

That would be enough

This has been issue 97 of *To Win Just Once*, published 17th July 2009. It incorporates *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, a postal game of *En Garde!*. Issues are published ten times a year, roughly every five weeks. © Paul Evans 2009

Deadlines

Orders for *Star Trader* and *Railway Rivals* to Mike Dommett by Friday 31st July 2009.

Orders for *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, Pick-a-Low entries and any other contributions to Pevans by Friday 7th August 2009.

(Remaining 2009 deadlines: 4th/11th Sept, 23rd/30th Oct, 27th Nov/4th Dec.)

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Games played

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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: www.engarde.co.uk

Railway Rivals Jonathan Palfrey, Pevans, Ben Brown, Gerald Udowiczenko with room for 1-2 more (on the Yorkshire map – working copy provided).

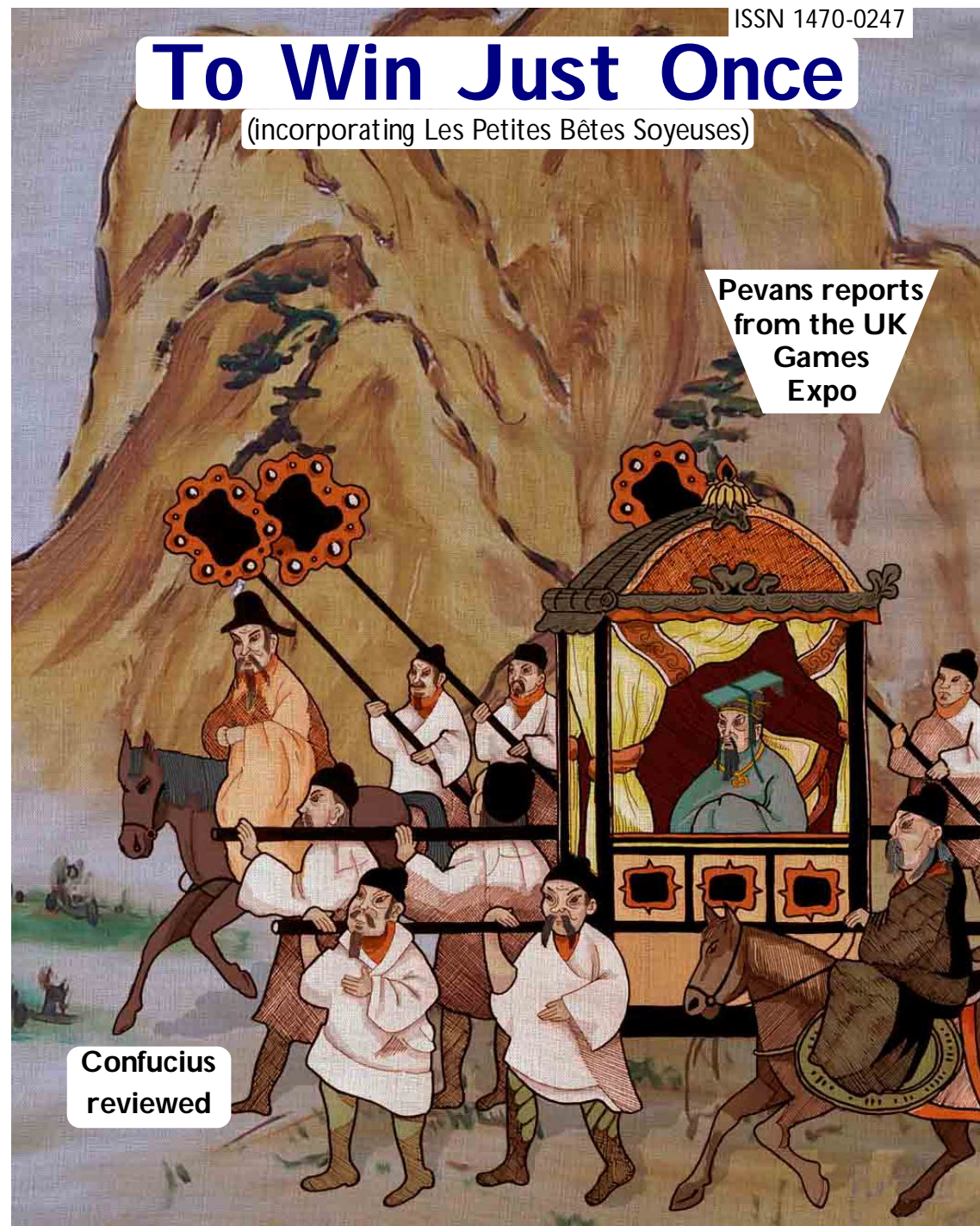
Star Trader Mark Robinson, Steve Lyder are in the queue for the next one. Rules provided.

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To Win Just Once

(incorporating *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*)

Pevans reports
from the UK
Games
Expo



Confucius
reviewed

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Chatter

We don't have Mike's games in this issue as he's on holiday, so this *TWJO* may be a bit shorter than usual. However, Nik Luker has come to my rescue with a review and I have one of my own plus my report from the Games Expo.

Working from home, as I do quite a bit, I'm intrigued by the people who knock on the door during the day. Usually they just get sent away again, but I've noticed a bit of a change since the recession started. There are still people trying to sign me up for their gas/electricity/mobile provider and dodgy lads with selections of scruffy dusters and tea towels. However, I've also had the knife sharpener—a well-spoken, middle aged man and his wife in their van. I thought this kind of thing went out in the Thirties! And then there was the mobile butcher looking for orders. He was clearly aiming at people wanting to fill their chest freezers, which is a more modern approach. Could this be a burst of entrepreneurial activity, prompted by straitened circumstances? If it is, I'm all for it. Somehow, though, setting up as an itinerant knife sharpener doesn't seem to be the obvious response to being made redundant.

Having brought up the subject of the recession, I'm struck by how patchy this is. Clearly, some people and some businesses are suffering badly. But it seems to be business as usual for some and many are only marginally affected. Yet the news is constantly doom, gloom and the dole queue for everybody. As far as I can see, the only effect of this is to worry everybody. They get more cautious, spend less, economic activity declines and hey presto! It's a recession.

June's website stats show no decline in people searching for information on "Feudo", "Viking" and "toy guns" and all ending up on my website. They generally leave pretty quickly, though. A new arrival in the top search terms is "Seasons", which takes people to that game in the Games from Pevans section. I wonder why? Be that as it may, the PDF version of *TWJO* 96 was downloaded 133 times, issue 95 a further 78 times (178 in total), but nobody was interested in issue 94 any more.

Enough of my waffling, let's have someone else.

Letters

That well-known fan of *Snowball Fighting*, Graeme Morris, comments on the just-concluded game of Fictionary Dictionary.

Thanks for the game—I'm afraid I didn't always give my entries as much attention as they deserved. Well done to Andy for such a consistently high standard. BRING BACK SNOWBALL FITE!

Andy Kendall's prize was a copy of *Wampanoag* (I thought a game with an obscure name was appropriate ☺) and he responds.

A quick thanks for the game. I wasn't expecting that. I quite enjoyed Fic Dic and had a couple of good turns towards the end. More luck than judgement! It's also a lot harder if you actually know the meaning of the word to start with—I come across zwitterions at work.

Now if only I understood *En Garde!* half as well...

UK Games Expo 2009

I say this every year, but the Masonic halls of The Clarendon Suites in Birmingham make an unusual setting for a games convention. The building really is a warren with rooms tucked away in odd corners that connect to other rooms that you've already visited. There is plenty of room, though, for trade stands, displays, demos and tournaments. The organisers did another sterling job this year and report that several hundred more people came through the door than last year.

As I was attending with my JKLM hat on (though JKLM shirt would be more accurate), I was busy all weekend demonstrating various games. This means I had limited time for looking round and the games I saw most of were the ones I was demoing! So let me start with these.



Days of Steam was JKLM's major launch at the show—though the game is actually published by Stratamax with JKLM handling production in Europe. I played the game for the first time at Spiel last year and was quite impressed with it. It's a tile-laying game that offers a distinctive take on railway games. Players take it in turns to lay square tiles or to move their locomotive around the network of railway lines the tiles build up. What's different is that you need 'steam' points to move your loco and these come from laying tiles. Hence there are times when you have to lay tiles, even if this helps the other players!

Adding 'town' tiles to the grid brings in coloured cubes, which are worth points if players can deliver them to a town of the same colour. The problem is that laying a town gives everybody else the opportunity to grab the cubes before the turn comes back round to you! This makes for a lot of jockeying for position and building up a head of steam before adding a town to the network. This is a clever game that is more demanding than it first appears, but plays to a satisfactory conclusion in under an hour.

Sector 41 is a new space exploration games from Scimitar Games in the US. It's played over a grid of tiles, initially turned face down, that represents part of the galaxy—sector 41, in fact. Each player has a 'mother ship' tile, which they can move along one edge of the grid. This is home to 'Explorer' ships that players use to explore the sector, turning over tiles they land on. Many of these tiles will shunt the explorer ship further along (or delay it), but players are looking for planets that contain the rare mineral 'Glynium'.

Now the fun really starts as players score points by getting Glynium discs back to their mother ship. However, other players can steal the Glynium *en route*. This is where the different tiles can be really useful—providing a quick route for your ships to get home. It's also where the mother ship's ability to 'fold space' comes in handy. Instead of moving it, you can use your mother ship to shunt a row of tiles, shifting the tile from the far edge to the near edge, *Amaz(e)ing Labyrinth*-style. This is particularly useful when you can bring a far-away Glynium planet next to your mother ship!

The game is enhanced by colourful graphics—based, in part, on images of real outer space phenomena provided by NASA—and neat playing pieces. *Sector 41* requires more thought than I expected as you line up tiles and try to establish useful routes to your mother ship. It's good stuff.

Also from the US (the publisher is Balls Out Entertainment), *Playing Gods* is a bonkers game of smiting the followers of other gods! The board shows the Earth, surrounded by a circular track. Players move their 'god' piece along this, picking up 'Wrath' and 'Conversion' cards. When they land on a portal to a continent, they can use these cards to remove or convert followers of other gods, while the



Sector 41 in play at the Expo

owning player can counter these attacks if they have the right cards. Running out of believers takes a player out of the game and the last god standing wins.

As you can see, this is a very silly game, but provides plenty of opportunity for mayhem. It seemed to go down particularly well with families where the youngsters had great fun smiting their parents' followers! The other attraction of the game is the playing pieces—with the Gatling-wielding Buddha a particular favourite. Okay, it's a not even a slightly deep game, but it does provide some mindless fun.

Having launched at Spiel '08, *Jet Set* (from US publisher Wattsaloag) was not a brand new game, but it's one of my favourites and, I think, the best of Kris Gould's games so far (and they're generally of a pretty high standard). My full review of the game is in TWJO 93, so I won't go on at length here. *Jet Set* is all about establishing airline routes around Europe. Players have to balance income against victory points and, the key to the game, gauge the right time to set up their 'final flight'. An excellent game and well-received at the Expo.

Next to JKLM were the Ragnar Brothers, showing off *Monastery* (see my review in TWJO 90) and the designs for *A Brief History of the World*. This is a re-working of their brilliant *History of the World* and is scheduled for publication in October (and launch at Spiel '09). While the original intention was to streamline and speed up the original game, the re-development has introduced new features and replaced whole sections of the rules. It looks like this will be a radically different game, while retaining the feel of the original. I can't wait...

The Surprised Stare team were on the other side of the Ragnars. This being an odd-numbered year, their new game was a card game designed by Tony Boydell, *Fzzzt!*. This went down well with the Expo crowd and won the show's Best New Card Game Award. The game is about building wacky robots, with players gaining special abilities from the robots they acquired in previous rounds. Each round is a series of auctions, players using the cards in their hands to gain robots and 'Production Units' that can give bonus points at the end of the game. I didn't get the chance to play *Fzzzt!* at the show, but it's high on my list to try.

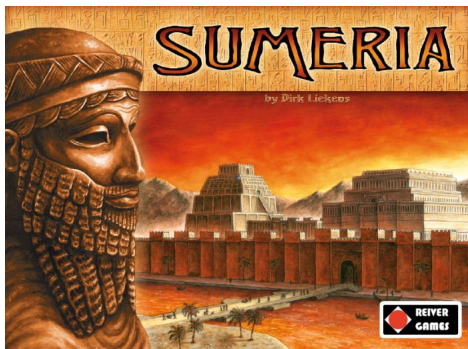
Pete Burley was next in line, showing off *Kamisado* to the UK audience. This is a very colourful, very clever, two-player abstract game and deserved winner of the Expo's Best Abstract Game Award. Played on an 8x8 board, the eight colours are key to *Kamisado*. The colour of the square you move your piece to dictates which pieces your opponent must move next. Fiendish! See my report from Spiel '08 in TWJO 91 for more about this one.

Continuing round the room brings us to *Sumeria*, the new game from Reiver Games. Designed by Diek Liekens, this is a fairly abstract game set in the ancient land of Mesopotamia. The small board is divided into 8 provinces, each with a city, three towns and three villages. Linking the settlements is a network of roads, divided by a river down the middle of the board. Together, these facilitate and constrain movement between the provinces. A set of tiles gives the



current pecking order between the provinces. At the end of each turn, the players with the largest presence in the top three provinces gain tiles, which are worth points at the end of the game.

In each turn, players have three opportunities to place, move or remove one of their pawns. As adding a pawn moves a province up the pecking order, while removing one drops it down the order, this is as much about promoting and demoting provinces as getting pawns into the right place. There is also the problem of running out of room as each province can only hold seven pawns. *Sumeria* is quite a tricky game to get right, but certainly doesn't outstay its welcome, playing to a conclusion in well under an hour.



Across the hall from Reiver was Martin Wallace with the two most recent Treefrog Games. *Waterloo* is the first wargame in the line and a proper wargame it is, too, using wooden figures to good effect. The game reproduces the strategy, tactics and geography of the famous battle. The neat touch is that players can't be sure how much they will be able to get done in a turn. This has the potential of leaving units vulnerable if the player runs out of steam mid-manoeuve. Another one I'm looking forward to trying—not least as it's been some time since I played a full-blooded wargame.

The other game was *Automobile*, the first of this year's Treefrog selection, which I pontificated about in *TWJO* 95. This is now getting plenty of play at the Swiggers group as players wrestle with Martin's take on the early automobile industry in America. It's proving a tough game to master, but is providing plenty of entertainment along the way. The 'loss' cubes you accumulate from less efficient factories and failing to sell what you produce seem to be key to the game. However, constantly upgrading your factories loses you money, too. I'm coming to the conclusion that my original, cautious approach worked best. Definitely the game of the moment.

Across the far side of the room from JKLM was Terror Bull Games, best known for their controversial *War on Terror* board game. Their follow-up is *Crunch—the Game for Utter Bankers*. As the name suggests, this is a game for the times. Players are CEOs of global banks, awarding themselves the biggest bonuses they can get away with. The winner is the player with the most cash at the end, as you'd expect. However, they have to make money first to be able to pay the bonuses—and the crunch tends to interfere with this. This looks like a fun game and I look forward to giving it a go.

Tucked into the corner nearby was Pants on Fire Games. Their first game is, predictably, *Liar Liar*, subtitled "Who Lies Wins". The quickest way I can describe this is as trivia game meets *Call My Bluff*. There are several types of question, depending on the square you land on, all of which involve lying or challenging lies or both. Players move round the board by answering questions or challenging lies, but also need to get away with lying in order to win. *Liar Liar* is a clever twist on the usual trivia game and won the Best Party Game Award at the Expo.

However, the Pants on Fire boys are not content to rest on their laurels. They already had their second game ready to show at the Expo. *Eurobabble* takes the mickey out of our European neighbours. Players may have to assume a particular accent (mock-Swedish anyone?), mime something in the style of a particular nationality, answer a question that's in a European language, or guess the equivalent in a foreign language of an English word. It had me sniggering after looking at a couple of cards, so this could be a hit too.

Cubiko is a different slant on noughts and crosses. The 'board' is a frame with a cloth stretched across it, divided into the familiar 3x3 grid. Players have to bounce a ball into the square they want to place their piece. The problem is getting the ball to stop bouncing! This is a clever way of making noughts and crosses much more competitive and is a really fun family game. So much fun that it won the Best Family/Children's Game Award at the Expo.

I was particularly pleased to see *Great Fire: London 1666* at the Expo. Still in pre-production form, this is a game designed by Richard Denning, one of the



Jet Set in play at the Expo

Expo's organisers. I've played an earlier prototype several times and thoroughly enjoyed it. The subject matter is what you'd expect with players all property owners trying to preserve their buildings from the fire. As the fire is spread by the players, this can be rather tricky! It's not a real gamers' game, but still has plenty to offer gamers as well as being an excellent family game. It was shown at the Expo under the banner of Medusa Games and I hope we'll be seeing a published version soon.

The Best Board Game Award went to the Lamont brothers' sled racing game *Snow Tails*. Originally released in a limited edition on their own label, Frigor Games, at Spiel '08, it was picked up by French publisher Asmodee. They have given the game a big box make-over that looks splendid.

Let me see: who have I missed? Coiled Spring were in attendance with the Gigamic range of good-looking abstract games. Games for the World had Expansion 5 for *The World Cup Game*, completing the set of World Cup tournaments to date. Ludorum Games were back with *Ice Flow* and *Fagin's Gang*. MAG were showing off *Colors* and *Caveman*. If you think I've covered a lot of games and publishers here, bear in mind this is only the board games. I haven't touched on the many role-playing games, miniatures games and trading card games that were on show. Add a huge assortment of retailers and you begin to get an idea of just how much was going on over the weekend. The organisers' explicit ambition is to provide a UK equivalent of the Spiel games fair and I think they're well on the way to doing just that.

The UK Games Expo will be back next year on 4th-6th June 2010. Keep an eye on the website, www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk, to see how things are going.

Confucius reviewed by Pevans

The latest board game from Surprised Stare Games, *Confucius* is still fascinating me. The game is set in China during the Ming dynasty. The players represent families trying to better themselves within the Confucian system espoused by the Imperial government and court. In game terms this means within the three Ministries of the government, in sea expeditions to explore the world and military expeditions to expand the empire. The key to success is the network of obligations between players established by giving gifts. While this is stated in the rules, you only realise just how important this is when you play the game.

To start with, what's in the hefty box? The solidly mounted board shows various areas that are important to the game. In the centre of the board (and the game) are the three Ministries: of Finance (*Hubu*), the Army (*Bingbu*) and Public Works (*Gongbu*). Each has spaces for tiles representing officials and the victory points for becoming Minister and Secretary. Below the Ministries are spaces for

Invasions and Explorations. The former is where armies are placed, along with the military invasions they may be sent on (to score victory points). The latter holds constructed ships and shows expeditions to foreign parts (also worth points). At the top of the board are the space for the Imperial Examinations, a table of the actions available to players and, of course, a victory point track.

Each player has a set of wooden pieces in their colour: army pawns, action cubes and hexagonal marker 'barrels'. They also have a set of gifts (cards) in their colour. Ships are neutral pieces. Money is provided by a deck of cards. Each card shows 1, 2 or 3 coins and 3, 2 or 1 'licences' – each card having four things on it. A smaller set of cards are 'Emperor's Rewards', extra actions that players may earn. There are thick cardboard tiles for the officials who staff the Ministries, some of which are candidates for examination. And cardboard chits for some victory points and the sections of the Great Wall that mark the end of the rounds. There is also an extensive, double-sided player aid for each player. This shows the sequence of play and describes all the actions available to players.

Each round, players have 3-5 actions, depending on how many gifts they have given and received. This is a small range, but an extra action makes a significant difference. Hence, one of the things to do in the first round is to make sure you get four actions next round. You do this by giving (or getting) a gift – and everybody starts the game with one gift (the least valuable) available. Gaining the fifth action requires at least three gifts given/received, so it's not going to happen in the first round. However, I strongly recommend getting to that position.

Players start the round by taking as many cubes as they have actions. However, before they take any actions, one player gets to be Chief Minister. At the start of the game, this is decided at random. After that, the retiring Minister gives the privilege to another player. The new Minister puts one of their cubes aside – they will get the very last action of the round. The round starts, then, with the player to the left of the Chief Minister. Unless there are tactical reasons for making a specific player Chief Minister, the privilege tends to pass to the right, so that the ex-Minister gets the first action of the round.

Players take one action each, placing a cube to show which action (or playing an Emperor's Reward card), until everybody's taken all their actions – ending with the First Minister's final action. You can take the same action more than once – it just needs two cubes if you've already taken the action. Some of the actions are paired, in which case you need two cubes to take either action if you've already taken either action. This, of course, is where the meat of the game is: deciding what actions to take, in what order, and dealing with the consequences of other players' actions.

Probably the most significant action is to bribe a Ministry official. The Ministries provide a significant number of victory points and having the most officials is the way to get them. The bribery cost is shown on each tile and players place a marker, lying down, to show their control. The officials are dished out at random, so it's just luck where the cheap ones end up. An obvious early move is to snap up a cheap official. Once you have an official in a Ministry, you get a discount. The Ministry of Finance gives a discount on bribing other officials (so that's always my priority), the Army Ministry makes licensing Armies cheaper and you get cheaper junks with an official in Public Works.

Paired with Bribing an Official is the action of Securing one. This involves paying the bribe amount again and then standing your marker on its end. There are a



couple of ways of replacing or taking over an official that someone else has bribed, but not a secured official. In the early stages of the game, this is not a threat, as empty spaces in the Ministries have to be filled first. However, as the game moves towards a conclusion, securing an official – particularly one in a strategic position – becomes more attractive.

The other paired actions involve armies and junks. Recruiting an army (which costs licences, not cash) is paired with Invading a Foreign Land (for cash). The former means making one of your armies available, the latter places the army on one of the invasion tiles. This will earn victory points (and sometimes an Emperor's Reward card) if the invasion succeeds – that is, if the invasion tile is filled with armies. There are some tactical options here. One player is unlikely to be able to carry out an invasion on their own. However, once one player is committed, will others help them score points? It may be worth taking the smaller number of victory points to encourage someone else to join you...

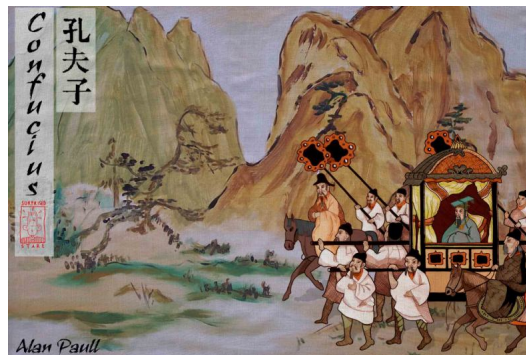
Buying junks costs cash, but sending some on a voyage costs licences. Five junks will complete a voyage to one of the available destinations. Every completed voyage earns an Emperor's Reward card. However, only the first to each destination gets victory points. The cards can be very useful as each provides an additional action. What's more, many of these actions are not generally available, such as bribing someone's (unsecured) official away from them.

The second way of gaining officials in a Ministry is putting a candidate through the Imperial Examinations. One action allows a player to nominate a student, placing a marker on one of the exam spaces. The exam takes place at the end of the round if both student places are filled – or if someone has taken the action to force an exam. The exam involves all players 'coaching' one or other student by paying money: the best-coached student passes the exam. The winner places the candidate tile as an official in a Ministry – the other way of replacing an unsecured official – and secures it with their marker.

I've mentioned giving gifts: there is an action to do this. There is also an action to buy a gift, which involves spending the amount of money shown on the card to make this available to give to someone else. Finally, there are income actions: Tax income gets you two cards. Commercial income gets you cards according to how much money you spend. As money and licences are needed every round, players need to make sure they get some income (think of it like food in *Agricola*). Of course, this eats into the actions available to you, which is one reason it's so useful to have more than three actions in a round.

The game will always end after nine rounds (the Great Wall is complete!), though it will generally end earlier than this. Either because all the candidate officials have been placed or, more usually, because all three Ministries have been

resolved. A Ministry is resolved at the end of the round in which all its officials have been bribed. There is a voting system that has the player with the fewest (or lowliest) officials backing one of the other factions (players) until only two are left. The player with the most officials becomes Minister, the other becomes Secretary and they get victory points for this.



My experience is that most victory points come from the Ministries (4-8 for Minister/Secretary), although a lot can be accumulated from invasions as well (2-5 per army). Fewer points are available from exploration (2-4), but voyages are a very useful way of gaining Emperor's Reward cards. There are a few bonus points available at the end of the game, but these aren't usually significant. The player with the most points wins, of course.

Phew! That's quite a lot of description as the mechanics of *Confucius* are complex. What I've described is a fairly standard action point game where players have lots of choice about what action to take and in what order. There is a premium on planning what you're going to do in a round – and round on round. Players are clearly focussed on the few ways to get victory points, but they have lots of options as to how they get there.

However, what I haven't described are the obligations imposed by gifts and these add a whole new dimension to the game. Essentially, players must support other players who've given them a gift – the most valuable gift taking precedence. In most cases, this support cancels out the gift. Gifts can also be cancelled by transferring a Ministerial official to another player or by giving a higher value gift. This leads to the tactical ploy of keeping a high value gift ready to counter another player.

Gifts define who players must support in Imperial Examinations – this can even mean supporting a candidate against your own! When resolving a Ministry, players must support those who've given them gifts. Crucially, though, a gift can stop another player bribing more officials in a Ministry in opposition to you. All of this means that players not only have to plan their actions, they have to plan for who owes obligations to whom. In practice, this is not difficult, but it may take a game or two to get your head round this. It is important to do so as this really is the key to the game. It's not simply a matter of bribing officials in a Ministry, but of making sure you get support from others when the Ministry is resolved. And this applies through the game.

There is one further use for gifts: to petition the Emperor. This action allows players to present a gift to the Emperor. What they can get for this depends on the value of the gift, but it's something that would otherwise be outside the rules. Like swapping over two armies or taking control of another player's official. This is a very powerful addition to the game and gives the players yet another thing to think about—hence it is suggested for advanced play only.

As I said at the beginning, *Confucius* is a fascinating game. The whole gift-giving mechanism adds another layer to the use-actions-to-do-things-to-get-victory-points game. However, the game remains predictable. You can see what obligations exist and what gifts players have available to create more or cancel obligations. Or what they could do by presenting a gift to the Emperor. There is a lot to think about and success comes from out-maneuvring your opponents. Given all the factors involved, this is difficult to pull off. This makes victory all the sweeter. *Confucius* gets 8/10 on my highly subjective scale.

Confucius was designed by Alan Paull and is published by Surprised Stare Games. It is a strategy board game for 3-5 players, aged 12+, and takes about 2 hours to play.

***Handelsfürsten* reviewed by Nik Luker**

In 2007 Pegasus Spiele released a neat little supply-and-demand filler game by one of the world's top designers. Swamped by all the new releases that year, it slipped under nearly all the usual 'radars' and consequently is not very well known at all. A shame, as *Handelsfürsten—Herren der Meere* (Merchants—Lords of the Sea) is most definitely worthy of your attention.

The game comes in a small, somewhat drab box and consists of 2 packs of cards, a number of coloured cubes, some cardboard coins and a set of rules (German only). Not exactly awe inspiring I grant you, but appearances can be deceptive. The first pack is of nicely illustrated 'goods' cards in six colours (i.e. types) which correspond to the colours of the wooden cubes. The second pack contains fourteen 'ship' cards and six special cards.

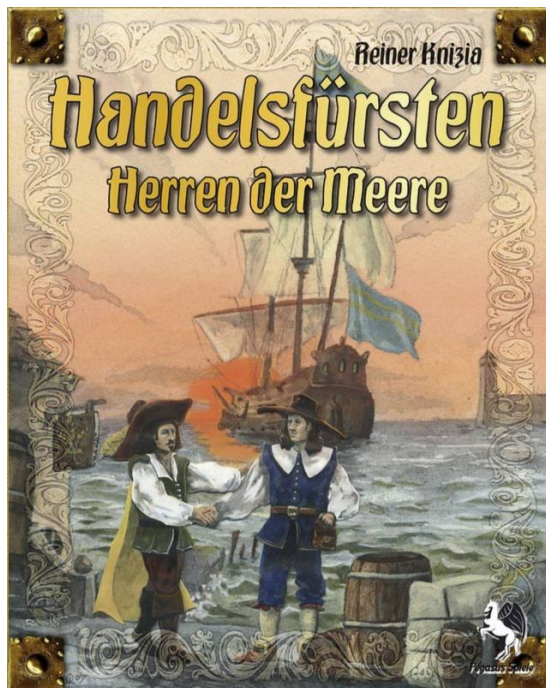
At the start of the game, the goods cards are shuffled and each player receives three of these as a starting hand, plus two ship cards which they place face up in front of them. Six goods cards are then placed face up in the centre of the table to represent the current demand; the remainder are set face down as a draw pile. Each player then chooses and places a coloured cube on each of his ships. Play may then commence and is simplicity itself, the object being to accumulate the most cash. A player's turn consists of two phases and only one action may be taken in each phase. In phase one, a player may either exchange one of his coloured cubes for one from the pool, buy an extra ship or special card (which, of course, come at a price) or pass and go directly to phase two. Here the choices are

either to play goods cards from the hand, thereby initiating a scoring, or to draw two more goods cards to hand.

Scoring is, naturally, the crux of the game and it works like this: a player may play as many goods cards of the same type as he wishes onto the six cards at table centre, choosing which piles he wishes to play to. Then, for each face up card of the colour played which matches a coloured cube on his ships, he receives one coin. It should now be obvious why being able to swap cubes in phase one could be a very useful action! And why gaining an extra ship might help too. The special cards mix things up a bit, allowing extra cards to be drawn, extra income on a scoring or more than one cube to be exchanged, but they don't come cheap so timing their purchase needs careful consideration. The game continues until the draw pile is exhausted, whereupon the player with the most money wins.

There is, of course, a twist. When a scoring is initiated, all players with the relevant coloured cube(s) on their ships score. This makes the game not so much about simply maximising the profit from one's own hand of cards, but rather achieving this goal without benefitting one's opponents whilst attempting to take full advantage of the scorings they initiate. It's a surprisingly tricky act to pull off even with the use of the special cards. Of course, the ideal would be to have six ships with a different coloured cube on each thus ensuring coins at every scoring, but extra ships have to be paid for with money earned and the cash just does not flow fast enough to allow this.

On the whole, the game seems to be well balanced (comment below notwithstanding), end scores usually being quite close, supports 2 to 4 players and plays very smoothly to a conclusion in about 30 minutes. It isn't perfect—I have a few issues with the power of some of the special cards (easily corrected though)—but is a fine example of just how much can be achieved with a very simple set of rules. Its biggest drawback seems to be availability (I could only find three copies at Spiel last year). Thankfully, Pegasus are set to release a second edition, with an English edition from Catalyst Games in the pipeline too,



although the only text on the cards has no effect on gameplay whatsoever. Whether there will be any rules changes made remains to be seen, but if you're looking for a decent, quick filler, I would strongly advise you to pick up a copy.

Oh, and one more thing. The name of the designer. It's Reiner Knizia...

Handelsfürsten was designed by Reiner Knizia and is published by Pegasus Spiele. It is a strategy board game for 2-4 players, aged 8+, and takes about 30 minutes to play.

Science Fiction

Peter F Hamilton is at it again. *The Dreaming Void* is the first volume of another galaxy-spanning adventure. Interestingly, this is set in the same future history as his previous duology (if that's the right term), *Pandora's Star* and *Judas Unchained* (see my reviews in *TWJOs* 57 and 71 for the full force of my enthusiasm). It may be some 1,500 years later, but rejuvenation technology, suspended animation and the ability to transfer consciousness onto computers mean that many of the characters from the earlier books are still around. Technology has moved on, of course, humanity has taken some new forms and there are more alien races around.

The starting point of the plot is the earlier discovery that, unlike many galaxies, ours does not have a black hole at its centre. Instead there is a strange phenomenon called the Void. So strange that intelligent races have been studying it for millennia before humanity finds it. And trying to keep it in check, as the Void is prone to sudden expansions and will eventually devour the galaxy. The prologue to the story has one Inigo arriving to join the human scientists studying the Void alongside the delegations of other races. In his sleep, he dreams the life of a human living inside the Void—something nobody believed was possible.

I mentioned that technology has moved on since the earlier books and nanotechnology is a big part of this. Not only do 'bionics' provide individuals with constant feedback on their health, they allow them to manage it. There is also a way for a community with the right technology to share feelings—and dreams—the 'gaiafield'. Through this medium, many other humans experience Inigo's dreams. And some of them start a religion: the Living Dream.

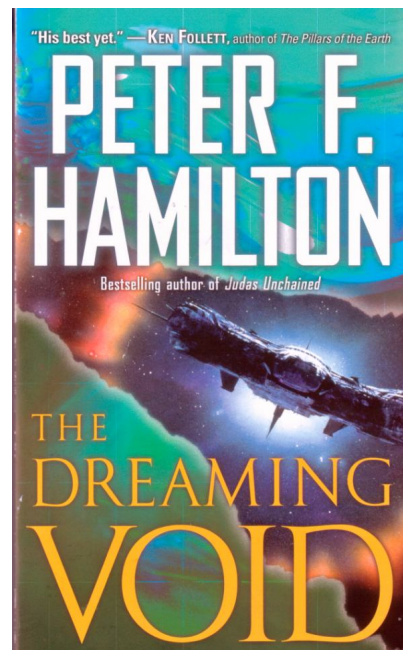
The story proper starts some years later when Inigo's followers (the man himself having disappeared) decide on a mass Pilgrimage to—and, hopefully, into—the Void. The possibility that this would provoke the Void to expand and devour more of the galaxy sets several cats amongst the pigeons. At the same time, new dreams have appeared in the gaiafield, from an unknown Second Dreamer. Cue everybody trying to get their hands on this person. Or find the original Dreamer.

As always there are political divisions and structures within humanity—they these have changed since the earlier books. One faction, the highers, embraces technology and looks forward to eventually ascending to a higher plane. Highers migrate inwards to the centre of humanity—Earth, of course—and join ANA, the community of billions of downloaded humans. ANA is a major force in human politics, but is far from being monolithic. A major feature of the story is the machinations (overt and covert) of factions within ANA through their agents in the physical world—some of whom have no idea what they're doing, let alone who they're doing it for.

As usual, Hamilton tells his story through several viewpoints. This gives the reader a lot more information about what's going on than any of the characters, while emphasising the different factions and viewpoints. It also gives a thorough introduction to the different cultures and ways of life around human space. Some of the viewpoint characters are movers and shakers—including several survivors from the earlier books—but others are simply citizens. Well, that's what they appear to be. To me this is one of the most interesting aspects of the book: learning what life is like for ordinary inhabitants of this future universe.

The plot follows the reactions of several factions of humanity to the announcement of Living Dream's pilgrimage. These include the overt response of the authorities (such as they are), relations with other cultures, the covert response of those trying to locate the Second Dreamer or Inigo, the First Dreamer, the machinations of the Living Dream's new leader and the 'life as usual' response of the general populace.

Interwoven with this far future story are chapters recounting Inigo's dreams. These tell the story of Edeard, a young man with strong psychic powers growing up in a medieval-ish society on an alien world. This could almost be a sword 'n' sorcery tale, except that it's very clearly not magic that is employed by the inhabitants and some of the technology is clearly more than medieval. I have to say, though, that nothing in the dreams seemed to prove that this world is inside the Void. Growing up in a remote village, Edeard is propelled to the centre of this human society by tragedy. Here he begins to realise the full extent of his



The cover to my US edition of *The Dreaming Void*

powers—climaxing with a very public demonstration at the end of the book. There is also a climax in the outside world, where the various hunts reach their bloody conclusions. At the same time, there are hints that there are other things going on that we readers don't know about yet.

Once again, Hamilton's writing grabbed me from the start and the book gallops along at quite a pace. The juxtaposition of the high tech, far future galactic civilisation with the low tech, medieval society on Edeard's planet makes a fascinating contrast. In effect, Hamilton has combined space opera and sword 'n' sorcery fantasy in one book. Brilliant! *The Dreaming Void* is another terrific SF story from Peter F Hamilton and comes highly recommended. The second volume of this story, *The Temporal Void*, is already on my reading pile.

Games Events

Very last call for Manorcon: it starts today, 17th July and runs through to Monday (20th). Lots of games will be played and I'm sure day visitors will be welcome—though family commitments mean I won't be there. See the website for more details: www.manorcon.org.uk

The calendar is then empty of significant board games events for the rest of the summer. There is one role-playing convention, though. Constitution is "a roleplaying, science fiction, fantasy and filk convention ... to be held at New Hall, Cambridge on 31st July-2 August 2009." Details at www.constitution-con.org.uk

This box concentrates on events I expect to attend.

Swiggers: games club that meets every Wednesday evening, upstairs at The Shipwright's Arms, 88 Tooley Street London SE1 (just along from London Bridge station, past the London Dungeon). 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.

Manorcon: July at Stamford Hall, University of Leicester. The biggest board game event in the UK and host to numerous tournaments, including Spiel Champs, the UK Board and Card Games Championship (and qualifier for the European Championships). More information from the website: www.manorcon.org.uk

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

MidCon: a long-running board games event in central Birmingham. 14th-16th November 2008 at the Birmingham City Thistle Hotel. A friendly convention in a decent hotel for board games players. See www.midcon.org.uk for more.

Credits

To Win Just Once issue 97 was written and edited by Pevans. The *LPBS* masthead (page 21) is by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, as are the drawings on pages 22 and 24. The illustration on page 23 is by Bryan Lea and the one on page 24 by Nik Luker. The cover illustration is a detail from the *Confucius* artwork, courtesy of Surprised Stare Games. Pevans took the photos and played with Photoshop.

© Paul Evans, 2009

Pick-a-Low

This is a very simple game. All you have to do is send me a number—a whole number greater than zero (aka, a positive integer). The winner of the round is whoever selects the lowest number that no-one else chooses. Think about it...

Round 1

Thanks to everybody who sent in a number for this first round. The table to the right shows the fine selection of numbers that were chosen.

There were 43 entries in all and I find it fascinating that 6 and 8 were the most popular numbers. (Having said that, 8 was my choice.)

The solitary number 4 was chosen by Simon Burling.

Well done, Simon. Now, what's your next choice?

I don't think we'll get many rounds out of this, but I'd like to try a few more and see how the number choices develop.

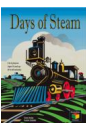
**Send your number to Pevans at 180 Aylsham Drive,
UXBRIDGE UB10 8UF or TWJO@pevans.co.uk
by Friday, 7th August 2009**

Numbers chosen

Number	Picks
1	4
2	2
3	2
4	1
5	2
6	6
7	3
8	7
9	1
11	2
13	3
17	2
20	1
21	1
27	2
37	1
45	1
48	1
58	1

Games from Pevans

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www.pevans.co.uk/Games



Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses 223

Being a postal 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 back page). You will also need a copy of the published rules to *En Garde!* (see www.engarde.co.uk).

**Orders for June 1662 to
Pevans at 180 Aylsham Drive,
UXBRIDGE UB10 8UF or
lpbsorders@pevans.co.uk
by Friday, 7th August 2009**



August 1662

It's the height of summer and Paris is experiencing something of a heatwave. The general lethargy this induces does not extend to Sir Horatio d'Escargot and Sir Roland Pollee d'Eaulee. They have a duel to fight and turn up weapons in hand. D'Escargot's greater expertise with his two-handed sword gives him a slight edge over d'Eaulee and his sabre. There's no subtlety in the way d'Escargot wields his cleaver. He starts slashing. The first one is blocked by d'Eaulee. The second coincides with d'Eaulee's own slash, injuring both men.

This is enough for d'Eaulee and he capitulates. His only response is a grim smile and the two-handed sword swinging round in another slash. Reacting quickly, d'Eaulee blocks this attack. Both men slash again, causing each other further damage. D'Eaulee blocks the next attack, but a further slash knocks him to his knees. He still manages to hit d'Escargot to make it three blows apiece.

D'Eaulee crumples to the ground in a spreading pool of blood. D'Escargot staggers across and raises his sword to finish off his opponent. But d'Eaulee has just enough strength left to brace his weapon. D'Escargot lands his killing blow, only to find d'Eaulee's sword embedded in his ribs. He collapses across the body of his foe. RIP both.

Ranks and Regiments

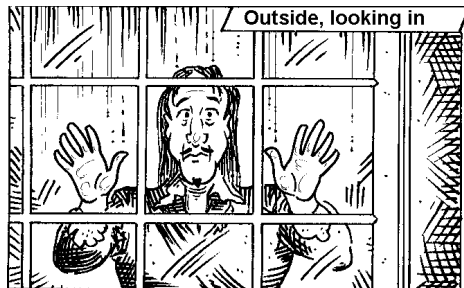
After which there is no trial, of course. Minister of State Charlemagne le Gosse is disappointed: he had found a rather fetching black cap to wear. What's more, he now has a vacancy for Commissioner of Public Safety to add to the other gaps in his cabinet. However, the sudden death of the Adjutant-General (Lieutenant-General d'Escargot held the position), is good news for Lt-Gen Gustav Ind. His application to lead a Division is no longer blocked and he takes over as commander of Second Division instead of Guards Brigadier. In the Horse Guards, Brigadier Herve d'Conde tries to appoint a Brigade Major. Neither Antoine Dubeque nor Thierry Fitoux is interested in the job.

Zachary The Money Goes sends word from the front to ensure that the current Captain of the Cardinal's Escort retains his job for the final month of the military year. And plenty of newcomers sign up for army life. Hearing that the French army is fighting the English, Bragen Declan signs up for the 53rd Fusiliers. Paul le Gros joins the same regiment, after being turned down by Jacques de la Boite for the Picardy Musketeers and by Quasi Le Bossu for the Princess Louisa Light Dragoons. Neither recruit buys a rank, preferring to serve as private soldiers. Though le Gros has been adequately funded by Zachary The Money Goes.

The Picardy Musketeers do gain a couple of recruits, though. De la Boite admits Gerald Redoux, who buys a Captaincy, and Jean-Luc de Picardy, who takes the rank of Subaltern. Chris P Bacon takes on Willem de Biest for the Grand Duke Max Dragoons, where he becomes a Subaltern. The highest ranked recruit is Giles Etraseur. He joins the Crown Prince Cuirassiers—using a little influence to oil the wheels—as a Major, after borrowing more than enough cash. The one failure is Alexander Denton, who also applies to the CPCS, but fails to get in. He, at least, is able to remain in Paris, while the rest board ships to join the Armies in Africa. Perhaps he'll get the chance to spend all the money he borrowed to finance his military career.

Carousing and Courting

It is not a rewarding month in Paris for recent arrival Alexander Denton. It starts well enough with a visit to the Bawdyhouses for a drink and a little female company. The remaining weeks involve a tour of Paris's clubs. Alexander is not able to enter any of them, though, as he hasn't taken the simple step of actually applying to join one. The resulting decline in his social standing reduces his options for joining a club next month.



The Bawdyhouses' only other visitor in August is Patrick Declan. After two weeks practising his knife throwing, he skulks around the red light district for a while before entering one of the establishments for a drink and female company.

Roland Moulin spends most of his month—three weeks to be precise—in the gym with his rapier. His first week is in the more salubrious setting of Hunter's where he has the company of Mlle Sue Briquet. Sean Sondamour practises his sabre techniques for a couple of weeks, but finds all this physical exertion just too strenuous. He departs for the Fleur de Lys, bringing Ella Fant with him, and stays there for the rest of the month.

Sean finds a few other people in the Fleur. Foremost of these is the Minister of State, Count Charlemagne le Gosse, who has Lois de Low on his arm. They remain in the cool interior of the club for the whole month. Charlemagne receives a messenger from His Majesty, requiring him to resume his duties as Keeper of the Royal Spittoon next month. Field Marshal Revaulvin d'Or is in the Fleur for most of that time, accompanied by Katy Did. His one excursion is to the gym for a week's practice with his sabre. The one time Revaulvin isn't there, Beppe de Marko pops in to the Fleur. He is showing off his new companion, Mlle Kathy Pacific. It's taken him two weeks to win her affections and now he has a matter to settle with General Jacques Shitacks, Kathy's previous beau. Beppe takes himself off to sharpen his sabre skills to conclude August.



This leaves Armand de Luce. He spends his time with the ladies. Well, with one particular lady. A week practising rapier finishes his month.

Peril and Promotion

There's one month left of the campaign season, so First Army has just this time to consolidate the new French holdings in Africa. Unfortunately, the natives have other ideas. The Royal Foot Guards are forced to retire in a hail of arrows and spears. Acting commander Lt-Colonel Egon Mad 2 pockets 50 crowns despite this. Major Indie Spencible gets three times as much and is Mentioned in Despatches as a result ("chap has a knack for getting rich ... slowly").

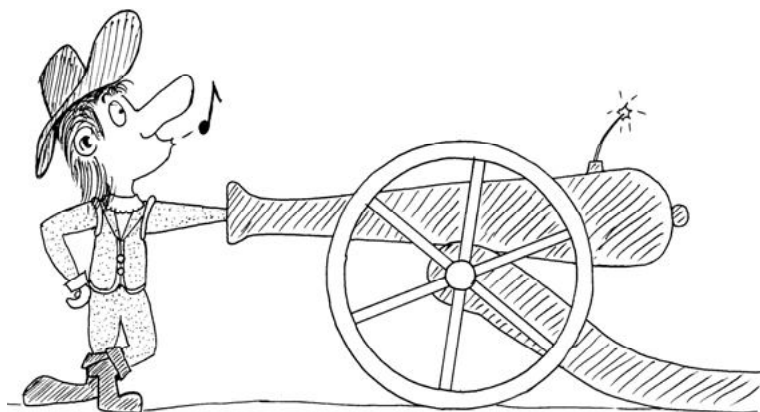
The other Guards regiments cover their comrades' retreat. Brigadier-General Jean Laissez Faire, in command of the Cardinal's Guard, grabs a little cash and receives a Mention. This brings him the title of Baron, which must be a satisfactory conclusion to the campaign. Bdr-Gen Zachary The Money Goes also

goes in to the Despatches as commander of the King's Musketeers. At the very end of the month, he gets command of the Guards Brigade. Major Jacques de Gain finds a new parting in his hair as a spear gets a little too close for comfort. After this, he keeps his head down and gets no reward. Captain Mouton Rothschild spots an opportunity. A brisk trade in commemorative spears nets him over 200 crowns and a Mention in Despatches.

RFG Bdr-Gen Averell d'Alton is acting Guards Brigadier. The sudden attack takes him by surprise and only his breastplate saves him from a nasty heartburn when an arrow smacks into his chest. He walks away with a few hundred crowns and a Mention in Despatches. RFG Major Roget de Saurus is his Brigade Major, but gets no reward this month.

The Dragoon Brigade supports the Guards. The Princess Louisa Light Dragoons aren't much help as they bolt for the ships home. Grand Duke Max's Dragoons hold the line and enable an orderly retreat. Subaltern Willem de Biest survives his baptism of fire without reward. Brigadier Devlin Carnate finds a couple of hundred crowns to add to his fortune and is Mentioned in the Despatches. He assumes command of First Division as his final act of the campaign.

It's not a good month for First Division. Divisional Adjutant Benedict d'Over gets a bit too close to the action. It's only a flesh wound, though and he is able to make his escape with a hundred crowns worth of goodies. The Cavalry Division has the job of protecting First Army's flanks. A job that is made trickier by First Division's rapid retreat. Commander Lt-Gen Yves Bretheauteque has his rank made permanent for pulling this off. He adds 150 crowns to his war chest, too. His Adjutant, PLLD Colonel Quasi Le Bossu, follows the money and gets twice as much cash, but nothing else.



RECKLESS BRAVERY

The Horse Guards earn their pay this month as English forces make a concerted attack from the north. Brigadier Herve d'Conde faces certain death when a counter-attack leaves him facing the mouth of an English cannon. The artilleryman applies the lighted match. The cannon goes phut! And the cavalry charge home! There's a fulsome Mention in Despatches for Lt-Gen d'Conde, who makes nearly 500 crowns selling off "one English cannon, slightly used".

Colonel Swender de Jewel leads the Dragoon Guards to gain a promotion to (brevet) Brigadier-General. He has a nice line in souvenir red coats that brings in a cool thousand crowns. The Queen's Own Carabiniers do just as well. Lt-Col Antoine Dubeque does best: there's a Mention in Despatches, well over 500 crowns of loot and a Knighthood for him. Major Thierry Fitoux gets none of these. In fact, he gets nothing. However, there's a Mention for Captain Luc Around ("finely buffed helmet—quite remarkable when he's in the middle of the jungle").

Things are more peaceful on the southern flank where the Heavy Brigade is in charge. Brigadier Pierre Cardigan adds just under 500 crowns to his funds. New Major Giles Etraseur serves ably with the Crown Prince Cuirassiers, but is overlooked by friend and foe alike. General Gar de Lieu is disappointed that First Army hasn't done better, but at least he's several hundred crowns richer. There's a Mention in Despatches for him and another for his Adjutant, Bdr-Gen Coeur Jette. Jette pockets a nominal hundred crowns.

Forts and Feathers

For Second Army, August is a successful month. The English fort they have been besieging capitulates as the Frontier regiments storm across its depleted ramparts. This is a major feather in the cap of the Field Marshal-to-be, General Jacques Shitacks. The General joins in the looting enthusiastically, taking the best part of 1,500 crowns away with him. This is boosted by more than 50% thanks to a donation from Chris P Bacon. And both men send money back to Paris to pay off their debts. The cash goes with his two Mentions in Despatches, which in turn bring Shitacks the title of Marquis. Bdr-Gen Bacon serves as Army Adjutant. He, too, is Mentioned twice and his share of the booty comes to 1,400 crowns. However, there's no title for him. He ends the month taking command of Dragoon Brigade for the journey home. Lt-Gen Euria Humble serves with Frontier regiment 4, the only Frontier regiment that doesn't get in on the looting. There's nothing for Humble.

Ports and Privates

Third Army has established a secure base for the French operations and this has become quite a decent port. Their final job is securing the departure of the troops, which goes well, despite the odd skirmish. One of these involves the 53rd Fusiliers, who see off an English detachment with a few volleys. For the troops,

this is something of a score draw: Private Bragen Declan survives; Private Paul le Gros doesn't. RIP.

The firefight is too hot for 13th Fusiliers, though, and they are quick to embark for the voyage back to France. Brevet Lt-Colonel Pierre LeFart is acting commander and is Mentioned in Despatches ("out of his depth"). He gets his full rank. This provides a space for a new Major, which goes to Captain Ali Vouzon. He may only be brevetted to the rank, but he still needs a couple more horses. He is also Mentioned. The mixed results for Second Foot Brigade bring Brigadier Johnny Sais-Pas a Mention. He makes the most of the opportunities for a little plundering and grabs well over 500 crowns.

There is little opportunity and little reward for First Foot Brigade as their month is relatively peaceful. Lt-Col Ilk Lamore Bartat of the Royal Marines is acting Brigadier and is amused to find his Brigade Major is Colonel Jacques de la Boite of the Picardy Musketeers. However, neither has any reward this month. Nor is there anything for acting RM commander Major Jacques Blanc. The drama in the PMs is when Captain Gerald Redoux slips on the quayside and falls into the harbour. Subaltern Jean-Luc de Picardy dives in after him, but can only pull out his body after Captain Redoux is caught between the stone wall and a ship. RIP. Subaltern de Picardy sees his name go into the Despatches.

Third Foot Brigade also comes under attack by English forces seeking revenge for the loss of their fort. The combined firepower of Musketeers and Arquebusiers sees off the attack. Colonel Tomas le Matelot is brevetted to Bdr-General for his leadership of the 4th Arquebusiers. A Mention in Despatches accompanies this and brings him a pat on the back. Of more practical use is 400 crowns of loot. 27th Musketeer Colonel Warren Peece is also promoted to (brevet) Bdr-Gen and gets command of the Brigade. Over 500 crowns finds its way to his personal account. Major Rex de Leon is promoted to Lt-Colonel in the regiment and loots the best part of 500 crowns. There is a pat on the back for him.

Finally able to command a Division, Lt-Gen Gustav Ind gets the promotion to full Lt-Gen that he is after while leading Second Division. He gains some loose change as booty and is Mentioned in Despatches. His campaign is topped with elevation to the title of Baron. ❖



Press

Announcements

I am looking for an experienced Lieutenant-Colonel to take up the position of my Aide. The role will be very challenging and involve visiting all the best clubs and parties. Skills needed will include small talk, flattery, looking genuinely amused and interested at all times, and, of course, looking after my drinks and nibbles! Oh yes, there will also be some military paperwork to take care of. All in all, a great opportunity. Please apply to Military HQ.

Yours,

† Field Marshal Elect Jacques
Shitacks

Ministry of Information Announcement:

Ungodly forces having interfered with the State Ministry communication systems, Minister Charlemagne le Gosse may have seemed to be frozen with a sincere smile recently in the tabloid rag VousTube. The Board-mother concerned has been rooted out and rendered to Martinique for interrogation. The MoS wishes to convey his apologies to any who may have been trying to use the Ministry communication systems and assures us that a new mother-of-the-board has been employed and trained at extreme expense to allow future communications to flow smoothly.

Applications for all vacant posts including Ministries without Portfolio, are invited for September and October.

To those newly arrived in Paris:

The Cardinal's Guard is the leading regiment in the kingdom of France. Who else has God's own hand to protect their backs on the battlefield and to soften the occasional jump from a fair damsel's balcony?

The Cardinal's Escort is needing new members!! Consider your choices well and apply today!

His Eminence will grant you his blessings.

QLB requires men of courage and good heart for the Princess Louisa Light Dragoons, in particular a new Regimental Adjutant. Applications to PLLD Barracks. Bursaries available to the right applicant.

Despatches from the Front

Brother,

The Frogs are fin'ly doing somfin worthwhile with their armies. Wish I'd known a couple of months ago, I'd a bin out there all along.

Couldn't find ya in any o' the usual dives, so had to sign up wi'out ya. Should be back in time to second ya tho, but best get s'm'ore practice in if I 'er ya.

If yer had the same idea as me, I'll see ya out in Africa.

Stay safe 'an don't let the buggers grind ya down,

† Bragen

Have at you, foul villains—I spit in your face!

- Heroic Cry of the 2nd Foot Brigade

Joke of the Month in PLLD ranks:

How do the Officers of the Gascon Regiment find their sheep in long grass?

Very, Very Entertaining!

To Brigadier Devilin Carnate

Dear Boss,

Congratulations on your promotion and appointment as the Dragoon Brigade's Boss. Me and the boys of the PLLD promise not to let you down. You have been like a father to us all and are welcome back to visit anytime.

You have our best wishes,

† PLLD Colonel Quasi Le Bossu and junior officers

Matters of Honour

Challenge to Sir Horatio d'Escargot Sir,

I find your total dismissal of my repeated applications for a Divisional command position to be extremely rude. I have written to you, both privately and publicly, and repeatedly presented my command potential to you and yet you have not even had the common decency to write and inform me of your decision to refuse me such a command. I find the stonewalling you have given me and the repeated rudeness ample cause to challenge you to a duel. I will place the actualization of such a duel to the [citizens of] Paris but, should they decide in my favour, then I will see you on the first of September.

Yours, in honour,

† Sir Gustav Ind

Social

Party!

To celebrate the successes of the last campaign and commiserate our losses, I will be hosting a party in Week 1 & 2 of Sept for all officers of Brev Brigadier-General and above and their ladies. I would also like to invite Viscount Revaulvin d'Or as my personal guest.

Yours,

† Field Marshal Elect Jacques Shitacks

Quasi Le Bossu announces a concert to be held in Hunter's in Week 1 of October 1662 to celebrate the life and times of Aloysius Gnomeclencher. The Boozers and Bellringers club will be performing and Alison and I will be holding open auditions sometime (QLB will let Bellringers past and future know the week(s) when he returns from Africa) in September 1662—have you the Balls and Bells to join us? Applications by post to QLB, Hunter's Club

Dauphin's Derby

To welcome France's brave soldiers back to Paris, His Highness the Crown Prince announces his second annual horse race. Officers of the rank of Captain and above are invited to join His Highness at the Prix d'Or in the last week of September.

1000 crown purse for the winner!

Be there or be frowned on!

Personal

Dear Field Marshal d'Or,

It has been an honour and a pleasure to be your Aide, but all good things must end. I'm sure the increase to my military skills during this time is no coincidence.

Your friend

† Swender de Jewel

My Dear General Shitacks,

The problem with your proposal is that, should M. Le Bossu survive the experiment, the bell round his neck will ensure he will always be found and surely that is the last thing we want.

Your compliments I will always welcome and your good regards, but I fear M. Le Bossu is beyond redemption (and, indeed, sanity). Oh, and congratulations on your promotion to Field Marshal, I can think of no better man to organise the army and spread the benefits of French civilisation...

† Field Marshal d'Or, Soldier of France

Ere', Bragen, what would you be doin' at the start of September? See, I could do with a bit of 'elp since I seem to 'ave got merself into a spot of bother. I did all right, see, with that Ada tart (the one who turned yer down—Ma did always say she shouldn'a dropped you on yer face as a babel!) and her pimp is seeking to pick a fight with me over getting it fer free. Since he'll probably 'ave a gang of 'is mates along when the fight kicks off, can you watch me back fer me?

† Paddy

Dear Monsieur Bacon

Thank you for employing me to look into this mysterious case. I came up against much bureaucracy in my investigation, but what I appear to have discovered is that Emile Fitoux did an NMR. Some weird letters for being late, though clearly not for his own funeral. You did all that was expected of an excellent Regimental Commander, allowing him to go along with his regiment. Unfortunately, due to this NMR, some official decided to post him to the Frontier Regiment instead of your fine Regiment. When I pressed for more answers as to why, from one official I got the answer of "Shit happens". I would advise you to not pursue this as the department is normally extremely efficient and well thought of.

The only consolation I can offer is that his cousin, who is from a much better background, appears to now be based in Paris. Though it would appear he is rather upset with you, as you can see rather erroneously from my investigation.

Lessons learned from this sorry affair are: don't send your messages late.

Your humble servant,

† Jacques Poirot

Dear Jacques,

Thank you for your report and I will take your advice on board. I hope the 20 Crowns you received will be well spent. I do like your accent and traditional moustache. I wonder if it will still be the fashion in 300 odd years time?

Yours sincerely,

† Chris P Bacon

Quasi Le Bossu to the Declan Brothers
My old friend Madame Fifi le
Whiplash of the Maison du Pain,
Montmartre, informs me that youboys
have wonderful singing voices and
even better you like the fine wine—
sounds like you are ideal candidates
for my Boozers and Bellringers! I will
be holding auditions in September
1662—I do hope you will consider
lending your talents to my little club
as our singing is not our strong point,
until we have drained a barrel or two
at which point we have the voice of
angels... well, sounds like that to me.

Look forward to meeting you boys,
† Quasi

*Madame Fifi in the 'House of
Bread'? Shurely shome mistake!*
† Le Roi

To whom it may concern:

Why is nothing being done re the
infestation of rats in our glorious
capital? Two rather large vermin have
been scavenging while real men have
been abroad fighting for King and
Country. These filthy Irish Pikeys
should be rounded up and
exterminated. Upon my return I will
do my upmost [sic] to see it done.

† Jacques Blanc

Dear Field Marshal Elect Baron
Shitacks

Many congratulations on your
promotion to Field Marshal. I am sure
France will continue its triumphs
under such great leadership.

Your honoured Army Adjutant,
† Chris P Bacon

Cher Etienne,
What a mess I've made of my first
weeks here ... you would not have
recognised me, so foul did I become. I
was stricken with a malady—I swear
it was not wine/women/song—and
spent weeks in a fitful turmoil. But
now I am in love ... I heard a sweet
song which drew me to the house of a
beautiful lady. The Eternal Feminine
is better medicine than an old
guidwife's foul concoction and I feel
soooo much better ... scrubbed up, I'm
now on the hunt...

Your loving brother,
† Armand

Mon Cher Col Sais-Pas,
Since joining (with the Baron's most
gracious assistance) the 13F, and
having had experience of the regiment
in actual combat, I find myself forced
to comment that the current
incumbent of the post of regimental
adjutant could not really be described
as being "really with us". He is, to put
it bluntly, a bit of a non-entity. I could
find nobody who could even go so far
as to bring his name to mind.
May I humbly put forward myself for
appointment in September as a worthy
replacement for this 'cypher'.

Your most humble servant,
† Ali Vouzon

Poetry Corner

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

1 By the hope within us springing,
Herald of to-morrow's strife;
By that sun, whose light is bringing
Chains or freedom, death or life

Oh! remember life can be
No charm for him, who lives not free!
Like the day-star in the wave,
Sinks a hero in his grave,
'Midst the dew-fall of a nation's tears.
2 Happy is he o'er whose decline
The smiles of home may soothing
shine,
And light him down the steep of years:
But oh, how blest they sink to rest,
Who close their eyes on victory's
breast!
3 O'er his watch-fire's fading embers
Now the foeman's cheek turns white,
When his heart that field remembers,
Where we tamed his tyrant might.

Never let him bind again
A chain like that we broke from then.
Hark! the horn of combat calls
Ere the golden evening falls,
May we pledge that horn in triumph
round.*

4 Many a heart that now beats high,
In slumber cold at night shall lie,
Nor waken even at victory's sound:
But oh how blest that hero's sleep,
O'er whom a wondering world shall
weep!

Bragen Declan, one of many songs
inflicted on his comrades while on
campaign

Points Arising

**Next deadline is
Friday 7th August 2009**

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 characters or
NPCs or leave positions vacant).

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

As you'll see in the Press, the Crown
Prince is sponsoring a horse race in
week 4 of September for characters

with the rank of Captain and above.
This counts as Toadying to Prinny—
check the house rules for details.

The following didn't get their orders in
on time ("No Move Received") and
suffered the consequences.
JB Jacques Blanc (Dominic Howlett)
has NMR'd. Total now 1
PLF Pierre LeFart (Olaf Schmidt) has
NMR'd. Total now 1

EM2 (Tym Norris) was floated as he's
"been rushed off his feet"

PTIB (Barry Townsend) was floated as
he's on holiday

SDL (Guy Arnold) was floated because
of his continuing exam and study
commitments

X4 (Aaron Sibley) got the benefit of the
doubt and was floated

We welcome Bill Howells and Charles Popp to the game. Have fun, guys!

The *En Garde!* rules are available to LPBS players at a reduced rate: see any month's Points Arising web page at www.pevans.co.uk/LPBS; or send a cheque (payable to Margam Evans Limited) for £7 (inc postage to UK addresses) to LPBS, 180 Aylsham Drive, Uxbridge UB10 8UF.

There's a Yahoo! group for *En Garde!* players that provides a forum for players of different games to swap stories and ideas. Sign up and get talking at: <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/EnGardePlayers/>

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 should be able to use any press. It also reassures me 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

Announcements

Averell d'Alton applies for Brigadier of Guards Brigade
 Averell d'Alton applies for Army Quarter Master Gen. of First and Second Armies
 Alexander Denton applies for Brigadier Major of Heavy Brigade
 Alexander Denton applies for Aide to General
 Ali Vouzon applies for Regiment Adjutant of 13F
 Benedict d'Over applies for Division Adjutant of First Division
 Chris P Bacon applies for Brigadier of Dragoon Brigade
 Devlin Carnate applies for Division Commander of Cavalry Division
 Devlin Carnate applies for Inspector General of Cavalry and of Infantry

Devlin Carnate applies for Adjutant General
 Devlin Carnate applies for Minister without Portfolio
 Devlin Carnate applies for Minister of War
 Euria Humble applies for Province Mil. Governor
 Euria Humble applies for City Military Governor
 Euria Humble applies for Minister of War
 Gar de Lieu applies for Army Commander of First and Second Armies
 Gar de Lieu applies for Minister without Portfolio
 Gar de Lieu applies for Minister of War

Gustav Ind applies for Division Commander of First, Second, Cavalry and Frontier Divisions
 Gustav Ind applies for Inspector General of Cavalry and of Infantry
 Gustav Ind applies for Adjutant General
 Herve d'Conde applies for Province Mil. Governor
 Herve d'Conde applies for Division Commander of First, Second, Cavalry and Frontier Divisions
 Herve d'Conde applies for City Military Governor
 Herve d'Conde applies for Inspector General of Cavalry and of Infantry
 Herve d'Conde applies for Adjutant General
 Herve d'Conde applies for Commnr. of Public Safety
 Herve d'Conde applies for Chancellor of Exchequer
 Herve d'Conde applies for Minister without Portfolio
 Herve d'Conde applies for Minister of Justice
 Jacques de Gain applies for Brigade Major of Guards Brigade
 Jacques de Gain applies for Aide to General
 Jacques de Gain applies for Division Adjutant of First, Second, Cavalry and Frontier Divisions
 Jacques de Gain applies for Aide to Field Marshal
 Jean-Luc de Picardy applies for Aide to Brigadier
 Jacques Shitacks applies for Chancellor of Exchequer

Jacques Shitacks applies for Minister without Portfolio
 Jacques Shitacks applies for Minister of Justice
 Jacques Shitacks applies for Minister of War
 Johnny Sais-Pas applies for Brigadier of 2nd Foot Brigade
 Pierre Cardigan applies for Brigadier of Heavy Brigade
 Quasi Le Bossu applies for Division Adjutant of Cavalry Division
 Quasi Le Bossu applies for Army Adjutant of First and Second Armies
 Rex de Leon applies for Brigade Major of 3rd Foot Brigade
 Revaulvin d'Or applies for Army Commander of First, Second and Third Armies
 Revaulvin d'Or applies for Minister of War
 Swender de Jewel applies for Brigadier of Horse Guards Brigade
 Thierry Fitoux asks NPC Colonel of Queen's Own Carabiniers to resign
 Yves Vrai Bretheauteque applies for Province Mil. Governor
 Yves Vrai Bretheauteque applies for Division Commander of First, Second, Cavalry and Frontier Divisions
 Yves Vrai Bretheauteque applies for City Military Governor
 Yves Vrai Bretheauteque applies for Inspector General Cavalry
 Yves Vrai Bretheauteque applies for Inspector General Infantry
 Yves Vrai Bretheauteque applies for Adjutant General

Applications

This shows the applications announced in the order in which they will be resolved.

Minister of War: DC, EH, GdLi, JS, RdO

Minister of Justice: HdC, JS

Minister without Portfolio: DC, GdLi, HdC, JS

Chancellor of the Exchequer: HdC, JS

Commissioner of Public Safety: HdC

Army Commander: GdLi (both), RdO (both)

Adjutant-General: DC, GI, HdC, YVB

Inspector-General of Infantry: DC, GI, HdC, YVB

Inspector-General of Cavalry: DC, GI, HdC, YVB

City Military Governor: EH, HdC, YVB

Division Commander: DC (Cavalry), GI (all), HdC (all), YVB (all)

Provincial Military Governor: EH, HdC, YVB

Army Quartermaster-General: AdA (both)

Brigadier: AdA (Guards), CPB (Dragoon), JSP (2nd Foot), PC (Heavy), SdJ (Horse Guards)

Army Adjutant: QLB (both)

Aide to Field Marshal: JdG

Division Adjutant: BdO (1st), JdG (all), QLB (Cavalry)

Aide to General: AIDn, JdG

Brigade Major: AIDn (Hvy), JdG (Guards), RdL (3rd Foot)

Regimental Adjutant: AV (13F)

Aide to Brigadier-General: JLdP

Duels

Results of last month's duels:

Horatio d'Escargot killed Roland Pollee d'Eaulee who killed him too.

Grudges to be settled next month:

Stan Dandy Liver (Cutlass, Seconds SS, adv.) has cause with Jacques Shitacks (Cutlass, Seconds JSP, 2 rests) for pinching Kathy.

Devlin Carnate (Rapier, adv.) has cause with Paul le Gros (Rapier, 1 rests) for pinching Angelina.

Jacques Blanc (Cutlass, 3 rests) has cause with Patrick Declan (Dagger, Seconds BD, adv.) for pinching Ada.

Jacques Shitacks (Cutlass, Seconds JSP, adv.) has cause with Beppe de Marko (Sabre, Seconds ZTMG, 2 rests) for pinching Kathy.

"Adv." shows who (if anyone) has the advantage in Expertise: his first duelling sequence need only contain six Actions.

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.

New Characters

Bill Howell gets the Bastard son of a Merchant: Init SL 2; Cash 135; MA 6; EC 3 (JLdP).

Charles Popp gets the Bastard son of a well-to-do Gentleman: Init SL 3; Cash 225; MA 4; EC 1 (GR).

Graeme Wilson gets the Second son of a very wealthy Merchant: Init SL 3; Cash 500; MA 2; EC 3 (X1).

Pete Card gets the Second son of a Peasant: Init SL 2; Cash 10; MA 4; EC 3 (X2).

Charles Popp gets the Second son of an Impoverished Knight: Init SL 6; Cash 40; MA 3; EC 2 (X3).

Mike Dommett gets the Bastard son of a well-to-do Gentleman: Init SL 3; Cash 225; MA 4; EC 4 (X5).

Tables

Other Appointments

King's Escort: Ensign __	Captain __	Shows who holds appointments outside military units: ID for Characters, N for NPC, __ for vacant, CPS for additional posts held by the CPS.
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 __		
Chancellor of the Exchequer __	Minister of Justice __	
Minister of War __	Minister of State CIG	

Frontier Regiments

(Defence for Sept-Nov)

	F1	F2	F3	F4	RNHB
Colonel	N3	N5	N7	N3	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.

The Greasy Pole

ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank, Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
CIG	Count Charlemagne le Gosse	26	72	Comfy	General/State Min.	14	Lois	Flr	2	Neil Packer
ZTMG	Count Zachary The Money Goes	25	F	Rich	B.Bdr-General KM/Gds Brigadier	14		Flr	4	Gerald Udowiczenko
SS	Marquis Sean Sordamour	23	60	Comfy	General/Min w/o Port	5	Ella	Flr	2	Pete Holland
SDL	Count Stan Dandy Liver	23	45	Rich	Lt-General/War Minister	11		Flr	4	Guy Arnold
DC	Baron Devlin Carnate	23	F	Withy	B.Lt-General/1st Div Commandr	6		Flr	2	Bruno Gordan
RdO	Viscount Revalvin d'Or	22	55	Withy	Fld Marshal	13	Katy	Flr	4	Jerry Spencer
EH	Earl Euria Humble	21	F	OK	B.Lt-General/City Mil. Gov	15		Flr	5	Matthew Wale
JS	Marquis Jacques Shitacks	21	F	Comfy	Fld Marshal/2nd Army Commndr	3		Flr	4	David Olliver
GdLi	Marquis Gar de Lieu	21	F	OK	General/1st Army Commndr	3		Flr	4	Bill Hay
BdM	Viscount Beppe de Marko	19	44	Filty	Bdr-General	17	Kathy	Flr	2	Mark Moores
GI	Baron Gustav Ind	19	F	Comfy	Lt-General/2nd Div Commandr	6		Flr	5	Ashley Casey
AdA	Sir Averell d'Alton	17	F	OK	B.Bdr-General RFG	5		Both	4	Martin Jennings
HdE	Sir Horatio d'Escargot	17	RIP							Graeme Wilson
RdS	Baron Roget de Saurus	17	F	Comfy	Major RFG/Gds Brigade Maj.	10		Both	2	Gerry Sutcliff
BdO	Benedict d'Over	15	F	Comfy	Lt.Colonel KM/1st Div Adjutant	9		Both	4	Mark Stretch
RPdE	Sir Roland Pollee d'Eaulee	14	RIP							Pete Card
SdJ	Sir Swender de Jewel	14	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General DG/FMshl's Aide	5		Both	1	Ray Vahey
JLF	Baron Jean Laissez Faire	13	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General CG	2		Both	3	Filipe Silva
IS	Baron Indie Spencible	12	F	Comfy	Major RFG/Min w/o Port	6		Hunt	1	Charles Burrows
HdC	Baron Herve d'Conde	12	F	Comfy	B.Lt-General/HGds Brigadier	11		Both	4	Simon Burling
YVB	Yves Vrai Bretheauteque	12	F	Comfy	Lt-General/Cav Div Commandr	4			1	Chris Boote
JdIB	Jacques de la Boite	12	F	OK	Colonel PM/1 F Brigade Maj.	1		Hunt	5	Justin Key
JSP	Baron Johnny Sais-Pas	12	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General 13F/2 F Brigadier	9			4	Mike Bird
EM2	Baron Egon Mad 2	11	F	Comfy	Lt.Colonel RFG	6			2	Tym Norris
TF	Thierry Fitoux	11	F	OK	Major OOC	7			1	Timothy Hunt
QLB	Quasi Le Bossu	11	F	OK	Colonel PLLD/Cav Div Adjutant	6		Hunt	6	Mark Cowper
AD	Sir Antoine Dubeque	11	F	Comfy	Lt.Colonel OOC	9		Hunt	2	Andrew Burgess
ILB	Sir Ilk Lamore Bartat	10	F	OK	Lt.Colonel RM	6		BG	6	Andrew Kendall

ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank, Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
JdG	Sir Jacques de Gain	10	F	Comfy	Major KM	7			4	Ben Brown
RM	Roland Moulin	9	11	OK		5	Sue	Hunt	4	Roland Lee
MR	Mouton Rothschild	9	F	Comfy	Captain KM	1		Hunt	4	Keith Bristow
X4		9	0	Poor		5			1	Aaron Sibley
CJ	Coeur Jette	9	F	OK	B.Bdr-General RM/1 F Brigadier	6		BG	2	Mike Weston
PC	Pierre Cardigan	9	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General ALC/Hvy Brigadier	7		BG	4	Matt Shepherd
LA	Luc Around	7	F	Poor	Captain QOC	4		BG	5	Colin Parfitt
GE	Giles Etraseur	7	F	Poor	Major CPC	1		F&P	4	Nik Luker
WP	Warren Peece	7	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General 27 M/3 F Brigadier	5		F&P	2	Pam Udowiczenko
CPB	Chris P Bacon	7	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General GDMD/Drgn Brigadier	1		F&P	3	Rob Lee
ADn	Alexander Denton	6-	1	Comfy		6		F&P	4	Paul Wilson
JB	Jacques Blanc	6	F	OK	Major RM	2		F&P	4	Dominic Howlett
PTIB	Pierre Theroux le Brouillard	5	6	Poor		5		F&P	2	Barry Townsend
PIG	Paul le Gros	5	RIP							Mike Dommett
TIM	Tomas le Matelot	5	F	Comfy	B.Bdr-General 4A	7		F&P	4	Tim Skinner
RdL	Rex de Leon	4	F	OK	Lt.Colonel 27M	11			3	Robert Carter
PLF	Pierre Lefart	4	F	OK	Lt.Colonel 13F	5			3	Olaf Schmidt
AV	Ali Vouzon	3	F	Poor	B.Major 13F	4			1	Graeme Morris
WdB	Willem de Bliest	3	F	Poor	Subaltern GDMD	3			6	Tim Macaire
GR	Gerald Redoux	3	RIP							Charles Popp
JldP	Jean-Luc de Picardy	2	F	Poor	Subaltern PM	6			3	Bill Howell
AdL	Armand de Luce	2+	7	Poor		3			2	Francesca Weal
PD	Patrick Declan	1-	1	Poor		2			4	Nathan Richards
BD	Bragen Declan	1	F	Poor	Private 53F	2			1	Mark Booth

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, 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+