

Variable Pig

The Canadian Super Pig Issue



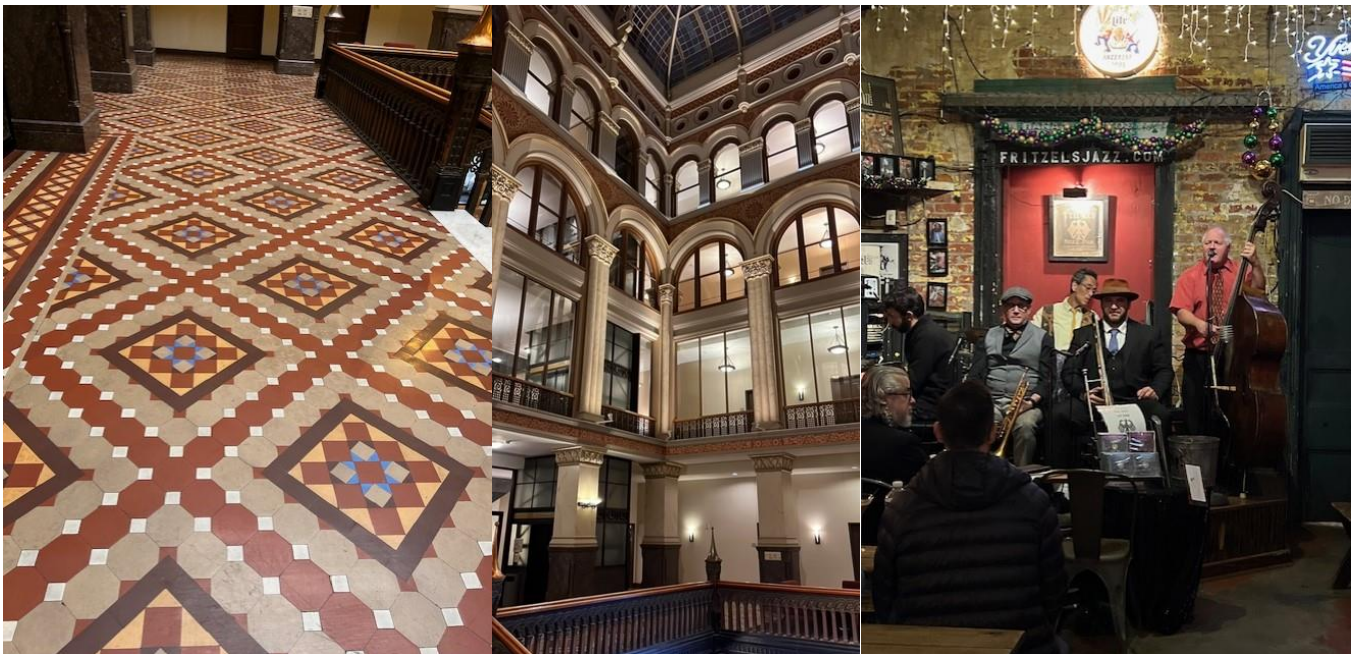
The "Winter" issue, featuring the 206th issue of "Polar Pig, Here Be Dragons 61 and "The Celestial Steam Locomotive" 28.

Variable Pig (Canadian Super Pig)

POLAR PIG 206

Greetings from a rather cold and snowy Pennsylvania. After a few years with unseasonably low snowfall, winter has returned to the Northeast with a number of snowstorms. One very kindly dropped a few inches over the surrounding area and dumped over a foot in the Center Valley area (including Coopersburg) last Friday night. It started as I was driving home from poker, and I thought it looked unusually heavy as I drove over South Mountain.

It's been a busy few weeks since last issue. I've 'enjoyed' business trips to Detroit with a high temperature of - 10°C and Chicago / Milwaukee where it was a little warmer. I did get to enjoy a nice dinner with Murray near O'Hare airport during the latter; Murray drove down in awful weather to see me, which was really nice of him. It was a good trip and I once again got to stay in the delightful Hilton Garden Inn in downtown Milwaukee, a converted former bank building built in the late 1880s that has retained much of its old character. It's also a short walk to the Indoor Market with its nice collection of fish restaurants.



This was followed by my annual trip to New Orleans and the Waterborne Symposium. I always enjoy my trips to the Big Easy and I arrived early enough to enjoy a 4.5 mile walk through the French District to Marigny and back, as well as the Carrolton Parade. This year, the organizers (University of Southern Mississippi) had invited me to give one of the Plenary talks, something I have not done before. It was strange to get up in the large conference hall with 200+ attendees, rather than the usual smaller halls. My talk was about sustainability, a difficult subject at the best of times and ripe for greenwashing. I like to think I was able to put over more nuance on the topic and avoid the narrow, single-issue subjects that distort the wider subject. I was also fortunate to also act as a judge for the student poster competition, which was very encouraging. I really wonder whether I could have created and presented a poster of the quality of those I reviewed when I was an undergraduate or post-graduate, although I think US students may be better prepared for this. Of course, it wasn't all work, so I did get to enjoy some excellent food plus my usual night of European Jazz at Fritzels.

Keeping with the music, we enjoyed Bizet's "The Passion of Carmen" at the Miller Symphony Hall when I returned. This was the third in our season of concerts by the Allentown Symphony Orchestra and we thoroughly enjoyed the event. This is the first year we have bought a season ticket, but we plan to renew next year. We're also going to see Carmina Burana at the Carnegie Hall in New York next week. Changing style somewhat, we also got to see a Bee Gees tribute band in Easton and Glenn Hughes in concert at the Sellersville Theatre last week.

The Bee Gees tribute was OK, the singer had a great falsetto but struggled with the lower notes, but it was fun to enjoy some 70s disco. Glenn was the bass player and shared singing duties with David Coverdale for Mk III and IV Deep Purple, so we were treated to lots of great songs from the “Burn” (celebrating its 50th Anniversary), “Stormbringer” and “Come Taste the Band” albums. Glenn still has an amazing voice, and it was a really great show. The highlight for me was “Burn” and “Might Just Take Your Life”, especially as their keyboard player stuck with the Hammond organ sound that made Purple so distinctive.



On a much sadder, musical note, Tony Clarkin, the lead guitarist and songwriter for Magnum died in early January, just before the release of their 23rd album, “Here Comes the Rain”. I can’t remember exactly when I first heard Magnum, although I’m sure it was in my first (Freshman) year at Warwick and their “Chase the Dragon” album, but I have been a big fan ever since. Jacqueline also likes the band and I/we saw them many times before they split up in mid 90s. They reformed in the early 2000s and have been playing live and recording new albums ever since, 40+ years as a band. We last saw them in 2022 in Holmfirth, at the end of the Crets holiday. A sad reminder that these bands will eventually disappear.

We also renewed our tickets for the nearby De Sales theatre and the Act One student productions there. This has been an absolute bargain as the tickets are very reasonably priced as the productions are part of the student program but are very high quality. Last week, we enjoyed “Twelfth Night”, and it was really well done. The actor playing the drunken Sir Andrew Aguecheek was superb and Malvolio’s second half costume was amazing. I always enjoy watching the stage craft – how a fairly simple set can be adapted to different settings by the addition and movement of props, and this was no exception.

Elsewhere, we continue to help out at the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter every other week. Sadly, the shelter is near full due to the lack of affordable housing and housing assistance in the area. Many of the ‘guests’ work, but do not earn enough to cover rent. At least the shelter provides safe accommodation, plus food through the winter nights.

Our bowling continues to improve. I had my first ever 600 series a few weeks ago and Jacqueline and I currently lie 10th in a large couple’s tournament held in East Greenville. We only went along to be sociable and have fun, but our first game scores were 196 and 213; even though we didn’t do quite so well in the other games, the handicap still gives us a chance of winning something. My average is now 165 (up from 150 at the start of the season) and Jacqueline’s is creeping up as well.

Finally, a word on the Pig. Richard has started to morph the website to “The Celestial Dragon” as he and John will continue to produce a zine. Polar Pig has two more issues to go after this, after which I will step out of running a zine. I think I will still run some simple games, like Bus Boss and maybe Railway Rivals, in the new zine, but not to the same extent. I hope that you will continue to follow and support the new zine.

And with that, I bid you adieu until next time.

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Letters

- Michael Pargman** Congratulations on the wedding! It seems to have been a success.
- Allan Stagg** Thanks for the VP issue, and the impressive pictures of the wedding. Despite the cold, no goosebumps were on show. A nice way for you and Jacqui to end the year.
The wedding went very well, much to my relief as I was concerned about the weather and people being able to get to Indy. It was cold, even if the goosebumps were successfully hidden. The newlyweds are visiting us this weekend but have gone down to Philly for the afternoon to enjoy the Reading Terminal Market (great, indoor market in the city centre).
- Andy York** Congrats on a successful wedding. Sounds like everything went smoothly and was a memorable event. All the best to the couple!
The wedding went very well despite the cold, and it was great to catch up with many old friends. 8 more months till the next one.
- Bob Gingell** I have just seen the zine and what a great set of pictures of Hannah's wedding.
Thanks Bob - these were some of the earlier, cell phone pictures we captured during the day. The official photos will be available soon.
- Brad Martin** You looked very smart in the wedding photos...you must be very proud.
Thanks Brad - it was a lovely day. Still not sure about the bowtie though, but it was lovely to walk her up the aisle.
- Murray Egan** Throughout the wedding I kept waiting for that perfect 'pull my finger Hannah' moment, but alas, I guess she isn't seven anymore (despite the echoes of my wife saying, "Murray it is YOU who are seven"). Well, at least I know my place. The hotel was a brilliant suggestion, tell Jacqueline thanks for that. It was fun being in the same place as the rest of the travelling wedding party and so nice to catchup with Thomas and his fiancé (she is a gem btw, very funny).
I'm glad that you liked the hotel. I think it worked very well and David and Marlene, Wendy and Ian and Thomas and Kelsey all had a good time. I hope I can find something similar for Thomas and Kelsey's wedding later this year. Sorry that you and Su won't be able to make it.
- Mike Pollard** You've already made my day with Shelbyville!! I'm sure I'm not the first to guffaw since The Simpsons is so popular.
I had to look up the link to Shelbyville and the Simpsons - very amusing. I wonder if Michael is aware of this.
- Murray Egan** It was AWESOME getting to see you twice in the last Pig-period, and Jacqueline once as well. I trust that Hannah and Michael are now in the midst of marital bliss and all her dreams are coming true. Ah, young love.....
Hannah and Michael drove down a couple of weekends ago for an event in Philly and they still seemed very happy. We're hoping to see them again sometime in March.
- Murray Egan** It was excellent catching up over dinner and I must say that one of the cutlet leftovers/doggy bag that I went home with was officially Sophie's (our coonhound) Best Thing That Happened in January. Which is particularly impressive in that it was in her mouth all of 4 seconds before being swallowed. Again, thanks for the beers and the leftovers.
Thanks so much for coming out to see me a few weeks ago, especially on such a cold and wet night. It was really great to see you again and I hope it won't be quite so long until our next get-together. Good to hear that the leftovers went down well 😊. Hope you're still doing well and best wishes to Su.
- Steve Ham** Sorry it's a rush but very briefly thanks for sharing Hannah and Michael's wedding photos. You all looked as though you were having a good time! Did you manage to include any quaint British customs into the day? Or did it feel very American?

The wedding seemed quite different to English weddings, but I don't know if that's American culture or just the preference of the younger generation. We've been to a couple of similar style weddings here, but Jacqueline also recently sang in a fairly traditional church wedding recently.

Steve Ham I'm a long way (I think) away from this stage of life and imagine it comes with its own challenges but I'm still looking forward to it. Well done to you and Jacqueline.
Your day will come. It's another stage of family life - children leaving and setting out on their own (hopefully). Like the other stages, it has its own challenges - different and maybe less frequent, but still there. However, I'm glad the teenage years have passed.

Allan Stagg We are having a varied mixture of weather at the moment - storms, cold spells, and currently sunny and unseasonably mild weather. The only thing we can be certain of is that it will change.
We've had our first snow for a couple of years - two storms depositing about 5 inches and then another 3 inches. It's also been pretty cold, although it has warmed up this weekend. This hasn't brought rain, but some heavy fogs. Driving to my friends for poker night last night was quite tricky; happily, it had cleared up when I left.

Michael Pargman We have had a pretty long and cold winter with lots of snow, but in a few days last week most of it melted away. That will make it much darker outside, but on the other hand it will make it much easier if you have to get out and drive a car. Tomorrow I'm renting a car to drive half of our chess team to a game one hours drive away into the countryside and I hope there won't be any ice left out there.
We had a couple more snow storms this week, including one that dropped 13 inches in our area. This was after 5 inches earlier in the week. It's just starting to melt. However, most days have been fairly pleasant when it wasn't snowing, so it's not been a really dark winter.

Brad Martin Getting warm here, 35°C here today.
It's still snowing here this morning.

Mike Pollard Happy new year, Jim! Same to the rest of the VP team and readers.
Orders received, thanks. Brendan beat you by a few minutes for the first set of orders received.

Bob Pitman After an awful December and January (so far) I am close to fixed and bug free, I had a flare up of gout on boxing day that my foot is still getting over, started with a horrendous hacking cough that wouldn't die then changed to a chest infection which kicked the kidneys leading to gout. I've been sat with a foot up marking the milestones of "no walking stick", "can wear a sock", "can wear a slipper", "can walk with foot more or less flat", "can walk to the bottom of the drive in a garden croc" (actually that hurt), and recently "can wear a very loose gym shoe for over an hour!". Only had one set back when I gently knocked the big toe ball joint. We finally got to deliver Christmas presents to family and friends last week and then celebrated the New year with a postponed meal with friends' last weekend.
Really sorry to hear about your battles with gout and very pleased to hear you're recovering. It sounds awful. I hope you can restart walking (and eventually running) again soon. We haven't been walking too much as the weather has been so bad, although I still get my 1.3 miles lunchtime walk when I'm in the office. Not great, but better than nothing.

Mike Pollard Instead, I managed to break my radius & ulna playing football on the beach with the young lads. Teach me to act my age! Clean breaks, so they should heal quickly and well, but I hate having to miss my exercise classes. Superb service by the beleaguered NHS. In and out of Minor Injuries (like a smaller A&E) within 2 hours, X-rayed and plastered. Fracture Clinic appointment 1 week later at my local hospital, between Xmas & new year. Further appointment already booked at end of Jan to have plaster off. Sorted, respect due.
Sorry to hear about your arm and I hope that they heal quickly and cleanly and great to hear that the NHS did a super job.

Bob Pitman Our New year's resolution is to get back to going for decent trail walks in the local countryside (New Forest, South Downs, the coast) at least once a month, looks like January isn't going to happen but there after!
Pig founder Dave ('Box') Holmes often posts his walks in the Farnham area on Facebook, which brings back some happy memories for me.

Mike Pollard Everyone seems to have had colds over Xmas. I'm usually susceptible to viruses (4 times Covid veteran) but haven't succumbed yet. Maybe the Covid boosters are helping?

My cold finally cleared ahead of the wedding and, so far, has not returned. I often get post-nasal drip problems so I'm relieved that this hasn't happened. I'll book my next COVID booster shot later today.

Allan Stagg Have your back pains gone away, or are they still lurking in the background?

My back problems have hopefully cleared as I haven't had any real problems since the brace last year. I'm still a little cautious and have probably lost some flexibility, but no pain.

Allan Stagg Good to hear that your bowling has improved, and that you have had some impressive recent series. My league's season finished a couple of weeks ago, and I managed to finish third, which I was very happy with. The new ball has definitely helped - since buying it in October I have won 9 out of the 12 games I have played. A lot of this is due, as you have said, to thinking more about what you are doing, but I also feel that there is good communication between the ball and myself - it often goes where I tell it to!

Glad to hear your new ball is helping and congratulations on the third-place finish. I finally managed a 600+ series (213, 179 and 212) for the first time a couple of weeks ago and then followed it with my worst game of the season. Our team finished 5th (out of 10) in the first half of the season after a bad start; hopefully we can do better this year.

Mike Pollard Very impressive bowling scores and average. I've only been (just) above 200 twice, but they were outliers. My usual scores are around 130, although they used to be more. However, that's on grotty public lanes using scuffed balls with unsuitable finger hole sizes.

I have my own ball with the finger holes drilled for me, which really helps. Most US alleys offer leagues (it's a good steady source of income), so the lanes are usually well maintained. Most weeks, I'm very consistent about picking up spares, so I can keep a reasonably high average, but I'm not so good with strikes that you need for the really high scores.

Mike Pollard I've gone from a 16 to a 12 over time - not due to age-related declining strength, but just to save my shoulder tendons, which are now 90% torn after years of racquet sports.

What racket sports do you / did you play? I started with tennis around aged 12 (my tennis teacher was Margaret Stickney, an Australian who once made the quarter or semifinals of Wimbledon in the mixed doubles) and played regularly until I went to Warwick, where I learnt Badminton as the tennis club was too high level. We played a lot of badminton in our second year, so we could use the showers in the sports centre as the water in Bullshead Lane took so long to heat up. I loved badminton as men and women can play competitively together. I took up squash when I started work in Manchester as no-one I know played badminton or tennis, but then restarted badminton when we moved to Holland. In Japan, it was back to squash before returning to tennis (and a little badminton) in the US. I haven't played since hurting my back but wonder whether I should give pickle ball a try.

Mike Pollard I used to play the same range as you - squash, tennis & badminton. Table tennis too if that counts! Squash has almost died out in this country. The courts are usually turned into extra gym space, and more often racquetball (or similar) played on the surviving courts. Squash used to be the way to keep fit cardi-wise, but people have turned to building muscle in the gym, or classes like yoga, Pilates, dance & circuits. Since both me and my best mate moved houses, now 500 miles apart, our sporadic tennis matches have declined to nothing. I reached my best standard at badminton, but that was probably the sport that caused the damage to my shoulder tendons. So, although I would still be prepared to play all three very occasionally, I've just about given them up. I've played pickleball a few times indoors, but you don't see it much and I only know one guy to play, and he's out injured!

I'm shocked by the decline of squash as it was so popular in the 80s and 90s. I understand the enthusiasm for gym or yoga, but I still prefer the element of competition.

Mike Pollard Haven't heard of Margaret Stickney, I'm afraid. I still love watching tennis and used to go to Wimbledon, near where we used to live. My current favourite is Camila Giorgi, but unfortunately she doesn't win much. I still have my Tony Roche aluminium racquet, which amazes the youngsters on tennis courts - one said, are you playing with a squash racquet?! When I finally switched to a big-headed graphite, my mate said my shots were 50% faster/harder.

I used to go to Wimbledon. Our school in Farnham ran a trip on the first Friday of the tournament and we could wander round to watch games on the outer courts (or pay more for the Centre Court or Court 1). One year, I saw both the men's and women's finalists play on Court 6, and I think I saw most of the best players of the 70s with the exception of Bjorn Borg. Happy days. I would like to go back one day or maybe visit the US Open.

Michael Pargman Sorry for late orders, again. I had it all planned to fix it all yesterday, but then a friend called me out for an hour with a ball-machine for padel. I never trained with a machine before. It was interesting. You could set it up to different angle, speed, spin and interval and you got many more balls to hit than when you play a game. It's great to train on consistency in hitting the ball. But I'm sure I will feel this in my arm and shoulder in a few days. And in the evening I played my weekly tennis, so by the time I sat down to finish off this letter I was already half asleep.

Sounds great fun, although probably very tiring. I don't think I have ever practised with a machine. We certainly didn't have them when I was learning. I think I mentioned that I played badminton with a Dutch Olympian one time – that was an amazing practice. His workout routine was exhausting.

Mike Pollard Having reached 65, it feels like I'm mainly living on the memories of my modest sporting achievements. Five a side football was my favourite sport, over the years winning 5 competitions with 3 different teams. I'll always treasure those moments, just wish I had it on film!

I also played 5-a-side, but never in a league just friendly games. I also enjoyed cricket in the summer, playing a few games for the Chemistry Department or our works team in Manchester. I wasn't very good, but not totally awful so usually batted at 7 or 8 and bowled occasionally. My best sporting achievements were at snooker. I played a few times for the Warwick University team and was runner up in 2007 YCAC snooker tournament. The latter was quite involved as it was a knockout tournament played over a couple of months and I played 4 or 5 opponents before the final. I think the final was a best of 5 game that went to the final frame before I lost on the Pink. I still have the pennant and I know my name was placed on a board at the club, the only time I have done this.

Andy York Looking forward to a good year of baseball though!
Only a couple more months until the season opens again.

Andy York Not much new on the baseball front. The Rangers caravan came through, but it wasn't as informative or enjoyable as previous visits. For some reason the place was wall-to-wall people (they did bring down the trophy for another go). Reportedly, once the tickets were opened up for non-Express ticket holders they were snapped up within 24-hours.

When chatting with staffers, they said there were only 400 tickets sold. My back-of-the-envelope guess of attendees was probably closer to 700. The signing line had to be cut off as the folks had to get back to Arlington, leaving many people without a chance to get any (I didn't expect I'd get any, so left after chatting with folks).

Sorry the baseball caravan wasn't as successful as some years. It happens sometimes and I'm sure the chance to see the trophy was a factor.

Bob Pitman In reply to Richard's observation on Reading FC... it just keeps getting worse, pitch invasion by RFC fans to force the Port Vale game to be abandoned, another protest over Yonge's failed ownership. If he is still waiting for a reasonable offer he needs to wake up, the teams value is going down every day, but if he owns the ground that would be worth money if he sells that out from under the fans. *A lot of Aldershot fans are fairly happy about the shenanigans at Reading, due to the ancient rivalry between the two clubs before Reading went up and the Shots went bankrupt. They're still the closest league team physically to Aldershot, although Woking (Woeking) are now the local rivals. I would anticipate a lot of problems if Reading do get sent down and play Aldershot again. It's been many years since the teams last met. I do find it sad and hope they can find a solution.*

Richard Smith I've just been listening to the new Magnum album Here Comes The Rain which will probably be the band's last following the death of Tony Clarkin. *I downloaded "Here Comes the Rain" but took some time to play it, so I could give it my complete attention. I still prefer their older albums (familiarity I guess), but this has a number of good songs. I really liked "Blue Tango", the first single.*

Richard Smith It was only back in VP197 that you reported on seeing them perform on their 50th anniversary tour.

Nick and I saw Magnum at Holmfirth after our 2022 Crets holiday and I thoroughly enjoyed the show.

Richard Smith I think I may have only seen them once (maybe twice) in the early 80s, but I definitely remember a double bill with Blue Oyster Cult.

I don't know how many times I saw them, up until their breakup after the Sleepwalking Tour, but it was quite a lot. Jacqueline also likes them, so we usually saw their tours when they played near Stalybridge. There were lots of opportunities to see them while we were at Warwick, as they came from Birmingham. I think I first saw them on the 11th Hour tour at Birmingham Odeon, but I most remember their show at the Lanch Poly, just before the release of Storytellers Night.

Richard Smith My first album of theirs was Chase The Dragon, and I think it was the Rod Matthews cover that attracted me to it in the record shop (same with Eloy). I then bought all their records up to and including Goodnight LA, then not another until Princess Alice in 2007.

The covers by Rodney Matthews certainly helped. A school friend of mine had some of his old calendars from the late 70s so I knew him before I discovered Magnum, plus he did the cover for "No Mean City" by Nazareth. I had a few posters of his on my walls as a student and still have a framed and signed copy (limited edition print) of "Another Time Another Place". I do like the cover for the new album.

Richard Smith Often considered uncool, probably due to their mix of genres: Hard rock, prog and AOR. Best album? Perhaps On A Storyteller's Night, though whilst I love the title track and the opener, many of the tracks are a bit too AOR for my tastes, so I'll pick Chase The Dragon.

I think my favourite album is still Marauder, their first live album recorded at the Marquee. The live versions of the songs packed so much more punch than the originals, especially from Magnum II which didn't have the best production. I agree about that Storytellers Night was a bit AOR, but it does have 3 or 4 of their best songs - How Far Jerusalem, Les Morts Dansant and Storytellers Night, plus The Last Dance which I really like. I think "Escape from the Shadow Garden" is the best of their newer albums, but there are some great songs on all of them.

Bob Pitman As the world seems to continue spiralling towards a darker future there was an interesting program on about the Doomsday clock and how its currently closer to midnight than ever, Governments are apparently making "feeble" efforts to deal with disruptive tech. It certainly feels a lot less stable than I can recall when I was a kid, I guess there were fewer national and non-national threat actors about that could tip an already fraught situation. I used to wave at passing Russian satellites when I worked at a sensitive establishment, it seemed to be a calmer colder war than now.

<https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/>

I have to agree that the World seems a lot more unsettled just now, with the Ukraine war continuing and multiple conflicts in the Middle East. Some aspects of technology (anti-social media) don't help, but I also think that personality politics is a factor - one person cannot and should not (in my opinion) have rulership over a whole country and people, democratically elected or otherwise and regardless of their claimed political stance. Hopefully, things will calm down sometime soon.

Allan Stagg I must admit that I am finding the news of the US election pretty depressing. It is difficult to understand how Trump can amass such popular support. I know from having lived abroad how the popular sentiment in a country does not always get reflected in the international news media, and it seems that populist politicians seem to be in the ascendancy at the moment - not usually a good thing. I do not look forward to the November election.

Election time over here is always depressing as almost all the candidates attack their opponents, so it's relentlessly negative. There are also very few swing voters most years, so the grandstanding is usually around convincing that small number that the other party is more awful than they are. I don't understand the appeal of Trump and had hoped that Haley might fare better, if only to give the Democrats some competition. As it is, I think they will run on the "We're not Trump" ticket again.

Allan Stagg A game I have played quite a lot of recently is Ark Nova, and its Marine Worlds expansion. Have you played it yet, Jim?

I've not played Ark Nova yet but have heard good things about it. I shall have to give it a try sometime. I'm mostly playing games on Yucata and Board Game Arena now, but I'm not very good at learning new games online so I'll have to wait to play it ftf.

Murray Egan Thanks for the reminder service... sadly I'm leaning on this more and more these days.

It's easy to lose track when you're busy – I've been getting a few reminders for my games recently.

Murray Egan I hope that your biz trip went well.

My trip to Milwaukee and the Chicago area went really well. The Hilton Garden Inn in downtown Milwaukee is a great place to stay, even though it doesn't sound very glamorous. The customer meetings all went very well.

John Marsden Not much to do any more.....

True, but it's always good to receive ODE.

David Cowie Today I found out that the Arabic letter ج is called Jim. Maybe we can call you ج Reader.

You learn something new every day. With that, it's a wrap ج

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By Variable Demand 1

Round Two – Fairly Popular Variant

1. A cloud formation: Cumulonimbus and Cirrus (both 5 scoring 0), Stratus (4), Nimbostratus (2), Stratocumulus (2); Alto Stratus and Cumulus both scoring 1.

I can't recall when or if I have asked this question before so no idea what will prove successful.

2. A sign of the Zodiac: Cancer (4 scoring 0), Libra (3), Virgo (2), Aries (2), Capricorn (2), Taurus (2): Scorpio, Pisces, Sagittarius, Leo, and Gemini all score 1.

Who will choose their own sign, like I did?

3. An American Airline: Delta (6 scoring 0), American Airlines (4), Southwest (3), Pan Am (2), Alaska (2) United (2) and Spirit score 1.

This is probably the toughest question of the round as the choice of big airlines is limited, although there are plenty of smaller ones to choose from. I rarely fly Delta now since the Allentown – Detroit connection was cancelled.

4. One of the Seven Deadly Sins: Lust (5 scoring 0), Sloth (4), Envy (3), Wrath (2), Greed (2), Gluttony (2): Vanity and Pride both score 1.

Seven to choose from – I plumped for the most Cret-like one..

5. One of the seven Dwarves: Doc (7 scoring 0), Happy (4), Sneezy (2), Bashful (2), Sleepy (2), Dopey (2) and Grumpy scores 1.

Another question with seven choices – will we get all seven?

6. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World: Hanging Gardens of Babylon (5 scoring 0), Colossus of Rhodes (4), Lighthouse of Alexandria (3), Mausoleum at Halicarnassus (3), Great Pyramid of Giza (2), Statue of Zeus (2) and the Colosseum scores 1.

This might be easier since the Seven Wonders game was published.

A tricky round - Congratulations to **Michael Pargman** who top scored with 16 from a maximum of 23.

Player	Cloud Formation	Zodiac	American Airline	Deadly Sin	Seven Dwarfs	Seven Wonders	
Bob Gingell	Cumulonimbus	Pisces	American	Envy	Happy	Lighthouse Alexandria	(15) 81
Mike Pollard	Stratus	Cancer	Delta	Wrath	Happy	Colossus of Rhodes	(14) 78
Steve Guest	Stratus	Cancer	Delta	Greed	Sneezy	Hanging Gardens	(8) 74
Roger Trethewey	Nimbostratus	Virgo	Delta	Envy	Grumpy	Colosseum	(9) 73
Martin Walker	Stratocumulus	Aries	American	Vanity	Doc	Colossus of Rhodes	(13) 72
John Walker	Alto Stratus	Sagittarius	Southwest	Gluttony	Bashful	Mausoleum Halicarnassus	(12) 63
Bob Pitman	Cumulonimbus	Capricorn	Pan Am	Wrath	Doc	Colossus of Rhodes	(10) 63
Dane Maslen	Cirrus	Taurus	American	Lust	Dopey	Lighthouse Alexandria	(11) 58
Richard Smith	Cumulonimbus	Gemini	United	Sloth	Doc	Lighthouse Alexandria	(10) 56
Chris Hibbert	Cumulonimbus	Leo	United	Sloth	Happy	Colossus of Rhodes	(15) 55
Allan Stagg	Stratocumulus	Libra	Alaska	Lust	Doc	Mausoleum Halicarnassus	(10) 55
Brad Martin	Stratus	Cancer	Delta	Lust	Sleepy	Pyramid of Giza	(8) 55
Steve Ham	Cumulus	Capricorn	Southwest	Envy	Sneezy	Mausoleum Halicarnassus	(14) 53
Jacqueline Reader	Cumulonimbus	Aries	Spirit	Lust	Doc	Hanging Gardens	(3) 46
Michael Pargman	Stratus	Libra	Alaska	Pride	Happy	Statue of Zeus	(16) 44
Andy York	Cirrus	Scorpio	Southwest	Gluttony	Doc	Hanging Gardens	(6) 44
Brendan Whyte	Cirrus	Cancer	American	Lust	Doc	Pyramid of Giza	(6) 41
Bob Blanchett	Nimbostratus	Libra	Pan Am	Sloth	Dopey	Statue of Zeus	(15) 39
Murray Egan	Cirrus	Virgo	Delta	Greed	Sleepy	Hanging Gardens	(6) 36
MY CHOICES	Cirrus	Taurus	Delta	Sloth	Bashful	Hanging Gardens	(8) 69

Comments

Mike Pollard

I'm not a fan of Almost By Popular Demand, aka avoiding the most popular answer. To me, it undermines the primary skill of the game and introduces a huge element of chance. We will all go through the same thought process of picking what we think is the first, second and probably third most popular answers, then having to guess how many players will try a bluff, or double bluff. Do you pick the most obvious answer on the basis that many players will avoid it and go for the second choice, thereby scoring nil when that becomes the most popular? Or do you "play safe" and go for the third most popular to avoid the aforementioned quandary? Either way, it means the results are left to chance rather than any skill, minimal though it might be. I don't believe it's a skill predicting how many people will bluff or play safe. That's quite different to the bluffing skill in, say, poker, where the players are usually visible to each other. Anyway, mini rant over, especially if I've managed a good score!

I like this variant more than the joker variant, as it keeps the scores relatively close. It can be very easy to fall out of contention in the joker or most popular answer scores double variants with one bad round or a mis-placed joker. I think the single letter or word variants are probably the best, but they are more work for the GM to come up with good questions.

Brendan Whyte

5. One of the Seven Dwarves Lusty? Flaky? Doc!
6. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World Pyramids of Geezer

Dane Maslen

I suspect I'm heading for a zero on category 3. I'd be surprised if that were the case on category 6. I've no idea about the others. It would probably be tasteless to recall the Snow-White joke which was a version of the Smirnoff "... until I discovered Smirnoff" sequence of ads.

Allan Stagg

Libra as it is my star sign, and Lust as I used to think it was my favourite deadly sin until Gluttony and Sloth overtook it as I grew older.

Roger Trethewey

1. Nimbo Stratus (I trust you didn't mean Amazon Cloud formation)

Bob Pitman

3 – did it have to be a live airline?

You may answer any airline that you wish (current or otherwise), but it may not score well.

4 – I considered Gluttony but as its still proximal to Christmas it might be on people's minds!

6 – I've been to Mandraki harbour at Rhodes and seen where Colossus's feet once stood... but I was tempted by The Great Library at Alexandria, but I then wondered if it was a library or lighthouse at Alexandria and I'm still not sure!

Chris Hibbert

3. United - won't most people go for "American"?

The third round will be the reasonably popular variant where I will give a 6-letter word and players must use each letter once for their 6 answers – answers for letters used more than once will score zero. The word for the 3rd round is ZEPHYR.

1. A river
2. A board game
3. A metal
4. A type of fish
5. A famous author
6. A US President

The fourth and final round will be the classic variant with jokers.

* * * * *

Breaking Away 12

Round Six

Correction

Matt Matic and Robert the Robot's cards were not correctly replaced last round. Their correct holdings were.

C. Robert the Robot 15, 7, 3

D. Prof. Matt Matic 15, 7, 7

All players were notified via email.

Most teams slow down and try to recover some better cards. **Hugh Jaas** and **Time** are both dropped as they have no chance to catch up with the rest of the pack.

Square	Replacement	Riders
56	3	Killer
55	4	Emma Roydz
54 - 50	-	
49	3	Dr. Venus
48	4	Regression, Prof. Matt Matic
47	6	Arthur Braine, Rodin, Sue Pertitz, The Universe, Dogwood
46	11	Miro, Moore
45	13	Col. Steve Zodiac, Amounts
44	15	Birch, Robert the Robot
43	15	Calder
42	15	Cherry
41	15	Samurai
40	15	Thermo
39	15	Arrow
38	15	Ash

Rooted In Place (Tom Howell) 5 points

Manager: Elm

- A. Ash 15, 14, 3, 3
- B. Birch (3) 15, 7, 15
- C. Cherry 15, 15, 9
- D. Dogwood (2) 6, 7, 15

Probable Infinites (John Walker) 9 points.

- A. Regression 11, 10, 4, 15
- B. Amounts (8) 5, 13, 5
- C. Time dropped
- D. The Universe (1) 9, 12, 6

Fireball XL5 Jetmobiles (Bob Pitman) 0 pts

Manager: Zoonie the Lazoon

- A. Col. Steve Zodiac 13, 13, 5, 5
- B. Doctor Venus 3, 11, 5
- C. Robert the Robot 3, 15, 15
- D. Prof. Matt Matic 7, 4, 15

Sudoku Scorchers (Richard Smith) 5 points

Manager: Simon Anthony

- A. Killer (5) 3, 6, 4, 5
- B. Samurai 15, 15, 3
- C. Arrow 15, 4, 15
- D. Thermo 15, 5, 3

What Have You Got (Allan Stagg) 20 points

- A. Arthur Braine (10) 6, 5, 8, 1
- B. Emma Roydz (6) 4, 3, 4
- C. Hugh Jaas dropped
- D. Sue Pertitz (4) 9, 6, 1

Artists (Chris Hibbert) 0 points

- A. Miro 13, 11, 13
- B. Rodin 15, 15, 6
- C. Moore 11, 11, 3
- D. Calder 7, 3, 15

* * * * *

Bus Boss (Orwell and Stour) - BB4100SE

Round Twelve

GM: Bob Gingell

What stood out from this Round was the large number of very expensive third place entries from GEORGE which seriously reduced its score. Close behind was HDMVTT failing to see a short route in Race 50 (or just refusing to pay ROGER) with the result of its race entry being too long and declared void. Ferries were used a lot this Round. HDMVTT surprised no-one with another high score and a very convincing win, while ROGER burst into second place past a slowing ESTUARY and a feeble GEORGE. Another Round with a lot of 2s and few 5s in the dice rolls.

GM notes:

- (i) Sorry Brad (ESTUARY), you never bought the route Wix to Ramsey.
- (ii) The maximum of 10 total payments to others in races includes payments to the ferry company. Placings would not have changed either by allowing the excessive payments or by disallowing GEORGE's entry in Race 47. It seemed fairest to correct the payment orders to allow entry (even though when it came to the dice rolls GEORGE rolled too many 2s and came last).
- (iii) The electronic in-game map is at <https://variablepig.org/maps/bb/ingame/BB410OSE.jpg>.

Races for Round 12 (max 5 entries, ties = *):

- 45: (6D–5S): HDMVTT: $30 - 3e = 27$; ESTUARY +3.
- 46: (TS–AC): HDMVTT $[13+1 = 14]$ $16 - 3F+2 = 15$; ROGER $[14+1 = 15]$ $9 - 3F+3 = 9$; GEORGE $[14+2+1 = 17]$ $5 - 3r, -3F, -2h = -3$; Ferry Company +9.
- 47: (4C–3H): ROGER $[21+1 = 22]$ $13^* - 3F+7 = 17$; ESTUARY $[26]$ 12^* ; GEORGE $[21+2+1 = 24]$ $5 - 7r, -3F$ [corrected payments] = -5; Ferry Company +6.
- 48: (KH–3S): HDMVTT $[23 \text{ from Colchester}]$ $15^* +1 = 16$; GEORGE $[25 \text{ via Langham} +1 = 26]$ $15^* -1h = 14$.
- 49: (KD–5H): ROGER $[23+1 = 24]$ $13^* - 3F = 10$; HDMVTT $[26+1 = 27]$ $12^* - 3F = 9$; ESTUARY $[40+1 = 41]$ $5 - 3F = 2$; Ferry company +9.
- 50: (3C–7D): ESTUARY $[14+1 = 15]$ $20 - 4r+2 = 18$; ROGER $[16+1 = 17]$ $10 - 2e+4 = 12$; HDMVTT $[35+1 = 36]$ too long so entry disallowed.
- 51: (TC–2C): ROGER $[16]$ $16 +6 = 22$; ESTUARY $[15+1 = 16]$ $9 - 2r = 7$; GEORGE $[21+2+1 = 24]$ $5 - 4r, -3F, -3h = -5$; HDMVTT +3; Ferry Company +3.
- 52: (6H–TH): GEORGE $30 - 1h, -1e = 28$; HDMVTT +1; ESTUARY +1.

Scores:

- HDMVTT, yellow (Jim Reader): $359 + 71 = 430$. 1st
- ESTUARY, blue (Brad Martin): $295 + 43 = 338$. 3rd
- GEORGE, red (Richard Smith): $283 + 29 = 312$. 4th
- ROGER, green (Roger Trethewey): $276 + 70 = 346$. 2nd
- Ferry Company: $39 + 27 = 66$.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JIM READER.

Endgame Statements:

Jim Reader (HDMVTT (1st): I'm surprised that I won this so comfortably, as it's much closer in the game in Western Front. I think the difference was that I connected from Manningtree north. My opening builds along the Stour were nostalgic rather than tactical, but they paid off quite well. I also built the line intending to use the ferries and this also worked well. Brad's ESTUARY line looks nice and efficient with 2 E-W lines with a direct N-S connection, and I think he might have fared better. My thanks to Bob for running the game and to everyone else for giving this map a try.

Roger Trethewey (ROGER, 2nd): Congratulations to Jim for a well-planned routing system. It is a good map and one I would play again.

Brad Martin (ESTUARY, 3rd): Great win by Jim. I'm a bit unhappy with my network, especially in the west and south-east, but guess you can't be everywhere. And maybe I should have gone with shorter routes to get to the Trimleys, rather than the "9".

Richard Smith (GEORGE, 4th): The map's name, Orwell and Stour, is apt as it's these bodies of water, plus the ferries that make getting your passengers from A to B a bit trickier than most BB maps. Although the map looks nice, the lines are a little thin if using a printed A4 map (rather than A3) or an electronic map on a small screen (absolutely fine on my big monitor).

Early on I was struggling to get the connections I wanted on this map, though I did come back into contention as the game wore on. Some of my routes could definitely have been more efficient. Congratulations to Jim whose line was efficient, in particular Colchester to Harwich along the south bank of the Stour. The Crets 2025 holiday is not far from this area so perhaps we could do a bus tour?

Bob Gingell (GM): A good map with a number of alternative ways to create a network and no obvious killer routes (although the two routes south from Brantham were deservedly popular). Colchester to Harwich was valuable, but I was a bit surprised that no-one built along the main road from Colchester to Ipswich. Fairly important in the early ORs were remote villages (particularly the four in the South-East) which gave good returns to the companies first to connect there. Jim did very well while the other three had good sections but less effective overall networks.

Bus Boss (Orwell and Stour) - BB409OSE

Round Twelve

Bob wins it on the very last race.

	TEA Andy York <i>Blue</i>	TED Jacqueline <i>Red</i>	SWELL Bob Gingell <i>Black</i>	MALTINGS Steve Ham <i>Brown</i>
45. Mistley (6H) – Brantham (5D)	15 - 2	+ 2 + 1		15 - 1
46. Langham (10H) – Felixstowe Ferry (3C)		+ 4	30 - 4	
47. Port of Felixstowe (AC) – Clacton (QS)	5 - 4	9 + 5 – 1 – 3 ferry	+ 4	16 - 5 + 1 – 3 ferry
48. Trimley St. Martin (5C) – Shotley G. (KD)	Route too long	10 - 3 ferry	20 - 3 ferry	
49. Little Oakley (5S) – Manningtree (7H)		20 - 2		10 + 2
50. Shotley (QD) – Wrabness (9S)		12 + 6 + 6 – 3 ferry	13 - 6 – 3 ferry	5 - 6
51. Elmstead Market (2H) – Ipswich (QC)	7 - 2		16 + 3	7 + 2 - 3
52. Parkeston Quay (3S) – Wherstead (7D)	5 - 4	9 + 1 – 3 ferry	16 - 1 – 3 ferry	+ 4

Last Turn	305	336	329	329
Points from Races	20	70	82	44
Total	325	406	411	373

Congratulations to SWELL (Bob Gingell)

Game end statements are welcome.

* * * * *

Fair Means or Foul 6

Round Twenty-Three

	Brendan Whyte	Brad Martin	John Walker	Roger Trethewey
Cheques	9, 13, 16	11, 14, 21	10, 15	-
Thieves	4, 9	3, (10)	(2), (11)	1, (12)
Location next turn	Auction House	Castle	Castle	Castle

3/2	4/2	2/1	3/2	4/2	3/2	4/2	2/1	5/3	Finish
JW			BW/ RT		BM				

Castle

It's another boon for art lovers as all three collectors put on big shows. Baron **Brad** has the best show with AABBCDEFF (1468) with his Scolds Mask from 1468 winning great plaudits. Lord **John's** display of ABCCDDEFF (1616) was nearly as impressive, while Earl **Trethewey's** exhibit of AAAABCDE (1760) was none too shabby but missed out on the plaudits.

Please can you send in orders for your first action and second location (auction house or castle) for next round; the location can be made provisional upon the outcome of the next round. At the auction next month are a Gangloff Beer Poster (B 1930) and Marilyn Monroe's Lipstick (E 1962). In Jail are John's Thief 2, John's Thief 11, Brad's Thief 10, and Roger's Thief 12.

Auction House

Baron **Brendan** secures Johnny Weissmuller's Loincloth (E 1932) for a bargain 9K and continues to hang around at the auction house searching for more bargains.

* * * * *

Railway Rivals

RR Game LXXXVI – RR2505WC – West Cumberland Map – Round Eleven

	FAR Brad Martin <i>Blue</i>	MARS John Marsden <i>Orange</i>	WATER Judy Ferguson <i>Black</i>
25. Egremont (13) – Kelton Fell (34)	+ 1		20 - 1
26. Parton (24) – Workington (42)	10 - 1	20	+ 1
27. Cleator (31) – Great Broughton (55)	+ 6	20 - 6 – 1 + 2	10 + 1 - 2
28. Harrington (41) – Branthwaite (62)	15 + 2		15 - 2
29. Egremont (14) – Maryport (53)	10 + 2	20 - 2 - 1	+ 1
30. Lowca (25) – Cockermouth (66)	20 - 4	0	10 + 4

Points from last round	301	238	289
Races	61	52	57
Total	362	290	346

The sixth and final set of races is.

31. Sellafeld (11) – Whitehaven (22)

32. Whitehaven (23) – Arlesdon (35)

33. Hensingham (36) – Flimby (46)

34. Seaton (45) – Aspatria (56)

35. Dearham (54) – Bridgefoot (63)

36. Beckermeth (12) – Ullock (61)

Enter up to 4 races good luck everyone.

RR Game LXXXIX – RR2508PR – Prairies Map – Round Eleven

Corrections

1. There was a big mistake in race 28 last round. TEAR did not enter the race, which was won by BIG FOOD, not TEAR as reported. The 20 points for winning are awarded to BIG FOOD and deducted from TEAR. My thanks to Kev for his honesty as no one else noticed.
2. BIG FOOD's builds last round should have read (Q20) - R20 - S21 - T21 - U22: (T28) - S28 - R27.

	BOB Bob Gingell <i>Black</i>	LTP Brendan W. <i>Yellow</i>	STOP Michael P. <i>Green</i>	BIG FOOD Steve Ham <i>Purple</i>	TEAR Kev Lee <i>Red</i>
29. Billings (65) - Trinidad (54)	20		+ 1		10 - 1
30. Minneapolis (13) - New Orleans (31)		0 - 1	+ 5	20 + 1	10 - 5
31. Canada (Sp3) - Cheyenne (56)	20 - 3 - 1	+ 2 + 3	10 - 2 + 1		
32. New Orleans (32) - St. Louis (24)	5 JR			5 JR	20
33. Transcontinental (Sp6) via Minot (63)	+ 2	20 - 2 + 5 - 2	10 - 5 + 2		
34. Kansas City (23) - San Angelo (44)	15 + 3 - 1 - 6		0 - 3 + 1 + 6	15 + 6 - 3 + 3 - 6	
35. Dallas (41) - Sioux Falls (15)	+ 2 + 1	15 + 1	0 - 2 - 1 + 4	15 - 4	0 - 1

Last round	187	157	223	197	185
Correction				+ 20	- 20
Races	57	41	27	52	33
Builds	- 4 - 1 + 1	- 1 - 1	+ 1		
Total	240	196	251	269	198

BOB: (M8) - L7 - K7 - J6 - I6.

LTP: (A26) - A27.

No-one else ordered builds.

The sixth and final set of races is.

36. Amarillo (51) - St. Louis (25):

37. Tulsa (35) - Fort Worth (42)

38. El Paso (45) - West (Sp1):

39. Oklahoma City (52) - Vicksburg (33)

40. Des Moines (21) - Great Falls (66):

41. Mexico (Sp4) - Davenport (16)

42. Miles City (64) - Duluth (11)

Enter up to 4 races. It's still quite close so good luck everyone.

RR Game LXXXVII – RR2506NF – Norwegian Fjords Map – Round Eleven

	REAR Kev Lee <i>Blue</i>	R Roger Trethewey <i>Green</i>	PINING Richard Smith <i>Red</i>	HERRING Steve Ham <i>Purple</i>
29. Kristiansand (51) - Stjordalshalsen (14)		15 - 7	0 + 7 - 3 + 1	15 + 3 - 1
30. Andalsnes (15) - Oslo (44)		5 + 1 + 1	20 - 1	5 - 1
31. Myrdal (66) - Oslo (45)	+ 4 + 1	20 - 4 - 2 + 1		10 + 2 - 1 - 1
32. Sweden (Sp1) - Bergen (63)	10	+ 2	+ 3	20 - 2 - 3
33. Flisa (34) - Dombas (23)	20 - 7	+ 7 + 8	10 - 8 - 3	+ 3
35. Denmark (Sp6) - Koningsvinger (36)		10 + 2	20 - 2	

Last round	183	258	226	199
Races	28	59	44	49
Builds	+ 1		- 4 - 1	
Total	212	317	265	248

PINING: (N33) - M34: (N11) - M12 - L12 - K12
No-one else ordered builds.

The sixth and final set of races is.

36. Stavanger (54) - Honefoss (41): 37. Flekkefjord (52) - Denmark (Sp5)
38. Sweden (Sp2) - Kristiansund (13): 39. Drammen (42) - Lillehammer (31)
40. Trondheim (12) - Nardoal (22): 41. Haugesund (62) - Gjøvik (32): 42. Bergen (64) - Opdøl (21)
Enter up to 4 races and good luck everyone. Game end statements are welcome.

RR Game LXXXVIII – RR2507SA – South Africa Map – Round Eleven

	RAND Steve Guest <i>Orange</i>	CAMRAS Bob Pitman <i>Red</i>	SADDER Michael P. <i>Green</i>	R Roger T. <i>Blue</i>	KAFFIR Brendan W. <i>Black</i>
29. Springbok (14) - Kimberley (33)	10 + 1 - 2 - 2		20 - 1 + 2		0 - 1 + 1 + 2
30. Pietermaritzburg (61) - Brandvlei (32)	+ 1	+ 7	10 - 1	0 - 7	20
31. Dundee (63) - Port Nolloth (13)	10 JR - 1		+ 2		10 JR - 1
32. J'burg (53) - Bloemfontein (46)		20	10		
33. Mozambique (Sp4) - Durban (45)	10 + 2 - 8		20 - 2 + 8		
34. SW Africa (Sp1) - Beaufort West (25)				20	
35. Pretoria (51) - Port Elizabeth (21)	10 - 2	20 - 1 + 2	+ 1		0

Last round	194	136	298	151	139
Races	29	48	69	13	31
Builds		- 4 - 1 + 1		+ 1 + 1	- 2 - 1 - 1
Total	223	180	367	166	166

CAMRAS: (U17) – V18 – W18: (R26) – R27 – R28
KAFFIR: (T20) - U19 - V19.
No-one else ordered builds.

The sixth and final set of races is.

36. Cape Town (12) - Aliwal North (42): 37. Mafeking (54) - Kimberley (34)
38. Askham (36) - Botswana (Sp2): 39. Swaziland (Sp5) - Messina (66)
40. Pietersburg (65) - Queenstown (26): 41. Cape Town (11) - Kroonstad (56)
42. East London (41) - Graff-Reinet (24)

Enter up to 4 races. Please send game end statements with your orders.

* * * * *

SPACEFILLER QUIZ – CLERIHEWS 1 of 4

xxxx xxxx

Never uses blu-tak

Because he is too posh

And his wife's got loads of dosh

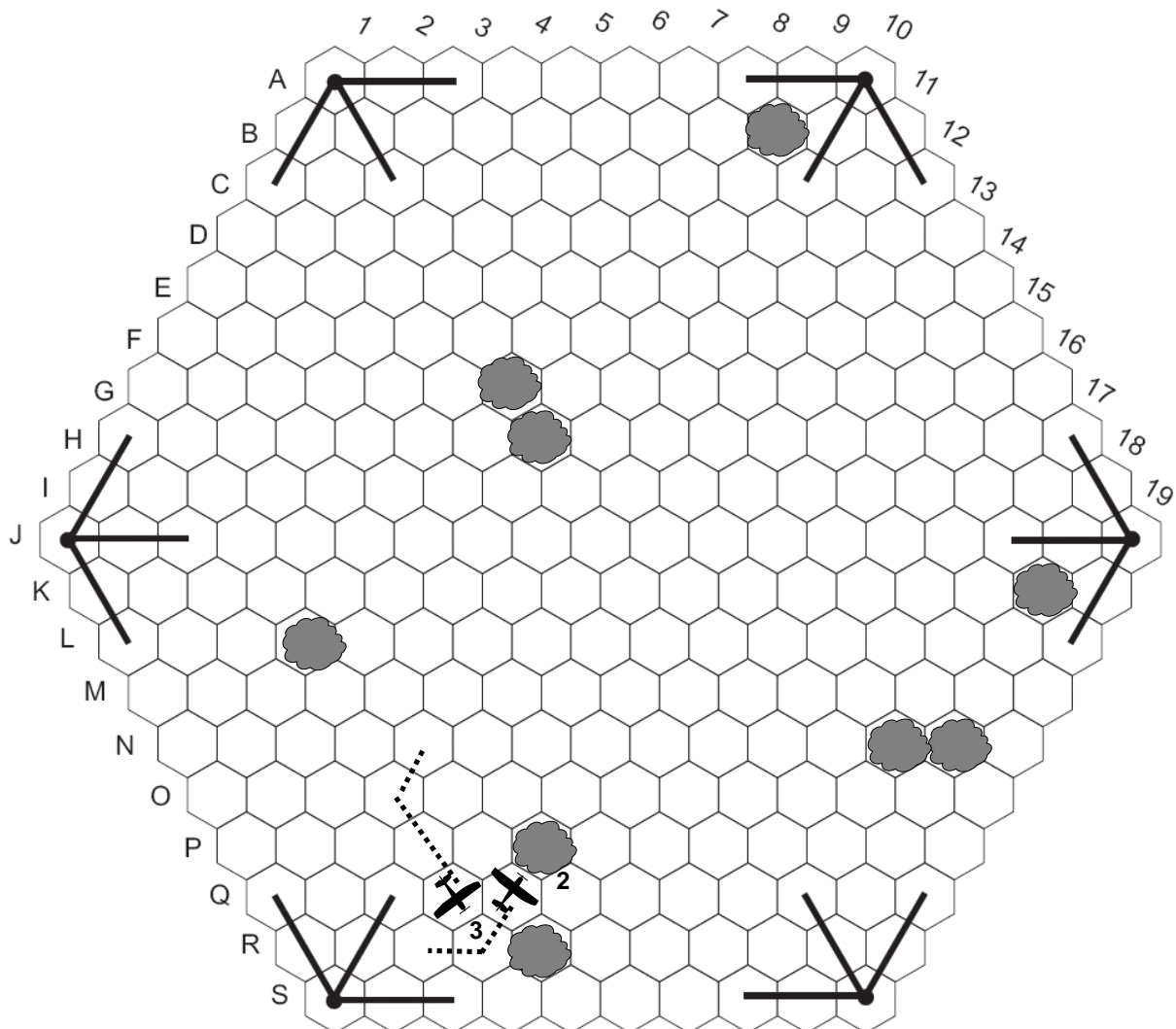
More on page 21, answers to Richard (I think they're a bit easy)

Sopwith T-365VP

Round Forty-Seven

The Gossamer Heron decides to try a no-move and suddenly finds his opponent almost on top of him.

Pilot	Starts	Moves	Ends	A:D:P
2 Gossamer Heron <i>Chris Hibbert</i> Start: A1	44) N13W 45) P12E 46) P9E 47) R11SE	44) LS – A – LS 45) A – A – A 46) LT – LT – LS 47) LT – LT – O	44) P12E 45) P9E 46) R11SE 47) Q12NE	0:6:14
3 Cameltoe (ACE) <i>John Walker</i> Start: A10	44) N16SW 45) N13E 46) N12E 47) N9W	44) RS – RT – A 45) A – O – O 46) A – A – A 47) LT – LT – A	44) N13E 45) N12E 46) N9W 47) Q11SE	16:7:12
5 The Ode-ace-ious One John Marsden	Start S19	Shot down turn 26		15 points
1 Avey Ate Her <i>Brendan Whyte</i>	Start J1	Shot down turn 15		6 points
4 The Mystery Pilot (ACE) <i>Brad Martin</i>	Start J19	Shot down turn 10		11 points
6 Red Baron <i>Arthur Owen</i>	Start S10	Shot down turn 4		0 points



on-the-shelf (addendum)

vol. XVI, no. 75

25 February 2024

Brought to you by Tom Howell: off-the-shelf at olympus.net . Some additional charts about the WiTWiKN orders, as promised, but first a bit of history spawned by a thread about the Lyrics game...

First, there was Costaguana produced by Conrad von Metzke. (Well, technically, first there was Graustark by John Boardman. Costaguana was actually the second postal Diplomacy 'zine, but Graustark doesn't really figure in this story.) There were several hiatii in the appearance of Costaguana, and eventually it ceased to appear under that title. In the meantime, Conrad had also generated publications under so many titles that even he couldn't recall exactly how many there had been. He did, however, continue to produce something with game reports (and a lot of chat) up until the end of his life. There had been a 'zine out of the UK named "Where Is My Mind?" that Conrad took over when it's original publisher (was that David Watts?) threw in the towel and that was the penultimate title he used. That's story line one.

Sometime, but not very long, later, there appeared in the UK two 'zines called "Polar Pig" and "Variable Title". You'll forgive me (I hope) for not being able to tell you off the top of my head who edited and published them. As was the case for most Diplomacy 'zines, neither of these lasted very long. When the original publisher of 'Polar Pig' bowed out, our very own Jim Reader took it in hand. When 'Variable Title' quit appearing, Jim also took that in hand and merged the title, producing "Variable Pig." I'm not familiar with the details, but apparently when Jim began skipping out of one country after another an old school buddy of his, namely the notorious Richard Smith, stepped up to handle printing and mailing VP, while Jim continued adjudicating the games and formatting the main 'zine. There you have the abbreviated story line two.

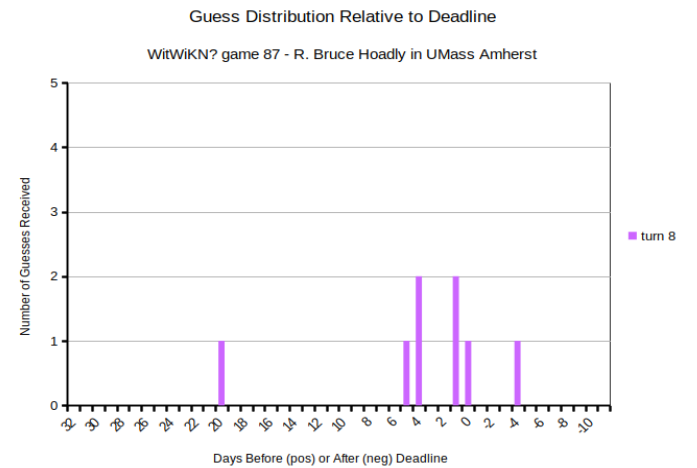
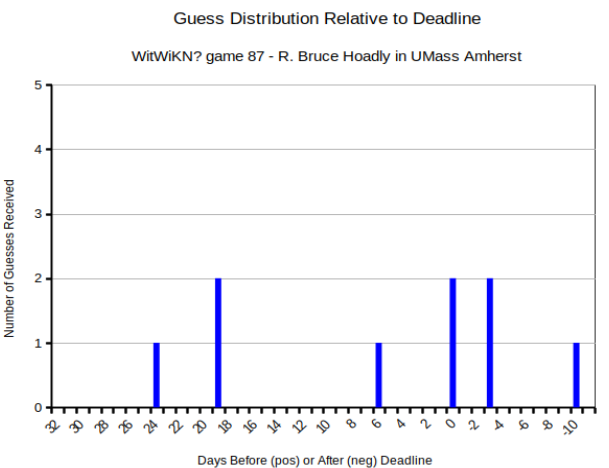
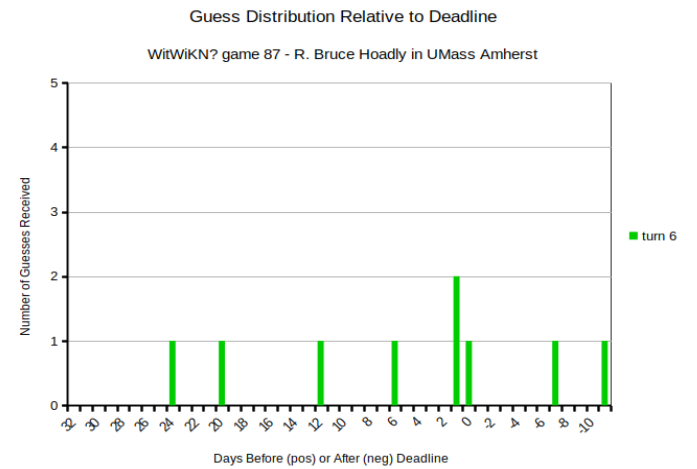
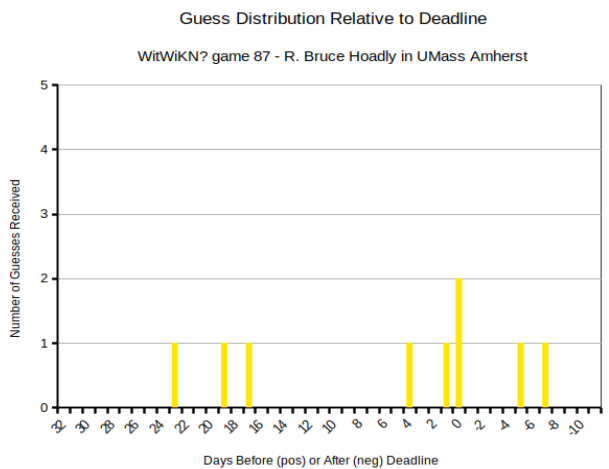
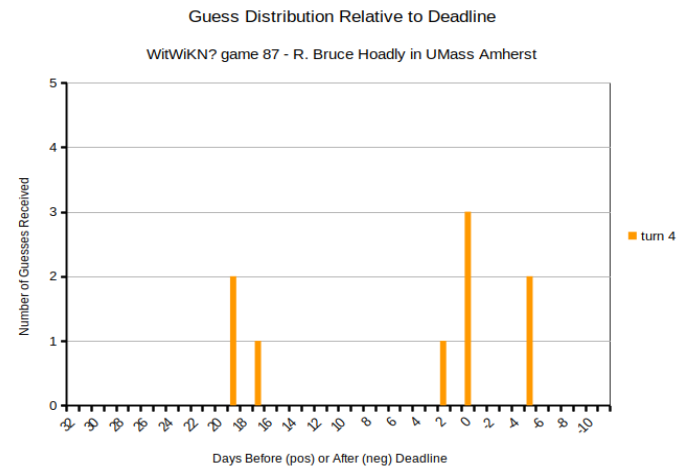
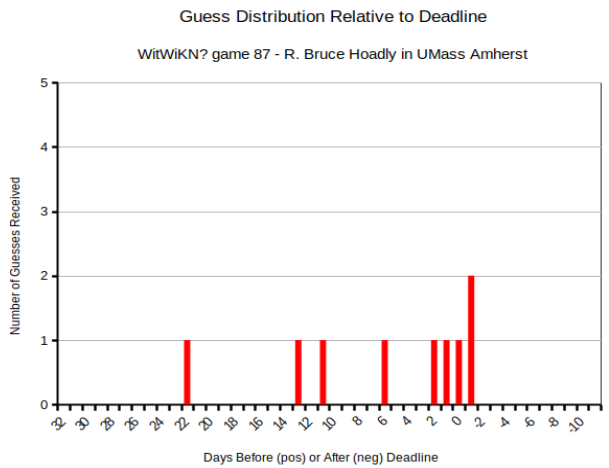
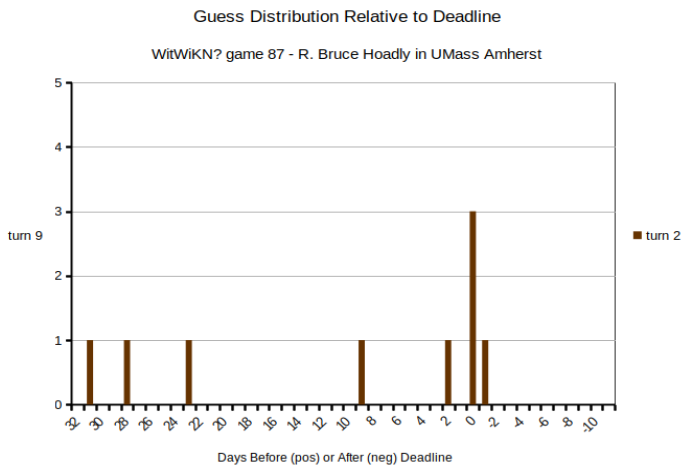
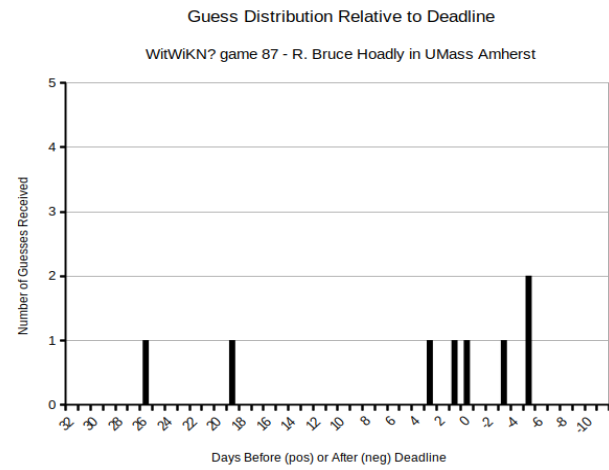
About half way through this timeline, yours truly adopted a couple of Diplomacy games who's GMs had absconded, and used them as the seed for "off-the-shelf". [Note the capitalization. Preserve the capitalization.] After appearing regularly for 15 years, the demise of o-t-s came when the ink-jet printer it was printed on clogged up and would only spit out streaked images.

Back around 2012, I got crazy again and volunteered to run a game of Richard's titled "Beeline" and submitted it as a sub-zine to VP under the title "on-the-shelf" - some kind of a play on the defunct 'off-the-shelf'. I eventually ran instances of 'Where in the World is Kendo Nagasaki?', 'Love Letter', 'Machi Koro', 'Breaking Away!', and 'Snakes and Ladders' in 'on-the-shelf'.

Then a couple of years later, I really lost my mind and volunteered to run a sub-zine in Conrad's WIMM? This one I named "back-of-the-envelope". In this venue I ran instances of 'WitWiKN?', 'Eat Me!', 'Love Letter', 'Barmy Battleships', 'Work, Rest, & Play, and two experimental games of 'Dominion'.

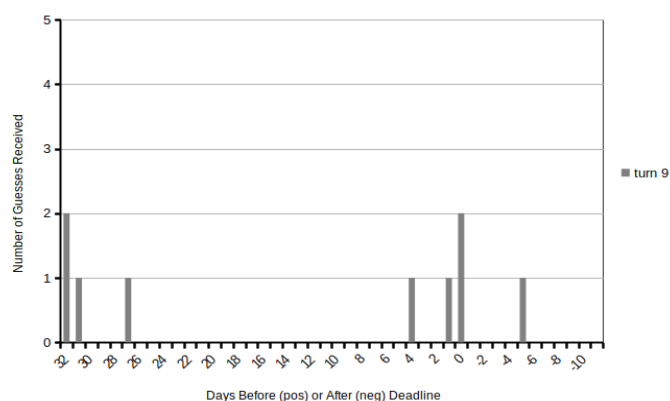
When Conrad moved on to that great gaming room in the sky, we had all long since moved from distributing our nonsense via the post and were inflicting it on our victims via e-mail. Not having to deal with a printer, it was easy for me to continue the games I was GMing in b-o-t-e as a stands-on-its-own-two-feet 'zine, and I retained the name. So far, in this iteration, I've run instances of 'Breaking Away!', 'Dominion', 'Eat Me!', 'Love Letter', 'Jabba's Palace', 'Machi Koro', 'WitWiKN?', 'The Golden Strider', 'Snakes and Ladders', and 'Tactical Sumo'. Peter Sullivan was kind enough to introduce 'Railway Rivals' into b-o-t-e. Since then, Chris Hibbert has graciously provided GMing duties for a round of 'Fuzzy Borders', and a couple more 'Railway Rivals' games. I've even gotten my feet wet as a RR GM. (Who 'da thunk it?)

Back to story line two: Mine wasn't the only sub-zine to appear in Variable Pig. For as long as I can recall, Richard Smith has provided a sub-zine in VP, under different names at various times. I understand that there were others back before I came onto the VP scene. John Walker is only the latest with 'Here Be Dragons'. After Jim announced the projected termination of his GMing and editing skills at VP, I decided to concentrate my efforts on b-o-t-e and started no new games in 'on-the-shelf'.



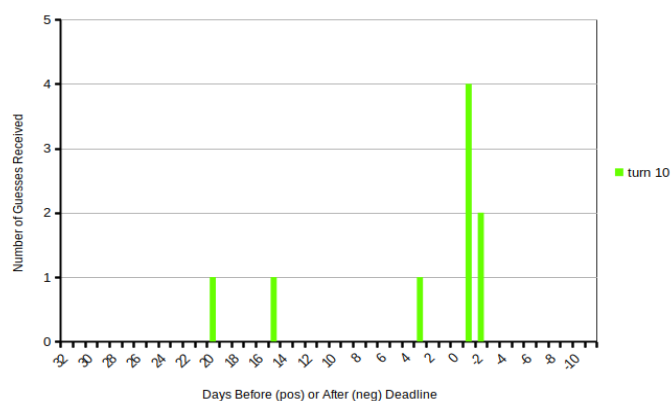
Guess Distribution Relative to Deadline

WitWiKN? game 87 - R. Bruce Hoadly in UMass Amherst



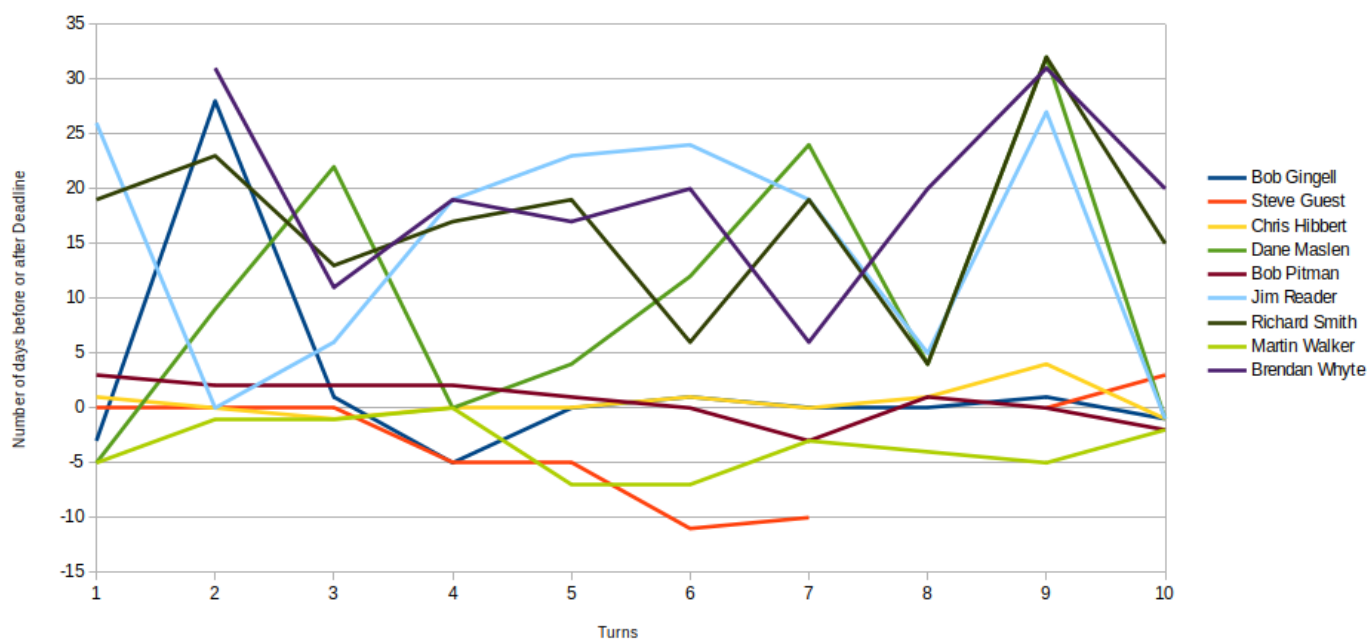
Guess Distribution Relative to Deadline

WitWiKN? game 87 - R. Bruce Hoadly in UMass Amherst



Timeliness of Guess Submission

WitWiKN? game 87 - R. Bruce Hoadly in UMass Amherst



SPACEFILLER QUIZ – CLERIHEWS 2-4 OF 4

xxxx xxxx

Has never been a farmer
He used to practice law
And now he is a bore

xxxx xxxx

Has very often rified
Her songs have ne'er been finer
And she's dating a gridironer

xxxx xxxx


Is into guns and shootin'
Especially in Ukraine
Where he's causing lots of pain



Issue 61

Queuedo – Wayne bids the queen Verabschiedung, although this goes virtually unnoticed as Heir Beckham enters the building, joining two other big stars. Surely nobody would take advantage of the distraction on such a solemn occasion. Although Roger and Jim seemed to have gained a few spots.

Players may select any incident card at any time. If two different cards are selected only the earliest listed one, will be processed. The incident cards are in the positions E, F, H (E being the earliest listed, also highlighted in **bold**). They will remain in these positions for the whole game. If any are used, they are removed from the game.

Position	Names	
1	Marika Lighter	
2	Aidan O'Mahony	
3		 Holly and Phil
4	Matti Nykanen	
5	Mary Dale	
6	Kyle Sandilands	
7	Max Musterman	
8	Susan Smith	
9	Steve Ham (2)	
10	Katy Montgomerie	
11	Roger Trethewey (Card D)	
12	Jim Reader (Card E and 3)	
13	Richard Smith (Card E and 2)	
14	Eric Moussambani	
15	Michael Edwards	
16	Brendan Whyte (2)	
17	Dusty Bottoms	
18	Lucky Day	
19	Ned Nederlander	
20	Norn Hewitt, John Walker, David Beckham	

This card was processed in the above report (last turn). **D David Beckham Enters the Hall:** You take advantage of the distraction and move ahead half the number of spaces (rounded up) of the lowest unique number played.

The remaining cards are:

E A Corgi Poops: Right in front of Holly and Phil, they move back two places this round. You may also play a number.
F A Guardsman Faints: You jump ahead the same number of spaces as did the player with the lowest unique number, unless more than one person selected this card.

H Duke And Duchess Of Sussex Shed Crocodile Tears: You gain one more place than the player with the lowest unique number as people get distracted by the Netflix documentary cameras.

Parkrun3 4 of 4 – Richard relaxes into his running keeping up a good pace with very little effort. Roger decided to dig into his reserves but saw his running buddy pull away. Mr Pitman used an interesting tactic as he let Mr Ham overtake, then slipstreaming for most of the 1000 metres before easing past him. Chris's plan worked well as he caught Bob but was joined by two unexpected guests. Steve is feeling exhausted and will have to settle for a top half position. Mr Gingell saved his energy hoping to overtake a few runners with a big finish. Sleepy Crawley and Brendan will be hoping to maintain their positions in mid table.

Park runner	Play	Start SP	Turn SP	Overtaken	Lead Tail	New Stamina	Time after 4k
Richard Smith	Relax	43.7	1.2		5	47.5	13.56+4.32=18.28
Roger Trethewey	8	46.5	8		3	41.5	13.56+4.52=18.48
Bob Pitman	Track Ham	35.5	6.5		0.2	29.2	14.19+4.34=18.53
Chris Hibbert	Target Pitman	36.5	6.5		0.2	30.2	14.30+4.23=18.53
Kev Lee	6 Target Pitman	52.2	6.5		0.2	45.9	14.30+4.23=18.53
John Hopkins	6 Target Pitman	44.5	6.5		0.2	38.2	14.32+4.21=18.53
Steve Ham	Relax	24	13	3		8	14.21+4.34=18.55
Tom Howell	4 Relax	48	1			47	14.32+4.26=18.58
Bob Gingell	Relax	50.5	2.3			48.2	14.32+4.37.7=19.07.7
Allan Stagg	6 – Target Gingell	50.7	2.3			48.4	14.45+4.22.7=19.07.7
Sleepy Crawley	10	44.5	10	1		33.5	14.32+4.50=19.22
Brendan Whyte	6	40	6	5		29	14.30+4.54=19.24
Martin Walker	1-2	30	2	1		27	14.35+4.58=19.33
Andrew York	4 Relax	49.7	3	1		45.7	14.44+4.54=19.38
C Townsend	6 Target York	43.2	3			40.2	14.52.3+4.45.7=19.38
John Marsden	6 Target York	49.7	3			46.7	14.55+4.42.7=19.38
Dane Maslen	1-2	38	2	2		34	14.46+4.58=19.44
Judy Ferguson	1-1	50.7	1	2		47.7	14.46+4.59=19.45
Jon Carter	6 Target Ferguson	54.2	0.5			53.7	15.00+4.45=19.45
David Cowie	1-6	37.7	6			31.7	14.55.3+4.54=19.49
Murray Egan	3-6	44.7	6	3		35.7	14.48.3+5.06=19.54
Mike Pollard	3-4	46.7	4	3		39.7	14.50.3+5.04=19.55
Michael Pargman	5 Track Pollard	35	2	3		30	14.51+5.04=19.55
Jacq Reader	4 Relax	26				26	15.00+5.00=20.00
Brad Martin	4 Relax	45.7	2	1	1	41.7	14.59.3+5.04=20.03
Steve Guest	5 Track Martin	40	1		3	36	15.00+5.03.3=20.03.3
Doug Kent	3-6	46.7	6	3	5	32.7	14.58.3+5.06=20.04.3

The order of processing is NMR (Dice 1 2 3), Stamina, Relax, Track then Target

With a big lead Richard had more than enough to cruise to victory. Roger was a little less secure but managed to hold off a slew of unfancied runners. Bob G had a strong finish picking up a couple of spots. Chris was a bit unlucky, as the runners he dragged along on the last k, picked him off. Not as unlucky as Bob P who finished with a decent time but got overtaken by a few runners who were having a good day. As expected, Steve dropped a few places as he could only jog in and was pipped on the line by ever improving man of mystery. Brendan ground out the last k, with only a couple of novices flying past him.

Park runner	Start Time	Stamina used	4 to 5k time	Finish time
Richard Smith	18.28	47.5	4.12.5	22.40.5
Roger Trethewey	18.48	41.5	4.18.5	23.06.5 PB
Kev Lee	18.53	45.9	4.14.1	23.07.1
Tom Howell	18.58	47	4.13	23.11
John Hopkins	18.53	38.2	4.21.8	23.14.8 PB
Allan Stagg	19.07.7	48.4	4.11.6	23.19.3 PB
Bob Gingell	19.07.7	48.2	4.11.8	23.19.5
Chris Hibbert	18.53	30.2	4.29.8	23.22.8
Bob Pitman	18.53	29.2	4.30.8	23.23.8
Sleepy Crawley	19.22	33.5	4.26.5	23.46.5 PB
Steve Ham	18.55	8	4.52	23.47
Jon Carter	19.45	53.7	4.06.3	23.51.3 PB
John Marsden	19.38	46.7	4.13.3	23.51.3 PB
Andrew York	19.38	45.7	4.14.3	23.52.3
Brendan Whyte	19.24	29	4.31	23.55
Judy Ferguson	19.45	47.7	4.12.3	23.57.3 PB
Caroline Townsend	19.38	40.2	4.19.8	23.57.8 PB
Martin Walker	19.33	27	4.33	24.06
Dane Maslen	19.44	34	4.26	24.10
Mike Pollard	19.55	39.7	4.20.3	24.15.3
David Cowie	19.49	31.7	4.28.3	24.17.3
Murray Egan	19.54	35.7	4.24.3	24.18.3
Brad Martin	20.03	41.7	4.18.3	24.21.3
Michael Pargman	19.55	30	4.30	24.25
Steve Guest	20.03.3	36	4.24	24.27.3
Doug Kent	20.04.3	32.7	4.27.3	24.31.6
Jacqueline Reader	20.00	26	4.34	24.34
Tailwalker				24.35

Puerto Rico – John takes the **Trader (+2)** Trades: John Corn, Kev Tobacco, Chris the trading house is full, Jim the trading house is full. The trading house is emptied.

Kev takes the **Captain (+1)** Loads: Kev Corn to 7 ship. Chris 2x Coffee to 5 ship. Jim cannot load. John cannot load. The 7 ship is emptied. Jim loses 1 Indigo. John loses 1 corn and 1 Indigo

Chris takes the **Settler** Plantations taken: Chris Quarry. Jim Indigo, John Coffee, Kev Coffee.

Jim takes the **Craftsman (+1)** Goods Produced: Jim: Indigo, Tobacco. John: Corn, Corn, Indigo, Indigo. Kev: Corn (only 1 available), Indigo, Tobacco Chris: Corn, Coffee.

Player	Doubloons	Goods	VPs	Buildings	Plantations
Jim Reader	0	Indigo Tobacco Tobacco	0	3 of 12 Small market (v) Small Indigo Plant (v) Tobacco Storage (vxx)	6 of 12 Quarry (v) Quarry (v) Quarry (x) Indigo (v) Indigo (x) Tobacco (v)
John Marsden	5	Corn Corn Indigo Indigo Indigo	2	3 of 12 Construction Hut (v) Small Indigo plant (v) Large Indigo Plant (v xx)	6 of 12 Quarry (v) Corn (v) Corn (v) Indigo (v) Indigo (v) Coffee (x)
Kev Lee	8	Corn Corn Indigo Indigo Tobacco	5	3 of 12 Small market (x) Small Indigo Plant (v) Tobacco Storage (vxx)	6 of 12 Corn (v) Corn (v) Corn (x) Indigo (v) Tobacco (v) Coffee (x)
Chris Hibbert	1	Corn Corn Coffee	6	2 of 12 Small sugar mill (x) Coffee Roaster (vx)	6 of 12 Quarry (x) Corn (v) Sugar (x) Sugar (x) Coffee (v) Coffee (v)

Building	Cost	VP	Available	Tiles	Available
Small Indigo Plant	1	1	1	Quarry	3
Small Sugar Mill	2	1	3	Corn	3 (1)
Small Market	1	1	0	Indigo	2 (5)
Hacienda	2	1	2	Sugar	8 (1)
Construction Hut	2	1	1	Tobacco	6 (1)
Small Warehouse	3	1	2	Coffee	2 (2)
Large Indigo Plant	3	2	1		
Large Sugar Mill	4	2	2	Goods	
Hospice	4	2	2	Corn	4
Office	5	2	2	Indigo	5
Large Market	5	2	2	Sugar	10
Large Warehouse	6	2	2	Tobacco	6
Tobacco Storage	5	3	0	Coffee	6
Coffee Roaster	6	3	1		
Factory	7	3	2	Colonists	41
University	8	3	2		
Harbour	8	3	2	Victory Points	87
Wharf	9	3	2		
Guild Hall	10	4	1		
Fortress	10	4	1		
Residence	10	4	1		
Customs House	10	4	1		
City Hall	10	4	1		

Doubloon bonuses held on role cards: Mayor (+1) Builder (+1) Prospector (+1)

The trading house is empty. The 5 contains 2 coffee. The 6 ship contains 1 Sugar. The 7 ship is empty.

Plantations available are Sugar, Sugar, Sugar, Sugar, Coffee. 9 colonists remain onboard the colonist ship.

The play order for the third turn is: Kev, Chris Jim. Then John.

Tiles shown in ()s are in the upturned stack.

Rock, Paper, Scissors2 – In the first semi, Steve wraps up Richard’s rock. Boyed with this success, he faces Mr Rocknroll in the second and promptly smashes his rock with his shiny diamond, wrapping up the whole contest. Steve takes the applause, making the diamond sign to the crowd.

Position	Player	Result		Final
1	Richard Smith	Rock	1	Steve Ham
2	Steve Ham	Paper		v
3	Steve Ham (Graphene + Diamond)	Diamond	2	Steve Ham
4	Edward Abel Smith (Excalibur)	Rock		

Lyric quiz 3 of 5 – 1 point scored for singer, 1 for the song and 1 for theme.

1 We were born and raised in a summer haze. Bound by the surprise of our glory days. (2011)

2 It's like a dream. No end and no beginning. You're here with me. It's like a dream
Let the choir sing (1989)

3 Hit it This ain't no disco It ain't no country club either This is LA (1993)

4 I've been taking on a new direction. But I have to say. I've been thinking about my own protection.
It scares me to feel this way (1984)

5 So he hung all his hopes. And he even sold his own car, hmm. Bought a one way ticket back.
To the life that he once knew (1973)

6 He takes me to a movie or to a restaurant. To go slow dancing, anything I want
Only when he's with me, I catch light. Only when he gives me, makes me feel alright (1981)

7 Well I hear you went up to Saratoga. And your horse naturally won
Then you flew your lear jet up to Nova Scotia. To see the total eclipse of the sun (1972)

8 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Say you will (say you will)
Throw your head back baby (say you will). Come on, come on (say you will) (1965)

9 Well, the undertaker drew a heavy sigh. Seeing no one else had come (1973)

10 The colors of the rainbow. So pretty in the sky. Are also on the faces. Of people going by (1967)

R2 Answers:

1 It's wonderful to be here. It's certainly a thrill (1967) **St Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band – The Beatles** (Richard Smith, Brendan Whyte, John Hopkins, Bob Pitman, Steve Guest).

2 Well? You need a little time to wake up, wake up Well? **Morning Glory – Oasis** (1995) (Richard Smith, Jim Reader, Bob Pitman).

3 The foulest stench is in the air. The funk of forty thousand years (1982) **Thriller – Michael Jackson** (Jim Reader, Martin Walker).

4 Someday you'll return to Your valleys and your farms And you'll no longer burn to be {1985) **Brothers in Arms – Dire Straits** (Dane Maslen, Martin Walker).

5 We only said goodbye with words. I died a hundred times (2006) **Back to Black – Amy Winehouse**

6 Oh, baby you're the only thing in this whole world. That's pure and good and right (1977) **Bat out of Hell – Meatloaf** (Jim Reader, John Hopkins, Bob Pitman, Steve Guest).

7 Her mind is Tiffany-twisted. She got the Mercedes-Benz, uh. She got a lot of pretty, pretty boys.
That she calls friends. (1976) **Hotel California – The Eagles** (Richard Smith, Jim Reader, Brendan Whyte, John Hopkins, Bob Pitman, Steve Guest, Martin Walker).

8 Got in a little hometown jam. So they put a rifle in my hands. Send me off to a foreign land. To go and kill the yellow man (1984) **Born in the USA – Bruce Springsteen** (Richard Smith, Jim Reader, Dane Maslen, Bob Pitman, Steve Guest, Martin Walker).

9 Forget the hearse 'cause I never die. I got nine lives. Cat's eyes. Abusin' every one of them and running wild (1980) **Back in Black - AC/DC** (Richard Smith, Bob Pitman).

10 Controlling my mind and my soul. When you reach out for me, yeah. And the feelin' is right (1977) **Night Fever – Bee Gees** (John Hopkins, Bob Pitman).

Theme – Title Tracks (Jim Reader, Steve Guest).

Brendan Whyte

8 Nineteen. (though Kung fu Fighting came to mind first!)

9 Eye of the tiger / Duran Duran

Jim Reader

I think I scored 10 last round, with correct answers for songs 1, 2, 4, 5 and 10. GM Quite correct 2 points have been added to the total

Richard Smith

Got five again, (GM although I only credited you with 4, 2 points also added)

though I suspect I will kick myself over some of the others.

Reminded me that Born in the USA was used by Trump and other Republicans despite it being an anti-(Vietnam)-war song. They've also used John Lennon's blatantly communist anthem "Imagine" with slightly changed words.

Jim Reader 10 + 11 = 21

Richard Smith 10 + 10 = 20

Steve Guest 8 + 9 = 17

Bob Pitman 6 + 14 = 20

John Hopkins 8 + 6 = 14

Martin Walker 6 + 8 = 14

Dane Maslen 6 + 4 = 10

Brendan Whyte 5 + 2 = 7

Chris Hibbert 2

Let's play darts – Game end statement

Richard - After a poor start, I really didn't think I could win this, and was expecting the two-dart finish attempt to be scuppered.

I do think this game works well and a tournament with (say) 8 players would be fun. Unlikely to get any 16-year-old entrants.

Postscript. In never ceases to amaze me how games are played. In parkrun this turn in never occurred to me that someone would track a runner that was behind them. My thought was it would be someone in your eyeline. I checked the rules and could see nothing wrong with the order, so processed it. Thinking about it, when I'm running, I might have the occasional peek behind to give myself a little incentive, so it does make logical sense.

I'm in the initial stages of planning a house move, so will be easing back on the number of games I run. Parkrun, Let's play darts and Rock, Paper, scissors will be put into abeyance for the next six months or so. I will of course continue to run my current games to a conclusion and would run Nearly the best game in the world and 6 Nimmit! If they fill.



THE CELESTIAL STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

Track no. 28

richard530smith@btinternet.com

10th February 2024

I have started looking into using <https://www.craiyon.com/> to create some images for the new zine and website. This issue's picture was created by Craiyon (logo in corner). Not bad at all!

The service is free (and fun to use) and the images are not subject to usage conditions unless you are business with over \$1m annual turnover. I guess the only downside is that many human artists are not happy that these AI programs have been trained to mimic their work without consent or payment.

We're trialling Microsoft Co-pilot at work, which does lots of clever things to help you, though many have pointed out that the greedy computing power required is not good for the planet. I guess Greta doesn't use it. Being a sad old git I wondered what happens when everyone is using it, wouldn't the training program be eating its own dogfood?

I've not mentioned TV shows for a while, but I must report that I did enjoy The Winter King on ITV-X. Not quite as good as The Last Kingdom (also based on Bernard Cornwell's books) and reviews were mixed, some criticising the acting of Derfel (whose in-series haircut turns him from David St. Hubbins into Jason Donovan) and others saying it was a bit cheapo. Thumbs up from me though.

On the games front, I have designed another new RR map (aided by Bob and Jim, as ever) and there will be at least two games on offer. With Dilemmas nearing the end and the death of the Pig looming, I am intending to start two more all-reader games next issue: A rare outing for By Popular Opinion and a new go at House of Games (no crap prizes on offer).

Richard

Google CEO Sundar Pichai claimed that artificial intelligence (AI) would be more transformative to humanity as a species than electricity and fire.

DILEMMAS - ROUND FOUR



And so we move on to the final pair of questions, but there will also be a "likes-only" (see <https://variablepig.org/rules/dilemmas.html>) round to finish.

I will of course be happy to receive any comments about the game. One rule change I thought might be fun is to have the players submit questions (perhaps with the GM choosing the best two).

Scoreboard

Does anybody actually care about the scores? Probably not but you can tactically choose to like answers you think are from players below you on the scoreboard, or the GM. New players will start on 27 points. Note that I decided if players vote but don't explicitly predict, I'll use their vote as their prediction.

Player	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	TOTAL
John Walker	5	4	7	6	5	5	3	2			37
Brendan Whyte	5	5	5	6	6	4	3	2			36
Bob Pitman	3	4	6	5	5	4	2	2			31
Chris Hibbert	4	2	5	7	3	4	3	3			31
Tom Howell	4	4	7	4	3	5	0	0			27
Steve Ham (12)	-	-	0	0	4	5	3	3			27

Likes: You can "like" up to 2 answers and you get a point for each one, as does the author of the answer, unless it's the GM. Example orders: Like Q7A7 and Q8A9. These points will be added to the Q7 and Q8 columns in the table above.

10 likes were given out from a possible 12 on Q5 and Q6 and these have been added to the scoreboard, as have the points for voting on and predicting Q7 and Q8.

R4 Questions:

7) Would you rather live in poverty in a world of love and peace, or in luxury in a world of hate and war?

Result of Vote: Love: 3 Hate: 2

Q7A1: Give me luxury! And everyone else living in a shoebox in middle of t'road. If they were lucky!

Q7A2: Surely I'd want to live in poverty, spending everyday happy in a friendly world, rather than worry about every little interaction and the threat of nuclear destruction.

Q7A3: That's a tough one. Usually we highlight progress by pointing out that if you had to choose between being a King 300 years ago or a pauper today, your standard of living would be much higher today. This question poses a different trade-off, but I think I'll interpret the love & peace and hate & war as international rather than interpersonal, and choose to be poor.

Q7A4: Live in luxury in a world of hate and war, it's not so far off this one really, love and peace doesn't work while we have "haves" and "have nots", so take the money, the helicopters and the travel and run. Let the haters and the dimbulbs become cannon fodder and go extinct while I sip cold cocktails and buy weapons factories. Maybe even do a little something for love and peace through tax deductible charity. Really I'd like a Star Trek world where everyone has free access to almost any resource or training they need to live a fulfilled life and money is done way with!

Q7A5: I don't think this is clear cut. For those of us not living in poverty it's difficult to understand what living in poverty is like, but we can imagine a world full of hate and war, thanks to the internet and TV. It's probably a matter of degrees, if poverty is at a level where hunger is avoided most days that may be preferable to a world of hate with Piers Morgan as president of the world. At an evolutionary level it would be interesting to know what life expectancy is in both scenarios, if death by hunger at the same age as death by an axe-swinging sociopath, then is being happy and very hungry preferable to well off and living in fear preferable? I'll answer poverty in a world of love and peace because mankind is able to adapt to the environment and may be able to bring about change and reduce the impact of hate and war, however unlikely.

Q7A6: The question doesn't properly define poverty and luxury. Provided basic needs were met, I would go for love and peace, but if not Maslo's Triangle of Needs would kick in and couldn't choose that option. The question also doesn't say if the hate and war is localised or universal. When, for example, terrible things were happening in Rwanda, most of us were just glad we lived in a comfortable liberal democracy, as we cracked open another bottle of Prosecco.

8) Would you rather appear on Who Wants to be a Millionaire or Deal or No Deal? Note that in both cases you will definitely get a go in the "hot seat".

Result of Vote: Millionaire: 2 Deal: 3

Q8A1: Millionaire, win from your own decisions (good or bad) rather than win by chance only to be ripped off by Edmunds or a banker.

Q8A2: It has to be Millionaire, a day's filming to take home a quarter of a million, compared to a few days of filming multiple episodes in order to take home 10 pence/cents.

Q8A3: Having actually been on WwtbaM, and having never seen DonD, put me down for that one as only remaining public humiliation I've never tried.

Q8A4: I'm not great at trivia. I'd go for the randomness of Deal or No Deal.

Q8A5: Deal or No Deal. I understand the contestants have a few days in a nice hotel together, away from their families for a few days and have a good time together. I'd put up with that to have a chance of winning 10p.

Q8A6: It has to be Deal or No Deal for me because I can't remember my own name let alone the winner of the Best Picture Oscar in 2000. You might ask me was it

A) A Beautiful Mind

B) American Beauty

C) Gladiator or

D) Shakespeare in Love

and I would say "yes, probably one of those four".

R5 Questions:

9) Assuming we are not already living in a simulation, would you like your consciousness to be transferred to an artificial reality?

10) A good old "train tracks" question to finish. A runaway train is hurtling towards a junction that is controlled by a lever in your hand. You can send the train down one track tied to which is Donald Trump. Or a different track with Vladimir Putin tied to it. Mr Trump claims that he has a nuclear trigger up his butt which will go off if he is run over, killing 10 million people. Mr Putin warns you that his supporters will murder your family and friends if he dies. There is no time to verify either claim. So who gets squished, Trump or Putin?

CRYSTAL BALL 2024 - BOWLED OVER!



No	Sport	Event	Date	Jim Reader	Steve Ham	John Walker	Martin Walker	Richard Smith
1L	Football	African Cup of Nations	January	Morocco	Morocco	Ivory Coast [2]	Morocco	Senegal
2L	American Football	Super Bowl	February	SF 49ers [1]	Buffalo Bills	SF 49ers [1]	Miami	Kansas City [2]
3L	Rugby	6 Nations	March	France	France	France	France	England
4L	Golf	US Masters	April	Scheffler	Koepka	Rahm	McIlroy	Rahm
5L	Football	Men's FA Cup	May	Newcastle	Liverpool	Chelsea	Chelsea	Southampton
6	Football	Men's Euro 2024	June	Portugal	France	Germany	Germany	England
7	Tennis	Wimbledon - Men's singles	July	Sinner	Tsitsipas	Alcaraz	Djokovic	Alcaraz
8	Tennis	Wimbledon - Women's singles	July	Gauff	Gauff	Sabalenka	Swaitek	Swaitek
9	Multi	Olympics - UK medals	August	48	54	62	39	56
10	Multi	Olympics - US medals	August	94	127	124	88	102
11	Cricket	Women's T20 World Cup	September	Australia	Australia	Australia	Australia	England
12	Baseball	World Series	October	Cleveland	NY Yankees	LA Dodgers	Houston Oilers	LA Dodgers
13	Formula 1	Highest placed driver (not Verstappen)	November	Perez	Leclerc	Perez	Perez	Russell
TB	Global Warming	Number of degrees Celsius (to 2DP) 1.18	Available in 2024	1.06	1.01	0.95	1.10	0.91
SCORE				1	0	3	0	2

You can have up to three changes (to events not yet locked, indicated by L next to the number) during the game, but the first one is free, and the second and third cost 1 point deducted from your total.

Deadline day (+1) summary: AFCON reaches the semi-final stage with Ivory Coast scraping through, all other chosen countries out. The Super Bowl is the 11th Feb (the chickens are getting worried) between the 49ers and the Chiefs, so point guaranteed for three of us. 6 Nations kicks off with a defeat for France and narrow wins for England and Scotland. All chosen teams still in the FA cup, Liverpool will play Southampton in round 5 if the Saints win their 4th round replay.

Update: Kansas City win the Super Bowl in a thriller! Two points to me, and one each to John and Jim. Hosts Ivory Coast win AFCON! Two points to John. In the rugby, France controversially beat Scotland after a very long TMO check on a potential last gasp winning try for the Scots, and England edge out Wales despite having two players sin-binned. I was intending to change my prediction from England to Ireland but the first 6N game was actually on deadline Friday, so the event should have been locked.

Global Warming: The NCEI figure for 2023 is now available, and it's high! *The January–December global surface temperature ranked highest in the 174-year record at 1.18°C (2.12°F) above the 1901–2000 average of 13.9°C (57.0°F). This surpassed the previous record from January–December 2016 by 0.13°C (0.23°F). According to NCEI's statistical analysis and data through December, there is a one-in-three chance that 2024 will be warmer than 2023 and a 99 percent chance that 2024 will rank among the five warmest years on record.*

CENTURY SPICE ROAD - ROUND 14



Rules are on the VP site at <https://variablepig.org/rules/centuryspiceroad.html>
Claim order for round 14 was Kevin, John, Jim. For round 15 it is John, Jim, Kevin.

1) Payment for last merchant cards: None.

2) Merchant cards played / point cards claimed: Jim upgrades 3 Turmeric to Saffron, John plays Trade 1 Cinnamon for 1 Cardamom, 1 Saffron and 1 Turmeric. Kevin creates 2 Saffron enabling him to buy the 2 Cardamom, 2 Saffron and 2 Turmeric for 16VPs (13 +3 for gold).

3) Rest: John does rest but must pay 1VP as he also played a merchant card.

4) Bids: None

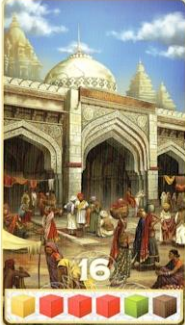




I probably should have mentioned this earlier, but at the end of the game (R15), each spice that is not a turmeric on your caravan is worth 1 VP. So even if you can't get a point card in the last round, there is still scope to score a few extra VPs.

Status Table

Player	Claim Order	Spices	Unused Cards	Used Cards	Point Cards	VPs
Kevin Lee	3	Turmeric: 1 Saffron: 0 Cardamom: 0 Cinnamon: 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade 3 Saffron for 2 Cinnamon Create 1 Saffron and 2 Turmeric Upgrade 2 Create 2 Turmeric Trade 4 Turmeric for 1 Cardamom and 1 Cinnamon Trade 1 Cinnamon for 1 Cardamom and 3 Turmeric 	Create 2 Saffron	3	32
John Walker	1	Turmeric: 2 Saffron: 1 Cardamom: 1 Cinnamon: 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade 2 Cardamom for 3 Saffron and 2 Turmeric Trade 1 Cinnamon for 1 Cardamom 1 Saffron and 1 Turmeric Create 2 Turmeric Trade 1 Saffron and 1 Turmeric for 1 Cinnamon Trade 2 Cardamom for 1 Cinnamon, 1 Saffron and 2 Turmeric Trade 2 Saffron for 1 Cinnamon and 2 Turmeric Upgrade 2 Trade 2 Turmeric and 1 Cardamom for 2 Cinnamon Trade 2 Cardamom for 2 Cinnamon Trade 5 Turmeric for 2 Cinnamon Create 4 Turmeric Trade 5 Turmeric for 3 Cardamom Create 1 Saffron and 1 Turmeric 		2	18
Jim Reader	2	Turmeric: 6 Saffron: 3 Cardamom: 1 Cinnamon: 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create 1 Cardamom Create 2 Turmeric Trade 1 Cardamom for 2 Saffron and 1 Turmeric Create 1 Cinnamon Upgrade 2 Trade 3 Turmeric for 1 Cinnamon 	Create 3 Turmeric Create 1 Cardamom and 1 Turmeric Upgrade 3	2	25

Spice Pot: Empty.

Point Cards Available

1 (gold +3)	2 (silver +1)	3	4	5
				
Claim 16 for 1 Turmeric, 3 Saffron, 1 Cardamom + 1 Cinnamon	Claim 7 for 3 Turmeric and 2 Saffron	Claim 14 for 2 Turmeric and 3 Cinnamon	Claim 12 for 1 Turmeric, 1 Saffron, 1 Cardamom + 1 Cinnamon	Claim 8 for 3 Turmeric and 2 Cardamom

Next round: The final round. No point buying merchant cards, see note above about leftover spice.

BUS BOSS - DENMEAD AND WATERLOOVILLE (BB416DEN) ROUND 1



And so our four intrepid entrepreneurs have started trying to make a few bob running buses in the Meon Valley and surrounding urban areas.

Everyone got their first choice build except Kevin who couldn't build Waterlooville to Purbrook, and this sent him further north so we have two norths and two souths at the moment.

Note in response to Michael: The build cost for the motorways (or other segmented routes) is the main number, there is no option to build parts, so to build the A3M the cost is $13+2 = 15$. The numbers in brackets are

the number of stops between each segment, required for races. This is exactly the same as all other BB maps, I'm just using an alternative representation that uses the bracketed numbers instead of drawing lines across the routes. It makes the map look cleaner and means the in-game map can easily be annotated using the "flood fill" tool. Talking of which...

The in-game map is available at <https://variablepig.org/maps/bb/ingame/BB416DEN.jpg>

BOB Cosham - QA Hospital - Purbrook - Waterlooville Bob Gingell BANK: $100 - 12 = 88$ Black BOB - Busy Overland Buses	DAWN Denmead - North Boarhunt - Hundred Acres Michael Pargman BANK: $100 - 12 = 88$ Green DAWN - Denmead And Waterlooville Nightbuses
WEAR Hoe Gate - Worlds End - Denmead - Anmore Kevin Lee BANK: $100 - 12 = 88$ Red WEAR - Wickham Expressways Are Rampant	CRETS QA Hospital - Cosham - Port Solent - Portchester Jim Reader BANK: $100 - 12 = 88$ Yellow CRETS - Carriages Riding East To Southampton

The build order for round 2 is Michael, Kevin, Jim, Bob.

BUS BOSS - DENMEAD AND WATERLOOVILLE (BB417DEN) ROUND 1

The map is available at <https://variablepig.org/maps/bb/bb-den-v1.pdf>.

GM: Bob Gingell

An interesting clumping of purchases around Denmead, which will cause some restrictions and dilemmas on what can be bought in Round 2. ROGER buys first.

Press: WHCW - Can't cowplain...

CRT00,

purple (Steve Ham) 100-12 = 88

Denmead - North Boarhunt - Hundred Acres [6+2, 2+2 = 12]

Riding On Good English Roads (ROGER),

Orange (Roger Trethewey) 100-12 = 88

Hambledon - Denmead - Waterlooville [4+2, 4+2 = 12]

The Wombles of Hambledon Common are Wee (WHCW),

Bungo Blue (Brendan Whyte) 100-12 = 88

Denmead - Waterlooville - Cowplain [4+2, 4+2 = 12]

Buses until 2150 (B2150),

Green (Richard Smith) 100-12 = 88

World's End - Denmead - Anmore; Denmead - Furzeley [3+2, 1+2; 2+2 = 12]

Purchase order for Round 2: Roger, Brendan, Richard, Steve

BUS BOSS - NEW FOREST (BB408NF) - GAME END COMMENTS

Bob Gingell: I was fairly happy with my central route but Roger's early control in the North helped him a lot. I think he has enough of a lead to hold on for the win. There will be quite a lot of very close races this round but I think I might be the only one able to enter five races (not that it will do me enough good!).

My fears were realised with a weak score and Brad (NOVA) doing much better with his five races and easily staying ahead of me. Direct links to the north seemed to be what linked the two leaders and exclusion from the centre and north is what cost Kevin. Once in that northern area players were able to monopolise access to villages there.

Jim Reader: Congratulations to Roger for a well-deserved win. He succeeded in connecting four of the five main towns with a nice straight route and his control of the North also paid well in the early races. My line was a pigsear and I'm amazed I got second as I seemed to get shut out of everything I was trying to do and also a little surprised that Brad didn't fare better. Thanks for the game.

Roger Trethewey: It is a good balanced map. Arthur got me off to a good start and I was pleased to take over. I was expecting Jim to catch up, but I was pleased to hang in there. Thanks to everyone in the game making it interesting.

GM: I do like the appearance of the map, and it is reasonably authentic. It does perhaps need a few more double routes to avoid people getting cut off, and I also felt there were a few too many tied races.

Map showing final builds <https://variablepig.org/maps/bb/ingame/BB408NF.jpg>

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS KENDO NAGASAKI - ROUND 2



This is a game of the Temperature Control variant - see <https://variablepig.org/rules/kendo.html> and it is best with at least 6 players, now up to 7 (huzzah!) but room for more to join.

The person guessed must be a real human with a Wikipedia entry (can be live or dead). The location guessed must have a Wikipedia entry with a given lat / lon. I am not providing GPX files but will include the link to my tester web page with the temperature email.

Round 2:

Player	Who	Where	Lat	Lon
Bob Gingell	Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902)	Harare, Zimbabwe	-17.829167	31.052222
Steve Guest	Luis Suarez (1987-)	Puerto Suarez, Bolivia	-18.966667	-57.798056
Chris Hibbert	Nim Chimpsky (1973-2000)	Taipai, Taiwan	25.0375	121.5625
Bob Pitman	Leslie Groves (1896-1970)	McDonald Ranch House, NM	33.650739	-106.460356
Jim Reader	Sofia Vergara (1972-)	Sintra, Portugal	38.799167	-9.388333
Martin Walker	Ray Bradbury (1920-2012)	Bucharest, Romania	44.4325	26.103889
Brendan Whyte	Midge Ure (1953-)	Vienna, Austria	48.208333	16.3725

Nim Chimpsky isn't a human (as stipulated) so I probably should have rejected him. I will in future.

Public response to the player with the closest guess:

I became moderately famous about 3 years after your death.

Round 1:

Player	Who	Where	Lat	Lon
Steve Guest	Laurence Olivier (1907-1989)	Khartoum, Sudan	15.6	32.5
Chris Hibbert	Ann Hardy (1933-2023)	Chicago, USA	41.881944	-87.627778
Bob Pitman	Frank Herbert (1948-1986)	Richat Structure, Mauritania	21.124	-11.402
Jim Reader	Elon Musk (1952-)	Financial District, Manhattan, USA	40.7075	-74.009167
Martin Walker	Bruce Forsyth (1928-2017)	Havana, Cuba	23.136667	-82.358889

Public response to the player with the closest guess:

My name, as given in the title of my Wikipedia page, has the same number of letters as yours.

RAILWAY RIVALS - WESTEROS (RR2516WR) - ROUND 8



The map is online at <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/westerosrr.html>
This game <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2516WR.jpg>

the two of the held over races were won by sole entrants, then everyone has a go at the big N/S run for race 8, with MEAD edging out ROG for 1st. In race 9 MEAD's and GREYJOY's dragons faced off, but no ship was sunk, with MEAD sailing along the south coast from Oldtown to Mir and GREYJOY and BIEN sailing from King's Landing to Pentos, GREYJOY winning despite a slightly longer route.

Race 10 saw BIEN's dragon swoop down and derail MEAD's train with a big swish of the tail.

Only GREYJOY had a viable entry to race 11 (to the edge of The Wall) but had ROG owned a ship in King's Landing he could have competed. Will ROG eschew seafaring completely? Remember ships can be bought with your build orders, at any port(s) you are connected to.

BIEN's timely connection to Gulltown gave him an uncontested win in race 12, and The Eyrie has now been connected by two companies so race 13 can be run next time. Race 14 had three companies with near-identical track lengths, result was ROG 34, GREYJOY 32, MEAD 32.

DRAGON ACTIONS:

GREYJOY	BIEN	ROG	MEAD
Attack MEAD Race 9	Attack MEAD Race 10	Taking a nap	Defend Race 9

	GREYJOY Bob Gingell Black	BIEN Brad Martin Yellow	ROG Roger Trethewey Green	MEAD Steve Guest Orange
R1) Storm's End (46) - Deepwood Motte (15)	race not possible			
R2) Karhold (14) - Flint's Finger (26)			20 [22]	
R3) Widows Watch (23) - Highgarden (54)	20 [39] -1	+1		
8) Last Hearth (13) - The Tor / Godsgate (64)	JR 0 [28+31] +2	JR 0 [28+31] +3	10 [53] -1 -3	20 [53] -2 +1
9) Old Oak (51) - Essos (Sp2)	20 [38] -7	10 [35] -4		0 [62] +4 +7
10) Oldtown (56) - Lemonwood (65)		20 [20]		Train derailed
11) Dragonstone (Sp3) - Shadow Tower / Eastwatch (11)	20 [46]			
12) Gulltown (33) - King's Landing (43)		20 [21]		
13) The Eyrie (32) - Moat Cailin (25)	race not possible			
14) Bitterbridge (45) - Winterfell (22)	5 [31] -1 -1 +3	+1	20 [32] -3 +1	5 [31] -1 +1

Last Turn	69	78	58	68
Points from Races	60	51	44	35
Buils	-10 +2	-10 +6 -1 -1 -2	-9 +6 +13 +1	-8 -13 +1
Points Total	121	121	113	83

Ships in port: Sunspear: BIEN=1; Starfall: BIEN=1; Lannisport GREYJOY=1, MEAD=1; King's Landing: BIEN=1, GREYJOY=2; White Harbor: GREYJOY=1; Oldtown: MEAD=1

BUILDS:

ROG: (L11) - - - - H9 - DEEPWOOD MOTTE

BIEN: (T26) ----- THE EYRIE; (K20) - - - - O18 - O17 [-1 ROG] [-1 MEAD] [-2 GREYJOY]

GREYJOY: (P24) - Q25 - R24 --- ----- The Eyrie

MEAD: (Q7) - - Q6 - - R5 - - - Castle Black; (J42) - K43 [-13 ROG]

Reoffers:

R1. Storm's End (46) - Deepwood Motte (15) R13. The Eyrie (32) - Moat Cailin (25)

The third set of races are:

15. Casterly Rock (41) - Blackcrown / Three Towers (55) 16. Starfall (61) - Lannisport (42)
 17. Cider Hall / Grassy Vale (53) - Castle Black (12) 18. Winterfell (21) - Pyke (S6)
 19. The Twins (31) - Lands of Always Winter (S1) 20. The Dreadfort (16) - Harrenhal (35)
 21. White Harbor (24) - Wyl / Yronwood (63)

Enter either or both the reoffers plus up to 4 new races and build up to 8 points of track (ships may also be bought at connected ports, marked with anchor symbol).

RAILWAY RIVALS - WESTEROS (RR2517WR) - ROUND 5

GM: Bob Gingell

BEAR guesses right with a build to Three Towers and then heads North, followed by DRAGON who is slowed by a river and a mountain. STARK forces a way into the South-East while STARKLINE links King's Landing to the Wall. No more ships were built although some new ships might be expected in the forthcoming final building round.

GM note: The Wall cannot be built over; track reaching any part of the Wall allows (at a cost of +3 to route length) for people and goods in races to leave the train and cross over the Wall. Clarification: This does mean that track reaching Castle Black allows passage over the Wall.

Correction: BEAR should have paid 1 to STARK in 4c for the junction in M22.

Build allowance for Round 5: 4, 6, 4

STARKLINE (Mike Townsend), Green: $63 + 6 - 4 + 4 = 69$.

5a. (Moat Cailin) - O17; (L27) --- M28

5b. (M28) - - - Harrenhal - Q30 [-1b, -3s]; (S4) - S3 - CASTLE BLACK

5c. (Q30) - - S31 - - Kings Landing

STARK (Jim Reader), yellow: $41 + 1$ (correction) $+ 3 - 3 + 4 = 46$.

5a. (O44) --- O45 - Yronwood [-3d]

5b. (Yronwood) - - - - GODSGRACE - - V48

5c. (V48) --- Lemonwood; (R46) - The Tor

BEAR (Kevin Lee), Black: $30 - 1$ (correction) $+ 3 - 4 + 4 = 32$.

5a. (Oldtown) - D45 - THREE TOWERS; (M20) - M19 - L18 [-1sl]

5b. (L18) - K18 - J18; (M19) - - - - M15 [-1sl]

5c. (M15) - --- O14 [-1s, -1sl]

DRAGON (Richard Smith), Blue: $48 - 4 + 3 = 47$.

5a) 4. (M29) - --- Riverrun

5b) 6. (Riverrun) - - - - K26

5c) 4. (K26) - K25 - L24 [-1sl]; (Oldtown) - D45 - Three Towers [-3b]

Ships owned: DRAGON – King's Landing, Sunspear; BEAR – Oldtown.

Build allowance for Round 6: 6, 4, 3.

RAILWAY RIVALS PARTNERSHIP BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA (RR2522BH) ROUND 2



The map can be found here <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/bosniarr.html>

The rules can be found here <https://variablepig.org/rules/partnership.html>

As you can see below, I have changed the report format slightly to show the partners inside the same box.



We've now had our first payments. I haven't forgotten that you don't have to pay your partner for junctions or parallels, but, unsurprisingly giving the geography of the starts, this wasn't the case for any R2 builds. Instead ROGER copped a big parallel payment to POOR when building south from Sarajevo to Foca. ROGER and HBBRT cancelled in Z13 / Z14 so these payments are not shown on the report.

ROGER Roger Trethewey Green	2a. [5] (A56) - Z14 - - - Z11; (Sarajevo) - G64 2b. [5] (G64) - - G66 - - - J67 2c. [3] (J67) - Foca; (G65) - - E66 BANK: 29 +6 +1[BLAG G82] -18[POOR G64-J67] = 18
JOHN John Walker Black	2a. [5] (G6) - - - - L8 2b. [5] (L8) - <u>SANSKI MOST</u> ; (F7) - - D8 - <u>BIHAC</u> ; (G6) - F5 2c. [3] (F5) - - - C4 BANK: 29 +6 +6 = 41
BLAG Bob Gingell Purple	2a. [5] (I55) - - I57; (E51) - <u>GRACANICA</u> - - F48 2b. [5] (F48) - <u>GRADACAC</u> ; (I57) - H57 - - H59 - G60 2c. [3] (G60) - F60; (G60) - G61 - G62 [-1 green, -1 red] BANK: 38 +3 +3 -1[POOR G82] -1[ROGER G82] = 42
BUM Jim Reader Yellow	2a. [5] (V20) - - - - V16 - U16 2b. [5] (U16) - U15 - <u>JAJCE</u> ; (V18) - <u>BUGOJNO</u> - - S20 2c. [3] (X28) - <u>SIROKI BRIJEG</u> ; (Y29) - - Y31 BANK: 23 +6 +6 +3 = 38
POOR Dane Maslen Red	2a. [5] (Sarajevo) - - - G66 - - I67 2b. [5] (I67) - - FOCA; (Pale) - J64 - - L63 2c. [3] (L63) - - N64 - <u>GORADZE</u> BANK: 29 +6 +6 +1[BLAG G82] +15[ROGER G64-J67] = 57
HBBRT Chris Hibbert Blue	2a. [5] (A54) - Z13 - Z14; (A54) - B54 -B55; (Banja Luka) - R8 2b. [5] (R8) - Q9 - P9 - O9 - N9 - Sanski Most 2c. [3] (X9) - - <u>PRNJAVOR</u> ; (Banja Luka) - S7 BANK: 23 +3 = 26

The in-game map is here <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2522BH.jpg>

Rolls for R3: 3a) 6 3b) 4 3c) 3

SOUND CHARADES - THE CLASSIC RADIO 4 GAME

Answers: Superheroes

6. (one word) "The bloke at the hairdressers did a terrible job at making my hair curly. I'm going to take legal action!" SUPERMAN (SUE PERM MAN)	7. (one word) "I'm 'avin' that Apple Watch, and I'm not payin' for it!" ROBIN (ROBBIN')
8. (one word) "The ball was out!" HAWKEYE (ball tracking system)	9. (two words) "Get lost, Aragorn!" GHOST RIDER (GO, STRIDER)
10. (two words) "I was in the toilet as the train crossed the border into the USA. I think I must have peed in Canada, then..." CAPTAIN AMERICA (CRAPPED IN AMERICA)	

Bob Gingell got 4 right Chris Hibbert 2.

The Hawkeye one is a reference to tennis though it is also used in cricket. There was something similar in operation at the one and only baseball game I attended, I'm not sure if it was Statcast <https://www.si.com/mlb/2023/11/15/how-it-works-mlb-pitch-tracking-baseball-statcast>

New Questions: Classic Albums

11. (six words 70s) "This morning, I painted my left buttock black and my right buttock white, then later in the day I went up to someone and dropped my trousers" "So how did that go?" "Unfortunately they could only see some of my bum, the left part"	
12. (four words 70s) "Hello Doris" "Hello Cynthia" "When I was a young woman I used to go out with Bono, the singer from U2" "What a coincidence! I had an intimate relationship with the guitarist!"	
13. (two words 60s) "Purr! Meow!" "Woof! Woof!" "Squeak!"	14. (two words 60s) "I like driving along this stretch" "I can understand that, it's reasonably wide but also nice and twisty" "That's right, it's..."
15. (one word 70s) "I've heard he's having an affair with Ethel Bloggs" "Ooh! I was told at the bus stop he was involved in organised crime"	

I will probably do a couple more of these, then you can all say thank Bob that's over, or, if your brain is sufficiently perverse, you might like to submit a guest round (five "mimes" on the same topic). The game is one of several silly ones played on Radio 4's I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I%27m_Sorry_I_Haven%27t_a_Clue#Games)

VARIABLE PIG (Canadian Superpig)

Polar Pig #206

jim_reader"of"hotmail
.com

on-the-shelf*
vol XVI, #75

off-the-shelf"of"Olympus
.net

The Celestial Steam
Locomotive #28

richard530smith"of"btinternet
.com

Here Be
Dragons #61

hbdragons"of"btinternet
.com

* *subzine now ended but do check out back-of-the-envelope if you don't already get it.*

Jim Reader is the editor. **Richard Smith** did the printing and distribution from the UK (print version no longer produced) and maintains the Variable Pig website <https://variablepig.org>. The site holds back issues, game rules and RR/BB maps.

The mailing list has been discontinued.

PIG WAITING LISTS

NEW! BY VARIABLE DEMAND – short run all reader game, anyone can join in (Polar Pig)

NEARLY THE BEST GAME IN THE WORLD – Richard Smith*, Chris Hibbert*, 3 more wanted [*=willing to GM next game] (Here Be Dragons)

6-NIMMT! – Kevin Lee, Jim Reader, Richard Smith, Dane Maslen 1-2 more wanted (Here Be Dragons)

FEUDALITY – Improved V2 rules – Bob Gingell, John Walker, Bob Pitman 1 more wanted (Celestial SL)

DILEMMAS – light-hearted all-reader game nears the end but anyone can join in (Celestial SL)

DICE FORGE – boardgame conversion – John Walker, 3 more required (Celestial SL)

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS KENDO NAGASAKI (Temperature Control Variant) Game in early stages – anyone can join (Celestial SL)

LYRIC QUIZ: The new game continues, anyone can join in (Here Be Dragons)

RAILWAY RIVALS: New Azerbaijan Map – two games on offer, ideally a 4 and a 3 for test purposes – Roger Trethewey, Jim Reader, Bob Gingell 4 or 5 more wanted.

THE DEADLINE FOR VARIABLE PIG (WELSH) is Friday 22nd March 2024



Pigs with lop ears have been bred since time immemorial in Wales and have featured in the Mabinogi. The Welsh Pig was first mentioned as a breed in 1870 and is known as a large white breed with a long pear-shaped body and lop ears. They are a hardy breed suitable for outdoor farming. The breed declined in the late 20th century and was declared endangered in 2005 but has been recovering since.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Welsh_pig