you weren't warned! Alternatively, declare your loyalty, your love of the crown and reap the benefits of such.

I hereby decree, despite being at the Front because of the machinations of 'snake-in-the-grass' Cuckpowder, all recognised mistresses who refuse to pledge an oath of loyalty and obedience to the Crown, which, obviously, includes me, Commissioner Toothpick, will mean you're all liable to arrest.

† Commissioner for Public Safety
Major Tiny Thierry Toothpick, His Majesty's Royal Foot Guards

Gentlemen of Paris – A Call To Arms
It seems our streets are not safe for unaccompanied ladies: diminutive dastards dwell in the dark depths; puny pipsqueaks prowl and pounce. To counter this threat, I have enlisted a small company of stout fellows, strong of arm and of honour, to protect the gentler members of our community from renegades in general, and the tangerine tyrants in particular. I pray their vigilance will allow ladies to promenade in peace on the pavements of Paris.

† Greg

Poetry Corner

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

Around Paris I've heard it said
That Violets are blue and Roses are red.

I really feel that the people I meet
Should not be so indiscreet.

† FXC

Overheard in the Fleur de Lys: Witchcraft, you say? Beguiling, you say? Spying for the enemy, you say? I say that's not witchcraft, that's desperation. I mean, if he can't convict a woman, then he's not fit for his post and should be removed.

To: Captain Pierre de Terre
Sir,

I recently spoke with my tailor and was delighted to hear you had taken my advice and he had measured you for a new dress uniform. I was looking forward to seeing you wearing it at Mass, but you were absent, nor were you to be found at my festive luncheon at Fleur de Lys afterwards. I was profoundly disappointed and naturally assumed you had succumbed to some illness and sent my servant to your lodgings to enquire after you. A gentleman directed him to the Frog & Peach, where he discovered you in the company of a young woman and her friends.

I should not have been surprised that you were spending my allowance on these women, while I organised carriages to transport my guests to Fleur de Lys after the Mass. When you first approached me regarding the position as my aide, I understood we had made an agreement, including a generous recompense. Then you have the temerity to inform me you are already acting as aide to Count Bernard de Lur-Saluces. If that was not bad enough, you arrive at the barracks and ask the divisional clerk for your pay as my aide, blaming your pigeon for the misunderstanding.

During the summer, you demonstrated exceptional courage and

loyalty to his majesty. Your service was commendable. However, your loyalty to your Lieutenant-General is not as steadfast. I am a charitable man, and I am willing to give you a second chance. Miss Nifisent and I plan to attend the horse race sponsored by Baron Louis Severin Descartes, during week one, and our musical evening at Fleur de Lys during week two. I expect you, in your dress uniform, to be in attendance at your own expense. Miss Nifisent always enjoys meeting the ladies of my aides, and she requests that you be accompanied by your friend from the Frog & Peach.

If you prefer the company of your associates at the Frog & Peach in preference to assisting me, then so be it. However, such actions are not in line with the expectations I have for my aide. If you choose to continue in this manner, I will expect your letter of resignation forthwith. Note, I have instructed my clerk to withhold any further payments until further notice.

Note, I will not be taken for a fool. It is not suitable for one's reputation when one's aide chooses to snub one's invitation. If you choose to continue as my aide but then fail to undertake your duties seriously, then I will have no other option but to demand an apology. You may contact my second, Marquis Xavier Ulric Turenne.

† Lt-General Marquis Louis Renault

To Lt-General Marquis Louis Renault
Sir,

I must apologise again for any confusion, and profusely apologise for any unintended disrespect on my part. I have been so enamoured with Sal



Part of the *Stationfall* board. Project X has been revealed as the Death Ray - and used to obliterate the News media I'd sent evidence to, grumble, grumble. And Daredevil is at the bottom, poised to deploy the Cargo Claw and then make his escape.

We managed to foil Lindsey's plan by jettisoning the anti-matter into space before it could destroy the station. Only for Jim to use the Cargo Claw to bring it back on board the turn before it detonated. He was playing Daredevil, we then realised, as he had grabbed the rocket wings and a helmet and was the only character to escape. Great fun and this is another game I must play some more. (Not least because all the different characters and combinations make it fiendishly complicated – in a good way!)

The other new game back in May was *Expeditions*. We're all *Scythe* fans and Veronica was given this sort-of-sequel for Christmas but hadn't played it yet. The setting is the same alternative steampunk world as *Scythe*, but it's a very different game. We are in Siberia "where a massive meteorite crashed near the Tunguska River, awakening ancient corruption." I assume this is a reference to the real-world 1908 Tunguska Event when a meteor exploded in mid-air, devastating a large area of the forest.

What's more "An expedition led by Dr. Tarkovsky" that went to investigate has not returned. So we "heroes" are leading our own expeditions – in our individual 'Mechs' – to find out what happened to Tarkovsky and see what we can find. (In our world, Andrei Tarkovsky directed the film *Stalker*, based on the Strugatsky brothers' novel, *Roadside Picnic*, in which alien visitations to Earth have left areas of inexplicable phenomena and powerful artefacts. Which is a bit of a clue to what to expect in the game.)

In the game, players all start in the 'base camp' area (bottom of the photo) and explore the network of hexagonal tiles which get more dangerous/valuable the further away they are. In between the tiles are face-up cards that players can collect – the rest of the deck is off to one side. Apart from what's on the tiles, most of what players do revolves around their cards.

The three actions available to players are move, gather (do what it says on the tile, which can be picking up a card) and play (play a card for its effects, possibly adding a worker pawn to do more). Before taking their actions, players must move the cube that's covering one of them to a different one and then carry out the two uncovered actions. This is such a neat little mechanism for limiting players' options – planning needed! Alternatively, they can 'refresh' to pick up their played cards (and workers) and can then do all three actions on their next turn.

Players have several goals in the game: collecting meteorite fragments, completing 'Quests', upgrading 'Items', vanquishing 'Corruption' and more. Each time they achieve one of these, they place a 'Glory' marker (I'm sure I've seen those little wooden stars somewhere before...). The game ends when someone's achieved four goals and players score for money, Glory (the value depends on how many Quests you've completed), upgraded items and corruption.



Here we are mid-game in *Expeditions* as our Mechs start to explore the dangerous Northern tiles.

Bvt. General Count de Bécqueur seeks one or two reliable gentlemen to stand as his seconds, should any disagreements need to be settled on the field of honour. In these unsettled times, it is sound military sense to secure one's rear. The Count will, of course, reciprocate, if required. Please contact the General through his club.

I hope this letter finds you well, Brigadier-General Puffington. You may have heard that I have found myself challenged to a duel. Unfortunately, being new to the city of Paris I do not yet have a second. Being a member of the same regiment, I would humbly ask if you would be willing to be nominated as my second. Of course I would reciprocate such a generous action and would be willing to act as an additional second for your upcoming duel with Thibault Chanson de Skye.

Best,

† Captain Barthélemy Chifflet

It appears that a scoundrel known as Arent Hayes has been recirculating old invitations from Count de Béquerer [sic] in a manner designed to confuse and embarrass his social betters. I challenge him to meet me on the field of honour to learn some manners.

† Thibault Chanson de Skye

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 posture of the

straight line" 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.

To the gentleman of Paris.

As I seem to find myself at the rather cold and dreary front for this winter, I regret I must cancel the chest [sic] tournaments that was posted to be held next month.

† Captain Neville Moore

PS I will attempt to reschedule when back from the front.

Personal

It appears that I have been challenged by someone I have never heard off through a cowardly letter, some wannabe bully called Chancy de Skye? It appears he has teamed up with another pair of cream puffs called Stantinople and Saad into some sort of Gay Paris Funboys club whose aim is to challenge TRUE PATRIOTS for their efforts in exposing corruption at the very heart of our Government. Sadly, it appears they have turned the head of Baron Descartes, who I had thought of as a fair and decent gentleman. Ho hum, I had better warn the stable boys to watch out for unwanted attentions from this trio of rascals when the Horse Race is over.

Bon swar, Paree. What's a decent club round here then?

† Charles Etfeevor

In Defence of Mademoiselle Morgane Le Fay: A Citizen's Plea

January, 1677

My dear people of Paris, and all who cherish justice,

A grave and troubling charge has reached our ears: that Mademoiselle Morgane Le Fay stands accused of the most heinous crimes—witchcraft, treason, and the beguiling of our glorious King. The whisper of her name now travels on a tide of dark rumours, sown by jealous tongues and ambitious rivals. I have penned this plea not to deny the fears that grip our city, but to implore you to pause and consider the truth, not the shadows, that lie behind this indictment.

The Accusation of Witchcraft:

Mademoiselle Morgane is charged with using the "Dark Arts," a claim as vague as it is damning. Upon what evidence, I ask you, does this accusation rest? Let us not forget that a woman's knowledge of remedies and herbs, passed down through generations, is a gift from God, a skill to bring comfort and healing, not a pact with the Devil. Are we to condemn a lady of fine birth for the same practical wisdom a peasant woman uses to heal a fever? Do not let the fear of the unknown to blind you to the simple truth: her piety is known, her attendance at Mass is as regular as the tolling of the church bells, and her charity to the poor is unwavering. Her accusers stand on nothing more than the testimony of those who profit from a witch hunt.

The Accusation of Aiding an Enemy Spy:

The charge of treason is the most heinous of all, a stain upon the very honour of our nation. It is said that Mademoiselle Morgane aided an unnamed spy, a baseless claim whose vague nature forces us to infer it is Count Cuckpowder. This entire line of reasoning is a deceit. The said Count's trial concluded without a single mention of her name, and no credible proof has been presented to support this fantastic claim. A woman with influence, who holds the King's ear, makes for a tempting target in a court rife with rivalry. Consider who benefits from her fall, for it is not France, but her rivals. To accuse her of treason is to diminish her reputation and to cast a shadow on all at court who know her. The true traitors are those who sow discord and falsehood to gain an advantage.

The Accusation of Beguiling His Majesty:

Most grievously, she is accused of beguiling our beloved King through the Dark Arts, an indictment that is a profound insult to His Majesty himself. Is it not a woman's craft to use her beauty, her rhetoric, her talent to beguile and play on a foolish man's aspirations, without the need for arcane crafts? Does one condemn a merchant for using his wealth or his skill at negotiation to gain influence? No, for it is simply the natural use of his resources. So too, it is merely the natural use of a woman's gifts to gain favour and position in this world.

This preposterous indictment is an insult not to her, but to His Majesty himself! To suggest that our Sun King, Louis XIV—the very embodiment of divine right and wisdom—could be swayed by sorcery is a heresy. It implies that his mind is weak, that his judgement is clouded, and that his decisions are not his own. This is a claim of extraordinary audacity, and we must not let it stand. The King's will is his alone, a manifestation of his power and intellect. To say otherwise is to question his authority. The love and trust he holds for Mademoiselle Morgane are born of her wit, her intelligence, and her loyalty—not a demon's spell.

Let it be remembered that in this great city, the scales of justice are weighed by evidence, not by the breath of rumour. Let us not condemn this woman of proven character on the testimony of shadows or purchased confessions. Let us stand for justice and for truth.

A Citizen of Paris.



My player board and cards at the end of the game – note the four Meteorites tucked under the bottom.

Our learning game was a win for me after Paul ended it with his fourth glory marker. Despite only having completed two quests, my meteorites had garnered me a lot of cash. Veronica had miscalculated, not realising she didn't get much benefit in getting more than four quests. Despite her completed quests, she didn't have enough other stuff to beat my score – nor Paul's.

Expeditions is a decent game, but didn't grab me the way *Scythe* (and *Viticulture*) does. So that's a provisional 6/10 on my highly subjective scale. I should really give it another go. Or two.

I have also published this report, with pictures, in my BoardGameGeek blog: boardgamegeek.com/blog/8392

Reading Matter

I've been hankering to re-read Alan Moore's *Watchmen* for a while. Prompted by finally catching up with the 2019 TV series. This is a sequel to the original book/comics, though initially you're wondering just what is going on. It has its own momentum, though, and then you begin to see the connections back to the original story. I particularly liked the origin story for Hooded Justice, which makes a lot of sense when you re-read *Watchmen*, and the cliffhanger ending. (I think the fact that there wasn't a second series tells you how the cliffhanger worked out.) And Jeremy Irons is just terrific as the wonderfully deranged Adrian Veidt/Ozymandias.



Then I opened a storage box and there was my copy of *Watchmen*. Definitely a sign. And re-reading the book was a delight. The overall plot was no surprise, of course, the magic was in all the details that I'd forgotten. The plot against Doctor Manhattan, the writers' island, Rorschach in jail, Ozymandias's Antarctic retreat (Fortress of Solitude, anyone?) and Rorschach's eventual fate. I still don't get the whole 'pirate' comic book thing that weaves through the entire story. All I can say is that, if you haven't read *Watchmen*, you should. And, if you have, it's well worth re-reading.

And now some more from Jonathan Palfrey.

By now I've read The Tainted Cup and A Drop of Corruption twice each, and I'll buy the third in the "Shadow of the Leviathan" series (by Robert Jackson Bennett) when it comes out. It's a pity there seem to be only two regular characters in this series, but those two are curiously engaging; and of course there are other characters, although they come and go.



I'm currently reading the fourth in C. K. McDonnell's modern urban fantasy series starting with The Stranger Times. The same genre as the "Rivers of London" series, I suppose, but the feel of the series reminds me more of Good Omens (Pratchett and Gaiman). In "Rivers of London" there is humour, but it's understated and in passing, whereas the "Stranger Times" books are clearly comedy-thrillers. Serious things happen, people get killed, but the dialogue is frequently amusing. The main characters are not policemen but journalists, of a sort; although some secondary characters are in the police.

McDonnell is an Irishman living in Manchester; the series is set in Manchester.

Recently I reread Finder and Driving the Deep by Suzanne Palmer, then bought and read the other two books in the same series. They're mildly entertaining science-fiction adventures starring Fergus Ferguson, a Scot who travels around the galaxy (faster-than-light travel) on paid missions to recover stolen items. Various different alien species get involved. Not really comedies, but Fergus has a sense of humour. I don't enthusiastically recommend these books, but they're good enough for me to reread occasionally.

Games Events

It's the big one: Spiel '25 is 23rd-26th October in Essen, Germany. Something every gamer should attend, though not necessarily every year (I haven't been since 2019). The organisers say it will be bigger than ever with 890 exhibitors from 51 countries and Hall 7 at the Messe (exhibition centre) being used "for the first time". What makes Spiel different is that it's about playing/trying out the new games, not just



Puffington. Captain Barthélemy Chifflet collects a hundred crowns less, but his personal bravery in taking on the defenders earns him a week in the infirmary and promotion to Major. At least he can afford the horses he needs for his new rank.

The RNHB regiment does its thing, earning over a thousand crowns' worth of loot for General Rick Shaw, who's commanding a battalion. Come Asiouar survives with his battalion of the Cardinal's Guard attached to Frontier regiment 4. Not so Major Justin Cartier. His battalion of the 27th Musketeers is serving with Frontier regiment 2 and he chooses the wrong moment to poke his head above the ramparts to investigate all that the noise from the Dutch lines. Firing their artillery is the answer and his head does not survive impact with a cannonball. RIP. ❖

Press

Announcements

Currently seeking a suitable subaltern to act as my Aide.

† Thibault Chanson de Skye

**** Aide Required ****

I am looking for a competent aide.

Please contact me with your credentials.

† (Brevet) Bdr-General Count Thyme

The Ladies of Paris are most unhappy that one of their number has been horribly victimised by the tiny-winy Commissioner. Accordingly, none of them will accompany their beau this month if he supports this unjust prosecution.

What do you mean unjust prosecution... horribly victimised? The wench is a witch, be damned... Women threatening their gentlemen companions if they support His Majesty's Commissioner of Public Safety? Treachery... revolution... treason... TREEEEASSSOONNNN! If only I had more arrest warrants I'd bring the whole lot of them in! No-one defies Commissioner Toothpick!

B. Gen le Marquis Camille de Polignac requires an aide. Volunteers are requested to send their applications so that the chosen candidate can be hired by February.

**** Join the QOC ****

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

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

† Count Thyme

Matters of Honour

Gentlemen of Paris, I find myself in the unfortunate position of having to attend frequent matters of honour. I feel it prudent, therefore, to appoint a second to keep the dust off my coat and ensure fair play on the duelling field. Reciprocal arrangements will, of course, apply to whoever fills the role. Please contact me directly if interested.

Honourably yours,

† Dediette

Boom!

January is not a good month to be campaigning, so the French troops mostly stick to their lines as they continue to lay siege to enemy positions. Jean d’Aubergine, commander of the Fourth Arquebusiers, oversees the sappers laying a mine under the enemy’s fortifications. When they light the fuse, it fizzles ominously, but quickly goes out. “Re-light it,” demands Jean. “Can’t be sure it’s not still alight, sir,” is the reply. “Stuff and nonsense,” is the reply. “Anyone can see it’s gone out.” Jean grabs a lighted taper and heads for the mine. He is presumed dead in the explosion that follows. RIP.

The Royal Foot Guards may not be doing much, but the loot keeps rolling in. Over a thousand crowns’ worth for CO Camille de Polignac and Major “Tiny” Thierry Toothpick. A little more for Captain Neville Moore and nearly fifteen hundred for Lieutenant-Colonel Martin de Garnache. Captain Felipe Savant’s plundering is closer to two thousand crowns’ worth and Major Hector William Boone does best with over 2,000 crowns’ worth of goodies. Guards Brigadier Terence Cuckpowder is rather left out in the cold with a paltry few hundred crowns as his reward.

It’s the fresh troops of the Picardy Musketeers who score the one success of the month, overrunning an Imperial outpost. There’s a round thousand crowns’ worth of booty for commanding officer Percival

Who was where – with their weapon				
Where	Practising	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
		AH - Sabre HDS - Cutlass JdG - Rapier CDF - Cutlass BeV - Sabre BdLS - Foil	CE - Rapier HDS - Cutlass JdG - Rapier ID - Sabre MD - Sabre JH - Sabre BdLS - Foil	CE - Rapier ZVT - Rapier SBC - Rapier HDS - Cutlass JdG - Rapier EIF - Sabre CDF - Cutlass ID - Sabre MD - Sabre JH - Sabre BdLS - Foil
				Week 4
				CE - Rapier HS - Rapier ZVT - Rapier SBC - Rapier AH - Sabre JdG - Rapier CDF - Cutlass BeV - Sabre ID - Sabre CDN - Sabre MD - Sabre JH - Sabre SDS - Sabre BdLS - Foil

Shows whowais in the gyms: Weapon = Weapon practised with.

buying them. For details, see www.spiel-essen.de/en but be warned that accommodation in the city is probably fully booked by now.

A week later (31st Oct–2nd November) is **MidCon** at the Derby Mickleover Hotel – a great chance to try out what people have brought back from Spiel! This is one event I will be attending and I’m looking forward to playing lots of games (that’s what it’s about!). midcon.org.uk for details and to book.

Swiggers: games club that meets on Wednesday evenings (co-ordinated on WhatsApp) upstairs at The Shipwright’s Arms, 88 Tooley Street, London SE1 2TF (next to London Bridge station) – though without me these days. For more info, see www.pevans.co.uk/Swiggers or the BGG Guild at boardgamegeek.com/guild/1672

UK Games Expo: 29th-31st May 2026 at the NEC. This is a public event that showcases games of all sorts with a huge trade hall plus demonstration and participation games and guests. For gamers there are lots of tournaments and open gaming space. For details see www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk

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

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

Subscribing to TWJO

TWJO is published on paper and online at www.pevans.co.uk/TWJO (as a free PDF). If you want to play in any (or all) of the games in *TWJO*, you have two options. You can subscribe to the paper edition, which includes playing in the games. Or you can take the PDF edition and pay the “games only” subscription.

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

	UK	Rest of World	Games only
10-issue (1 year) subscription	£39.00	£54.00	£5.00

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

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Fictionary Dictionary

Round 7 scores

Guipure is a particular type of lace where the motifs are connected by plaited threads rather than a mesh.

A Younker is, indeed, a young man/gentleman/knight, but is archaic, of course.

Colin Bruce is top scorer this round (though not by much) to stretch his lead (ditto).

Anthony Gilbert wonders. “I wonder how many lewd definitions you're going to get for Vavasor! It was very tempting to go down that route. I also considered this one: the nickname used by four-year old Francesca Hilton for her mother... who happened to be Zsa Zsa Gabor.”

Well, I'm not seeing anything lewd...

The scores		
Player	This round	Total
Colin Bruce	5	25
Mark Cowper	3	14
Mike Dommett	2	12
Anthony Gilbert	1	19
William Hay	3	17
Andrew Kendall	0	12
Andrew Larder	2	8
Nik Luker	3	22
Tim Macaire	2	12
Nigel Monaghan	0	1
Graeme Morris	1	14
Jonathan Palfrey	4	13
Mike Pollard	2	14
Pam Udowiczenko	2	8
Bruce Whitehill	0	3
Andrew Whiteley	0	2

Round 7 definitions

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

Mot-mot

1 A contraction of Motor-Motor used in some dialects of English to refer to a golf cart.

2 A cuddly toy from the 1970s, based on the football commentator John Motson (life-sized).

3 A drum designed to be played backwards.

4 A form of mediaeval defence, consisting of a flooded ditch, a bank and then another flooded ditch.

5 A linguistic sparring match contested by witty Frenchmen. Akin to a rap battle, but with class.

Who was where – with the ladies				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Edna	Out	LSD at home	LSD at home	LSD at home
Katy	TCdS at home	Out	TCdS at home	TCdS at home
Therèse		BS fails I-Alison	BS fails	BS fails
Thomasina			DJA succeeds ex-SE	
Violet		CPL succeeds ex-BC	Out	Out
Shows who was with a mistress or on a doorstep: Out = Mistress with current lover; I = Indiscreet (+ mistress name); ex-ID = Pinched from former lover; st.down = stood down to rivals.				
Who was where – in the Bawdyhoses				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Bawdy houses	CE MHD + FC SBC + FC ID + FC		AH + FC AA + FC SDS(G) + FC	JS + FC VdF + FC HDS + FC
Shows who went to the red light district: FC = Female Companionship; Mug n = Mugged & amount lost; (G) = Gambled.				
Who was where – round and about				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Regimental Duties				IP
Busy doing nothing				EIF -Toady to ??? DJA -club
Shows everybody else: For those doing nothing: -club = not a member of a club; -Cash = insufficient funds; -SL = insufficient Social Level; ??? = Toadying to unknown host.				

Both Ben and Greg continue their hosting for a second week, but only Greg carries on to week four. By now he's got fed up with characters of low social standing damaging his reputation and confines the guest list to more prestigious members of society. This leaves a substantial group of hopefuls stuck outside the Fleur.

Meanwhile, despite Neville Moore giving notice that his Chess Tournament would not be taking place (he's in action with the Royal Foot Guards), a couple of hopefuls still turn up at Hunter's expecting to participate.



In the courting stakes, both Charles Pied-Luminaire and Dee Jean Aise are successful at the cost of triggering a duel with their new ladies' old beaux. While Balzac Slapdash's history is one of failure. He tries to take advantage of Rick Shaw's departure from Paris. However, not only does he fail to woo Paris's

favourite non-witch, but his indiscretion also means he gets the boot from Alison Wunderlandt and gives cause to Morgane's current squeeze.

And a couple of others are content to spend time with their ladies. Louis Renault explains, "Unfortunately, somewhere along the line, Edna and I have contracted a nasty bug identified by doctors as Covid-1676 and have to self-isolate as well as practice social distance for a while. Anyway, the weather is dreadful." Not spending time with any ladies is Charles Etfeevor, despite his trip to a Bawdyhouse. Steve De Sade uses his visit to practise his wagering, placing a series of small bets. Three wins and a loss leave him a few crowns to the good. Even Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux and Henri DuShite, both jingling their remaining crowns, fail to attract any footpads.

Who was where – in the other clubs				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Hunter's	HS + Sue	AA		AA
Outside Hunter's			PDT (NM) CDN (NM)	
Frog & Peach		JS	JS CPL + Violet	CPL + Violet
Red Phillips	VdF			

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.

6 An invented word-pair that appears in (and only in) James Joyce's Ulysses. Scholars contend that the actual meaning in each of the four appearances therein depends on the pronunciation: 'Mo-mo' means 'petulant', 'Mo-mot' is 'amazed', 'Mot-mo' is 'delightful' and 'Mot-mot' is 'disingenuous'. In no case is the precise pronunciation (or meaning) made clear. Narrators of Ulysses in audio book form tend to mumble when they reach 'mot-mot'.

7 An old banger that is destined for the scrap heap after failing the MOT test twice.

8 Early satnav, notable for only working when the vehicle is in reverse.

9 French slang for a moped.

10 The sound made by a very early motorcycle's engine: "Mot-mot, mot-mot, mot-mot..."

11 The sound of a moped.

12 The test a tuk-tuk must pass before it can be legally used on British roads.

13 Twice as strict Ministry of Transport test for the anxious, safety-conscious driver.

Vavasor

1 (More properly vavasour) – a large yellow tropical fruit, which tastes horrible but is nevertheless much sought after by gourmets since it is so rare.

2 A member of a French order of go-go dancing nuns (from the French: va-va soeur).

3 A mythical creature with the body of a dragon, the head of a woman, and a large hat decorated with fruit.

4 A powerful medicine, available only on Prescription from a doctor, to treat rashes endured by Sportsmen who don't always have the time to launder their jock straps between matches.

5 A toothless dinosaur.

6 A woman who was in the same sorority at Vassar College as the speaker. As in "She's my vavasor".

7 Beaked dinosaur herbivore living in artic [sic] regions.

8 Italian Mob in origin to describe a plane trip: 'Badda bing, badda boom. Va va sor.

9 Loosely translates as "Go! Go! Fly!". The call-to-action of the little-known 1960s French comic book superhero Rapidhomme. Frankly he never really took off.

10 Name given to a Samovar by dyslexics.

11 Pain in the fundament after excessive going* in Spain (* may indicate euphemism).

12 The serf of a feudal lord.

13 When you need to correct a mistake quickly, don't waste time rubbing desperately with an eraser; one zap from ACME's patented vavasor, and your troubles will be gone.

Words for round 8

Epicarp and Rostellum

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

What’s this all about?

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

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

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

Send your votes and definitions to Pevans at
180 Aylsham Drive, UXBRIDGE UB10 8UF or
to TWJO@pevans.co.uk by 24th October 2025

The Wizard of Anharitte (Star Trader game 12)
Turn 16 and game end

Gamma Leporis was quiet again.

In trading at Epsilon Eridani ROCKET TRADERS sold 3 Spice for 2 HTs each, diminishing returns, but also sold 8 Isotopes for 9 HTs apiece and were made Contractors.

COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE INC sold 7 Alloys for 10 HTs each and gained a Dealership position at Tau Ceti.

ROCKET TRADERS went to sell Isotopes at Mu Herculis for 9 HTs but TREKBOER were selling at 8, unloaded 16 units and gained a Contractor’s position. COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE INC. sold Monopoles on Contracts.

At Sigma Draconis SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS sold Spice on Contract and TREKBOER bought Alloys on Contract.

Who was where – in (or outside) the Fleur				
Where	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Fleur de Lys	FXC + Justine LSD + Edna JH + Cath	FXC + Justine (CG) BeV + Lotte HS + Sue VdF (CPC) GdB + Bette	JiT + Guinevere FXC + Justine BeV + Lotte HS + Sue VdF	JiT + Guinevere FXC + Justine GdB + Bette ZUT + Laura LR + Maggie
		FXC + Justine (CG) BeV + Lotte HS + Sue VdF (CPC) GdB + Bette ZUT + Laura FdB + Freda (CPC) HF + Ella ZvT MHD (RM) BLC + Eve LR + Maggie TCdS + Katy (69A) JiT + Guinevere SBC (53F) AH (CPC) PDT + Sal EIF + Lucy Cdf + Jenny (RM) CS + Anne CdN + Jacky (KM) CPL SDS(G) DJA	JiT + Guinevere FXC + Justine BeV + Lotte HS + Sue VdF GdB + Bette ZUT + Laura FdB + Freda HF + Ella MHD BLC + Eve CS + Anne LR + Maggie	JiT + Guinevere FXC + Justine GdB + Bette ZUT + Laura LR + Maggie
Outside Fleur de Lys				FdB (GdB) HF (GdB) MHD (GdB) PDT (GdB) BLC (GdB) CS (GdB)

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.

Justin’s mount can’t take the pace, stumbles around the turn and can only walk to the finish line. Con does just enough to stay ahead of Hugo who pulls away from the pack to take second place. Louis and Xavier maintain their momentum and pass the slowing Hugo and Maurice for joint third. Balzac catches Justin for joint 6th. Maurice trots in as 8th with Elroi, Greg, Steve and Zeold just behind him (and 9th equal). Dee and François are 13th= at the back of the pack and Botte brings up the rear, a couple of minutes after the winner has finished. The strain of “riding like the very devil” has been too much for Hugo’s horse, however, and a pistol shot signals its demise.

Having decreed that the carousing should not start before the race, Louis now leads the charge to the bar where the riders join their ladies and the other spectators. Elroi le Flingue is quick to buy the winner a drink. Despite the celebrations, winning rider Con Stantinople is challenged by Balzac Slapdash from his enemy regiment. Con gives as good as he gets and his regimental colleague, Justin Thyme, adds his support.

Love Me for a Reason

The race means it’s a quiet week elsewhere in Paris, but the parties kick off in the Fleur de Lys the following week. Ben e’Volence, Greg de Bécqueur (“the invitation was intended for last month!”) and Louis Renault



– who’s provided entertainment from a “renowned string quartet” – are the hosts. Elroi tips Louis’s musicians to play “Je ne mange point de porc” and accompanies them, singing the bass part boisterously. Following his dressing down by his boss (see Press), Pierre De Terre is careful to attend with Sal Munella and in full dress uniform. The final part of Pierre’s penance being the only person who has to buy his (and Sal’s) own drinks. Steve De Sade takes the opportunity of being in the Fleur to place a minimum bet at the tables. And loses. Talking of kicking off, with all the parties in one club, it’s no surprise some regimental enmities are triggered.

All the shenanigans involve Louis’s guests. Starting with Royal Marine Chemin de Fer and Arquebusier Thibault Chanson de Skye. This brings in Marcel Hatch Dupree, another Marine, from Greg’s bash. Then there’s a set-to between Arent Hayes of the Crown Prince’s men and Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux from the 53rd. Hearing the epithets, François de Blanchefort comes from Greg’s group to support Arent and is followed by fellow Cuirassier Vaux de Fon who’s Toadying to Ben. Finally, King’s Musketeer Claude de Nord (the man who wasn’t allowed in the horse race) leaves the party to exchange challenges with another club member, Cardinal’s Guard Frank X Change. And Dee finds he can’t re-join Red Phillips yet.

At Beta Hydri, ROCKET TRADERS sold 5 Spice on Contract, but only after SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS sold 6 units for 3 HTs each.

TREKBOER were quiet this Quarter, being under new management.

ROCKET TRADERS took OP 15, sending Gemini on the exploration mission. Columbia sold its three light weapon pods, replacing them with cargo pods. They then bought five more Spice Factories at Sigma Draconis.

COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE INC. flew their Dagger Hull, now named Special Brew.

SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS managed to evade the patrols and landed on planet at Gamma Leporis. Agent Willy proved vital and the Tempus was sold for top dollar. Pevans van Riijn decided to go for it, liquidating all his assets and, while the ships did not bring in their cost price, there was enough to put SSL well past the 2000 HT mark. He therefore has won the game.

Corporation Table

Corporation letter and name	Connections Bus/Crim/Pol			Init'v Bid	Turn order	Cash Rep		Player
A Costa Nostra Coffee	10	0	1	0	4th	36	40	Mark Cowper
B Madness & Mayhem								Anthony Gilbert
C Solar Spice & Liquors	8	3	4	4	2nd	2253	40	Paul Evans
D TrekBoer	10	7	2	0	3rd	1204	40	Mike Dyer
E Rocket Traders	10	0	8	30	1st	319	36	Przemek Orwat
N under Initiative Bid means No move received, F indicates the Corp was floated								

Press

Has anyone seen my bassoon?

GM Notes

Please could players send in any Game End Statements. I have provided end of game Corporation values for comparison:

Corporation	Net Worth
Costa Nostra Coffee Inc	1,553
Solar Spice & Liquors	2,253
TrekBoer	1,817
Rocket Traders	691

Game End Statements to Mike Dommett, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ or by e-mail to mike_dommett@yahoo.co.uk by 17th October 2025

Brat's Hill (*Railway Rivals* game 19 – RR2559LD)

Turn 4

Welsh Interstate Train Service headed east and south, meeting Seaside Railways coming the other way. Seaside Railways then continued building south, blocking WITS progress in future. They also constructed a branch line to Lancaster. Locomotive Observation Steam Train Company built further south, deciding to cross the mountains. Cart and Barrow Rail built east into virgin territory.

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

Starts: Whitehaven

Builds:

- a)(F53) – G54 – H53 – I54 – I55
- b)(I55) – L56
- c)(L56) – L57 – Appleby – L58 – M59 – M61 (2 to SR)

Points 72 -2 = 70

SEASIDE RAILWAYS (SR), Rob Pinkerton – Blue

Starts: Carlisle

- a)(L61) – APPLEBY (+6)
- b)(L61) – KIRKBY STEPHEN (+6); (L61) – L63
- c)(L31) – LANCASTER – M33 (+6)

Points: 57 +18 +2 = 77

GM Notes

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

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

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

You cannot build over bodies of water, only rivers.

Orders to Mike Dommnett, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommnett@yahoo.co.uk
by 17th October 2025

LOCOMOTIVE OBSERVATION STEAM TRAIN COMPANY

(LOST), Gerald Udowiczenko – Black

Starts: Port Carlisle

- a)(G7) – G8 – Cockermouth – H9
- b)(H9) – G10
- c)(M17) – M18

Points: 34 = 34

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

Starts: Barrow in Furness

- a)(Carnforth) – N30 – A70 – C71
- b)(C71) – D70
- c)(D70) – E71 – E72 – INGLETON – G73 (+6)

Points: 37 +6 = 43

Charles PiedLuminaire, Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux and Thibault gang up on the senior Major in Princess Louisa's Light Dragoons and force him out. This allows Dee Jean Aise to promote himself into that rank – though he becomes junior Major.

Percival Puffington decides it's time for the Picardy Musketeers to join in the fun and games in the Netherlands. This comes as an unwelcome news to PM Captain Barthélemy Chifflet, who had other plans.

Lieutenant-Colonel Come Asiouar of the Cardinal's Guard is also keen to get into action and takes his battalion with him.

Crazy horses!

We start the month's social calendar at the Prix d'Or for the latest horse race sponsored by Louis Severin Descartes. The cold conditions do not attract as many participants as usual, but there are still 14 horses and riders lined up at the start. Missing is Claude de Nord, who has turned up wearing "Royal blue silks and pantaloons." However, Louis does not want his presence and he – together with his mount, Martinique – is turned away. Con Stantinople on Pharlap is the clear favourite – his small stature and tactical nous put him well ahead of the others. And Con does indeed take the lead at the start, stretching that to several lengths as the horses jostle round the first corner.

Justin Thyme is closest of the chasing jockeys. On his tail is the race's sponsor, Louis SD, with Xavier Ulric Turenne just behind him. The main pack consists of Balzac Slapdash, Dee Jean Aise, Elroi le Flingue, Hugo Furst and Maurice Danseur. Greg de Bécqueur and Zeold von Tu are just off the pace with François de Blanchefort and Steve De Sade right behind them and Botte Le Chimiste bringing up the rear.

Con's horse doesn't show a great turn of speed down the back straight, allowing the fast-charging Justin to catch him at the second/final turn. Charging even faster are Hugo and Maurice, still alongside each other and just two lengths behind the leaders. Equally fast are Dee, Louis, Xavier, and Zeold, now just behind those three. Balzac is next, his horse faltering and caught by Steve. Greg has maintained position, but is now only ahead of Elroi, François and Botte in that order.

At the races

Where	Week 1
Prix d'Or	LSD + Edna . ZUT + Laura . FdB + Freda . JS . BS + Alison . HF + Ella . JiT + Guinevere . ZvT + Morgane . PDT + Sal . BLC + Eve . AA . ELF + Lucy . GdB + Bette . CS + Anne . MD + Belle . SDS . DJA . LR + Maggie

Outside Prix d'Or CdN (LSD)

Shows who was in or outside:
. = Toadying to character above;
(id) = expected host;
bold = spectating only

“This trial is a farce. Under the laws of France, specifically section 15, subsection 3, paragraph 2 of the Apprehension of Persons Act, the CPS or one of his ferrets,” he begins, prompting more boos from the gallery, “must be present to make an arrest.” He looks around the room. “As the court has heard, the CPS is on the border defending our country against the Dutch – or at least hiding in a trench there. No ferret has come forward to detail the arrest or charges. The poor lady was arrested by a fraud – we know someone was going around Paris impersonating the CPS as he was seen by many at Mass last month. Accordingly, her arrest is invalid and all charges should be dismissed,” he concludes to raucous cheers from the gallery.

Before the Minister can give his verdict, Zeold von Tu demands to be heard for the defence. “This charge is a travesty of justice,” my lord. “Witchcraft, it is well-known, is indulged in by ancient crones with broomsticks and warts; accusing this prisoner is both mad and ungallant. Morgane is certainly enchanting,” he bows toward the prisoner, “but Paris would be a sorry place if that were banned, eh? And when the disgraceful CPS claims that a lady being beguiling is against the law, he gives a more troubling insight into his own affairs than into those of Mlle Le Fay. But then, what can you expect from a man who surrounds himself with small orange boys with large moustaches? In the name of sanity, I demand an acquittal.”

Justin Thyme weighs in as well. “Guinevere was talking to me last night, and mentioned this terrible situation that Morgane has gotten herself into, through no fault of her own. After Guinevere explained the situation, I totally agree: Morgane’s no witch and these charges should be dropped straight away.”

The prisoner does not indulge in oratory, but merely looks piteous and passes the judge a note which, when later retrieved, reads only ‘If I am acquitted I shall be at home alone on Friday evening. I shall also feel very grateful.’ and her address.

“While due weight must be given to the Commissioner of Public Safety’s evidence,” begins the Minister. “What I have heard – and received – from the defence makes it clear that he is completely mistaken. I therefore find Mlle Le Fay not guilty of all charges and release her from custody.” Though those last few words are drowned out by the cheers and applause from the gallery.

Plus and minus a Brigadier

Dragoon Brigadier Louis Severin Descartes has a hankering to be a Minister. But he doesn’t want a specific portfolio, just the kudos of being a Minister. His ambition is supported by Greg de Bécqueur and Rick Shaw, who call in some favours to make sure Louis gets this appointment. His Majesty is impressed enough to follow this by awarding the title of Marquis to his latest Minister.

Thibault Chanson de Skye’s ambition, conversely, is to lead a Brigade. Fourth Foot, in his case. To this end, he uses his influence: first, to ensure the incumbent steps down, and second, to all but guarantee that he gets the job. And so he does.

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

**Orders for February 1677 to Pevans
at 180 Aylsham Drive, UXBRIDGE
UB10 8UF, UK or
lpbsorders@pevans.co.uk
by 24th October 2025**



January 1677 (395)

We start the new year as usual – with Parisians chopping chunks out of each other with sharpened steel. First up are beefy Balzac Slapdash with his rapier against pint-sized Con Stantinople with his sabre (and lack of expertise). Con has the support of Jacques Shitacks and Thibault Chanson de Skye, while Balzac comes alone. A lunge from the rapier is met by a slash from the sabre and it’s the bigger man who surrenders.

The new wound is enough to allow Balzac to decline his other duels, leaving Ian Dediette and Justin Thyme disappointed.

Next up are average-sized Arent Hayes and the slender Sebastiane Blanc-Chevaux. Neither man has a second and it’s sabre (Arent) versus rapier (Sebastiane) again. Sebastiane shows some skill by dodging Arent’s opening slash and then impaling him with a lunge. However, Arent’s second slash strikes home and that’s enough for Sebastiane.

His defeat doesn’t stop Sebastiane going on to meet Vaux de Fon, a duel that matches his rapier against another sabre. Not to mention a more skilled swordsman and beefier fellow. This time Sebastiane’s lunge is at the same time as his opponent’s slash and, again, Sebastiane concedes the fight.

Hugh Jeneaux is due at several encounters this month, but fails to show up at any of them. This leaves Botte Le Chimiste, Elroi le Flingue and Maurice Danseur all swishing their swords at empty air. Not so, Marcel Hatch Dupree – he doesn’t turn up either! Nor is Marcel present for his match with Thibault.

Instead, big man Thibault gets to face a slightly bigger man, Percival Puffington. Both wield rapiers and have an array of seconds: Con (with a plentiful supply of brandy and bandages) and Jacques for Thibault and Bernard de Lur-Saluces for Percival. A lunge from Percival is countered by a slash from Thibault. Then it's cuts from both sides. Given his old injuries, Thibault surrenders before taking any more damage. As far as Percival is concerned, this is a fight to the death! Luckily for Thibault, his seconds quickly intervene and force Percival to put up his sword.

Last into the fray this month are Barthélemy Chifflet and Charles PiedLuminaire. Once again we have sabre (Charles) against rapier (Barthélemy) and bigger man (Barthélemy) versus smaller (Charles). This time, however, it's the smaller man who has the greater skill. And two seconds in the form of Dee Jean Aise and Louis Severin Descartes. Charles's block is ineffective against Barthélemy's lunge and his jump is mis-timed, allowing Barthélemy to hit him again, with a slash. An exchange of slashes sees Charles concede, just as Barthélemy starts to struggle.

Does she weigh the same as a duck?

After which, it's everybody to the courthouse for the historic trial of Mlle Morgane Le Fay, alleged by the Commissioner of Public Safety to be a witch and traitor. The ladies of Paris, in particular, are taking this very seriously and have clubbed together (with some help from their menfolk) to support Morgane. The public gallery is packed with well-dressed women. However, there are also supporters of CPS "Tiny" Thierry, who consider this latest spectacle of justice merely a sideshow compared to previous months. "Who is this Le Fay woman?" they murmur. "Commissioner Toothpick had her arrested, so she must be guilty, right?" They were about to find out...

The arrival of the prosecutors brings hissing and cries of 'shame on you!' from the ladies, but cheers erupt when the defendant is brought in. Perfumed handkerchiefs wave in the air, giving the court an aroma of lavender rather than sweat and fear.

"Pray rise for Minister of State Comte Monty Christie," announces a sinewy looking court usher and the room falls quiet. In shuffles a non-descript fellow, albeit adorned in the finery befitting his station, noticeably bleary-eyed, dew drop clearly visible hanging from his prominent nose. His Majesty's recently appointed State Minister takes his seat and, after an initial fumble, bangs his gavel.

"Court is in session," he announces. "I call for the case of Crown against Mlle Morgane Le Fay and trust it will not be a lengthy case as I have a number of scintillating young ladies, ahem, pressing matters of State to attend to. Commissioner Toothpick please take the stand."

A small, orange-garbed fellow pushes himself forward to the Commissioner's seat. "Your Grace, if I may," he says in an apologetic tone. "Commissioner Toothpick is presently inconvenienced at the Front. Sent there unannounced on the orders of that vagabond swine, Cuckpowder, a terrible individual who Commissioner

Toothpick suspects to be an insidious English spy, worthy only of immediate death, and a TERRIBLE death at that, Your Grace. Yes, slow... deliberately slow as befits a traitor... Anyway, we'll get back to that."



"You can call me Tangerine 1," he continues, "I'm here in the Commissioner's enforced absence to lead the case for the Prosecution, granted full permission by Commissioner Toothpick, as shown in this signed letter here." The petite man flourishes a sheet of paper. "The case against this whore of Beelzebub, Morgane Le Fay. She's a harlot, Your Grace, steeped in witchcraft and totally in league with Cuckpowder... I mean, that should prove guilt in itself. Cuckpowder, you must have heard of him? Commissioner Toothpick has instructed me, at this point, to make clear to Your Grace that he has a couple of arrest warrants left and you don't want to be the recipient one of those do you, really? Find this harlot guilty then, makes sense, you don't want to be on the bad side of Commissioner Toothpick, surely, no, of course not."

"I state to the Court this has to be one of the most 'open and cut' cases it has ever reviewed. This wench oozes the dark arts, oozes treachery, she simply has to go... permanently... do it, Your Grace... you have to... the sentence has to be GUUUUILLTTTTYYY and the punishment... DEEEEEAAAATTHHHH..." At this juncture the orange-attired fellow begins a dramatic exhibition of jumping up and down, ranting, shouting, waving papers in the air. "GUILTY, Your Grace... you have to concur, otherwise it's a mockery of our legal system. I have a whole sheaf of papers here, clear evidence of guilt, signed by Commissioner Toothpick, absolutely no point in wasting any further time... allow me to conclude the Prosecution's case – as well as reminding you arrest warrants still exist, waiting to be served upon traitors, traitors who might currently be Ministers for State – so it has to be GUILTY!"

As this frothing peroration comes to an exhausted end, it becomes clear that the growing background noise is the continuing chorus of boos and cries of "shame!" from the well-dressed ladies in the gallery. Then attention is diverted by a commotion at the back of the court.

A hush spreads through the room as a short man with a long moustache pushes his way through the crowd to take the position of defending advocate. He pauses briefly to straighten his cravat before addressing the Minister of State. "I am Monsieur Shark of Sue, Grabbit and Runne, notaries to the gentry and... well, whoever can pay our fees." His eyes sparkle briefly. "I have been engaged by loyal officers of the crown to represent this unfortunate lady." Taking a deep breath, he draws himself up to his full height of 5' 2".