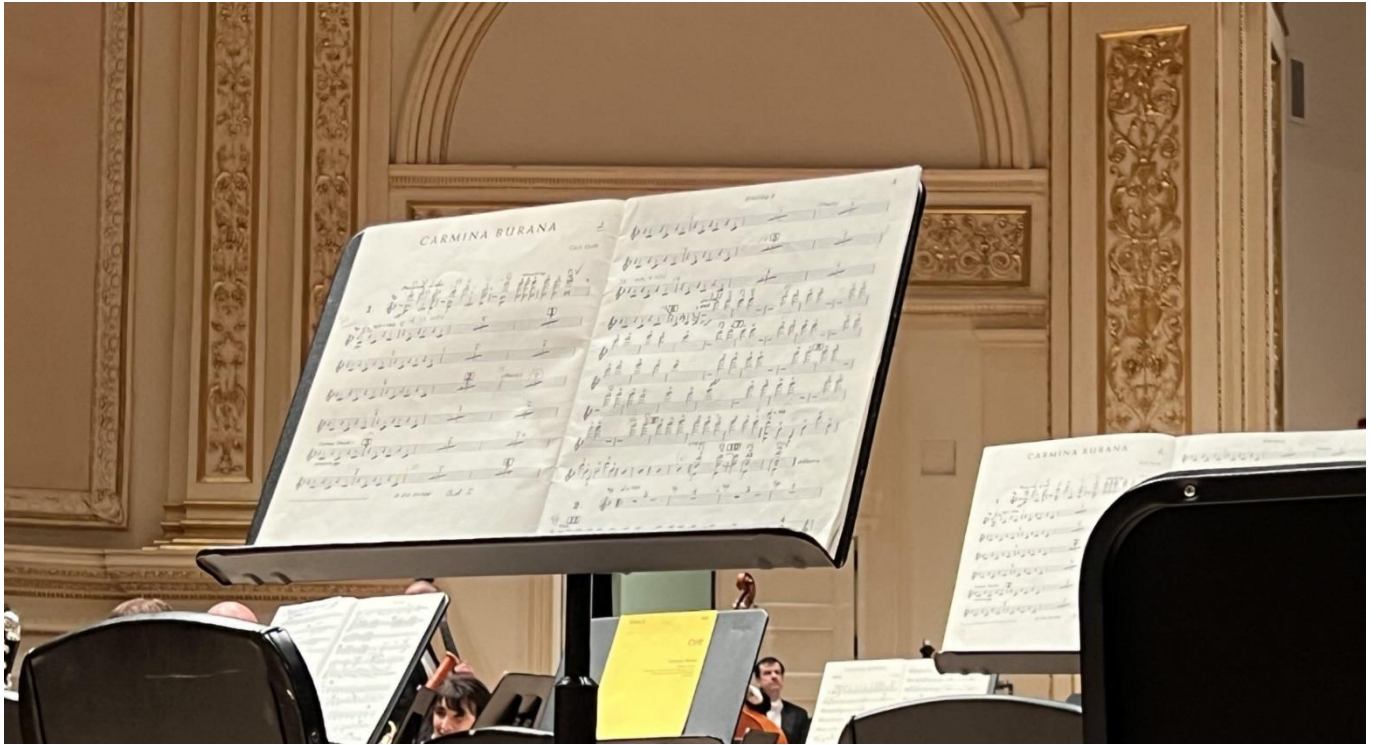


Variable Pig

The Welsh Issue



The "O Fortuna" issue, featuring the 207th issue of "Polar Pig, Here Be Dragons 62 and "The Celestial Steam Locomotive" 29.

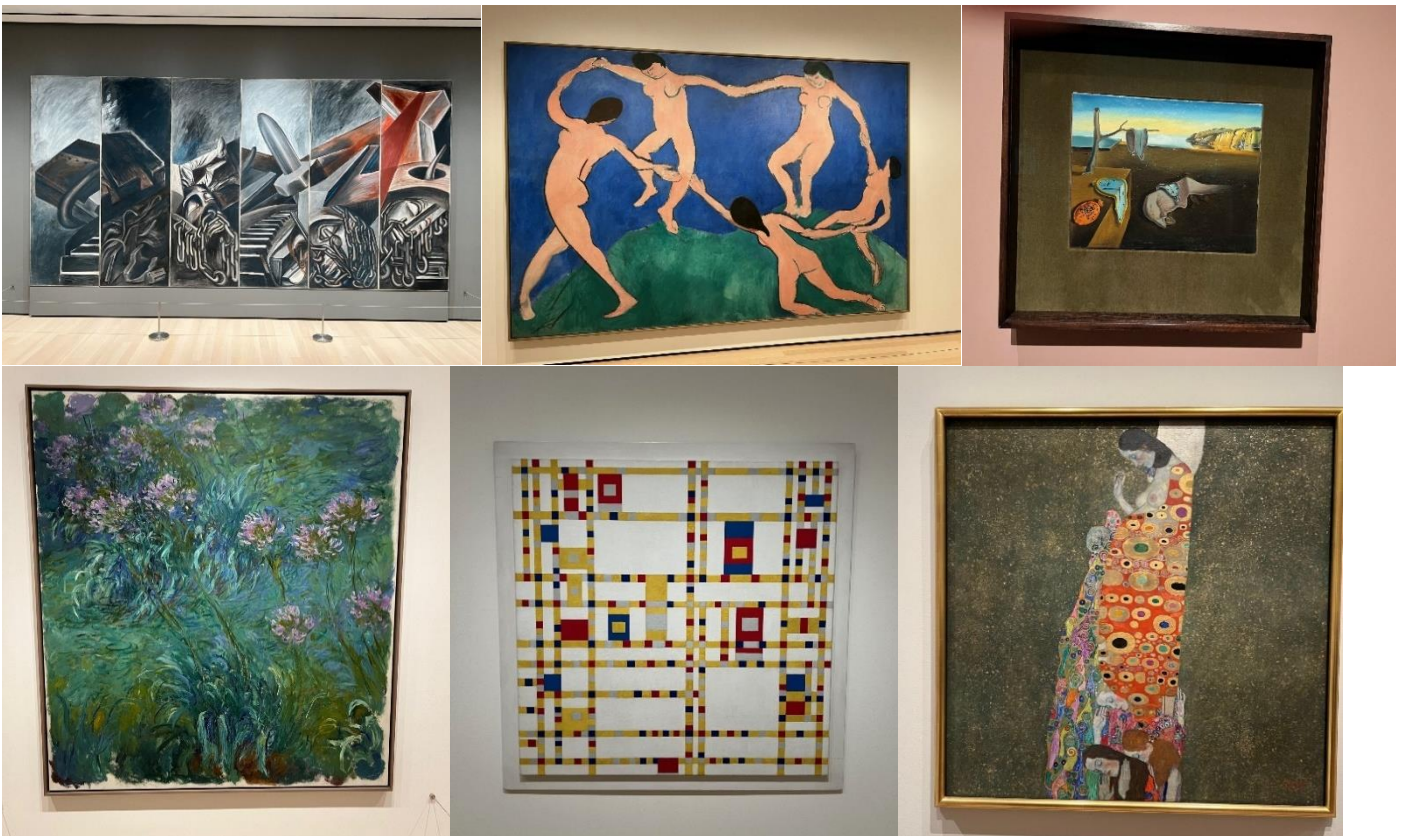
Variable Pig (Welsh)

POLAR PIG 207

Welcome to the penultimate issue of Polar Pig. This issue sees the final round of the last Railway Rivals games. The Sopwith game will be stopped next issue, while the remaining Fair Means or Foul and Breaking Away games will continue on into The Celestial Steam Dragon when Richard and John take over. However, next issue will be mostly focused on game and zine end comments.

The highlight of the last month was our short break in New York city. We drove to Newark and took the train to Penn Station and caught the subway to 57th Street and walked to our hotel. Sadly, we arrived just a little too late to get last minute tickets for a show, so we settled for lovely meal at Le Grand Boucherie on 65.5th street, which sounded like something from Harry Potter. The hotel had a nice bar on the corner of the 54th and 5th Avenue, so we also relaxed with a nice cocktail after.

The next day we spent at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Jacqueline had visited this museum before, but I hadn't, and I don't think either of us appreciated how big it was. We spent over 6 hours there, starting from the top floor exhibits and working our way down. The top floor featured older modern artists including "Starry Night" by Van Gogh, "Water Lilies" by Manet and many others. I was surprised by how many artists I recognized by name (such as Klee) but didn't know their work.



The exhibits became more modern and went through different styles and periods as we made our way down through the lower floors. We enjoyed some sections more than others (I did comment in one room that it was a 'load of Pollocks) and I enjoyed reading some of the descriptions about the art movements intent, but quite a lot also went over our head. The very last exhibit, back on the ground floor and the most modern, was about systems and the most modern, featured a huge flow chart about the production of Google's Alexa and AI starting from mining raw materials and going through to waste and recycling. It was enormous and fascinating.



After our first culture fix, we retreated back to the hotel for a short break before finding a nearby Diner close to the Carnegie Hall and the main event. We enjoyed a nice dinner before being one of the first to enter Carnegie Hall and take our seats near the front for a full orchestral (plus 2 choirs) production of “Carmina Burana”. I think most have heard the opening section, “O Fortuna” of this piece by Carl Orff, as it has been used in many advertisements, but I was not aware of the whole production and its many tales about the fickle fates of fortune, especially in love and lust. The lead baritone was particularly busy and choirs (one was a children’s choir) sounded fabulous together. We had excellent seats, near stage left so we could watch the percussion section and double basses. We had a wonderful time.

It was a damp morning the next day, but fortunately it stopped raining enough for us to enjoy a nice walk around Central Park before lunch and heading home. That was the end of our good fortune for the month as I went down with bronchitis the week after and felt pretty crappy for a couple of weeks and we didn’t get out much. I was fortunate that I didn’t have any business travel scheduled. It’s finally passing now.

Our next trip will be a long weekend in the Finger Lakes district of New York state to hopefully enjoy the total eclipse as it passes over the US. Hopefully, the weather will stay clear so we can enjoy the event. We’re also hoping to finally visit Niagara Falls and maybe Watkins Glen state park. We’re staying on Lake Keuka so we should also be able to enjoy some nice wine.

With that, I’ll finish this issue and wish you all a pleasant and enjoyable spring.

* * * * *

Letters

Kev Lee As these are my last VP orders for you I would just like to say many thanks for your sterling efforts – I have thoroughly enjoyed everything about your zine.
Thanks for the very kind words about Polar PIG. I'm very glad that you have enjoyed the zine and thanks also for taking part in so many games.

Michael Pargman I hope everything is fine with you and your family.
We've been mostly OK, other than I picked up a really nasty cough last week and have been struggling with this. I saw the Doctor yesterday and it may be bronchitis. I fear that I may also have passed it on to Jacqueline.

Allan Stagg I hope you and all are well. These orders are later than I would have liked as I slightly lost sight of the deadline. When I was playing games in up to a dozen zines I had little difficulty meeting deadlines. Now I only have two deadlines to meet, and I am retired, I have less excuse!
I've been struggling with bronchitis this last week and was finally forced to go the Doctor this morning after more unpleasant coughing last night. Of course, it's not been so bad today so hopefully it will finally pass. Otherwise, we've been doing well. About the one positive from a fairly miserable week is that I did, at least, catch up with all my orders.

Michael Pargman On Monday I have a scary appointment with a dentist. I used to be called every 18 months or so for a check, but this disappeared with the pandemic, and it never came back. Finally, I had to call them to make an appointment, since I've been feeling some pain occasionally when I've chewed on my right side. They started by taking the first x-ray. He had one look and then said "Yes, you are right. There is a big hole in one of the teeth". So, on Monday I have a new appointment to try to fix it.

Good luck with the Dentist appointment. I went a couple of weeks ago to get a replacement crown fixed. I get my teeth checked twice a year which seems pretty normal here, possibly because that's what our dental insurance covers. Our Dentist recently moved her office from Coopersburg to Quakertown, which is a little less convenient than before, but the new surgery is larger and better equipped.

Mike Pollard Regarding your large couple's bowling tournament in East Greenville - was it a large tournament or for large couples?! You never know...

I think the answer may have been both, although it wasn't exclusive to large couples. The tournament has run for over a month with 2+ games (6 teams) every Saturday and Sunday and a total of 206 teams entered. There was some partner swapping, so I'll also bowl with Kelsey next year. We only entered for fun as we would be bowling with friends from our Tuesday Night league; doing well and winning something was an unexpected bonus. We finally finished 15th with the top 18 places getting prizes. We won \$35 each. Dave and Amy Hess invited us, and Kathy Campion also bowls in our league.

Allan Stagg Congratulations on your bowling scores - I have never got close to a 600+ series. However, the partnership with the new bowling ball continues to prosper, and this week I had a 541 series - my best bowling in six years. (Yes - I am sad enough to keep records of my bowling scores, and it was easy to retrieve this information). I am currently standing second in our League, but there is a long way to go yet.

Congratulations on the 541 series. I'm still pleased every time I get a 500 series although happily they are more frequent now. I've never kept a record of my bowling scores. I'm not sure why. We always get a printout at the end of the season scores so I can see how I got on, but I don't keep them. I just keep a mental track of my top scores and series. I suppose if we had started doing this when we began bowling in Japan, we might have continued, but few people seemed to track their scores there.

Dane Maslen Unlike Mike Pollard I can't really look back on any sporting achievements, no matter how modest. At school I was always one of the last to be picked when teams for football or cricket were being chosen, though for a few years I was a half-way decent sprinter, an ability encouraged by the survival instinct when the thugs from the local secondary modern were hunting for anyone wearing the uniform of the grammar school I attended.

I wasn't awful at soccer, although there were many better than me. Our school team used to practice against the 'best of the rest' at PE lessons and I made that team a few times. My school highlight was once scoring the only goal in that game, a breakaway from defence by my friend Nick who put me through down the wing to lob the keeper from the edge of the penalty area. I can still picture it.

Dane Maslen Astonishingly I was a regular substitute in the 3rd and 4th-year school hockey teams, though that was mostly a reflection on how few of us had opted to play hockey. It's hockey that provides my mostly fondly remembered school sporting event (I have a nasty suspicion that I have recounted this story before, so I hope it wasn't in VP). A tournament was played between the three classes in our year. I shall refer to them by their captain's surname, namely Ralf, Benyon and Leonard. Most of the school team members were in the Ralf and Benyon classes. The Leonard class had just two plus a regular substitute (me), though we did also have one ringer. We were therefore likely to finish last.

It's amazing how some school sporting memories stay with us, even when we weren't that good at sports. I was never a sprinter and hockey scared the hell out of me. All those thick staves hacking around my ankles - no thanks. It was even worse than rugby.

Leaders unconfirmed

Handicap

Shannon Quick & Michael Finken Jr. 1518

Sheleen Polash & Jeff Sostarecz 1465

Jessica Dawson & Sean O'Brien 1461

Paulette Wright & Edwin Harris 1456

Ann Snyder & Mike Finken 1440

Melanie Sipics & Justin Beltrame 1432

Dayna Kramer & Dennis Latshaw 1428

Amy Hess & Dave Hess 1423

Rosemary Brinckman & Bob Graber 1422

Heather Gerrits & Sean Andrew 1415

Heather Gerrits & Eric Schantz 1411

Kathy Campion & Dave Hess 1406

Renee Talkington & George Miller 1406

Stevie Stewart & Gary Overdorf 1399

Jacquette Reader & James Reader 1397

Heather Gehris & Ric Laub 1395

Stacy Crapo & Kevin Forman 1391

Jess Riga & Chris Riga 1391

Michele & Bill Bauer 1375

Betsy Christman & G Kim Ziegler 1375

Dayna & Kevin Kramer 1371

Linda Diehl & Dalton Dunlap 1371

Dane Maslen The first match was Leonard against Benyon. They took the lead. Then our ringer, who had been in his previous school's hockey team but was now in our school's football team, scored a magnificent goal after a more or less solo run through the opposition's defence. Alas they scored again, but our ringer repeated his feat, so the game ended 2-2. In the next match Benyon beat Ralf 1-0, which was a slight upset. That left just the final match of Ralf against Leonard. Alas our ringer wasn't available to play, so we were obviously doomed.

Inevitably Ralf took an early lead, but then we somehow managed to get a short corner. When a short corner is taken, five (or is it four?) of the defending team has to be in the opponents' half, and it would be normal for the opponents' defence to stay there in case the corner got cleared. I and the other defenders decided, however, that in the absence of quality maybe quantity could achieve a goal, so we deserted our half and our captain, the goalie, who was plaintively calling "Come back", alarmed by the prospect of facing five attackers alone. The corner was taken, and suddenly I found the ball in front of me. A frantic swipe somehow caused it to go in the desired direction. We'd equalised!

Fantastic – great memory. I wonder how your goalie might remember the tale.

Dane Maslen As he walked back to the centre of the pitch, Ralf commented "We'll just have to get another one then." That might have been unwise, as when we next got a short corner it inspired us to abandon our captain again. I can't remember who it was that scored that time (probably the other member of the school team), but incredibly we were now in the lead. Thereafter we mounted a pitched defence: whenever the ball came near any of us in our half it (or, given our collective lack of skill, quite possibly the accompanying attacker) was smashed away into touch. We hung on, and thanks to having the same points and goal difference as Benyon but a greater number of goals scored, we achieved a highly improbable victory in the tournament.

Congrats on the hockey win. It sounds like a fun tournament.

Keve Lee It's going to be a tense finish on the footie front for our teams with Saints, Aldershot and to a lesser extent Eastleigh all having something to play for – the relegation battle in the Conference in particular is really tight.

Fully agree about the football, especially if you also add Ipswich Town to the mix. Ipswich were my mother's family team and the first games I went to (even before Aldershot, my local team) were with my Uncles Derek, Paul, and Nick. Sadly, Paul and Nick are long gone, but I'm sure Derek is enjoying the last 2 - 3 seasons. Aldershot are very hit and miss - mostly up but the occasional awful game like today at York. It's Tommy Widdrington's first season as Manager so hopefully he is setting the stage for better things to come, including much fewer red and yellow cards. Best of luck to Eastleigh and also the Saints, whom I would prefer over Leeds or Leicester, especially with the questions about FFP rules.

Andy York In baseball news, the first game for the Express is a week from Friday - looking forward to it. I'll go out this Saturday for the annual Fan Fest. It'll be nice to see what they've changed in the field and in the food offerings. One thing I know is changing is the Intel Club is moving to membership only, no day passes sold. That'll help the crowding during inclement weather.

My first game is now 10 days away. I booked a Sunday afternoon game in the hope that it won't be quite as cold as most season openers I've attended. I'm looking forward to going back to Coca Cola park and seeing what new beers are on offer in the beer garden. Hopefully the Pigs will retain their good form from last season. This will be followed the next day with Reds @ Phillies game, a free gift from the Pigs. I had hoped I might get a third game in that week, but sadly the Guardians are traveling that week. Our new sales manager in Cleveland supports all the local teams, so I'm hoping I might get to a Guardian's game this season.

Bob Pitman My miserable December and January continued through February then March picked up, I even got a couple of test 5ks (very slow very gentle) done before I was hit with another cough/cold chest filling nasty. Week and a half later and I am back trying to get recovery runs done and its sort of going OK.

I've been struggling with a nasty cough for the last 10 days or so. I finally conceded defeat and saw our Doctor on Friday who indicated it might be bronchitis, so back on the meds again. Hopefully, it will start to clear soon.

Bob Pitman However, the pressure is on as I half signed up (I didn't think I had completed the sign up) to jog 31 miles over 31 days in March and then the Prostate Cancer charity's t-shirt arrived in the post.

I had thought it would be a useful recovery motivator as well as doing it for a good charity cause, but the bug near the start of March upset that and suddenly I was honour bound to get the mileage done. I've got some sponsors as well (not through Facebook's awful sponsorship pages but JustGiving) so I really do have to get there in 31 days. Wednesday just gone helped as I went out with a friend from my group who is also recovering from injury. We wound up getting 8 miles done. So, recovery and target both getting there. *Good luck with your 31-mile jogging target. I hope that you succeed in reaching the target despite the colds and coughs. We had a fairly active February and early March, with a nice city break in New York, but recent cold weather and the damn cough has slowed us down a little.*

Bob Pitman No walking done yet due to the bugs and injuries.
Hopefully, it will clear soon so we can get out walking again soon. We'll be off to upstate New York for a long weekend in early April, to see Niagara Fall and hopefully enjoy the eclipse over the Finger Lakes.

Murray Egan Sue and I celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary this last week. The highlight for me is that she continues to put up with me 😊. We took a long weekend to a hiking area Southwest of Chicago (Starved Rock) with loads of canyons next to the Illinois river. I'm ashamed that we have lived here for 19 years and never visited it. It was lovely and full of ancient Indian history. Our evenings were spent in La Salle (also on the river), and we had some lovely meals.
Congratulations on your wedding anniversary. The Starved Rock area sounds really nice; I checked it out on the web, and it looks a lovely place for a weekends hiking (Starved Rock State Park - Wikipedia) . It's amazing how many nice State Parks there are and how few we know - did we take you to Ringing Rocks Park?

Tom Howell We're cruising through eastern Washington right now. Saw a nice cross section of the lava deposits that this part of the world is sitting on when we crossed the Columbia River. The surface here is supposed to be loess which makes good farmland, which this area definitely is. We passed a sign that said, "Crop Names in Fence Line Next X Miles", but I never saw a one. The irrigation mechanisms are everywhere, and plenty of fence line but absolutely no crop names.
Sounds like a nice drive. How long does it take to travel to the east side of the State?

Tom Howell Riding shotgun, headed east with the sun shining... Hard to read the laptop screen in those conditions, but I got it done. Shortly after I sent them, we drove under clouds for the remainder of the day... Thought you'd want to know / be amused.
I've written many a customer call report under similar conditions.

Tom Howell We're in Pocatello, ID. The sun is out and was for most of the day. For a while it looked like we were going to go through a rainstorm, but as we got closer and the road wandered hither and yon, it started to look like we would be going between two different rain falls. In the event, we got a bit of light hail or frozen snow on us, but not too much.
Another state we haven't visited yet. That looks a long drive from NW Washington to Pocatello - you're nearly in Utah. It looks like it should have been a pretty drive through the Rockies. I hope the weather stays kind so you can enjoy the scenery.

Tom Howell Speaking of understanding, we found a sushi place here and ordered for delivery. I thought I ordered the Sushi Deluxe but the sashimi deluxe arrived instead. The order record said I did the latter. I'm having trouble believing I did that. They were generous with the Wasabi, but not so much with the pickled ginger.
I thought you were supposed to eat potatoes in Idaho, at least according to the registration on our first hire car here. Less carbs with the sashimi deluxe, but I would have preferred the sushi.

Richard Smith Today (March 3rd) was the first dry sunny day for ages and I dutifully burst into action with 5 hours of early spring gardening. More than adequate for my required daily exercise, with the bending part reminding me I need to lose a kilogram or ten.
Got to get fit for the Crets holiday...

Andy York You start out about the snowstorms in the northeast. I just read an article that says a town in the Texas Panhandle (Plainview) had more snow this winter than either Boston or New York. They had a total of 13", with 12" of that coming on Feb 11/12. The article does note that this isn't because of abnormal snowfall in Texas but abnormally low snowfall in the Northeast. Interesting...

Here in Austin, we only had 8 days below freezing. That's unusual, with almost no "winter" experienced - nothing like the year with "Uri" and the power grid failure. However, I think this will portend a hotter than normal summer.

Snow has finally melted, and it warmed up again last week, but has turned cold again this week. We had another frost this morning. I don't mind the cold as I think we need the cold spells up here, but I'm looking forward to Spring. I hope you don't get a really hot summer.

Murray Egan The Bee Gees tribute sounds like a hoot, and I can only imagine the attire at that concert was spectacular.

Sadly, I don't think there wasn't too much exciting attire on display, as the audience was mostly too old for tight fitting Spandex.

Bob Pitman Sad news about Steve Harleys passing. I saw him live at a Heineken Music festival gig on Southsea common back in the 90's. He was very good, and he didn't rely on his old hits.

I didn't see Steve Harley in concert, and I don't think I ever saw an opportunity to do so. I do remember enjoying a number of Cockney Rebel songs on Top of the Pops, but that's as much as I remember.

Murray Egan Sue has me on a 'I'll go to one concert per year' quota, so I have to be very careful about my selections. Sadly, Toby Keith died a couple months ago, so next on my bucket list will be Sara Evans. (And still waiting For Aerosmith to resume their tour). So pleased to read that you are getting a plentiful supply of live music...

Fortunately, we have a few more concerts lined up with Beethoven's 9th, Saxon, and Uriah Heep (some ancient British heavy rock there), Cropredy and Suzanne Vega all lined up. I hope you can find a good event soon - Chicago should be good for concerts. I'm not familiar with Sara Evans but I do hope you get your chance to see Aerosmith. Not heard much about their tour recently.

Michael Pargman When I retired I got money in the form of a gift card from my work. Originally I had planned to use it as part of an electric bike, but they needed to have a specific shop to get me a gift card. But since I hadn't decided on the bike, I couldn't decide on the shop, so I changed it to a gift card for travels instead. And now I have used the gift card to buy some travels. I will go to Athens for four days in the middle of April and then to Krakow for four days in the middle of May and finally I will go to Prague with my nephew in the middle of June. I've been to Krakow once ten years ago, but I've never been to Athens. And Prague I visited almost 40 years ago. The trip with my nephew is something I promised him two years ago when he finished high school, but he never seemed to have time to travel,

I've never been to Prague although I have heard many positive reports about it. I went to Krakow a few times for business, but rarely stayed as most of the paint business was located about an hour's drive east in Debica (definitely not a tourist location). I did get to see some of the city the first time I visited on the worst planned business trip of my career and first trip to Poland, but I blame the Finns for confusing us. The castle overlooking the river looked very impressive. Similarly, I only ever visited Athens once, also on a business trip, although I did stay for longer. I hope you have a wonderful time.

Murray Egan Greetings from 30,000 feet over Nebraska en-route to Las Vegas for an Electric Vehicle trade show. I hope your travels have been going well.

Hope you had a good flight to Sin City and are enjoying life back in Vegas. At least you can eat well. I'm currently on a little break from travel, but it will pick up again in April with trips back to Cleveland, Detroit, and Indianapolis (I can tell your jealous 😊), plus a long weekend in the Finger Lakes for the eclipse.

Mike Pollard I liked the pictures of the Hilton Garden Inn, Milwaukee, especially the tiles (they'd be called Victorian over here), which were almost exactly the same design as we used to have in our hallway. *It's a nice hotel and always nice to stay somewhere the building has character and history.*

Allan Stagg Things have been busy here, mainly with helping Julie to deal with calculating and paying the Inheritance Tax due on her father's Will Trust. He died in 2016 but left the bulk of his money in a Will Trust, the income from which went to help pay for his wife/Julie's stepmother's care fees. She died last year, but her daughters' solicitor has not yet submitted details of her Estate to HMRC to enable them to calculate the IHT, and how this is to be shared between the Estate and the Will Trust. In the end we have calculated how much IHT might be payable by the Trust and paid that before the deadline of 6 months after the stepmother's death. Any IHT not paid by this date attracts a fine - currently 7.75% of the amount due.

The IHT calculation sounds fairly laborious. I hope that you were able to complete this to the taxman's satisfaction. I must admit that I am getting worried about when I will have to deal with my father's estate, although he is very organized and is well-prepared, then dealing with both the UK and US taxes on any inheritance. Fortunately, my Dad still seems to be doing reasonably well after a couple of uncomfortable weeks.

Michael Pargman Last month has been pretty calm for me. I'm the cashier of an association and a foundation and finished the yearly bookkeeping during this last month.
And I thought you were retired...

Bob Pitman Getting annoyed with Microsoft pushing the new Outlook mailer at me, I keep telling them why I am going to use the old version via the feedback when I turn the new version off but they take no notice... It's got adverts at the top of the "lists like inbox. If I wanted random unwanted ads in my inbox I would not be paying for spam filters and every other bit of intrusive advertising!
I think I use the new Outlook, but it's also the software I use at work, so I have got used to it. I am getting fed up with Norton pushing zillions of extras for the antivirus software though.

* * * * *

By Variable Demand 1

Round Three – Reasonably Popular Variant (ZEPHYR)

Andy York, **Brendan Whyte** and **John Walker** all lose one answer for repeating a letter or using a wrong letter. **Bob Pitman** only manages one legal answer.

1. A river: Yangtze (7), Zambezi (5), and Rhine (4): Zaire and Yellow River both score 1. Amazon does not start with a correct letter so scores 0.

I think the Yangtze was my second selection after Zinc – get rid of the tricky letters first.

2. A board game: Railway Rivals (5), Yahtzee (3), Empire Builder (2) and Pandemic (2): Power Grid, Puerto Rico, Pictionary, Elfenroads, Yspahan and Risk all score 1. Wingspan does not start with a correct letter so scores 0.

This was one of the more open categories, so I plumped for one of the popular zine games. Those using their letter P were a little unlucky.

3. A Metal: Zinc (11), Platinum (3) and Yttrium (2): Ytterbium and Potassium all score 1. Iron does not start with a correct letter so scores 0.

With Zinc and Zirconium, I think this was the most obvious place for the Z. A little surprised by a couple of rare earths sneaking in.

4. A Type of Fish: Eel (5), Haddock (5), Pike (3) and Herring (2): Yellow Fin Tuna, Perch and Piranha all score 1. Bass does not start with a correct letter so scores 0.

I think this was my fourth selection as I couldn't think of an author or President beginning with P.

5. A Famous Author: Earnest Hemingway (4), J. K. Rowling (3), David Eddings (2) and Edgar Allan Poe (2): Terry Pratchett, Enid Blyton, W. B. Yeats, Aldous Huxley, Homer, Hilary Mantel, Jean-Jacque Rousseau, and Charlotte Yonge all score 1.

This was my last selection, and I was struggling to find an author whose surname began with E.

6. A US President: Dwight Eisenhower (9), Ronald Reagan (4): Zachary Taylor, Rutherford Hayes, Herbert Hoover, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Henry Harrison all score 1. George Bush (not specified which one) does not start with a correct letter so scores 0.

A big win for the Republican party, maybe an omen for November. I wish I had remembered Ike when trying to choose how to use my letters E and H.

Player	A River	Board Game	A Metal	Type of Fish	An Author	A US President	
Steve Guest	Yangtze	Railway Rivals	Zinc	Haddock	Terry Pratchett	Dwight Eisenhower	(38) 112
Martin Walker	Yangtze	Pictionary	Zinc	Haddock	J.K. Rowling	Dwight Eisenhower	(36) 108
Roger Trethewey	Rhine	Yahtzee	Zinc	Pike	Earnest Hemingway	Dwight Eisenhower	(34) 107
Bob Gingell	Zambezi	Pandemic	Yttrium	Haddock	J.K. Rowling	Dwight Eisenhower	(26) 107
Mike Pollard	Zambezi	Railway Rivals	Platinum	Yellow Fin Tuna	Earnest Hemingway	Dwight Eisenhower	(27) 105
John Walker	Yangtze	Risk	Zinc	Piranha	J.K. Rowling	Dwight Eisenhower	(31) 94
Chris Hibbert	Yangtze	Railway Rivals	Zinc	Herring	Edgar Allen Poe	Dwight Eisenhower	(36) 91
Steve Ham	Yangtze	Power Grid	Zinc	Eel	Earnest Hemingway	Ronald Reagan	(32) 85
Allan Stagg	Yellow River	Railway Rivals	Zinc	Pike	Aldous Huxley	Dwight Eisenhower	(30) 85
Richard Smith	Zambezi	Yahtzee	Platinum	Herring	David Eddings	Ronald Reagan	(19) 75
Dane Maslen	Rhine	Yspahan	Zinc	Eel	Edgar Allan Poe	Herbert Hoover	(24) 72
Michael Pargman	Yangtze	Puerto Rico	Zinc	Eel	Earnest Hemingway	Ronald Reagan	(27) 71
Bob Pitman	Amazon	Wingspan	Iron	Eel	Enid Blyton	George Bush	(5) 68
Brad Martin	Rhine	Pandemic	Yttrium	Eel	Hilary Mantel	Zachary Taylor	(15) 66
Murray Egan	Rhine	Yahtzee	Zinc	Perch	Homer	Dwight Eisenhower	(29) 65
Jacqueline Reader	Zambezi	Elfenroads	Platinum	Haddock	W. B Yeats	Theodore Roosevelt	(16) 62
Brendan Whyte	Zambezi	Empire Builder	Potassium	Bass	Charlotte Yonge	Ronald Reagan	(13) 54
Andy York	Zaire	Empire Builder	Ytterbium	Haddock	J. J. Rousseau	Rutherford Hayes	(10) 54
MY CHOICES	Yangtze	Railway Rivals	Zinc	Pike	David Eddings	W. H. Harrison	(29) 98

Congratulations to **Steve Guest** who top scored with 38 from a maximum of 39 (I think).

Comments

Bob Gingell

Should Roger have been given 1 point in BPD for the Colosseum which was not an ancient wonder (Temple of Artemis was the missing one) or Martin for Vanity (which I would suggest is really another word for (or aspect of) Pride? If Vanity = Pride then Michael would have got 2 points and 17 overall (although giving just 1 point to Martin seems reasonable for his alternative wording). If you do not agree then this could be presented as Press next round.

Richard Smith

According to the Pig house rules, only certain variants (see Unpopular Demand here <https://variablepig.org/rules/bypop.html>) require the answer to be correct.

I agree with Richard. A wrong answer is still an answer, although unlikely to score well and 1 point scored in this variant is not enough to win. I have offered games where I have indicated that the answers must be correct (within the bounds of the question), but I did not specify this for the current game or round.

It's also a lot more work to GM, firstly in trying to set questions without much ambiguity but secondly also checking that if unexpected answers are correct or not. There is also the question of different regional nuances - vanity may very well be defined as a deadly sin in some parts of the world. It's also tricky to decide whether to treat answers as equal - sometimes I will do this if it seems obvious enough (to me), but I don't see Vanity and Pride as the same. I'm happy to include the discussion in the press next time, but I don't think I need to amend the scores.

Bob Gingell

OK, you are the boss. I thought that a question asking for a choice of one of seven options had limits. *To the question of "I thought that a question asking for a choice of one of seven options had limits", it seems reasonable if you're playing with a single nationality / culture group, but the Pig isn't. There are definitely differences in the ways that English, Americans, and Aussies (Kiwi's) phrase things and I'm not prepared to search whether one of the seven deadly sins is referred to differently elsewhere. I'm also reluctant to draft ever more prescriptive and detailed rules for what is intended as a fairly light game (except in Dane's Games). I have specified rounds / games in the past when incorrect orders would score 0, but it required me to check every single unfamiliar answer via google / Wikipedia to check if it was valid or not - it's quite a lot in a 20-person game.*

Bob Gingell

Would I be able to get 6 points per Round by saying 'My entries for BPD are all "Don't know"? Not going to win of course but does it deserve any points? Each "Don't know" is still an answer.

'Don't Know' as an answer is trickier, as I could interpret that as a non-answer which would score 0. An offer of "Heartbreak Hotel by the King" (a regular offer from John Hopkins in the Lyric game for songs he didn't know) would score 1, even to a question about colours of the rainbow. Again, the winning score last round was 16 and only one player scored less than 6 (3 scored 6), so I'm not sure it would be worth it for the player, although reasonable if they had no clue about answering the question. I have been tempted by this for some of Dane's questions, but it usually only takes a few minutes of googling to get a possible answer.

Bob Gingell

Fair enough. I think I am being entirely hypothetical since it seems unlikely that anyone would 'play the system' by answering "Z no idea" and expect a point from it. My thoughts were triggered by a low level of resentment that I and others had put thought into fitting an answer into the question (although only getting 1 point for a rare answer) while careless or thoughtless others still got the same 1 point.

Note, next round, I will be scoring 0 for answers that do not start with the correct letters or if a letter is used twice (the first letter will score normally). A player will only score for all 6 questions if the answers begin with one each of the 6 letters of Zephyr.

Mike Pollard

What do you mean by "reasonably" popular demand? Are we meant to avoid the most popular answer, as in "fairly"?

PS: Follow up questions on the game - do we have to take the letters of Zephyr in strict order, i.e., use "Z" for the river, etc?

Also, when you say to use the letter only once, I assume you mean once in each answer, not once for all six answers. In other words, I can't use "Zambezi" for river because it has two Zs. But I could use another Z in my answer for an author or fish?

I realize that it's been some time since we last played this variant, so I will probably send this explanation out to all players.

1. For this round, it will be normal scoring, that is each answer will score points equal to the number of players that give the same answer.

2. Each letter of the given word (for this round ZEPHYR) should be used once as the starting letter for one of the answers, but these do not have to be used in order. Answers with incorrect starting letters or letters used more than once will score 0; in the latter case, the answer with the first use of the letter will score normally and the second will score 0.

3. Answers do not have to be correct (for the given question), although they are unlikely to score well. This is because it can take a lot of extra work for the GM to check every answer for validity, especially in a game played with different nationalities.

4. Questions left unanswered or letters unused will also score 0; I will also take answers such as "don't know", "no idea" etc as a non-answer scoring zero, so submitting an answer that fits the letter criteria that may not be correct will still be a better strategy than no answer.

5. As with all postal games, the interpretation of answers and scoring is determined by the GM, although I'm usually willing to discuss or review.

So, for example, if the word is OSBERT and the questions are.

1. A city in Africa
2. A chemical element
3. A colour
4. A boy's name
5. A geometric shape
6. A fruit

The following answers would all score normally.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. Ouagadougou | 1. Tripoli |
| 2. Sodium | 2. Bronze (even though this is not an element) |
| 3. Blue | 3. Red |
| 4. Edward | 4. Edward |
| 5. Rectangle | 5. Oblong |
| 6. Tangerine | 6. Satsuma |

1. Okehampton (even though this is neither a city, nor in Africa)
2. Schubert (obviously wrong, but still uses the right letter)
3. Buff
4. Eunice (as Schubert above)
5. Round
6. Triangle

The third set of answers may not score highly but would be acceptable for scoring. Note, like the previous round, it is very unlikely that a score of 6 will do well.

The following answers would have some answers scoring 0.

1. Ouagadougou
2. No idea (scores 0 as I would treat as a non-answer)
3. (scores 0)
4. Osbert (scores 0 as uses the letter O for a second time)
5. Rectangle
6. Apple (scores 0 as uses a wrong letter)

It is only the start letter that matters for determining whether an answer counts, so Zambezi (as a river) would be fine. Please let me know if this helps, so I can distribute this more widely. I have run this variant before, but it has been a while as it's quite tricky to set the questions.

Dane Maslen

As Mike Pollard might be able to guess from its absence from the BPD variants I run in Dane's Games, I too dislike the variant in which the most popular answer scores zero. In one game I played I agonised which of two answers to give. When the results were published, I discovered that I had been going to score zero whichever one I chose, my choice merely determining which of the two groups of players were going to get a non-zero score.

Sorry you're also not a fan of the By Fairly Popular Demand variant, but that round has now passed. I still like it.

Brendan Whyte

I'm doing this in letter order:

- 4. A type of fish Bass
- 5. A famous author Charlotte Mary Yonge (tricky one this!)
- 6. A US President Ronald Raygun Reagan

Well, that's a mere 6 points for me.

Allan Stagg

Step 1 - identify difficult letters and allocate them to obvious answers.

Step 2 - allocate remaining letters to less obvious answers.

Step 3 - find you have one or two letters that won't fit any category to your satisfaction.

Step 4 - go back to step 1.

Dane Maslen

This is tough. One big problem is finding any sane answer for 'Y'. Admittedly there are plenty of authors called Young, but I don't recognise any of them. I could go for Yttrium or Ytterbium as a metal, but surely that category has to be Zinc. An even bigger problem is how people will interpret the fourth category.

- 1. A river: RHINE (even though R might be better used for Railway Rivals)
- 2. A board game: YSPAHAN (hoping that scoring low here won't be as bad as doing so elsewhere)
- 4 A type of fish: EEL (though this means I can't go for Eisenhower)
- 5 A famous author: POE (though maybe Puerto Rico will in the second category)
- 6. A US President: HOOVER (having used my E and R elsewhere, this seems necessary)

The fourth and final round will be the standard By Popular Demand variant where a player can use a joker to double their score for one question. The questions for the final round are.

- 1. A story from the (Australian Aboriginal) Dream Time
- 2. A Native North American Tribe
- 3. A Musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein
- 4. An operetta by Gilbert and Sullivan
- 5. A National Anthem from a country not England or the United States
- 6. One of the moons of Jupiter

Don't forget to play your joker and please send in any game end statements with your orders.

* * * * *

Breaking Away 12

Round Seven

The pack almost closes back up as the riders start to jockey for position for the second sprint.

Square	Replacement	Riders
63	3	Regression
62	4	Rodin
61	-	
60	3	Dr. Venus
59	4	Killer, Miro, Birch, Robert the Robot
58	8	Col. Steve Zodiac, Emma Roydz, Calder
57	11	Moore
56	12	Samurai, The Universe,
55	14	Prof. Matt Matic, Thermo
54	15	Ash, Arrow
53	15	Sue Pertitz, Dogwood
52	15	Arthur Braine,
51	15	Cherry
50	15	Amounts

Rooted In Place (Tom Howell) 5 points

- A. Ash 15, **15**, 3, 3
- B. Birch (3) **4**, 7, 15
- C. Cherry 15, 15, **15**
- D. Dogwood (2) **15**, 7, 15

Probable Infinites (John Walker) 9 points.

- A. Regression 11, 10, 4, **3**
- B. Amounts (8) **15**, 13, 5
- C. Time dropped
- D. The Universe (1) **12**, 12, 6

Fireball XL5 Jetmobiles (Bob Pitman) 0 pts

Manager: Zoonie the Lazoon

- A. Col. Steve Zodiac 13, **8**, 5, 5
- B. Doctor Venus 3, **3**, 5
- C. Robert the Robot 3, **4**, 9
- D. Prof. Matt Matic **14**, 4, 15

Sudoku Scorchers (Richard Smith) 5 points

Manager: Simon Anthony

- A. Killer (5) **4**, 6, 4, 5
- B. Samurai **12**, 15, 3
- C. Arrow **15**, 4, 15
- D. Thermo **14**, 5, 3

What Have You Got (Allan Stagg) 20 points

- A. Arthur Braine (10) 6, **15**, 8, 1
- B. Emma Roydz (6) 4, **8**, 4
- C. Hugh Jaas dropped
- D. Sue Pertitz (4) 9, **15**, 1

Artists (Chris Hibbert) 0 points

- A. Miro **4**, 11, 13
- B. Rodin **4**, 15, 6
- C. Moore **11**, 11, 3
- D. Calder 7, 3, **8**

* * * * *

Bus Boss (Orwell and Stour) - BB409OSE

Game End Statements

SWELL (Bob Gingell), 1st A close finish and congratulations to all plus thanks to Jim for running this. I do not think there is a killer route on this map and a lot depended on which destinations came out when, in which early on I was quite disappointed. I was surprised that in both games on this map Ipswich to Clacton and Colchester to Harwich were not the dominant routes that I thought they would be, but there was not any obvious other.

TEA (Andy York), 4th Congrats to Bob for another fine win, though Jacqueline was close on your heels. I did my usual miserable ending, solidly in last place. One of these days... Thanks to Jim for GMing this game.

GM (Jim Reader) A good close game and a very tight finish. Interestingly, the Brantham connections didn't seem so critical in this game as others as neither Bob nor Jacqueline were connected. The Shotley peninsula seemed to act as a red herring in this game as Steve and Andy controlled this without too much reward. Bob built the fast A12 / A14 links and part of the A120, while Jacqueline stuck along the Stour, possibly hoping for another nice lunch at the Mistle Thorn. Thanks everyone for trying the map.

* * * * *

Fair Means or Foul 6

Round Twenty-Four

Auction House

Baron **Brendan** forked out another \$9 for the Gangloff Beer Poster (B 1930),

Castle

Constables **Walker** and **Martin** were on the prowl, suspecting that some nefarious activities were overdue. They weren't disappointed as they nabbed Tealeaf **Trethewey** breaking into an empty exhibit hall. Wicked **Walker** finished his long jail sentence.

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

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

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 Persil Washing Powder Poster (B 1927) and Marilyn Monroe's Lipstick (E 1962). In Jail are John's Thief 11, Brad's Thief 10, Roger's Thief 12, and Roger's Thief 1.

* * * * *

Railway Rivals

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

	FAR Brad Martin <i>Blue</i>	MARS John Marsden <i>Orange</i>	WATER Judy Ferguson <i>Black</i>
31. Sellafield (11) – Whitehaven (22)	20 + 1	10 - 1 - 3	+ 3
32. Whitehaven (23) – Arlesdon (35)	10 + 1	20 - 1 - 3	+ 3
33. Hensingham (36) – Flimby (46)	20 - 1 - 3 + 3	+ 1 + 3	10 + 3 - 3 - 3
34. Seaton (45) – Aspatria (56)	20	10	
35. Dearham (54) – Bridgefoot (63)		+ 2	20 - 2
36. Beckermeth (12) – Ullock (61)		10	

Points from last round	362	290	346
Races	71	48	31
Total	433	338	379

Congratulations to FAR (Brad Martin)

Game end statements are welcome (on file from Brad).

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

R, Roger Trethewey (1st) It is an interesting map, difficult to cover all the bases, and difficult to read as well. Probably difficult to gm as well. Richard has shown a good plan and covered the ground. Its thanks to Jim for looking after it all and to the other players for making a good match.

PINING, Richard Smith (2nd) An interesting and likeable map, and I prefer the colour image. My first thought was there were some hexes where it isn't entirely clear whether they were passable, but that was resolved. When the game kicked off there was a starts issue that with me in Oslo, and Roger in Fredrickstadt I could have blocked him, though I didn't, letting him build a very profitable north/south line up the east coast. I think the huge profit from one round was what won it for him. I did consider connecting Floro, but I had more profitable things to do with 13 build points.

HERRING, Steve Ham (3rd) A bit pants on the final round, but whether this is due to my overlooking to build I'm not sure. I think I would have tried to build to Floro if I'd had the opportunity. Congratulations to Roger, I didn't see his track as the obvious winner, but it obviously did the trick.

GM, Jim Reader A stunning comeback by Richard to tie the game in the final round. I have fond memories of playing this map in Devolution. It was a close game, and the race stages needed a lot of JRs and XRPs and this started my contacts with Brad and Brendan that later turned into trades. It's a tough map with many geographic features making builds difficult.

Congratulations to R and PINING (Roger and Richard)

	REAR Kev Lee <i>Blue</i>	R Roger Trethewey <i>Green</i>	PINING Richard Smith <i>Red</i>	HERRING Steve Ham <i>Purple</i>
36. Stavanger (54) - Honefoss (41)			20	
37. Flekkefjord (52) - Denmark (Sp5)			20	
38. Sweden (Sp2) - Kristiansund (13)	10 - 1 + 5 - 5	20 + 1 - 5 + 7	+ 5	0 - 7
39. Drammen (42) - Lillehammer (31)		10	20	
40. Trondheim (12) - Norddal (22)	10		20 - 1	+ 1
41. Haugesund (62) - Gjøvik (32)	20			
42. Bergen (64) - Opddal (21)	10 - 1		+ 1	20
Last round	212	317	265	248
Races	48	33	85	14
Total	260	350	350	262

RR Game LXXXIX – RR2508PR – Prairies Map – Round Twelve

	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>
36. Amarillo (51) - St. Louis (25)	10 + 6	+ 2	10 - 2	10 - 6 - 1	+ 1
37. Tulsa (35) - Fort Worth (42)	0 + 2 - 1 + 3 - 1	+ 2 + 1	10 + 1 - 2 - 2 + 2	20 - 3 + 1	0 - 1 - 2
38. El Paso (45) - West (Sp1)	20 + 5	10 - 5			
39. Oklahoma City (52) - Vicksburg (33)	+ 1 + 5	0	15 - 1 - 3	15 + 3	0 - 5
40. Des Moines (21) - Great Falls (66)		+ 6	20 - 6		
41. Mexico (Sp4) - Davenport (16)	+ 5	5 - 1 + 3		5 + 1	20 - 5 - 3
42. Miles City (64) - Duluth (11)	20 - 2 - 1	10 - 3	+ 2	+ 3 + 1	
Last round	240	196	251	269	198
Races	72	30	44	49	5
Total	312	226	295	318	223

Congratulations to Big Food (Steve Ham)

Game end statements (on file from Brendan) are welcome.

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

This round features a rare, 5 player race.

Questions

Bob Pitman Is the minimum race distance 3 hexes as usual? Looking at 38. Askham (36) - Botswana (Sp2) which looks as if its 1 hex across the border.

Regarding race 38 of this game, the connection to Botswana at D19 will not be allowed as the track length is too short. The connections at K27 and K28 are still valid.

Brendan Whyte Is it not possible for green/blue to loop south then back through Askham and over the border to Botswana? That doesn't reverse or use any track twice...

That would be legal, but most times I have seen this issue come up, the GM has just blocked certain connections for the special. I just forgot to do that in the turn report, but I will stick to only allowing the K27 and K28 connections to Botswana.

	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>
36. Cape Town (12) - Aliwal North (42)	Offer JR to KAFFIR	20 - 5		10 - 1	+ 5 + 1
37. Mafeking (54) - Kimberley (34)	0 + 2	0 - 2	5 + 3 - 1 + 1 - 5	20 - 3 + 1 - 2	5 - 1 + 5 + 2
38. Askham (36) - Botswana (Sp2)		+ 3	20 - 1 - 4	10 + 1 - 1	0 - 3 + 4 + 1
39. Swaziland (Sp5) - Messina (66)	20 + 5 - 10		10 - 5 + 10		
40. Pietersburg (65) - Queenstown (26)		+ 3	20 - 3 - 3 - 1	+ 3	+ 1
41. Cape Town (11) - Kroonstad (56)	10 - 1	+ 3			20 - 3 + 1
42. East London (41) - Graff-Reinet (24)		+ 5			20 - 5

Last round	223	180	367	166	166
Races	26	27	46	38	63
Total	249	207	413	204	229

Congratulations to SADDER (Michael Pargman)

SADDER, Michael Pargman (1st) I normally never write end-game statements before the last round has been played, because usually the game is so tight I don't want to draw the wrong conclusions.

This time, however, there is no question about the winner. It's very rare to be leading by 144 points before the last round, but it all comes down to my luck with the start positions. Two players started in Cape Town while no one started in Maputo. And I can understand why because it looks very off. I don't know if Brendan got their first choice, but everyone else did. I had Cape Town as my second choice and Maputo as #5. With all players but me starting in the West, Durban was an excellent starting position, and I made the most of that opportunity. It was only Steve who challenged me by building straight East for the first three rounds, but because of the rivers he had to cross I could always keep ahead of him and pick up the town bonuses. But the fact that he continued to build in the East forced me to do the same, and I could never really reach the West and South-West.

Steve has the only straight route all the way from West to East and it looks very efficient. Bob, Brendan, and Roger could end up in any order. The fact that Bob is in third place right now is due to him winning two races in round 11 with the longer distance. All three of them have built East-West track both North and South of Lesotho, and there have been several rounds when they haven't had four races to enter.

Thanks everyone for the game and a special thank you to Jim for GM-ing.

RAND, Steve Guest (2nd) Not a good round for me, can I hang onto second. I immediately regretted not going Durban for my first-choice start, which has the best monopoly potential. Cape Town might still have worked out if I'd been the only one starting there. Well done to Michael for exploiting the start with a good line, and a comfortable win. Not very much to choose between the rest in the end.

KAFFIR, Brendan Whyte (4th) Michael certainly romps home in this game. His early connections in the far east made up for lack of connection in the SW. I just learnt this week that the map's designer, Bill Brown, a gamer (and DtC subscriber in the 1990s) from Melbourne died a couple of years ago, which is sad (that I didn't know and none of my Melbourne friends told me), and a bit annoying as I had kept procrastinating on trying to track him down to ask why this map is so badly distorted from the actual geography. Vale Bill! It's just embarrassing that I did so badly in this game...

R, Roger Trethewey (5th) Congratulations to Michael on a good win. Looking at the map, green has quite the best coverage and deserves the win. I lost out by getting myself blocked to the east. So, thanks to Jim as GM for keeping us under control.

GM, Jim Reader A very one-sided game and a comfortable win for Michael that I hadn't expected. I hadn't spotted the western bias of the start towns and Michael capitalized well on his eastern advantage. Steve has a nice East – West line that looks very efficient and I thought he would run Michael closer. Thanks to everyone for playing and sorry it wasn't more competitive.

* * * * *

Sopwith T-365VP

Round Forty-Eight

Next round will be the last, regardless of the whether one or two planes are still in the air. **Cameltoe** shows off his skills with a perfect Immelmann turn, but the **Gossamer Heron** manages to slip away.

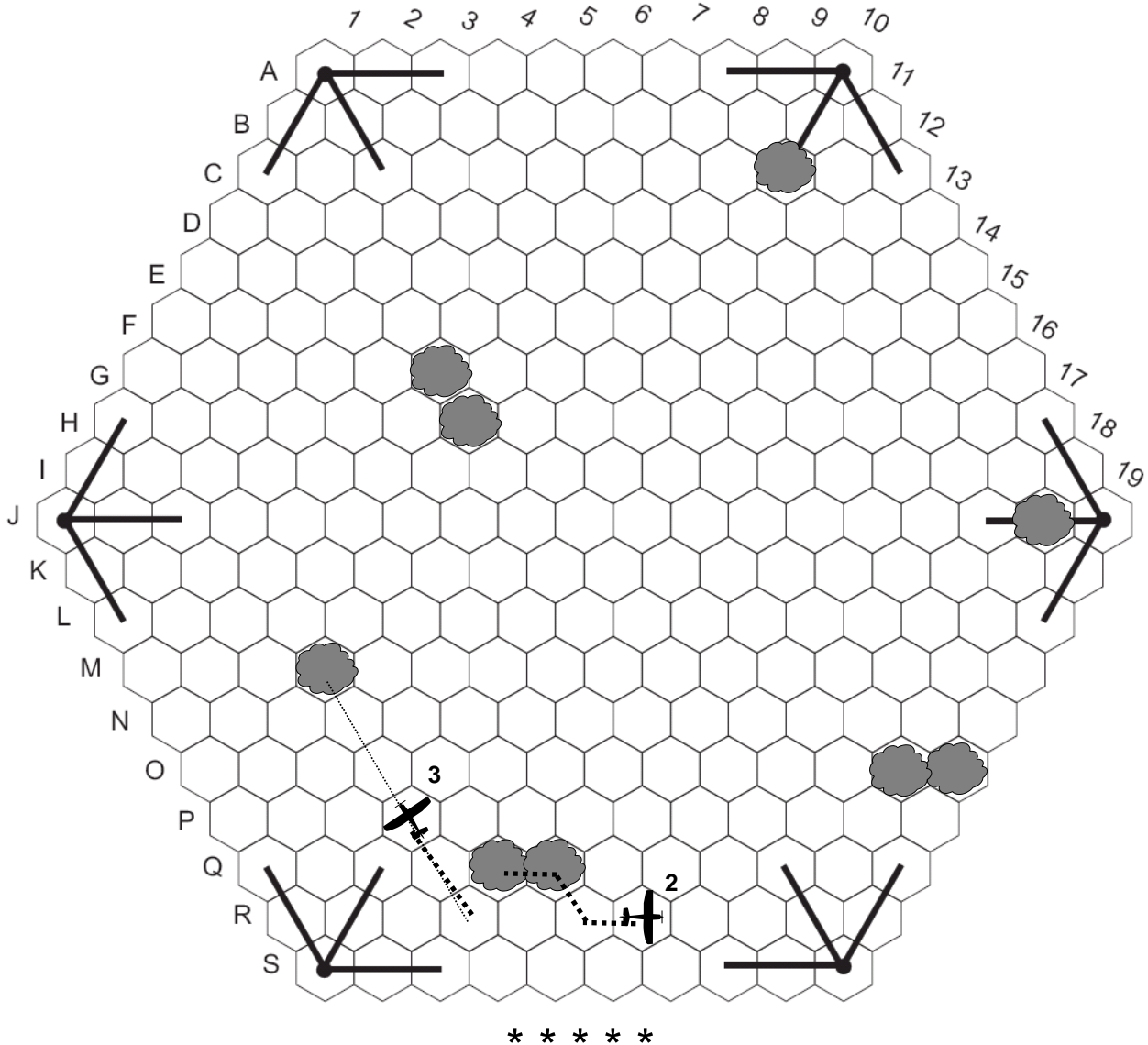
Pilot	Starts	Moves	Ends	A:D:P
2 Gossamer Heron <i>Chris Hibbert</i> Start: A1	45) P12E 46) P9E 47) R11SE 48) Q12NE	45) A – A – A 46) LT – LT – LS 47) LT – LT – O 48) RT – RS - A	45) P9E 46) R11SE 47) Q12NE 48) R15E	0:6:14
3 Cameltoe (ACE) <i>John Walker</i> Start: A10	45) N13E 46) N12E 47) N9W 48) Q11SE	45) A – O – O 46) A – A – A 47) LT – LT – A 48) IfA – A - A	45) N12E 46) N9W 47) Q11SE 48) P12NW	16:7:12
5 The Ode-ace-ious One <i>John Marsden</i>	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

Chris Hibbert

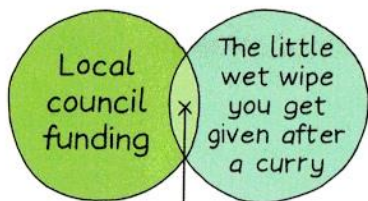
I can't find the issue where you said how many turns remain in the Sopwith game. How long do I have to elude John to get a draw? What's the planned last issue of Variable Pig?

Two more rounds - this one and next issue. The last planned issue of VP is issue 208. The Breaking Away game and possibly the Fair Means or Foul game will continue to completion in Richard's subzine, but I will stop the Sopwith game in issue 208.

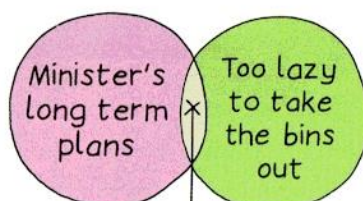
I'm not sure if I had specified a specific number of rounds or issues earlier as I wasn't sure how much longer the zine would last. However, with all the RR games finishing this round, next issue will be the right time to stop.



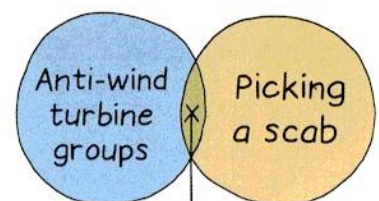
Edith Pritchett A week in Venn diagrams



Insufficient to deal with the vast mess



Wait for the next person to deal with it



Getting rid of something that's helping


EDITH @edithcartoonist



Issue 62

Queuedo – Marika says adieu, as she gracefully exits. Not so elegantly, one of the royal household’s pet Corgis could not contain itself and did a three turder right in front of the celebrity pair. While a member of staff cleared up the debris, Matty leaped ahead of them. Maybe the Corgi had sensed Mary approaching which set it off, nonetheless she slipstreamed behind Matty. A little further back, as Roger was talking loudly to Jim about the conventions of queuing, Richard nodded in agreement as he eased past the engrossed pair.

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

This card was processed in the above report (last turn).

E A Corgi Poops: Right in front of Holly and Phil, they move back two places this round. You may also play a number

The remaining cards are:

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.

Puerto Rico –

Kev takes the **Builder (+1)**. Builds: Kev constructs a Guild Hall, Chris can't afford his proposed builds, Jim passes, John builds the last Coffee Roaster.

Chris takes the **Mayor (+1)** Colonists placed: Chris Coffee, Sugar Mill, Quarry, Sugar. Jim quarry, tobacco storage, John newly acquired coffee roaster, coffee. Kev Small Market, Corn plantation

Jim takes the **Prospector (+1)**

John takes the **Captain** Loads: John 3 Indigo on the 7 ship, Kev 2 Indigo to 7 ship, Chris 1 Coffee to 5 ship, Jim 1 Indigo to 7 ship. John returns 1 corn to supply, Kev returns 2 corn to supply, Chris returns 1 corn to supply, Jim Returns 1 Tobacco to supply.

Player	Doubloons	Goods	VPs	Buildings	Plantations
Jim Reader	2	Tobacco	1	3 of 12 Small market (v) Small Indigo Plant (v) Tobacco Storage (v vx)	6 of 12 Quarry (v) Quarry (v) Quarry (v) Indigo (v) Indigo (x) Tobacco (v)
John Marsden	0	Corn	6	4 of 12 Construction Hut (v) Small Indigo plant (v) Large Indigo Plant (v xx) Coffee Roaster (v x)	6 of 12 Quarry (v) Corn (v) Corn (v) Indigo (v) Indigo (v) Coffee (v)
Kev Lee	0	Tobacco	7	5 of 12 Small market (v) Small Indigo Plant (v) Tobacco Storage (v xx) Guild Hall (x)	6 of 12 Corn (v) Corn (v) Corn (v) Indigo (v) Tobacco (v) Coffee (x)
Chris Hibbert	2	Corn	7	2 of 12 Small sugar mill (v) Coffee Roaster (v v)	6 of 12 Quarry (v) Corn (v) Sugar (v) 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	8
Office	5	2	2	Indigo	5
Large Market	5	2	2	Sugar	10
Large Warehouse	6	2	2	Tobacco	7

Tobacco Storage	5	3	0	Coffee	7
Coffee Roaster	6	3	0		
Factory	7	3	2	Colonists	33
University	8	3	2		
Harbour	8	3	2	Victory Points	79
Wharf	9	3	2		
Guild Hall	10	4	0		
Fortress	10	4	1		
Residence	10	4	1		
Customs House	10	4	1		
City Hall	10	4	1		

Doubloon bonuses held on role cards: Settler (+1), Trader (+1), Craftsman (+1)

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

Plantations available are Coffee, Sugar, Sugar, Sugar, Sugar. 7 colonists board the colonist ship.

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

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

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) **Someone Like You - Adele**

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) **Like a Prayer – Madonna** (Martin Walker, singer only, Jim Reader)

3 Hit it This ain't no disco It ain't no country club either This is LA (1993) **All I Wanna Do - Sheryl Crow**
(Richard Smith, Martin Walker, Jim Reader)

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) **What's love got to do with it – Tina Turner** (Richard Smith, Jim Reader)

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) **Midnight train to Georgia – Gladys Knight and the pips**

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) **9 to 5 a.k.a. Morning Train – Sheena Easton**

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) **You're so vain – Carly Simon** (John Hopkins, Dane Maslen, Richard Smith, Brendan Whyte, Martin Walker, Jim Reader, Steve Guest)

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) **Shout - Lulu**

9 Well, the undertaker drew a heavy sigh. Seeing no one else had come (1973) **Band on the Run – Paul McCartney and Wings** (Richard Smith)

10 The colors of the rainbow. So pretty in the sky. Are also on the faces. Of people going by (1967)
Wonderful World – Louis Armstrong (John Hopkins, Dane Maslen)

Theme – Sang Bond Themes (Richard Smith).

Jim Reader 21+8=29
Richard Smith 20+9=29
Steve Guest 17+2=19
Bob Pitman 20+0=20
John Hopkins 14+4 =18
Martin Walker 14+5=19
Dane Maslen 10+4=14
Brendan Whyte 7+2=9
Chris Hibbert 2+0=2

Martin Walker

5. Randy Crawford - Rainy night in Georgia? GM - correct state, it must have been in there somewhere
Theme - Female singers?
Chris Hibbert
3. That's Talking Heads, isn't it?
7. Joan Baez? Joni Mitchell?
9 Beatles, Eleanor Rigby GM - almost got a quarter of a point

Round 4 Lyrics - No theme this time, though there might have been...

- 1 Since you've gone, I've been lost without a trace / I dream at night, I can only see your face (1983)
- 2 And whatever happened / to Tuesday and so slow? / Going down the old mine with a transistor radio (1967)
- 3 When I'm driving in my car / When a man come on the radio / He's telling me more and more / About some useless information / Supposed to fire my imagination (1965)
- 4 Bittersweet memories / That is all I'm taking with me / So goodbye, please don't cry / We both know I'm not what you, you need (1973)
- 5 Now there's no welcome look in your eyes when I reach for you / And now you're starting to criticize little things I do / It makes me just feel like crying (1964)
- 6 I tried to give you consolation / When your old man had let you down / Like a fool, I fell in love with you / You turned my whole world upside down (1970)
- 7 There's something 'bout this / Let's keep it moving / And if it's good let's just get something cooking / 'Cause I really wanna rock with you (2003)
- 8 Looks like we made it / Look how far we've come, my baby / We mighta took the long way / We knew we'd get there someday (2007)
- 9 It's my own desire / it's my own remorse / Help me to decide / help me make the most / Of freedom and of pleasure / Nothing ever lasts forever (1985)
- 10 Sail on silver girl / Sail on by / Your time has come to shine / All your dreams are on their way. (1970)

Rock, Paper Scissors Richard GES - Ah, so Steve didn't have to play himself in the final, which would have been a bit pointless and silly. Although many say that most postal games are pointless and silly.
GM - Well when AI takes over most jobs, games will potentially become one of the most important things in the world. GMs will be society's elites.

Parkrun Richard GES - Good to get my first win at Parkrun and an interesting issue about the buttwise tracking (your ruling sounds right).



THE CELESTIAL STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

Track no. 29

richard530smith@btinternet.com

24th March 2024

For this issue I decided to write something about things I've been doing since the last issue, as many zine eds do. I've tended to avoid this as most things I get up to are rather dull (I don't get out much).

OK, here goes: *cough* When taking my latest electricity meter reading (I have yet to get a smart meter) I discovered the compartment was full of snails! I carefully removed them all and put them in the garden, but neglected to take a photo, which may have been better than the one I ended up with...

It's a plastic garden storage park bench. As you can see it's a good-sized trunk and seating capacity is two humans, four cats, or one human and two cats. I decided to spend a *little* bit of money on improving the garden this spring, and bought the above unit at a reduced price as a flat-pack from the DIY store. Little did I know that there was a small tear in the plastic wrapper that had allowed water to get in. This water dribbled out into the boot of my car on the way home: Oh, the horror!

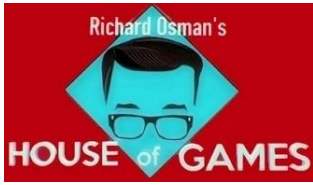
I also have some exciting health news. After 3 months of taking statins I had a blood test that showed my total cholesterol was down from a dangerous 7.8 mmol/L to a safe 4.7 mmol/L. So The Verve were wrong, the drugs *do* work!

On the games front, there are game starts inside for House of Games and By Popular Opinion, these being the all-reader games to replace Dilemmas. As usual, the more the merrier for these. Azerbaijan RR has almost got enough for two games, so one is starting this issue. Feudality and Dice Forge lists are not filling but I'll give 'em a bit longer before abandoning.

Richard

Some plastic garden furniture is made from polyrattan or polywood, which are synthetic materials. Polyrattan is made from HDPE woven into a rattan-like pattern. Polywood, in contrast, is a type of plastic lumber made from recycled plastic. Both offer a sustainable alternative to traditional rattan and wood furniture. Polywood may or may not be the only English word that rhymes with Hollywood.

HOUSE OF GAMES - NO RESEARCH VERSION - GAMESTART



A second (five-round) outing for the rather fun "guessing" version of (Richard Smith's) House of Games. All the games are ones where you have to take a punt, rather than resorting to Google or ChatGPT. I have added "And The Answer Isn't" which on the TV show players come up with a fake answer before the game and a point is scored if and when an opponent is lured into picking that option. For the postal game all three fake answers are by the GM.

Distinctly Average

Last time some people weren't too happy with having another player to be averaged with, so instead the player(s) closest to the correct answer get a point and the player(s) closest to the average of ALL players get a point. It is possible to get two points.

- 1) How many Penny Black stamps were issued?
- 2) How many all-electric cars were registered in the UK in 2023?

Where Is Kazakhstan?

2 points for getting the correct hex, otherwise 1 point for being the least hexes away.

- 3) In which hex is Machu Picchu?
- 4) In which hex are The Rainbow Mountains



I'm Terrible at Dating

2 points if exact, otherwise 1 point for nearest player(s).

- 5) In which year did the Slavery Abolition Act come into force in the UK?
- 6) In which year did sliced bread first go on sale (anywhere in the world)?

And The Answer Isn't

1 point for choosing the correct answer.

7) US Singer Katy Perry had a cat called...

- a) Furry Fred
- b) Cuddly Dudley
- c) Kitty Purry
- d) Fatty Catty

8) Who blew the raspberries for "The Phantom Raspberry Blower of Old London Town"?

- a) Ronnie Corbett
- b) Ronnie Barker
- c) Peter Cook
- d) David Jason

Answer Smash

"Smash" the answers to the two clues together (so the end of the first is the start of the second). 1 point for a correct answer, and unlike the TV show, you *don't* lose a point for a wrong guess.

- 9) Bariatric device fitted into stomach / 1973 album by Wings featuring the single "Jet".
- 10) 1978 Elvis Costello hit with a 7-word title / American writer with presidential parents.

BY POPULAR OPINION - GAMESTART



With Dilemmas almost done, its replacement is once again awash with subjectivity: A five-round blast of By Popular Opinion.

In this BPD variant players will be asked six questions on a common theme for each round. For each question, players submit two answers, which can be the same: A popular answer for points (as BPD) and a favourite answer for interest and discussion. The GM will provide one answer and a bonus point is awarded if either of your choices matches. Press is encouraged.

First Round Theme - Classic Rock Albums

In your opinion, which are the best albums by

1. David Bowie
2. Deep Purple
3. Genesis
4. Hawkwind
5. Rush
6. Uriah Heep

Remember to submit two answers for each - the one you think will be most popular and your personal favourite, and you can submit press discussing either or both choices.

ALBUM REVIEWS

With the quick turnaround this time, the new Hawkwind album "Stories from Time and Space" and the "new" Blue Oyster Cult album "Ghost Stories" have yet to hit my doormat, so they can go next time.

Blue Oyster Cult

I have however, been enjoying a different recent BOC release "50th Anniversary - Live in NYC - First Night" which I have the 2CD + 1DVD version of.



For the By Popular Opinion game, I considered BOC for one of the bands, but didn't pick them as most people would go for Secret Treaties as their best album, and it's certainly the best of their early records in the 70s (Fire of Unknown Origin for 80s) but I've always had a soft spot (or white underbelly?) for the self-titled first album, which is played live in its entirety on this album, recorded in 2022 but only released recently.

"The Last Days of May" is one of my favourites and great live with Buck Dharma's guitar solos. The very weird "She's as Beautiful as a Foot" gets a big cheer from the fans.

There are plans to release the second and third nights, featuring Tyranny and Mutation and Secret Treaties. On the evidence of this release my money is already spent. As well as playing the debut album very well, the current band (featuring several over-70s) also did a great job on the rest of the set, playing all my favourites on the recent "The Symbol Remains" plus a varied selection of oldies, including some from the much overlooked "Club Ninja".

Ebb

I discovered this band after digging their version of the Hawkwind classic "The Demented Man" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzjuDbrHedY>

Featuring an almost all-female line-up (with an and old but talented guy on the bass) they have released a number of EPs and singles (and the recent "Suffering" video is a cracking watch / listen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDnMgc_tzqU) but only one full album, "Mad and Killing Time" released in 2022, which I have been listening to a lot on my daily walks. "Tension" is a great track and I do like the instrumental "Violet is Tits" despite the silly name.

DILEMMAS - ROUND FIVE



Almost the end, with all 10 questions answered. Just the "likes-only" (see <https://variablepig.org/rules/dilemmas.html>) round to finish.

Game end comments also welcome. I think the rules and scoring could be better / clearer / simpler and having the players submit questions could be fun. Was I right to make the comments anonymous?

Scoreboard

So now we just have the "likes" voting to decide the winner.

Player	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	TOTAL
John Walker	5	4	7	6	5	5	6	4	2	3	47
Brendan Whyte	5	5	5	6	6	4	5	4	3	3	46
Chris Hibbert	4	2	5	7	3	4	7	6	2	3	43
Bob Pitman	3	4	6	5	5	4	5	5	3	2	42
Steve Ham (12)	-	-	0	0	4	5	5	6	3	3	38
Tom Howell	4	4	7	4	3	5	0	0	0	0	27

Likes: You can "like" up to 2 answers (one each on different questions or both on the same one) and you get a point for each one, as does the author of the answer, unless it's the GM. Example orders: Like Q9A7 and Q10A9. These points will be added to the Q9 and Q10 columns in the table above.

10 likes were given out from a possible 12 on Q7 and Q8 and these have been added to the scoreboard, as have the points for voting on and predicting Q9 and Q10.

R5 Questions:

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

Result of Vote: Yes: 2 No: 3

Q9A1: I'd say yes, but there are some issues of concern:

- 1) It would be ghastly if it ran on Windows - all those crashes and painfully slow updates.
- 2) Should you be able to tell who is "real" and who is an "NPC"? Perhaps after a while you might not care.
- 3) Would there be simulations available inside the simulation? Could get messy.
- 4) Could the consciousness ingest process correct your dementia? If not you might elect to go in long before your corporeal body was expected to expire. In which case, would the body continue to have the original you whilst the simulation contains you?

Q9A2: When I was younger, we talked about this a lot. I always came down to there being some things like rock climbing that I'd prefer the randomness of reality to an artificially sculpted fake, even if the difficulty could be exquisitely tailored to my abilities. But these days, I mostly climb in the rock gym, so I'm apparently willing to accept the artificial for its convenience. I don't object to artificial realities, but there are things I'd prefer to do in the real world.

Q9A3: I would just before my current "real" existence ended, until then no. Even after transferring I think my uploaded consciousness would worry itself about the energy bills and whether some power company drone was about to pull the world's plug after it has sent its 3rd red bill. Or maybe in return for continuing power supply the simulation would become processing slaves or digital saboteurs, agents wandering the net ready to commit mayhem at our direction (that could be fun).

Q9A4: No, not if there is any other consciousness in that reality. I wouldn't want to inflict that on anyone else. If I knew for certain that mine was the only conscious existence in that reality then perhaps for a short time, but this would get boring very quickly.

Q9A5: I'd opt to enter to download my consciousness, so long there is an option of being able to end the process at some point.

Q9A6: No. The current reality is already chaotic enough.

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?

Result of Vote: Trump: 1 Putin: 4

Q10A1: It has to be Putin. Hopefully this would accelerate a peace process, putting an end to the amount of unnecessary misery and deaths he is causing.

Q10A2: Assuming Trump can't be voted into office if he's dead... Kill Putin. Trump for President! Make America Great again... again!!

Q10A3: Putin's a liar, evil and dangerous but Trump is a liar, evil, a fantasist, petty and even more dangerous because he is supposed to be on the same "side" as us (the west) but you get the feeling that being a "strongman" autocrat is his goal and to that end his mates are Putin and a host of other unsavoury autocrats.

Q10A4: Putin is the bigger danger. He's actually competent and knows how to rely on people who will do what he wants.

Q10A5: Trump is a liar and several of his views (such as global warming and the COVID pandemic) are potentially disastrous, so he gets the train.

Q10A6: Putin, as painful as it sounds the worst-case scenario of 10million dead vs. friends and family means that I would have to put my friends and family at risk, but fortunately these are very low in number. But I tend to believe Putin more than Trump, so if I really was put in this position my answer might be the other way round.

RAILWAY RIVALS AZERBAIJAN (RR2535AZ) SETUP



The map is available on the Pig website at the following URL: <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/azerbaijanrr.html>

Roger Trethewey, Brad Martin, Bob Gingell and Kevin Lee are our four railway CEOs for this one. As usual I require a company name / acronym (which may or may not relate to Azerbaijan), preferences for colour and preferences for start town. Options are Sumgait, Jalilabad, Shirvan and Mingachevir.

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS KENDO NAGASAKI - ROUND 3



This is a game of the Temperature Control variant - see <https://variablepig.org/rules/kendo.html> The game has 7 players at the moment but more can join any time.

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 3:

Player	Who	Where	Lat	Lon
Bob Gingell	John Paul Getty Sr. (1892-1976)	St. Louis, MO	38.627222	-90.197778
Steve Guest	Gabriel Jesus (1997-)	Montreal, Quebec	45.508889	-73.554167
Chris Hibbert	Ernő Rubik (1944-)	Belize City	17.498611	-88.188611
Bob Pitman	Paris Hilton (1981-)	Honolulu	21.306944	-157.858333
Jim Reader	Al Pacino (1940-)	Kitty Hawk, NC	36.076944	-75.704722
Martin Walker	Taylor Swift (1989-)	Salt Lake City, Utah	40.760833	-111.891111
Brendan Whyte	Ernest Rutherford (1971-1937)	Atomium, Brussels	50.894722	4.341111

Public response to the player with the closest guess:

We both work in entertainment, but different types. We were born in adjacent decades.

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.

CRYSTAL BALL 2024 - FUNNY-SHAPED BALLS



No	Sport	Event	Date	Jim Reader	Steve Ham	John Walker	Martin Walker	Richard Smith
1L	Football	African Cup of Nations	Jan	Morocco	Morocco	Ivory Coast [2]	Morocco	Senegal
2L	American Football	Super Bowl	Feb	SF 49ers [1]	Buffalo Bills	SF 49ers [1]	Miami	Kansas City [2]
3L	Rugby	6 Nations	Mar	France [1]	France [1]	France [1]	France [1]	England
4L	Golf	US Masters	April	Scheffler	Koepka	Rahm	McIlroy	Rahm
5L	Football	Men's FA Cup	May	Newcastle	Liverpool	Chelsea	Chelsea	Southampton
6L	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	Aug	48	54	62	39	56
10	Multi	Olympics - US medals	Aug	94	127	124	88	102
11	Cricket	Women's T20 World Cup	Sept	Australia	Australia	Australia	Australia	England
12	Baseball	World Series	Oct	Cleveland	NY Yankees	LA Dodgers	Houston Oilers	LA Dodgers
13	Formula 1	Highest placed driver (not Verstappen)	Nov	Perez	Leclerc	Perez	Perez	Norris*
TB	Global Warming	Number of degrees Celsius (to 2DP) 1.18	figure is out	1.06	1.01	0.95	1.10	0.91
SCORE				2	1	4	1	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.

* free change

Deadline day summary: Ireland did win the six nations rugby, as I thought, but England were moments away from securing second place until a long-range penalty gave the French a narrow win. All of England's games were close and Italy managed a win and a draw this time.

Only Chelsea survive from our FA Cup picks. Liverpool's under-11s managed to see off Southampton (after a strong start by the south coast club) only to get done by a last-gasp extra time winner for Man United in the quarter final. Newcastle were comfortably beaten by Man City.

Euro 2024 is looming with the usual debate about the England squad, mainly the inclusion of some of the manager's "favourites" when better players are available.

Following a crap start by Mercedes in the F1, I have replaced Russell with Norris. Mercedes may come good later in the season, of course. Ferrari are currently matching the Red Bulls for speed but they have always failed to deliver for one reason or another in recent years. Impressive performance from Sainz in Australia straight after his appendix removal operation. Assuming he is the one to make way for Hamilton next season, he should have no trouble finding another seat.

CENTURY SPICE ROAD - ROUND 15 (THE END)



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

1) Payment for last merchant cards: None.

2) Merchant cards played / point cards claimed:

John has first dibs and creates 1 saffron and 1 turmeric allowing him to claim the 7-card (+1 for silver token) and the remaining cardamom is worth another VP, netting him a total of 9.

Next up is Jim who plays create 1 cinnamon to allow him to nab the 16 card (+3 for gold). He only has turmeric left so he gets 19 points in total.

Kevin, alas, can't rustle up another point card, with create 1 saffron and 2 turmeric giving him an extra VP for a total of 2 this round.

Status Table

Player	Claim Order	Spices	Point Cards	VPs
Kevin Lee	3	Turmeric: 3 Saffron: 1 Cardamom: 0 Cinnamon: 1	3	34
John Walker	1	Turmeric: 0 Saffron: 0 Cardamom: 1 Cinnamon: 0	3	27
Jim Reader	2	Turmeric: 5 Saffron: 0 Cardamom: 0 Cinnamon: 0	3	44

Point Cards Available (as of last round, left in for info)

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

Congratulations to Jim Reader!

Game end comments welcome from all players.

BUS BOSS - DENMEAD AND WATERLOOVILLE (BB416DEN) ROUND 2



Everyone got their first choice build except Bob who suffered the downside of being the first player in R1, you go last in R2! He had to make do with 4th choice.

Note in response to Michael: Building the A3M does cost $13+2 = 15$, but this can be built in one round, see rule 8 here <https://variablepig.org/rules/busboss.html> - if you are only building one route it can cost more than 12.

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

BOB Black Furzeley - Purbrook - Bedhampton
Bob Gingell BANK: $88 - 12 = 76$

DAWN Green Denmead - WaterlooVille - Cowplain
Michael Pargman BANK: $88 - 12 = 76$

WEAR Red Anmore – Lovedean; Denmead - WaterlooVille
Kevin Lee BANK: $88 - 11 = 77$

CRETS Yellow Portchester - Fareham - Fareham Common - Southampton Connections
Jim Reader BANK: $88 - 12 = 76$

The build order for round 3 is Kevin, Jim, Bob, Michael.

BUS BOSS - DENMEAD AND WATERLOOVILLE (BB417DEN) ROUND 2

GM: Bob Gingell

CARTOON stays in the west as the rest move southwards.

Riding On Good English Roads (ROGER),

Orange (Roger Trethewey): $88 - 11 = 77$

Waterlooville - Bedhampton - Havant [$5+2, 2+2 = 11$]

The Wombles of Hambledon Common are Wee (WHCW),

Bungo Blue (Brendan Whyte): $88 - 12 = 76$

Waterlooville - Purbrook - Queen Alexandra Hospital - Cosham [$3+2, 2+2, 1+2 = 12$]

Buses until 2150 (B2150),

Green (Richard Smith): $88 - 12 = 76$

Furzeley - Purbrook - Bedhampton [$4+4, 4+2 = 12$]

CRTOO, now renamed CARTOON

Purple (Steve Ham): $88 - 9 = 79$

Hundred Acres - Wickham; North Boarhunt - Boarhunt [$2+2; 3+2 = 9$]

Purchase order for Round 3: Brendan, Richard, Steve, Roger

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

RAILWAY RIVALS PARTNERSHIP BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA (RR2522BH) ROUND 3



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.



Note that the river underneath Capljina is mostly obscured by the town hexagon (perhaps I should have the river layer above the towns in GIMP?) but Jim did spot it.

It could have been a zero-payments round this time had HBBRT done their 3a builds the other way round - JOHN getting there first and extracting a parallel fee. The only other touch was team-mates JOHN and ROGER at Z11, I have shown this as a fee of 0 on the status table.

The map does seem to be filling up nicely suggesting it is the right size for a 6-player game.

ROGER Roger Trethewey Green	3a. [6] (Foca) - - K70 - Kosman; (E66) - D66 - C66; (Z11) - Teslic 3b. [4] (J67) - Garazde 3c. [3] (C66) - Konjic BANK: 18 +0[ROGER, Z11] = 18
JOHN John Walker Black	3a. [6] (R7) - - - R4; (Prijedor) - - M3 - <u>KOZARSKA DUBICA</u> 3b. [4] (Banja Luka) - - - - W10 3c. [3] (W10) - - - - Z11 BANK: 41 +6 -0[ROGER, Z11] +7[HBBRT,R6-R4] = 54
BLAG Bob Gingell Purple	3a. [6] (F60) - E60 - Visoko; (Doboj) --- B49 - A50 3b. [4] (A50) - Z9; (Visoko) --- C61 3c. [3] (I57) - J56 - K57 - L56 BANK: 42
BUM Jim Reader Yellow	3a. [6] (Y25) ---- Z25 - A66 - <u>KONJIC</u> ; (Y31) - Y32 3b. [4] (Y32) --- <u>CAPLJINA</u> - Y34 3c. [3] (Jacje) - T13 - S13 - S12 BANK: 38 +6 +6 = 50
POOR Dane Maslen Red	3a. [6] (C55) - Zavidovići - - - - Lukavac - I52 3b. [4] (I52) - Tuzla - K53; (I52) - - I50 3c. [3] (I50) - I49 - - Brčko. BANK: 57
HBBRT Chris Hibbert Blue	3a. [6] (Z14) - Y15 - Y16 - <u>TRAVNIK</u> ; (S7) - R6 - - R4; 3b. [4] (R4) -- R3 -- <u>GRADISKA</u> 3c. [3] (R6) - - - O5 BANK: 26 +3 +6 -7[JOHN,R6-R4] = 28

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

Rolls for R4: 4a) 5 4b) 3 4c) 6

RAILWAY RIVALS - WESTEROS (RR2516WR) - ROUND 9



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

ROG takes the lead despite lack of maritime and giant lizard activities. GREYJOY also had a good round and are just the cost of a ship behind. MEAD gets revenge on BIEN for race 10 in race 16 with a dragon-tail derailment. BIEN's dragon was on guard duty for race 15.

Race 1 was uncontested with only ROG able to run, whilst only GREYJOY had a viable entry for race 18, sailing from Lannisport to Pyke. Races 15, 17 and 19 were all very close with just the odd pip or two making the difference. Note that for race 19, the lengths shown include the 3 for scaling the wall (which anyone using a ship to reach the Lands of Always Winter can avoid, but they still have to embark and disembark).

Some useful connections built this round with most lines looking tidy (my "safe" builds for yellow resulted in a rather higglety line so there's probably still a bit of work for Brad with the remaining pips).

DRAGON ACTIONS:

GREYJOY	BIEN	ROG	MEAD
Defend GREYJOY Race 18	Defend BIEN Race 15	zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz	Attack BIEN Race 16

	GREYJOY Bob Gingell Black	BIEN Brad Martin Yellow	ROG Roger Trethewey Green	MEAD Steve Guest Orange
R1) Storm's End (46) - Deepwood Motte (15)			20 [40]	
R13) The Eyrie (32) - Moat Cailin (25)	20 [15] +1	10 [22] -1		
15) Casterly Rock (41) - Blackcrown / Three Towers (55)		20 [21] -5 +1		10 [23] +5 -1
16) Starfall (61) - Lannisport (42)		Train derailed		20 [18]
17) Cider Hall / Grassy Vale (53) - Castle Black (12)	0 [45] -3	+3	10 [43]	20 [43]
18) Winterfell (21) - Pyke (S6)	20 [39]			
19) The Twins (31) - Lands of Always Winter (S1)	20 [27]		10 [27] +1	0 [26] -1
20) The Dreadfort (16) - Harrenhal (35)	10 [28]		20 [25]	
21) White Harbor (24) - Wyl / Yronwood (63)	+2 +2	10 [49] -2 +4	20 [35] -2 -4	

Last Turn	121	121	113	83
Points from Races	68	40	75	53
Builds	-5 -8 -1	-8 -1	-8 -1 +1	+1 +1
Points Total	175	152	180	138

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, GREYJOY=1.

BUILDS:

ROG: (Goldengrove) --- - F36; (I18) - - - L19; (L18) - M18 [-1 MEAD]

BIEN: (K21) - - - - - F18 - Flint's Finger [-1 ROG]

GREYJOY: (G42) - - - D43 - Oldtown and buy ship; (K33) - - - Silverhill; (J41) - K42 [-1 MEAD]

MEAD: No builds

The fourth set of races are:

22. Essos (S2) - King's Landing (43)

23. Cider Hall / Grassy Vale (53) - Last Hearth (13)

24. Stoney Sept (36) - The Arbor (S5)

25. Wyl / Yronwood (63) - Silverhill / Goldengrove (52)

26. Riverrun (34) - Kingsgrave (62)

27. Moat Cailin (25) - The Dreadfort (16)

28. Casterly Rock (41) - Winterfell (22)

Enter up to 4 new races and build up to 6 points of track (ships may also be bought at connected ports, marked with anchor symbol).

RAILWAY RIVALS - WESTEROS (RR2517WR) - ROUND 6

GM: Bob Gingell

STARK misjudges the cost of building through mountains but builds a useful ship at Storm's End.

DRAGON gains double from building to Bitterbridge. BEAR and STARKLINE connect to Northern strongholds, making sure to build a few ships.

GM note: Reminder that your dragon can be used once per Round to defend any race entry or attack any race entry. You do not need to be involved in the race that you defend or attack although you must specify the player company. If a race entry using a ship is attacked successfully, that ship will be sunk but players can order any lost ships to be rebuilt at the end of the Round using treasury points (so not taken from the end-of-Round build allowance).

Build allowance for Round 6: 6, 4, 3

STARKLINE (Mike Townsend), Green: $69 +12 -10 -3 +1 = 69$.

6a. (O17) --- P16 - WHITE HARBOUR; (Last Hearth) - - U7

6b. (Highgarden) - - H43 - I44 [-2b, -1d]

6c. (U7) - - W8 - KARHOLD

Build Ships in King's Landing and Lannisport

STARK (Jim Reader), yellow: $46 +6 -5 -6 = 41$.

6a. (P27) - - - - S26; (S39) - T38

6b. (T38) - U39 - STORM'S END, build ship; (Q37) - - Grassy Vale

6c. (Grassy Vale) - N37 - M38 - Bitterbridge [-6d]

BEAR (Kevin Lee), Black: $32 +6 -5 +3 = 34$.

6a. (J18) - I18 - - - F19 - FLINT'S FINGER, build ship; (O14) - P13

6b. (P13) - - - S12 - S11

6c. (S11) - The Dreadfort; (R12) - - T13

DRAGON (Richard Smith), Blue: $47 +6 -2 +7 = 51$.

6a. (Grassy Vale) - N37 - M38 - BITTERBRIDGE; L24 --- L23

6b. (L23) - The Twins - K22 - K21 - K20

6c. (K20) - K19 - L18 - L17 [-1b, -1sl]

Ships owned: DRAGON – King's Landing, Sunspear; BEAR – Flint's Finger, Oldtown; STARK – Storm's End; STARKLINE – King's Landing, Lannisport.

Races for Round 7 (enter any 4):

1. 14 (Karhold) – #4 (Southeastern Island)
2. 25 (Moat Cailin) – 41 (Casterley Rock)
3. 34 (Riverrun) – 16 (The Dreadfort)
4. 42 (Lannisport) – 36 (Stoney Sept)
5. 54 (Highgarden) – 24 (White Harbor)
6. 62 (Kingsgrave) – 53 (Cider Hall / Grassy Vale)
7. #6 (Pyke) – 65 (Lemonwood)

Build allowance for Round 7: 12 points.

THE YOUTUBE BIT

I do spend a fair bit of time on YouTube, mostly consuming music content, though I do also watch a few vids on science, cars and philosophy / religion.

My pick for this issue is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKvRVv5Lcw4> which is a tribute performance of Dark Side of the Moon by Dream Theater. Floyd's music tends to be somewhat restrained whereas Dream Theater are known for over-elaboration. So I wasn't expecting this to be as good as it was - absolutely superb. Every member of the band performed beautifully and the singer and saxophonist they drafted in both excelled too.

CLERICHEWS ANSWERS

RISHI SUNAK

Never uses Blu-tak
Because he is too posh
And his wife's got loads of dosh

KEIR STARMER

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

TAYLOR SWIFT

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

VLADIMIR PUTIN

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

A bit on the easy side though non-Brits probably don't know much about Keir Starmer, the likely next UK PM, or that the current incumbent, Rishi Sunak's wife is a near-billionaire. Does Sunak rhyme with Blu-tak? Well almost. Also I wasn't sure if gridironer is a real word, maybe a bit of artistic licence there? No! It does exist <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/gridironer#English>

Bob Pitman got 4, Chris Hibbert 1

SOUND CHARADES - THE CLASSIC RADIO 4 GAME

Answers: Classic Albums

<p>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" THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON</p>	
<p>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!" CLOSE TO THE EDGE</p>	
<p>13. (two words 60s) "Purr! Meow!" "Woof! Woof!" "Squeak!" PET SOUNDS</p>	<p>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..." ABBEY ROAD (sounds like A B-road)</p>
<p>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" RUMOURS</p>	

Steve Guest got 5, Jim Reader 2, Bob Gingell 0 and Chris Hibbert 0

New Questions: Sci-fi Novels

<p>16. Four words, 1962 (movie 2018) "The new authoritarian regime has decreed that everyone under 60 must die" "Yeah, seems a bit mad, they checked me out yesterday and accepted that my grey hair and sagging chops proved my age" "Looking younger than my 61 years, I thought I was a goner until suddenly a line appeared on face" "Phew!"</p>	
<p>17. Six words, 1979 (movie 2005) "I like to bum a lift where possible as I can't afford to run a car or buy train tickets" "Me too, and I find my Samsung phone very helpful during my journey, except when I forget how to use it" "Same for me, that's why I always bring along the manual"</p>	
<p>18. Four words, 1992 (movie 2006) "I've just become a father, but in an odd way" "Do tell" "I was sitting on the sofa watching Top Gear when suddenly a baby popped out of my bellybutton" "Happened to me last year, I blame Women's Lib"</p>	<p>19. Three words, 1977 (movie 2016) "I just put a paper Railway Rivals map in my multifunction device in order to get an electronic image" "So was it a success?" "No, the picture was almost totally black!"</p>
<p>20. Two words, 1950 (movie 2004) "I went to the optician's yesterday for some new glasses" "The one on the high street with the very attractive technician?" "Yes, but they've replaced her with a machine that looks like R2-D2"</p>	

VARIABLE PIG (Welsh)

Polar Pig #207

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The Celestial Steam
Locomotive #29

richard530smith@btinternet.com

Here Be Dragons
#62

hbdragons@btinternet.com

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 same website is to be used for The Celestial Dragon, at least initially.

PIG WAITING LISTS

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)

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

RR2535AZ (GM Richard): *Gamestart inside:* Bob Gingell, Brad Martin, Kevin Lee, Roger Trethewey

RR2536AZ (GM Bob G): Jim Reader, Michael Pargman 1 or 2 more wanted

NEW! HOUSE OF GAMES (No Research) – fun all-reader game based on the popular TV show, any number can play

NEW! BY POPULAR OPINION – Rarely aired BPD variant, any number can play

THE DEADLINE FOR VARIABLE PIG (HAMBONE) is
Friday 3rd May 2024



A rare picture of Hambone winning a Pork race at Coca Cola park seems appropriate for my final issue with it's celebration of tasty pork products every game. Go Pigs.