

That would be enough

This has been issue 51 of *To Win Just Once*, published 14th January 2005. It incorporates *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, a postal game of *En Garde!*. Issues are published ten times a year, roughly every five weeks.

Deadlines

Orders for *Railway Rivals* to Mike Dommett by Friday 28th January 2005.

Orders for *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses* and Fictionary Dictionary votes and entries to Pevans by Friday 4th February 2005.

(Deadlines for 2005 are 4th/11th March, 8th/15th April, 13th/20th May, 17th/24th June, 22nd/29th July, 26th Aug/2nd Sept, 30th Sept/7th Oct, 4th/11th Nov, 9th/16th Dec.)

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Per issue/game turn	£0.50
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Games played

If you are interested in playing any game, please let Pevans know.

En Garde! Pevans has room for more players in *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*. You will need the rules to *En Garde!* in order to play. [start-up fee payable]

Railway Rivals Game 3 has started. Andrew Barnes is interested in the next game. We provide rules and a working copy of the map. [start-up fee]

Star Trader Martin Jennings, Michael Grazebrook, Bob Parkins, Michael Martinkat, Ian Whitchurch, Martin Jennings, Nathan Richards and Jerry Elsmore are in the queue for the next game – we need four more players. Full rules will be provided. [start-up fee]

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To Win Just Once

(incorporating *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*)



Tahuantinsuyu in play – one of my top games of 2004

Find out what the others are on page 4

Plus the conclusion of the civil war in *LPBS* – page 18

Contents

	Page
Contents	2
Chatter	3
Favourite games of 2004	4
Games Events	6
Credits	7
Fictionary Dictionary	8
Scores from Round 7	8
Round 8 Definitions	8
Railway Rivals game 3	10
Game Start	10
GM Notes	10
Odessa Steps	11
Star Trader – Game End	11
GM Notes	17
Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses 177	18
August 1658	18
Press	25
Despatches from the Front	25
Announcements	25
Matters of Honour	25
Social	26
Personal	26
Points Arising	27
Announcements	29
Applications	30
New Characters	30
Duels	30
Tables	31
Other Appointments	31
Battle Results	32
Army Organisation and Summer Deployment	32
Brigade Positions	32
Frontier Regiments	32
Regiments Organisation	33
Hell Hath no Furry	33
The Greasy Pole	34
That would be enough	36

ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank, Regiment/Appointment	MA Last seen	Club	EC	Player
BdW	Bud d'Wiser	12	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General GDM/D/Drgn Brigadier I	11	Hunt	2	Francesca Huskinson
JS	Sir Jacques Shitacks	11	F	OK	B.Bdr-General RM/1st Army Adjutant	3	Hunt	4	David Olliver
GdLi	Sir Gar de Lieu	11	F	OK	B.Lt-General/3 F Brigadier	3	Hunt	4	Bill Hay
MC	Sir Meaux Curleuinaurrie	10	RIP						Wayne Rutledge
CD	Ced Deucer	10	F	Poor	Lt.Colonel CG/Capt.C's Esc	5	Hunt	3	Nigel Monaghan
JdV	Joseph de Veevre	10	F	Comfy	Lt.Colonel 13F/2nd Div Adjutant	3	Hunt	5	Andrew Kendall
FLAG	Sir Fernand Louis Adelmo de Ga	10+	F	Comfy	B.Subaltern KM	5		4	Hajo 'Red' Schlosser
MOP	Marc O'Polo	9	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General 27M	6	BG	4	Kevin Morgan
LdE	Lucien d'Escaillehuitaillement	9	F	Comfy	Major CG	3	BG	4	Nik Luker
HdE	Horatio d'Escargot	8+	32	OK		4	F&P	3	Graeme Wilson
JW	Jacque Wabbit	7	F	Withy	Captain RM/LtGen's Aide ()	6	F&P	2	Terry Crook
XI		6	0	Poor		4		5	Chris Boote
JoR	Jean ou Rous	6	RIP						Brian Niemi
DeP	D'en Percent	5+	38	Comfy		1		4	Gerry Sutcliffe
TT	Thomas Tудо	5+	37	OK		2	RP	5	Ben Brown
AV	Antoine Valois	5+	28	Comfy		1	RP	4	Simon Burling
JdL	Jacque du Lac	5+	21	Comfy		5	RP	4	Paul Wilson
DB	Denis Bone	4	F	OK	Subaltern QOC	3		5	Timothy Hunt
NNC	Nom N Clature	4	RIP						Richard Huzzey
PdLF	Philippe de LaFey	2	RIP						Filipe Silva
X4		2	0	Poor		6		5	Pam Udowiczenko

An F under SPs means that the character was at the Front, RIP means that he died. + 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, Fitty = 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
AR	Count Abel Ringeur	27	RIP							Bill Michell
CWAE	Count Co W. Ard Extrême	25	51	Rich	Fld Marshal/State Min.		5 Bette	Flr	3	Benedikt Löwe
ZTMG	Count Zachary The Money Goes	24	F	OK	B.Bdr-General KM/Gds Brigadier		11	Flr	4	Gerald Udowiczanko
MLR	Count Marvin Leigh Rowbow	24	F	Comfy	General		11	Flr	3	Martin Jennings
CBY	Count Claude Bycat	24	F	Rich	Fld Marshal/1st Army Commandr		9	Flr	4	William Steven
AQH	Baron Alfonse Qué Holique	22	F	Wthy	B.Bdr-General RFG/Chancellor		7	Flr	5	Tym Norris
HTC	Count Henry Thierry Christian	21	F	Fthy	B.Bdr-General QOC/CPS		14	Flr	3	Matthew Shepherd
CIG	Baron Charlemagne le Gosse	21	F	Rich	B.Bdr-General CG/Min w/o Port		8	Flr	2	Neil Packer
BdM	Viscount Beppe de Marko	20	F	Fthy	Bdr-General/Hvy Brigadier		17	Flr	2	Mark Moores
DAV	Count D Arth Vader	20	RIP							Michael Blasebalk
SDL	Earl Stan Dandy Liver	20	F	Comfy	Lt-General/2nd Div Commandr		11	Flr	4	Guy Arnold
SS	Sir Sean Sondamour	18	F	Wthy	B.General/Cav Div Commandr		5	Both	2	Pete Holland
GdSM	Viscount Gaston de St Marque	17	F	Comfy	General/3rd Army Commandr		9	Flr	3	Nathan Richards
LI	Viscount Lokwot Isaw	17	F	Rich	Major RFG/Gen's Aide ()		15	Both	3	Barry Townsend
OP	Marquis Omi Palone	16	F	Comfy	B.General/Fntr Div Commandr		4	Both	4	Mike Dommett
BR	Baron Beau Romir	16	F	Wthy	Captain RFG/Capt.K's Esc		4	Both	3	Graeme Morris
HC	Earl Harry Covert	15	F	Rich	Lt.Colonel RFG		14	Both	2	James Guiton
RdO	Sir Revaulvin d'Or	14	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General 13F/Justice Min.		8	Flr	4	Jerry Spencer
MdZ	Sir Marc de Zorro	14	F	Comfy	Major RFG/Gds Brigade Maj.		3	Both	5	Colin Parfitt
OdC	Baron Orson de Combat	13	F	Comfy	Major RM/Min w/o Port		4	Both	5	Francesca Weal
JP	Sir Jean Petit	13	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General ALC/HGds Brigadier		5	Both	4	Pete Card
RO	Rene Ouai	13	F	Wthy	B.Lt-General/Min w/o Port		1	Both	5	Peter Denison
EH	Sir Euria Humble	12	F	Comfy	Lt.Colonel RM/FMshl's Aide		9	Hunt	5	Matthew Wale
JdF	Jean de Florette	12	F	OK	B.Lt-General/I F Brigadier		4	Hunt	4	Robert Carter
X3	Sir Xavier 3sup	12	F	Comfy	Major RM/Gen's Aide ()		4	BG	5	Mark Mortimer

Chatter

The Christmas – New Year period turned out to be fairly hectic, which means I wasn't able to get much work done on this. And since then I've had stuff to deliver for clients (pesky things). So this issue is a bit later than planned – sorry for that. While I'm at it, I'd better apologise too that I still haven't finished off my report on Spiel '04. It'll get done soon, I promise.

Anyway, welcome to 2005. As those of you who get the paper edition will see from the cover, this year's colour is mauve. I think it looks very nice up against last year's salmon. Well, distinctive anyway.

First off, many apologies to Brian Walker, editor of *Games International*, for referring to him as Brian *Williams* last issue! I guess I'd better apologise to Brian Williams, too...

The statistics from my website for December show that the most visited item was my review of *Puerto Rico*. Followed by my review of *The Really Nasty Horse Racing Game* and the Swiggers games club pages. *Puerto Rico* is also top of the terms used in search engines to find my site, relegating the traditional *Gothic Game* to second place.

Possibly more interesting is that the PDF of *TWJO* 50 was downloaded 120 times in December – and the version in 'booklet layout' a further 55 times. My thanks to Timothy Hunt, who suggested making this layout available as an alternative. The idea is to provide something people can print out double-sided and fold into a booklet – like the paper edition of *TWJO* in fact! I'd appreciate some feedback about the booklet layout: who finds it useful? Who's not bothered? How well does it work?

The IT types amongst you may also like to know that the statistics reflect what's been reported as a general trend. The percentage of those using Internet Explorer to view my website has dropped from 85-90% to about 70%. This seems to be due to people switching to the new Mozilla Firefox browser (as I have done), which is now used by some 10% of those visiting my site.

The Fictionary Dictionary game is heading for its conclusion in a few issues time. So I've begun wondering about what to replace it with. I'm tempted to return to *Great White Hunter*, since that went pretty well the first time. But I'm open to suggestions...

On a related note, Chris Boote suggested running Snowball Fighting in *TWJO*. (As you'll know, this game is a simulation of a snowball fight in an English back garden and is often used as an excuse for silly press – Graeme

Morris, take a bow.) I'm quite taken by this idea. I wonder if there's a variant that everybody can join in? Or if anyone fancies refereeing a game...

Meanwhile our third *Railway Rivals* game gets under way this issue. We already have several people signed up for a new game of *Star Trader*. Mike would like to have at least 12 players to start the game, so if anyone else is interested, get in touch with us quickly!

And now time for a look back at the board games that appeared last year.

Favourite games of 2004

There are just so many games I haven't played yet! Aaaagh! So what we have here is a list of the games I've played and really liked. They're in alphabetical order to prevent my brain melting as I try to choose between them.

Carcassonne – die Stadt (Hans im Gluck – *Carcassonne – the City* is the English-language version from Rio Grande) is the latest in the series and I reckon it's even better than the original. The key thing is being able to truncate other players' scoring opportunities. Ah yes, stuffing our opponents – that's what we like! There is less complexity on the tiles, but extra scoring opportunities provided by the walls and towers. Lots of tactics and nice wooden pieces make it a winner.

Hansa (Uberplay) is another cracker from Michael Schacht. Again, it's full of tactical niceties that give lots of chances to mess up your opponents. Well, whoever's next to play, anyway. The game is cleverly balanced as players need to do several things, only one of which scores them points directly. But there are different ways of scoring points and hence always options for what you do. As I said, a cracker.

And then I discovered *Maharaja* (Phalanx). Kiesling and Kramer do it again. This is a wonderfully subtle strategy game. Yes, it's pretty complex. The designers provide us with so many options of what to do each turn, that the simple way out often seems the best. But the way to take advantage of this is to do the unexpected and throw everybody else off balance. Brilliant stuff.

I've long been a fan of Richard Borg's *Battle Cry*. Then he came up with *Memoir '44* (Days of Wonder) – picture below. This transfers the same basic idea – a simple wargame driven by card-play and using great models on a board that can be laid out for different battlefields – from the American Civil War to the Second World War. It's a bit more complex and provides plenty of different scenarios. An instant winner and a wargame that's *fun*.

Hell Hath no Furry...

Regiments Organisation											
	RFG	Col	LCol	Maj	Maj	Capt	Capt	Capt	Capt	Capt	Capt
	AQH	HC	LI	MdZ	BR	N2	N1	N5	N1	N2	N2
	CG	CIG	CD	LdE	N1	N5	N1	N5	N1	N2	N2
	KM	ZTMG			N4	N4	N4	N5	N2		
	DG				N4	N6	N6	N4			
	QOC	HTC	N6	N4	N5	N2	N5	N5	N5		
	ALC	JP	N6	N2	N4	N2	N5	N5	N5		
	CPC		N3		N1	N1	N2	N2	N2		
	RM	JS	EH	X3	OdC	JW	N2	N3	N1	N2	
	GDMD	PM					N2	N5	N5	N5	
	BdW		N6				N2	N3	N1	N2	
	PLD		N5	N6			N2	N4	N5	N4	
	53F						N1	N4	N5	N6	
	27M	MOP	N3	N1			N2	N1	N4	N5	
	4A			N6			N6	N4	N6	N5	
	69A						N4	N6	N1	N5	
	Gscn						N2	N3	N2	N4	

Entries are Character abbreviations, N (+ Military Ability) for NPC, blank for vacant, * shows the regiment adjutant. + shows ranks held by characters with a brevet rank or an appointment elsewhere.

No	Name	SL	Attr	Last
61	Bette Noire	19	W	CWAE
64	Edna Bucquette	18	W	
3	Kathy Pacific	17	B	
35	Katy Did	16	I	
42	Maggie Nifisent	16	B	
55	Jacky Tinne	16		
60	Polly Hydronne	16	W	
52	Guinevere d'Arthur	15	B/W	
10	Frances Forrin	14	B	
48	Fifi	14	B/W	
16	Ophelia Derriere	13		
26	Ella Fant	13	B	
27	Lucy Fur	13	B	
30	Leia Orgasma	13	B	
45	Cath de Thousands	13		
8	Lotte Bottle	12	B	
12	Charlotte de Gaulle	12		
17	Henrietta Carrotte	12	I/W	
28	Vera Cruz	12		
31	Bess Ottede	12	I/W	
1	Sue Briquet	11	B	
4	Anne Tique	11	W	
9	Deb Onairre	11	I	
40	Sheila Kiwi	11		
63	Carole Singeurs	11		
20	Emma Roides	10	I	
33	Anna Rexique	10	I	
38	Pet Ulante	10	W	
43	Di Lemmere	10	I	
53	Angelina de Griz	10	B	
56	Ingrid la Suede	10		
51	Jane Lapotaire	9	B/I/W	
57	Ava Crisp	9	I	AV
59	May Banquot l'Idee	9		
2	Betty Kant	8	I	
19	Jenny Russe	8	W	
32	Sal Munella	8	W	
41	Marie Antoinette	8	B/I	
47	Eve Ningalle	8	I/W	
49	Mary Huana	8	B/I/W	
34	Freda de Ath	7	W	
39	Thomasina Tancenjin	7	I	
50	Ulla Leight	7	I	
5	Belle Epoque	6	B/I	
13	Josephine Buonoparte	6	I/W	
24	Violet Bott	6	I/W	
15	Ada Andabettoir	5	B/I	
25	Lois de Low	5	B	

This table shows the mistresses in Paris.
B=Beautiful, I=Influential, W=Wealthy,
Last = Last lover seen with this month

Battle Results

First Army: 1	1st Foot Brigade: 3
Cavalry Division: 4	Picardy Musketeers: 2
Heavy Brigade: 1	27th Musketeers: 3
Crown Prince Cuirassiers: 3	
Frontier Division: 1	Third Army: 4
Queen's Own Carabiniers: 1	Second Division: 1
Frontier regiment 1: 3	2nd Foot Brigade: 3
Frontier regiment 2: 3	13th Fusiliers: 5
Frontier regiment 3: 3	53rd Fusiliers: 3
Frontier regiment 4: 3	3rd Foot Brigade: 4
RNHB regiment: 2	Royal Foot Guards: 4
Guards Brigade: 1	Royal Marines: 2
Cardinal's Guard: 1	4th Arquebusiers: 3
King's Musketeers: 2	4th Foot Brigade: 4
	69th Arquebusiers: 2
	The Gascon Regiment: 3
Second Army: 2	Dragoon Brigade: 3
First Division: 2	Grand Duke Max's Dragoons: 5
Horse Guards Brigade: 2	Princess Louisa Lt Dragoons: 5
Dragoon Guards: 3	
Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers: 4	

Army Organisation and Summer Deployment

First Army (Siege)	___/___/___
Cavalry Division (Field Ops)	___/___/___
Horse Guards Brigade (Field Ops) – DG QOC	
Heavy Brigade (Field Ops) – ALC CPC	
Frontier Division (Siege)	___/___/___
Frontier Regiments (Siege)	
Second Army (Defence)	___/___/___
First Division (Defence)	___/___/___
1st Foot Brigade (Defence) – RM PM	
RNHB Regiment (Defence)	
Second Division (Defence)	___/___/___
3rd Foot Brigade (Defence) – 27M 4A	
4th Foot Brigade (Defence) – 69A Gscn	
Organisation and Deployment for the Campaign	
Season plus Army and Division posts	
(CO/Aide/Adj't/QMG):	
ID for chars, N (+ MA for CO and Adj't) for	
NPC, __ for vacant	

Brigade Positions

Guards Brigade	___/___/___
Horse Guards Brigade	___/___/___
Heavy Brigade	___/___/___
Dragoon Brigade	___/___/___
First Foot Brigade	___/___/___
Second Foot Brigade	___/___/___
Third Foot Brigade	___/___/___
Fourth Foot Brigade	___/___/___

Entries as Army Organisation Table



A player's eye view of Memoir '44

There's an argument that *Power Grid* (Rio Grande) shouldn't be in this list as it's a revamp of the older *Funkenschlag*. But it's too good to ignore. Great production quality and a slight simplification of the original make this a rather different and even better game. There's a lot to think about, there are decisions to make and it has plenty of tactical options. This is Friedemann Friese on top form.

It's a shame *Reef Encounter* (R&D Games) is a limited edition as it's another great game that deserves wide recognition. It's a bit of a departure by designer Richard Breese, but he has not lost his touch. The mechanics are a touch complex, but this is what makes the game. It's by understanding how the bits fit together (umm, almost literally!) that players comprehend how to manipulate the game and, hopefully, win. Great stuff.

So, too, is Martin Wallace's latest, *Struggle of Empires* (Warfrog), about 18th century empire-building and colonisation across the world. Unlike many strategy games, this just gets better the more people that are playing. This gives full scope to the various strategies that can be followed and makes it tough to get any of them to work. A meaty game that half a dozen people can relish playing for an afternoon.

Let me declare an interest: I'm UK rep for Hangman Games, who publish *Tahuantinsuyu*. But one of the reasons I am is that this is a great game. Players have decisions to make, plenty of tactical ploys and opportunities to stitch up their opponents as they compete to expand the Inca Empire. These make it a closely-fought game right up to the final scoring. My kind of game.

Viking Fury is a return by the Ragnar Brothers to the historical games they do so well. And this one's no exception. Players are Vikings trading, raiding and colonising wherever their ships can reach. Plenty of history, clever mechanics and a game that's in the balance until the end. And who can pass up the opportunity to leap into a longship and go pillaging around Europe or exploring North America?

Honourable Mentions: to round off, here are the games that didn't quite make it into my top tier. *Employee of the Month* (designed by Alan R Moon and Aaron

Weissblum, published by Dancing Eggplant) is a neat card game that's a bit more challenging than appears at first. *Goa* (Rüdiger Dorn, Rio Grande) is another good strategy game. *Keythedral* (Richard Breese, Pro-Ludo) is a reprint, but it's still an excellent game. High quality production and a few tweaks to the rules make the new edition even better than the original. *Oltre Mare* (Emanuele Ornella, Mind the Move) is a very clever game of Venetian trading and quite a challenge. *Razzia!* (Reiner Knizia, Amigo) is simply a card game version of *Ra*, but that is still one of Knizia's best. I have to include *Revolution* (Francis Tresham, Phalanx), even though I haven't played it yet, as it's been anticipated for so long. And *Ticket to Ride* (Alan R Moon, Days of Wonder), which is a good *Spiel des Jahres*, but I prefer something more challenging. (And something I can win!)

Games Events

Oxcon takes place over the weekend of 22nd-23rd January at the Mitre, High Street, Oxford. This includes *Diplomacy* and *Settlers of Catan* tournaments plus other things and lots of informal games playing. Admission is £4 (there's



Power Grid

Grudges to be settled next month:

Bud d'Wiser (Sabre, adv.) and Jean Petit (Sabre, 1 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

D Arth Vader (Foil, adv.) has cause with Co W. Ard Extrême (Rapier, Seconds CBy, 2 rests) for pinching Bette.

Jacque du Lac (Foil, Seconds HdE, adv.) challenges Co W. Ard Extrême (Rapier, Seconds CBy).

"Adv." Indicates player with the advantage in Expertise: his first duelling sequence need only contain six Actions.

Challenges to be voted on:

Jacque du Lac challenges Co W. Ard Extrême for still being alive.

All duels (including any to be voted on) must be fought next month unless held over due to one or other duellist being at the Front. Orders conditional on a challenge being voted cause are acceptable.

Tables

Other Appointments

King's Escort: Ensign ____ Captain ____
 Cardinal's Escort: Ensign ____ Captain ____
 Aides: to Crown Prince ____ to Field Marshal ____
 Provincial Military Governors: ____/____/____/____/____
 City Military Governor ____ Adjutant-General ____
 Inspectors-General: of Cavalry ____ of Infantry ____
 Commissioner of Public Safety HTC
 Chancellor of the Exchequer AQH Minister of Justice RdO
 Minister of War ____ Minister of State CWAE

Shows who holds appointments outside military units:
 ID for Characters, N for NPC, __ for vacant,
 CPS for additional posts held by the CPS.

Frontier Regiments

(Defence for Sept-Nov)

	F1	F2	F3	F4	RNHB
Colonel	N4	N4	N7	N1	N9

Attached

Also at the Front

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

Applications

This table shows the applications announced in the order in which they will be dealt with.

Minister of State: ZTMG

Minister of War: GdSM, SDL, ZTMG

Minister of Justice: ZTMG

Minister without Portfolio: ZTMG

Chancellor of the Exchequer: BdM, ZTMG

Commissioner of Public Safety: ZTMG

Army Commander: GdSM (both), SS (both)

Adjutant-General: GdLi, RO, SDL

Inspector-General of Infantry: GdLi, RO, SDL, SS

Inspector-General of Cavalry: RO, SDL, SS

City Military Governor: GdLi, SDL

Division Commander: GdLi (all), RO (all), SDL (all), SS (all)

Provincial Military Governor: GdLi, SDL

Army Quartermaster-General: ZTMG (both)

Brigadier: JS (1st Foot), ZTMG (Gds)

Army Adjutant: JP (First)

Division Adjutant: JdV (Second)

Aide to General: LI

Brigade Major: LI (Gds), MdZ (Gds)

Captain, King's Escort: BR

Regimental Adjutant: BR (RFG)

New Characters

Bill Michell gets the Second son of a well-to-do Gentleman: Init SL 4; Cash 250; MA 6; EC 3 (X2).

Michael Blasebalk gets the Bastard son of a small Merchant: Init SL 2; Cash 23; MA 3; EC 4 (X5).

Brian Niemi gets the Second son of a Merchant: Init SL 3; Cash 150; MA 5; EC 2 (X6).

Richard Huzzey gets the Second son of an Impoverished Gentleman: Init SL 4; Cash 40; MA 5; EC 3 (X7).

Filipe Silva gets the Second son of a well-to-do Gentleman: Init SL 4; Cash 250; MA 4; EC 3 (X8).

Pete Card gets the First son of a well-to-do Marquis: Init SL 9; Cash 275; MA 1; EC 3 (X9).

Robert Carter gets the Bastard son of a well-to-do Gentleman: Init SL 3; Cash 225; MA 4; EC 5 (X10).

Kevin Morgan gets the Bastard son of a small Merchant: Init SL 2; Cash 23; MA 2; EC 4 (X11).

Duels

Results of this month's duels:

There were none!

extra to pay for entering the tournaments) and there's lots of information on the website: <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~diplo/oxcon/>.

Coming up in February is Ramsdencon, the delightful get-together organised by Annie Shillabeer. This happens at Ramsden Hall School just outside Billericay in Essex over a long weekend: 24th-27th February. Expect lots of board games, some role-playing and plenty of fun. There's accommodation on site (in the school's dormitories!) or nearby. More information on the website at: <http://www.ramsdencon.co.uk/>.

A quick mention for Consummation II: 11th-13th March, see <http://www.consummation.net/>. The venue for Maycon has been confirmed (see box). And the dates and venue for GEN CON UK 2005 have been announced: 3rd-6th November at Butlins, Bognor Regis.

This box concentrates on games events I expect to attend.

Swiggers: games club that meets every Wednesday evening (though December dates depend on venue availability) at the Bunch of Grapes, St Thomas Street, London SE1. Board games and occasional role-playing. No charges, all welcome. For more information, see www.pevans.co.uk/Swiggers.

Games Games Games Days: from noon(-ish) on the second Saturday of every month at the Duke of York pub at 35 New Cavendish Street, London W1. A day of board games, with those present covering the cost of the room and sandwiches.

Winter Stabcon: early January at the Britannia Hotel in Stockport.

Maycon: now confirmed as 29th April – 2nd May at the Rutland Square Hotel, St James Street, Nottingham. This convention is a mixture of board games and role-playing and includes SpielChamps UK – The UK Board and Card Games Championship and qualifier for the European Championships. For more details and a booking form, see www.maycon.org/.

Spiel: the board games event of the year. Oct. 13th-16th 2005, at the Messe (Exhibition Centre) in Essen (Germany). Contact Friedhelm Merz Verlag, Postfach 210250, Bonn, 53157 Germany, www.merz-verlag.com/spiel/e000.php4.

Summer Stabcon: 8th-10th July 2005 at Woolton Hall, Manchester University. A mixture of board games, wargames, CCGs and role-playing at this friendly con. Sign up with the stabconinfo Yahoo group to find out more: groups.yahoo.com/group/stabconinfo.

Credits

To Win Just Once issue 51 was written and edited by Pevans. The LPBS masthead (page 18) is by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood. The illustrations on pages 19, 22 and 24 are by Nik Luker and the one on page 21 by Tim Wiseman. Pevans took the photos and played with Photoshop.

Fictionary Dictionary

This game is open to all readers – I guess most of you will know it. Each issue I will put up a couple of obscure words. Anybody who wants to participate writes in with fictional definitions for the words. I publish these, anonymously. Everybody votes for their favourite definition (a vote for your own definition will be ignored).

Players score points according to how many people choose their definition. (In other games the definitions include the correct one and players get points for spotting it. However, it's too easy to look words up in a dictionary, so I've left this out for this game.) We'll run this for 10 issues. The winner is the player with the most points at the end.

Scores from Round 7

Here are the real meanings of the words in round 7.

Napiform (adj esp of a root): globular at the top and tapering off abruptly; turnip-shaped.

Ootheca (n): a firm-walled and distinctive egg case (e.g. of a cockroach).

Votes on Round 7

Voter	L	M
Mike Dommett	6	1
Pevans	7	3
Pete Holland	4	1
Nik Luker	7	1
Graeme Morris	6	6
Colin Parfitt	4	4

So there you are. The table on the left shows which definitions people voted for last round. The table on the right gives the scores of those who have provided definitions.

Graeme Morris picks up plenty of points this time, but Pete Holland is still in the lead.

Round 8 Definitions

Here are the definitions sent in for our next two words.

Pichiciago

1 Pichiciago – the ill-conceived soft top, 2-seater sports version of the Winnebago mobile home. Pitifully

few were sold and this vehicle is now a valuable collector's item.

2 Corrupted from “Pi-Chicago”, this is the value of pi as three, as laid down by statute in Indiana. Where the extra “i” came from is as

Players' Scores

Name	This round	Total
Guy Arnold	0	1
Mike Dommett	3	5
Pevans	0	16
Bill Hay	0	2
Pete Holland	3	20
Nik Luker	1	14
Bill Michell	0	6
Mark Moores	0	2
Graeme Morris	5	15
Neil Packer	0	1
Colin Parfitt	0	12
Al Tabor	0	4
Gerald Udowiczenko	0	11
Pam Udowiczenko	0	9

Announcements

Beppe de Marko applies for Chancellor of Exchequer

Beau Romir applies for Regiment Adjutant of RFG

Beau Romir applies for Captain, King's Escort

Gar de Lieu applies for Province Mil. Governor

Gar de Lieu applies for Division Commander of First, Second, Cavalry and Frontier Divisions

Gar de Lieu applies for City Military Governor

Gar de Lieu applies for Inspector General Infntry

Gar de Lieu applies for Adjutant General

Gaston de St Marque applies for Army Commander of First and Second Armies

Gaston de St Marque applies for Minister of War

Joseph de Veevre applies for Division Adjutant of Second Division

Jean Petit applies for Army Adjutant of First Army

Jacques Shitacks applies for Brigadier of 1st Foot Brigade

Lokwot Isaw applies for Brigade Major of Guards Brigade

Lokwot Isaw applies for Aide to General

Marc de Zorro applies for Brigade Major of Guards Brigade

Rene Ouai applies for Division Commander of First, Second, Cavalry and Frontier Divisions

Rene Ouai applies for Inspector General Cavalry and Inspector General Infantry

Rene Ouai applies for Adjutant General

Stan Dandy Liver applies for Province Mil. Governor

Stan Dandy Liver applies for Division Commander of First, Second, Cavalry and Frontier Divisions

Stan Dandy Liver applies for City Military Governor

Stan Dandy Liver applies for Inspector General Cavalry and Inspector General Infantry

Stan Dandy Liver applies for Adjutant General

Stan Dandy Liver applies for Minister of War

Sean Sondamour applies for Division Commander of First, Second, Cavalry and Frontier Divisions

Sean Sondamour applies for Inspector General Cavalry and Inspector General Infantry

Sean Sondamour applies for Army Commander of First and Second Armies

Zachary The Money Goes applies for Army Quarter Master Gen. of First and Second Armies

Zachary The Money Goes applies for Commnr. of Public Safety, Chancellor of Exchequer, Minister without Portfllo, Minister of Justice, Minister of War and Minister of State

Zachary The Money Goes applies for Brigadier of Guards Brigade

27th Musketeers remained loyal. They will take charge of their regiments with a brief to weed out any remaining rebel sympathisers.

Next turn is the start of a new season. **All characters start the month in Paris and all duels must be fought.** Any vacant appointments not taken by player characters will be filled by NPCs – unless appointed by a player character, who may order that they are left vacant (if you have applied for a post or hold a rank that allows you to appoint other characters to posts, don't forget to appoint people).

Remember that the military appointments on the Greasy Pole (and character sheets) this turn have expired. They are shown just as a reminder.

Stockbrokers Filthy, Rich and Loaded have one last Fleur Bond for sale. Bids in excess of 1500 Crowns are invited.

Solicitors Saisir et Courir have charge of the trust fund established by Charles à Tanne and supported by D Arth Vader. The fund, of 6,000 crowns, will be paid out on the death of Co W Ard Extrême.

X1 (Chris Boote) and X4 (Pam Udowiczenko) were floated at their request.

This turn we say goodbye to Wayne Rutledge, who is “moving off in another direction”. Thanks for playing, Wayne, and maybe we'll see you back here again in the future.

Note that SDL had special dispensation to gain the positions of Adjutant-General and Second Division commander this month. The Adjutant-General can certainly make himself a Division commander, but he cannot normally do this in the same month as he becomes Adjutant-General.

Reminders: It is worth sending orders in even if they're a day or two late: I may be able to action the orders and will probably be able to use any press. It also reassures me that you're still there.

You are welcome to submit orders and press by e-mail. Getting your press this way is particularly helpful. Send your orders to lpbsorders@pevans.co.uk and you'll get an automated reply when your message arrives in my mailbox. Please give your name and your character's name and specify actions in full (since it's without your character sheet). Attached files should have your character ID and the month in the name. If you want queries answered before the deadline, e-mail LPBS@pevans.co.uk. ◇ P

unexplained as the reference to Chicago, which is not even in the state of Indiana.

3 Signifies failure of a cunning sobriety test by which would-be imbibers have to name correctly bar-snacks such as peanuts (“weeeenutts”), pretzels (“feretsuls”) and, you guessed it, pistachios.

4 The nervous sensation occurring immediately after being asked your opinion, as you slowly realise you haven't been listening for ten minutes.

5 A musical term, used when playing the Chicago Piano

6 Taken from the Italian, this is the name of a citrus fruit that originates in North Africa. A close relative of the tangerine, this tart fruit was grown in large quantities in Sicily and southern Italy until the late nineteenth century. In modern times its cultivation has declined as the demand for sweeter fruit has grown.

For the next deadline, I need you to:

- vote for your favourite definition of each word above and
- let me have your fictional definitions for the two new words below.

The next words are: Sainfoin and Telpher.

Votes and definitions to TWJO, 180 Aylsham Drive, UXBRIDGE UB10 8UF or TWJO@pevans.co.uk by Friday 4th February 2005.

Rostellum

1 A sweeping generalisation used to deliberately provoke an argument. (e.g. “all modern music sounds the same”, “corporal punishment never did anyone any harm”, “a woman's place is in the kitchen”).

2 A puree of sweet chestnut, usually as an ingredient in making stuffing for roast fowl (esp. turkey, though originally goose).

3 BBC official term of encouragement for the presenter of Film 2004.

4 A device for reading highly sensitive encrypted data. Actually an acronym – Read Only by Scattered, Tuned Emission Laser Light Under Magnification.

5 Modern US term used for a rostrum with built in microphone and/or speakers.

6 “No, You tell 'em! And don't call me Ros!”

Railway Rivals game 3

Game Start

So we have six players ready to start on the London and South Eastern map with a nice spread of starting towns. The start details are below.

Player A

Player: John Harrington
Company: TRAINS TAKE YOU
FASTER! (TTYF!)
Colour: BLUE
Start Town: EASTBOURNE

Player B

Player: Chris Boote
Company: SLOTH WORST TRAINS
(SWT)
Colour: PURPLE
Start Town: RAMSGATE

Player C

Player: Steve Bunce
Company: DOVER EASTBOURNE
CHATHAM LINE (DECLINE)
Colour: YELLOW
Start Town: BEXHILL

Player D

Player: Edward Walkington
Company: TOTALLY OUT OF
ORDAH TRAINS (TOOT)
Colour: GREEN
Start Town: MARGATE

Player E

Player: Gerald Udowiczenko
Company: LEAVES ON THE LINE
(LOL)
Colour: BLACK
Start Town: FOLKESTONE

Player F

Player: Timothy Hunt
Company: SPAMTRAK
Colour: RED
Start Town: BRIGHTON

GM Notes

I expect to see orders similar to this, please – easy to understand

Mike Dommett Turn 1 orders
Seriously Crap Trains (SCT) PINK
1st Roll: (Dover) – C71
2nd Roll: (C71) – D70
3rd Roll: (D70) – D69-Canterbury – F67: (Canterbury) – G69

Dice rolls for round 1 are 5, 3 & 5

**Orders to Mike Dommett, 119 Victoria Road, ALTON GU34 2DD
or by e-mail to mike_dommett@yahoo.co.uk
by Friday, 28th January 2005.**

I humbly suggest that the administering of justice to the soon-to-be defeated rebels might be too much for the public courts. I therefore propose that licences be granted throughout the country (administered by this office) to catch and punish the rebels in return for generous fees and incentives. I call this the 'PFI' or Private Flogging Initiative. Since there are likely to be many rebels in hiding, I propose the King offer licences of perhaps thirty years duration so that we can continue to bleed, err, protect the country from its internal enemies.

† Revaulvin d'Or, Minister of Justice,
True To King & Country

*His Majesty thanks the
Minister of Justice for his
innovative suggestion, which
will be taken under
advisement.* † Le Roi

Grand Pere,

What can I say? I never saw the lad.

He sent me word that he had joined the 69th Arquebusiers with a view to

becoming their Commander by Summer's end.

You have my condolences upon your loss.

† Lt. General Earl Stan Dandy
Liver, Gds. Bde.

I am pleased indeed that our esteemed Minister of State has taken to heart the rather serious dilapidation of some of France's great Churches. So much so that he has appointed a Minister with responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of Church Buildings. I am delighted and honoured to fill this role. The Church, of course, is a poor organisation and, with Church members themselves sworn to poverty, it is up to us lay people to raise the funds necessary to keep all those gold ornaments polished. Once the current Uncivil War is ended, I expect to be organising some parties to raise the profile of the fund-raising campaign. Watch this space!

† Baron Charlemagne le Gosse,
Minister with responsibility for the
upkeep and maintenance of Church
Buildings

Points Arising

Senior rebel officers, including Jean Petit and Marc O'Polo, will be executed at the start of next month. Characters are welcome to petition His Majesty, who has set aside several minutes to consider them.

Jean de Florette is declared a traitor to France. All loyal Frenchmen are

urged to execute him without further ado, should they come across him.

The Dragoon Guards and Picardy Musketeers will be re-formed from scratch. Experienced officers are invited to take the senior positions.

The (now) Lt-Colonels in the Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers and

France's loyal citizens and soldiers are risking life and limb in the service of his Majesty King Pevans, scum like you are attempting to undermine us all. I will not stand by and listen to wild accusations about one of France's bravest and most loyal regiments. I challenge you to a duel, although I doubt you possess the courage to come out from the shadows.

Yours, † Jacques Shitacks

Social

To all members of the RFG and all LOYAL Ministers.

I will be hosting a 'welcome home' party for my loyal comrades in Week 4 of September, all costs will be met by me. † Col AQH

Field Marshal Count Co W. Ard Extrême, Minister of State
My Lord,

My deepest regrets for last month's 'Entertainment'.

Upon investigation, it transpires that M. du Lac had been hired by the Fleur to 'test their security' and had, in no way, designs upon the blood money that threatens your life.

Given your stance on the matter, I'm sure no one man will try that again!

Your friend, † Lt. General Earl Stan Dandy Liver

I shall host a party for all of Paris at the Fleur in the first week of September in thanks for the safe deliverance of His Majesty.

† General Count Claude Byacat

Personal

To: Gar de Lieu

Thank you for your letter to the Cardinal. His Eminence has shown me a copy and asked me to point out the following: the Cardinal's Guard has a Holy duty to (duhhhh) guard the Cardinal. In doing so, the CG has been in the environs of Paris for the campaign. I am aware of the fact that Paris is a northern City, but she cannot be described as a frontier town. The sad fact of the death of one of our promising officers in June goes to show that at these times Paris is indeed a dangerous place and His Eminence's safety cannot be put in jeopardy. Despite this, battalion commanders have been allowed to take their units off in pursuit of the more mundane and less spiritual pursuit of Pretender-bashing.

Get your facts right!

† Baron Charlemagne le Gosse, CO CG

Sir Gar de Lieu,

You will note that Baron le Gosse has allowed his forces to be split to enable the Pretender's forces to be opposed and the Cardinal to be guarded appropriately. Indeed the fact that the Captain of the Cardinal's Escort is among the loyalist forces is, I believe, a powerful political message.

† Ced Deucer CG

Civil war... have the prices started falling yet? And how's the fund going? When can the first dividends be expected? † DeP

Odessa Steps Star Trader – Game End

TRANS SOLAR TRADING INC: Corporation C, Jerry Elsmore

May I start by offering my congratulations to Martin on getting round to cashing in his assets – my calculations suggest he could have done at any time from Turn 14 – which is why I had a go last turn, only to be foiled by KATKORP, who timed his reneging on a written agreement to a T. <<grr gnashing of teeth! grin >> Well done, Michael.

Since that was the second written agreement to be torn up by my co-signatories – the first being The Culture's failure to provide News Chit information – I would like to thank Shylocks for restoring my faith in the written deal and Total Transit, NEWBIE, Interstellar Metals, The Universal, Swiss Mercenaries Fleet, Bland & Brass, Tau Ceti Express and Nekekami Corporation for keeping their word. Yes, Trans-Solar Trading Inc had non-aggression agreements with all the other Corporations and cashed in all weapons early on, thus maximising cargo space and hence profit – it nearly worked!

Thanks to Mike for his patience in answering a ream of questions.

Jerry was merely one of you who looked at the game and asked "what if I..." and came up with some excellent ideas which added to the pleasure in running the game. Always ask if you have a bright idea, I may have a problem with the suggestion or you may have found a hole in the rules. There are some anomalies and Paul and I are looking at using the game system in an expansion where you can't fly to everywhere from each system – some jumps are impossible.

There is a steep learning curve in this game as the rules, although they are all there, aren't always obvious and the price mechanism takes some understanding. I think I've finally got to grips with most of them and there are certainly things I'd have done differently if I knew at the start what I know now, so I'm looking forward to the next game.

A legacy of the SPI rule writing system, the rules cover most eventualities – though I was surprised by the inventiveness of the players and the queries they raised. The easiest way to understand the price mechanism, I have found, is to take a commodity with a supply/demand figure, decide a price to bid to buy/sell relative to a chosen starting price, throw the dice, adjust the supply/demand marker, and see what the result is; what can you buy or sell. Generally if the S/D for a product is -6, -7, -8, then the average roll of 7 will produce no movement on the S/D marker (-7 + 7 = 0). To sell 3 units you will need to bid 1 below the existing price, to sell 6 units, 2 below the existing price, 9 units, 3

below the existing price. (and reduce your price further if you need to undercut other players.) Buying is similar, except you have to bid a higher price than the current – 1 above to buy 3 units, 3 above to buy 9 units, and so on. If the S/D marker is 0, +1, – 1, then the average result with two die rolled is 7 again, $7 + 0 = 7$ and the S/D marker drops the price by 2. Here then to sell 3 units you must bid $2 + 1 = 3$ below the starting price, to sell 9 bid $2 + 3 = 5$ below the starting price. Conversely to buy 6 units you bid the starting price, and to buy 12 units you bid 2 higher than the starting price.

INTERSTELLAR METALS : Corporation D, Pevans

I started this game with a variation on my usual strategy. I decided I would look to trade heavily in all commodities. This would build up market positions, so that I could then take advantage of being a Contractor in lots of places. The Contractor's position would let me buy or sell (as appropriate) at the market rate, rather than having to bid substantially above/below the market to make sure of making the deal. Okay, the Contractor can only trade a limited amount, but it works really well over several turns. A ship flies in and delivers three turns-worth of goods. Three turns later, when these have been sold, the ship returns with another load. This can be fuelled by another Contractor's position buying the goods or by factories. And one ship can service several of these.

It kind of worked, too. Unfortunately, the commodity I started in was Isotopes. I built factories to produce them and started buying and selling to develop my market positions. So did everybody else. Fierce competition drove Isotope prices down and down. Not only was my margin disappearing, so was the value of my factories! I did fairly well trading other commodities, but didn't have anything like the network I'd established in Isotopes. The end result was that Interstellar Metals grew, but grew too slowly. At the end of the game I was generating cash, but still needed 5 or 6 turns to reach the winning post.

One thing I always do at the start of *Star Trader* games: buy some Agents. The skills they provide suggest which strategy I should follow to take advantage of them. In this case, however, I'd already decided on a trading strategy. So picking up Dwarf (who makes Sabotage easier) was not helpful. And I didn't even manage to sell him (despite negotiations reaching an advanced stage). Percent (a mobile Contractor, in effect) was much more useful. And Clint (who kills other Agents) might have been useful – I was pleased that he got one kill. At the end of turn 3, my position was looking pretty good – apart from everybody else's Isotopes factories alongside mine at Tau Ceti.

I took advantage of my special ability (gaining 2 reputation each turn) to offset things which damaged my Reputation (such as not paying the interest on my loans!). And I capitalised on some of the early Events (such as the one that

The last gasp of the rebels in Paris is a demonstration against the King's Musketeers. The rebels ambush a patrol led by Lt-Colonel Meaux Curlieunlaurrie. They succeed in cutting down Curlieunlaurrie, but are annihilated when the rest of the regiment arrives. Private Fernand Louis Adelmo de Gaulle, serving in Curlieunlaurrie's Battalion, rallies his fellows. He is brevetted to Subaltern and Mentioned in Despatches – which earns him a Knighthood. A promotion is Zachary The Money Goes' reward. He becomes a Bdr-General and takes over command of the Guards Brigade.

This success reflects on acting Brigadier Charlemagne le Gosse, for whom there is a Mention in Despatches. His Brigade Major, Major Marc de Zorro of the RFG, also receives a Mention. There are two Mentions for the First Army commander, General Claude Byacat, who prepares to take over as Field Marshal from next month. The Army Adjutant, RM Bdr-General Jacques Shitacks, gets two Mentions as well. But General's Aide Xavier 3sup is overlooked completely. ❖

Press

Despatches from the Front

My Lord King, gentlemen of Paris,

It is with a heavy heart and bowed head that I return to Paris. I now realise my foolishness at following the false pretender, and that God has indeed shown his true intentions with the defeat of our forces.

I commend myself into the King's hands for him to deal with as he judges fit. I ask that the men of my regiment be allowed to go unpunished as they were only showing loyalty in following me in my erroneous path.

God bless the true King!

† Marc O'Polo

Brvt Brig General

Commander of his Majesty's
regiment, 27th Musketeers

Off with his head! † Le Roi

Announcements

THE CARDINAL WANTS YOU

Still needed: strapping young men of good social standing who are prepared to stand up for principles and stand up against the bully boys of the King's Musketeers.

Also required: Aide to the CO of the CG. Must be willing to attend Church and parties regularly.

Generous grants available on application to the commanding officer, † B Bdr-Gen ClG

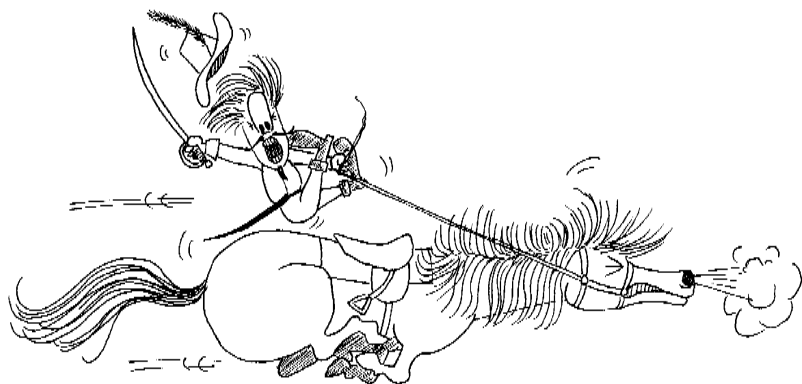
Matters of Honour

D'en Percent is available as a reliable second and is hoping to obtain a respectable sponsor to further his career.

To the author of misinformation and distrust,

At a time of civil war, when all of

What the Spanish were not expecting was the Queen's Own Carabiniers. The reconnaissance force unwise enough to take them on is promptly charged down and sent packing. Subaltern Denis Bone has his horse shot from under him. He promptly mounts another one and continues the fight. His bravery brings him promotion to ... full Subaltern. There is a Mention in Despatches for Bdr-General Henry Thierry Christian, but he much prefers the six hundred crowns he collects in booty from the battlefield.



CHAAAAAARGE!!

Frontier Division commander Omi Palone can be pleased with his track record in protecting France's borders during the Civil War. His Majesty thinks so, too, and bestows the title of Marquis on him. Palone also becomes a (brevet) General and tots up his own five hundred crowns worth of loot.

Still in Paris

As the rebellion's defeat looks imminent, the French troops find their lives on the Parisian streets much easier. Attacks on the Crown Prince Cuirassiers have all but stopped. Heavy Brigadier Beppe de Marko is promoted to full Brigadier-General as a result. And Cavalry Division commander Sean Sondamour finds himself a (brevet) General.

The Guards Brigade's 'zero tolerance' policy has had its effect as well: there is little musket fire on the streets of Paris in August. Lt-Colonel Ced Deucer has been recalled from the attack on the rebels to take command of the Cardinal's Guard while his CO is acting Brigadier. The only embarrassment of the month is Major Lucien d'Escaillehuitaillements. Sorry, the only embarrassment of the month is Major Lucien d'Escaillehuitaillements falling off his horse when it's startled by the guards snapping to attention. There's nothing for Major d'Escaillehuitaillements, but a Mention for Lt-Colonel Deucer.

halved Corporations' debts!). But then my warehouses were sabotaged, removing several turns' Isotope production. I missed another Event (the Civil War at Gamma Leporis), which lost me a ship and goods. And then suffered more sabotage. None of this was fatal, but it all served to slow down the Corporation's growth (as last issue's chart illustrated).

So, a good game, I think. Especially with Nathan demonstrating the fun and the perils of playing the pirate! Congratulations to Martin for winning. Commiserations to those whose Corporation values were up there, but who failed to cash in. Thank you to Mike for running the game and to everybody for making it fun.

SWISS MERCENARY'S FLEET: Corporation F, Martin Jennings – WINNER!

Still under the shock really, I won! I am not sure how many games of *Star Trader* I have played (5 that I know of. M), but this is the first time I have actually won.

Each time I have played, I have tried a different tactic and this time the tactic paid off. I took the extra connections and started with 9 Political, planning on building up the business ones through trading and, for once, not touching the criminal ones. I was lucky as the Inflation event, which was a P9, happened early and I was the only one who knew about it, so I took advantage of it. From then on it was a matter of just building up my assets, in this case the factories, until I had the cash.

In some respects, I am sorry for ending the game as it seemed that we were actually playing for pleasure. But, looking at Mike's chart, I am glad I did, because 4 of us could have won – though it seems I had the highest assets. Also the fact that some of you were starting to undermine me; it seemed a good time to bow out.

Thank you to Jerry for being a good ally and for Mike for reffing.

Yes, you can sign me up for the next game, where I am, yet again, going to try another tactic – or maybe this one again to see if it works again ;)

KATKORP: Corporation H, Michael Martinkat

Well, considering I had three free Alloy factories at the beginning I figured I'd start with cornering the Alloy market. But imbecilic traders did not price the markets correctly, and I ended up being pushed out of that market by TSTI.

I figured then to move to Isotopes, but had to contend with the Nekekami/Tau Ceti Express alliance, and struggled there.

Finally I kept pace with the opposing companies.

The only two military craft in the game – and I lost both of them!!

Michael bought two dagger hulls and had them both blown up by Missiles from TOTAL TRANSIT 2070's armed merchantmen

Well, it was tough going, but I gave it a run.

Now I know how to play :)

BLAND & BRASS: Corporation J, Colin Parfitt

Briefly, it started badly, and became progressively worse. Just as I was picking up again, someone pinched my ship. (Nathan – M). Then it was all down hill.

After which you went into a bit of a decline. But you didn't give up.

THE CULTURE: Corporation K, Nathan Richards

This was my first time playing *Star Trader* and I enjoyed it immensely – even if I didn't see the game through to the end. Perhaps because I came in with a novice's eye, I may have taken a slightly novel approach to the game, but it seemed to me that the commodity most worth trading in was ships! I therefore opted for a pirate strategy. However, there is one major difficulty in adopting a pirate strategy and that's once you suffer an inquiry it's very difficult not to actually end up with an inquiry every turn because you can't raise your reputation fast enough to dodge the slings and arrows of outraged competitors.

I hadn't meant to start pirating quite so early in the game, but the possibility of picking up so many ships so early in the game when they were just sitting outside the Spaceport was too good to miss. After that, pride took hold. I knew that I was way ahead in the early game in terms of assets and decided that rather than trade my way to victory from that point on I would instead take a few more risks and go for broke by trying to win the game in a record time! Alas, it was not to be. Although I reached the point that my assets had outstripped the level required to win the game, the cost of selling those assets in a spaceport was enough to make me uncertain as to whether I would be left on 1999 HTs and looking foolish and I couldn't jump the ships to better markets for sale as their D class crews probably wouldn't make the jump and would end up being confiscated. After that, the dizzying spiral of inquiries took hold and the rest, as they say, is history.

Arquebusiers end up acting as guards for the prisoners. The Guardsmen stroll into the enemy camp, brushing aside the remaining opposition. They are disappointed not to find General Ringeur anywhere. The Despatches Mention the names of the regiment's commander, Bdr-General Alfonse Qué Holique, its second in command, Lt-Colonel Harry Covert, and Major Lokwot Isaw. Lt-Colonel Covert is also made an Earl by the King, but there's nothing at all for Captain Beau Romir.

The Royal Marines follow up the Guards and seal the fate of the Picardy Musketeers. Faced with the gleaming cutlasses of their colleagues, the surviving Musketeers capitulate. However, Lt-Colonel Euria Humble, acting commander of the regiment, is strangely invisible in all this. It is left to Major Orson de Combat to lead the regiment. And receive a Mention in Despatches. The result also brings a Mention in Despatches for the 3rd Foot Brigadier, Lt-General Gar de Lieu. Overall the new Second Division commander, Stan Dandy Liver, is pleased with the month's work. He has his rank made permanent and also goes into the Despatches. So, too, do his Aide, Captain Jacque Wabbit of the Royal Marines, and the Divisional Adjutant, Lt-Colonel Joseph de Veevre of the 13th Fusiliers.

Having taken possession of the battlefield, Third Army wraps things up. In particular, the body of Abel Ringeur is recovered, abused and despatched to Paris so that his head can be mounted over the city gates. Of the so-called Pretender there is no sign. It is generally assumed that he has returned to his chores in whatever farmyard Ringeur found him in. Vader is dead, of course, and Petit and O'Polo in custody. This leaves de Florette unaccounted for. Further investigations identify de Florette amongst a group that fled across the Channel to England. It is more than likely that he has joined arch-traitor Roland di Vingt in serving the English crown against France's interests. General de St Marque is Mentioned twice in the Despatches and rewarded with the title of Marquis by a grateful sovereign.

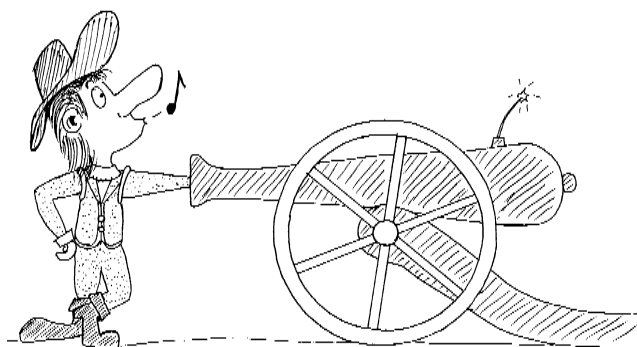
Out of the limelight

France's Frontier forces are tested by a number of forays by Spanish troops. All the Frontier regiments hold firm. General Marvin Leigh Rowbow and Lt-General Rene Ouai remain attached to Frontier regiment 4. Their contributions to the regiment's success (or lack of failure, anyway) are rewarded appropriately. General Rowbow is Mentioned in Despatches and grabs a hundred crowns off a passing Spaniard. Lt-General Ouai collars two Spanish soldiers for two hundred crowns. Rowbow is also pleased to have concluded his business with the Crown Prince. This involves large sums of money and lots of Bonds in the Fleur.

and negate the rebels' cavalry; 2nd Foot attacks on the left; 4th Foot on the right and 3rd Foot in the centre. Unfortunately, a full-blooded charge by the heavyweight Cuirassiers disrupts both Dragoon regiments. The Dragoon Brigadier, Bud d'Wiser, may not be pleased that his name is in the Despatches ("Never seen Dragoons go backwards before").

On the left, the 13th Fusiliers come under concerted fire from the Picardy Musketeers as Second Foot Brigade advances. It's too hot for the 13th and they break, leaving the 53rd to hold the line. Brevet Colonel Nom N Clature tries frantically to spread his men out to cover the whole of the left flank. He is largely successful, in that no formations of rebel troops are able to escape. However, several small groups get through the lines, including some senior officers. Colonel Clature encounters one of these groups as he dashes between his men's positions. His gun misfires and the rebel officer rides him down. RIP. Acting Brigadier Revaulvin d'Or gets a Mention in Despatches for the Brigade's work (rather than his regiment's rapid departure).

There is less resistance on the right flank, where 4th Foot swarms over the rebels' palisades. The only serious problem is a battery of guns, which enfilades the Gascons as they attack. Subaltern Philippe de LaFey makes a run for it, but can't out-distance the cannonballs. RIP. Brigadier Jean ou Rous takes personal charge and shows the Gascons how it's done. He outflanks the battery with a company of Gascons and charges home. The gunners just have time to wheel round one gun, but it's enough to blow ou Rous away even as his men succeed in their mission. RIP.



RECKLESS BRAVERY

Chancellor Holique first has to deal with his delivery from Paris (this seems to involve substantial communications to State Minister Extrême, Justice Minister d'Or and Second Division commander Liver). Then the Royal Foot Guards lead the way for 3rd Foot Brigade in the centre. The attack is slowed somewhat by the surrender of the remnants of the 27th Musketeers. The 4th

Congratulations to the eventual victor and many thanks to Mike, our long-suffering GM, who fielded so many rules clarifications. Count me in for the next one!

Your attempt to win came very close. The end of turn figures for your Corporation are after you had paid the fines, a total of 600 HT, which would have given you the game. I've not seen such a determined effort to be a pirate before and it was only luck of the die that eliminated you.

GRAND LARS THENI & HEFT: Corporation L, Ian Whitchurch

It was always a corporate recovery mission at GLT, and I think we did a pretty good job. (*Ian took over when Jerry Spencer had to drop out*)

Essentially, my plan was to recapitalise the company by liquidating GLT's non-core assets and taking out a loan, then rebrand it as a Passenger/small cargo concern. A network of warehouses would supplement the ships, allowing us to buy lots of Spice, Monopoles or Liquor and then sell them in small packets to avoid damaging the markets. Our big Monarch class hull would do the heavy lifting, when profits appeared to be available in petroleum, isotopes or alloys. This sort of 'big hauling' really needs warehouses to work though – you just can't be carting heavy goods around space.

The first call on cash flow was new ships; a fully outfitted Phoenix costs about 145 HT (b-crew, AJ pod, 4 passengers, 2 cargo), and should be returning 30 HT a turn minimum in passenger revenue, plus anything from speculative cargos. At game end we were up to 5 ships, out of a total of 35 in the game.

The second call was a cash reserve to fund trading. I'm particularly proud of the off-market deal we did with Bland and Brass for Monopoles – I understand it was the only off-market deal in the game and it made us about 80 HT on a 120 HT investment in one turn (I couldn't guarantee getting the Monopoles at that price on the market).

The third call was our warehouse network, which was pretty much complete at game end.

Starting at an exceedingly cash- and asset-poor position (one ship, probably 100 HT worth of cargo and factories at a generous valuation and 49 HT cash), we doubled the value of the Corporation from turn 10 to turn 17, a rate of increase that matched anyone else in the game.

Actually, I think that valuation understates our financial health; we were pulling in 100 HT a turn in passenger revenue, and that was going to go up by another 35 once our latest ship got established on the Tau Ceti run. Passengers are cash flow in Star Trader; 4 passenger pods equals 35 HT a

turn, assuming you are making a run between two 'core' worlds. Unlike speculative cargoes, you don't need masses of cash to float the purchase and they just keep delivering revenue – generally speaking, with cargo you have to take a ship from a 'destination' world back to a 'source' world, so you only make profits one turn in two, but passengers deliver every turn.

Of course the passengers need to be shipped between high value worlds that will provide 3 or 4 passenger groups a turn. Not many passengers come from Mu Herculis. Passengers are abundant between worlds without many natural resources. Both you and TAU CETI XPRESS concentrated on the passenger line, but TCX lost 3 ships to Piracy, bought replacement ships and then never sent another order in. Any player pursuing an option without competition – be it volume trading, piracy, illegal goods, or small volume goods – does tend to have an advantage. On the last two turns you were competing for passengers and whoever had the initiative took most of the passengers. Another problem that can arise is that regular passenger shuttles are obvious – TCX lost his ships when someone put an armed ship in Tau Ceti System Space. Deciding not to risk interception will cost you twice the money that the passengers made for you in fines and will take you a turn's carrying for no gain to get back to a level position.

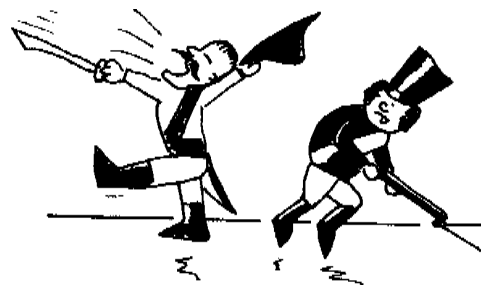
I enjoyed the game, and I hope I had other players looking over their shoulder as we rapidly gained on the leaders in the game. If it had continued another 3-4 turns, then people would have to start worrying if GLT could possibly win ...

General comments ; both Reputation and Business Connection levels are too easy to get. The 'factory pump and dump' is almost impossible to stop, and delivers profits with regularity – selling more than one factory should drop the price as per the normal S/D track.

This refers to the practice of buying factories – say 10 – in one commodity. Then bidding to raise the price, selling the factories at a profit and pocketing the difference. For example, buying 10 Spice factories when the price is 10 costs 600 HTs. Next turn the player bids 17 to buy Spice, buying 18 to raise the price by +7 to 17 HTs. This costs 306 HTs. Total Spend is thus 906 HTs. Next turn he sells the factories with the price at 17 HTs, raising 850 HTs. He also has 10 units of Spice from production and 18 units he bought, for a total of 28 to sell. Provided he can sell them for more than 2 HTs he has a profit. And if sold for half their purchase cost he will have over 200 HTs profit and market positions as well.

The more factories he buys, the bigger the potential profit. 14 factories would make 84 HTs profit and leave him with 32 units of Spice. If the commodity price is lower, say the starting price is 4 and he buys 10 factories, and bidding 11 to buy isotopes, he spends 498 HTs and makes 550 HTs – a profit of 52 HTs – and has 28 units of Isotopes to sell. It can be blocked by people selling goods, if they think a player is about to ramp the share price – as KATKORP did to TSTI on one turn. You must have a fair amount of cash to be able to start doing it as well – none of the backmarkers was in a position to use the tactic. It

After some very necessary medical attention, Ringeur takes stock of the troops he has left. In the meantime, many of Vader's Dragoon Guards have made off, demoralised by the death of their leader. The remainder of the 27th Musketeers has disappeared, too. Led off by Bdr-General O'Polo, the troops have surrendered to the nearest loyalist force. O'Polo is returned to Paris under arrest while his men are corralled by loyal troops. He is also Mentioned in Despatches ("just walked up and offered his sword").



There is little Ringeur can do, anyway, as the rebels' positions are assaulted by Third Army under General de St Marque. An artillery barrage flattens what's left of Ringeur's command tent. But the General has joined the troops in the front lines. The three infantry Brigades of Second Division advance on the positions held by what's left of one regiment – the Picardy Musketeers. General Ringeur stands out from the front rank. "Onward to Paris!" he cries and forges ahead towards the advancing loyalists. A concerted volley shrouds the battlefield in smoke. When it clears, Ringeur is only a ragged heap on the ground. RIP.

The Picardy Musketeers retain their order and respond with their own fire, concentrating on the 13th Fusiliers. Daunted by this ferocious defence, the Fusiliers fall back. Jean de Florette takes advantage of this gap in the loyalists' lines. He takes a promotion to Lt-General, a few hundred crowns and a couple of fast horses and heads north, riding down anyone who gets in his way. Despite their success, the remaining Picardies are outnumbered about 10:1 and the regiment disintegrates. Many of them are taken prisoner, but others escape by discarding their uniforms.

Jean Petit leads the Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers against the Dragoon Brigade and stops the lightly-armed Dragoons in their tracks. He assumes the brevet rank of Brigadier-General and takes command of the Horse Guards Brigade. But his troops are surrounded by huge numbers of infantrymen, unable to manoeuvre and without any support. The cavalry is taken prisoner and Petit returns to Paris in chains.

The final act

The return of the Dragoon Brigade from their mission of last month gives the Third Army commander, General Gaston de St Marque, the impetus to order the final assault on the rebel Second Army. The Dragoons set out to engage

Paris in summer

As usual, Co W Ard Extrême and Bette Noire are ‘at home’ in the Fleur de Lys all month. Extrême is surprised to discover that he is hosting a party in the latter half of the month, but gamely admits all comers. As this number includes Jacques “mad assassin” du Lac, this is very sporting of France’s most apprehensive man. However, for the first week it is Antoine Valois, D’en Percent, Horatio d’Escargot and Thomas Tudo who arrive to Toady to the Minister. Ava Crisp accompanies Antoine, but the other gentlemen are alone. Jacques arrives in the final week of the month, taking the place of Antoine and Ava, who have retired to Red Phillips.

Jacques’ previous week was spent at the Bawdyhouses, making sure he had some female company in August. D’en and Horatio chose this as their initial activity this month. The footpads jump Horatio on his way home, but he’s carefully spent his cash. Antoine spends the first two weeks practising with his sabre, as does Thomas. For Jacques it’s a two-handed sword for two weeks. D’en and Horatio fill in their spare week with some practice: rapier and two-hander, respectively. D’en makes a premature application for membership of the Frog & Peach and is, of course, turned down.

Death or dishonour?

Things are getting pretty fractious in what’s left of the rebel army. Second Army commander (and leader of the rebellion) ‘General’ Abel Ringeur confers with his senior officers. He would prefer to press on towards Paris than allow themselves to be cornered in a final stand. Colonel Jean Petit pledges the ALCs to his support. Brigadier Jean de Florette adds the backing of 1st Foot Brigade – though Bdr-General Marc O’Polo, commander of what’s left of the 27th Musketeers, is much quieter. Brigadier Vader, leading the Horse Guards Brigade, remains behind when the other officers are dismissed to speak privately with General Ringeur.

Ushered into Ringeur’s tent, Vader draws his sabre. He accuses Ringeur of having duped him and torn “my beloved France” apart with his own ambition and challenges him to a duel “to the death”. Ringeur draws his own sabre and blocks Vader’s attack, calling for help. Vader’s furious lunge goes straight through Ringeur’s block and wounds him. Ringeur jumps aside to inspect the damage – it’s not too bad. Until Vader comes back at him with a cut. Guards burst into the tent with levelled muskets as Ringeur falls to the ground from Vader’s hefty blow. But a volley of musketry cuts down the big cavalryman (and makes rather a mess of the tent!) and it’s Ringeur who gets back onto his feet. Taking a loaded pistol from one of the guards, Ringeur administers the coup de grace himself. RIP D Arth Vader.

also isn’t a tactic anyone can really use early on in the game, as no one has the funds. Dropping the price for sales of factories? I see the logic and I may think about it. But then shouldn’t the price go up when you buy factories?

GM Notes

A keenly fought game, and quite close among several Corporations. TAU CETI XPRESS was doing very well, until real world problems caused them to stop sending in orders. INTERSTELLAR METALS suffered from losing ships to Piracy and from misfortune from events. BLAND & BRASS and SHYLOCKS both suffered from losing laden ships at an early stage and never quite got back into the game, but continued playing.

NEKEKAMI went spectacularly bust. Realising that there was no way that they could meet their loan repayment at the due time, they liquidated all of their assets and revenged themselves on their tormentors, real and imagined with a sabotage campaign that affected INTERSTELLAR METALS and KATKORP quite badly.

THE UNIVERSAL seemed to have problems in trading, often buying only small lots and then failing to Hyperjump because of the poor quality of their crews. It is still worth buying where a product is cheap and

selling where it is dear. The competition in Isotopes did drive the prices really down though and the cut-throat nature kept prices and profits very low. Not many people shifted to trading in other commodities to the same intensity.

There wasn’t much use of illegal commodities from Opportunity Chits. Slave and Weapons weren’t bought and sold, even though a Corporation with the smuggling bonus and a Battle Comm pod could have made low risk profits. Nor was there much inter-player trading. With the growth of e-mail it is possible to ask questions and get replies quickly, but the player interaction didn’t extend to private sales. As usual, someone had a way of trading news amongst players, setting up an agreement between players with high Criminal, Political and Business Connections to trade information about News Chits. I refuse to organise the transfer of information between players and no one so far has apparently thought of feeding false information to the other players...

The next game can start when we get a few more players. If you’re interested in joining in, let Pevans (TWJO@pevans.co.uk) or Mike (mike_dommett@yahoo.co.uk) know.

We will provide you with the full rules of the game.

Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses 177

Being a postal game of *En Garde!* run by Pevans since April 1986 and now published as part of *To Win Just Once*.

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August 1658

In the month of August Paris is at its quietest. The combination of summer heat and the climax of the campaign season means that very few people are in the city. And those that remain are generally indoors during the heat of the day. But there's still time for some intrigue. Alfonse Qué Holique and Charlemagne le Gosse team up to force out the commander of Second Division and the Adjutant-General. Minister Co W Ard Extrême then appoints Lieutenant-General Stan Dandy Liver as Adjutant-General. This allows Liver to fill the vacant command of Second Division ... with himself! Liver appoints Joseph de Veevre as his Divisional Adjutant – Euria Humble turns down the job, preferring to remain Aide to the Field Marshal.

Liver's departure leaves a vacancy for Guards Brigadier. The application of Brigadier-General D Arth Vader to command the Guards Brigade is nodded through by the military appointments board. Until the Brigade staff points out that Vader is in the rebel camp! His appointment is quickly rescinded, leaving Vader in command of the Horse Guards. Bdr-General le Gosse of the Cardinal's Guard takes over as acting Brigadier of the Guards. General Gaston de St Marque presents Major Orson de Combat with the opportunity to be his Aide, but de Combat holds out for greater things. Meaux Curlieunlaurrie declines Sean Sondamour's offer to appoint him Adjutant of the Cavalry Division, though his reason seems to be indifference rather than any ambition for high office.

The Minister of State feels that there is "a serious lack of [Ministers] with silly titles". His remedy is simple. Extrême appoints Marquis Harry Covert to be Minister without Portfolio (responsible for Quality Quaffing) and Baron de Combat as Minister with responsibility for Galas, Boules and Balls. He also asks Rene Ouai to become Minister for Music and Melodies, but Ouai turns this down. Instead Ouai tries to persuade his Aide to quit, but the man remains stubbornly in post.

There is also some kerfuffle around the Ministry of Justice and the Exchequer with instructions flying back and forth between Justice Minister Revaulvin d'Or and Chancellor Alfonse Qué Holique. The end result is large chest being despatched, under heavy guard, to Holique, who's commanding the Royal Foot Guards in the field.

New boy Thomas Tudo applies to join the Queen's Own Carabiniers, but Henry Thierry Christian turns him down. Instead, he presents his credentials at the Archduke Leopold Cuirassiers' barracks. Jean Petit refuses to let Tudo join the rebel regiment – which is probably good news for the new man. Rebel Brigadier Jean de Florette exerts his influence on the Cardinal's Guard's third Battalion to come over to the rebel side. His efforts are countered by loyalist Harry Covert (and the Guard's loyalty to His Eminence). General de St Marque is no more successful in his entreaties. He suggests the acting commander of the Picardy Musketeers sees the error of his ways and abandons the rebel cause. Loyalty to Brigadier de Florette means the man rejects de St Marque and his command stays with 1st Foot Brigade.

