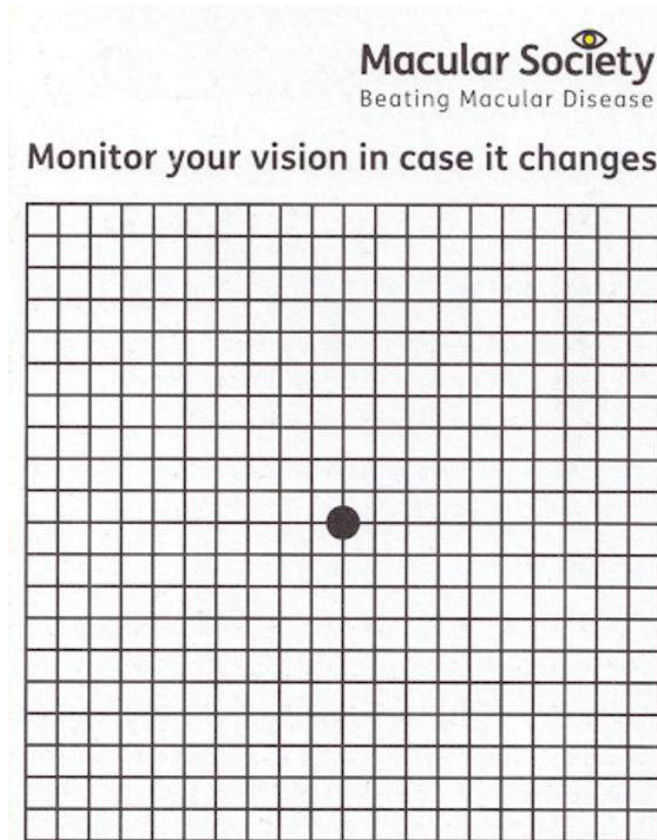


THE CELESTIAL DRAGON #17



It is important to spot early signs of changes in your vision. Hold the Amsler grid at eye level about 30cm from your eyes. Wear your usual reading glasses if needed, but not varifocals. Cover one eye at a time and look at the central dot. If any lines appear wavy, distorted, blurry or have gaps contact your optician or eye doctor immediately.

THE CELESTIAL STEAM LOCOMOTIVE #47
HERE BE DRAGONS #80 / HERE BE DRAGO #1
SUBPAR #17

THE TANGERINE TERROR #87 /
I AM THE KURIOUS KUMQUAT #17

DEADLINE: Friday 17th July 2026



THE CELESTIAL STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

Track no. 47

richard530smith@btinternet.com

1st June 2026

The zine will be out before I get my second eye exam, but I am hopeful that it will show the cyst is going down. I was given a “wonky vision test card” (front cover image) and this shows less distortion than when I used it just after my first hospital visit.

If it were to worsen significantly, I would be unable to drive, so I would be selling my car. Despite being 8 years old it is worth about £10,000 which could keep me afloat whilst waiting for my pension money. The latest on that is that I now have a vague idea of when I might see a farthing or two. I should expect a quote at the end of June (long after my official retirement date) and once I have replied to the quote, after 5 weeks I will get a confirmation. There is then a further four-week wait before the pension payments start, though the lump sum may arrive earlier via BACS. This may not sound great, but it's much better than “the twelfth of never”.

Espeon has been using his psychic powers on me (see the picture above) to stock up on tuna and Dreamies before retirement. He obviously knows that if I run out of cat food he might have to actually eat a bird or small rodent, rather than just chasing them.

Raymond meanwhile, has been quite happy (see the picture at the end of the zine) and enjoying the sunshine, and she seems to be ever more tolerant of her silly grey cohort. She is due her annual vet visit soon though, which includes injections. In an attempt to justify the billions of pounds in cost and the environmental damage caused by AI, it has been used to great effect to make a [parody rock video](#) about cats going to the vet. Not bad at all.

The possibility of being skint for a couple of months has affected my “tart the house up” plan. Instead of cleaning and painting one room at a time, I intend to clean and declutter the whole house, then do the painting etc. in a second pass, when I have some funds available.

I have already done one piece of DIY, and that was to fix a problem with my washing machine not consuming any fabric softener. The fix was to unblock the water jets above the detergent drawer using dental brushes, as described in [this video](#). It worked – hooray for YouTube!

Last time I mentioned teaching silly things to junior family members. I have a grandnephew and a grandniece and I thought maybe I would teach them the *Train Chant*. Another possibility: When I was small I was told about the *Belching Qualifications* which I found very amusing (and I passed it on to *The Crets* at uni when we were probably too old for such tomfoolery). The idea is that you have to say something whilst burping, and that would get harder as the qualifications progressed:

CSE: “Bollocks”

O-level: “Bulawayo”

A-level: “Archbishop of Canterbury”

Degree: *The soliloquy from Hamlet*

I always found “Archbishop of Canterbury” tricky because most of the wind would be expelled during the “aaaaarch” bit leaving little for the rest.

After last time’s sweet stuff about Southampton FC, it’s all turned sour again. Peeking at training sessions is normal in Italy and Germany but was banned in the EFL after the Leeds manager was fined for it in 2019. Whilst the punishment was excessive (in part fuelled by Middlesboro’s feigned outrage), it was a stupid thing to do – very little to gain and everything to lose. Did the manager really not know it was against the rules, and if he didn’t why did nobody tell him?

A quick update on the sci-fi watching: I have been enjoying *Babylon 5* and surprised how much of the storylines I remember, given the time that has passed since last viewing. Alas I have to say season 5 of *Andromeda* was poor, and I nearly gave up, perhaps I should have as the final episode was desperately disappointing. I thought the new *Spider-Noir* show was quite good, and liked the colour or black-and-white gimmick, but Nicolas Cage is too old at 62!

In other telly, I really enjoyed the BBC’s *Brexit: A Very British Civil War* 2-part documentary which is available now on [iPlayer](#). Was it really 10 years ago? I remembered most of it but not all – I had forgotten the bit about Bob Geldof and fishing boats. At the end of each episode we are told that Peter Mandelson’s contribution was filmed before his dealings with Epstein came out, and that Dominic Cummings was asked to contribute but refused (and he gets quite a slating).

So, on to the games. Bob’s [Wheel of Time RR](#) is now out and there is a game on offer in *Ode* as well and 1 (or 2 if demand) in CSL, but between them will test out the start options. Talking of starts, I am still playtesting different options for my new [Uzbekistan](#) map but will open a list for it now.

I am starting the *Choice Suppenkasper* game this issue (more players can hop in, but only for the first round), and the second outing for *By Wordley Demand* will start next issue, by which time I will have perfected the scoring spreadsheet. There were two missed 2-pointers in the first hand-scored game, each one leading the player astray.

This issue’s puzzle is all about adverts. Some of the slogans and jingle lyrics are very well-known, and others more obscure. One potential issue is that some of them were only used in the UK, so non-Brits will be at a disadvantage.

Richard

THE LETTERS BIT



DANE MASLEN

Greetings from the Planet Tharg! I'll leave you to work out the significance of that salutation, but it serves as confirmation that I'm the most boring of boring old farts.

Bob will probably reply to your question, those aged 60+ do indeed get cheaper Interrail tickets (-10%) than those aged 28-59, but not as cheap as those aged 12-27 (-25%).

When something goes viral (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angine_de_Poitrine) if it's on YouTube some older people will see it, if it's TikTok, only Sir Ed Davey.

STEVE HAM

Sorry to hear about your macula edema. I hope it is stress related and the stress disappears quickly. I too am susceptible to diabetes 2 (for the same reason) and get my blood sugars measured every 6 months. I've been close to the limit before (48) but had a period of eating well to get the score down, but it's creeping back up now. I've finally got my leaving date - end of July - but I have no expectation of my pension arriving when it should do.

Negative on my diabetes test, though my mum has now "upgraded" her macular degeneration to cataracts and has an op booked for September. As for your pension, you might just about be OK with end of July, based on what I said in the editorial.

I do hope you mention Spygate lots in the next TCD. I don't think Middlesbrough is a place to be caught hiding behind trees. The punishment seems excessive but they did tighten the rules a few years ago when Bielsa seemed to be doing this every week. I haven't heard too much about unrest of the players but they must be incredibly hacked off and out of pocket. It will be an interesting transfer window for Saints.

The window is yet to open but I am encouraged by the permanent signings of Peretz (a much better goalie than Bazunu) and Larin (playing for Canada in the World Cup). I expect Brazilian winger Leo Scienza to be sold along with Aaron Ramsdale, Shea Charles and Taylor Harwood-Bellis. As for players coming the other way, perhaps a cheeky loan bid for Tyler Dibling as Everton aren't giving him games?

CHRIS HIBBERT

When we got back from Virginia, we found Angus, (our dog) nearly unresponsive when we picked him up at the kennel, and we had to put him down the next day. We're still getting used to a quiet house. Janet doesn't want to adopt another dog who would likely live until we're 80 or so, but she's done some research and found that fostering would be less of a commitment, and the shelter would happily board a fostered dog anytime we wanted to travel.

I've begun riding my bike again, and surprise (!) on my second longish trip I happened to ride right past the shelter where we found Angus all those years ago. Fortunately, they were closed so I wasn't able to fall in love with one. We'll see how things work out.

That's awful about your dog. As for being too old to own a dog or cat, I think being in an extended rather than a nuclear family helps. My mum, sister, niece, and grandnephew all live in the same house, and they have two dogs and one cat. All three animals love my mum, especially Barney the Labrador. She is too old to take him for walks but they have lots of cuddles. Where I live I see lots of oldies walking their dogs but obviously not those who are incapacitated and probably had to part with their pets.

JIM READER

Good luck with your eyes - we have a family history of macular degeneration on my father's side, so I get tested annually or biannually depending on my last results. My next trip to the opticians is next week, but the last tests were all good.

Fingers crossed (and hopefully not eyes) for my next examination.

Three (non)-work days into retirement now and I've spent these mostly trying to do paperwork. I need to arrange my retiree benefits, particularly the medical insurance but I'm lacking some information so I've been phoning and emailing various people. I also translated my last Dutch Pension statements and have also sent an email asking for some additional information. Nothing too drastic yet, although a little frustrating as I haven't been able to finish anything yet. On a more positive note, I have signed up to learn pickleball and will check out our local Y (YMCA, even though I'm not a young man) tomorrow. I hope you're making some progress with Crapita.

So is YMCA a bit like Youth Hostels? There's no upper age limit? For people our age the Village People irrevocably changed the perception of the YMCA, with the implication that everyone who attends is gay.

Phoenix still seems to be doing well. Hannah and Michael are coming over next weekend and we will have our first grandparent babysitting time on Saturday evening as the parents go off to see Lorna Shore (a rock band m'lud) in Bethlehem. She is much more alert now and starting to wriggle and smile. I have decided that I need to teach our step grandson Kyler how to play cards. There are so many games to play if you know the basics of whist, rummy and a few others. I even taught some colleagues how to play Toad last week 😊.

I just watched a [Lorna Shore video](#) but didn't get to the end – no problems with the death metal music, but the vid was too “horror movie” for me.

When I was small I used to like “Strip Jack Naked”. I don't think it's called that any more, though the more modern alternative “Beat Your Neighbour” could also be misconstrued. I did publish the rules for “Toad” on the internet many years ago though I'm not sure I still have the file. However, I can still remember the rules – they were invented by me when I was at sixth form college and we spent hours playing cards in the “Student Centre”.

Best of luck to the Saints in the playoffs and hope you can enjoy the games. They had a great run at the end and I heard the game against Ipswich was a classic. Of course, I'm happy that the Tractor Boys held on and also quite pleased for Coventry,

Ipswich would have won that game 11-0 had the Saints manager not sent someone to watch a training session at Eastleigh. My boss at work is an Ipswich fan and shared a joke picture (from X) with me of an Ipswich employee viewing a Norwich session (sorry Steve!)



MICHAEL PARGMAN

I just came home from a vacation on Iceland. I have wanted to go around the whole island for a long time, and now it came true. We rented a car for 9 days and I planned to drive 3-4 hours per day and then have time for sights and some excursions. Still, the days became long. We rarely arrived at our final destinations before 9pm every day. On the other hand there was daylight 20 hours a day, so we never had to drive in the dark.

Just like in the movie Insomnia with Al Pacino and Robin Williams.

But I had a few hard drives up in the mountains. The worst was a two-hour drive on a mountain road up in the clouds. I could hardly see more than 30-50 metres ahead and meetings were scary. You only had a few seconds to react. And it was impossible to see how steep it was on the side of the road. I was down to 45 km/h and the queue behind me just grew - but no one, wisely enough, tried to pass me.

I imagine passing would be quite dangerous. Those behind you probably wanted to go a little faster, perhaps they'd driven the misty mountain roads before. I think I would do exactly the same as you - drive at a speed at which I feel safe, and let my passengers enjoy the view (when possible).

One of our main goals on the trip was to see puffins. We had several places where we were going to try to see them. One evening on the eastern coast, we were going to a cliff that was said to be one of the favourite places for the puffins. And there they were, hundreds of them, just a few metres from platforms where we tourists were standing. We stayed for more than an hour and got all our wishes fulfilled.

I have to confess I didn't think of puffins for things to see in Iceland. Hot springs, lagoons, waterfalls, geysers, and of course the Northern Lights come to mind. Some of the food is a bit scary like the fermented shark (Hakarl).

A few days later we had booked a boat tour to see whales and puffins. We did get to see a few humpback whales, but they were barely seen over the horizon. We did see they spurt water and the fin up in the air before they dived down. We also saw some puffins lying in the water, but from our distance we could barely see their orange beaks. And we never came close to the island cliffs where they were staying. But, since we already had our close encounter with them earlier, we were not that disappointed. Of course we also saw a lot of waterfalls, strange formations of craters and lava in various forms. Close to the airport you could see the results of the volcanic eruption two years ago. In one place they had built a new road around the lava field that covered parts of the old road.

Ah, so you did see some waterfalls. And how could one forget volcanoes - Iceland has endured many eruptions, from long in the past to right up to the present day.

MIKE POLLARD

(regarding House of Games) I only guessed Free Money because it seemed like the sort of subject any Punk band would write about. I have Moving Targets too, but didn't look! Saw Penetration in the 70s in Aylesbury, then again in the late noughties / early tens at the 100 club Oxford St, still blisteringly good. Saw them a few years ago in Islington, but sadly Pauline's voice was no longer up to it. One of the many horrors of getting old, seeing all our heroes going to pot, or worse.

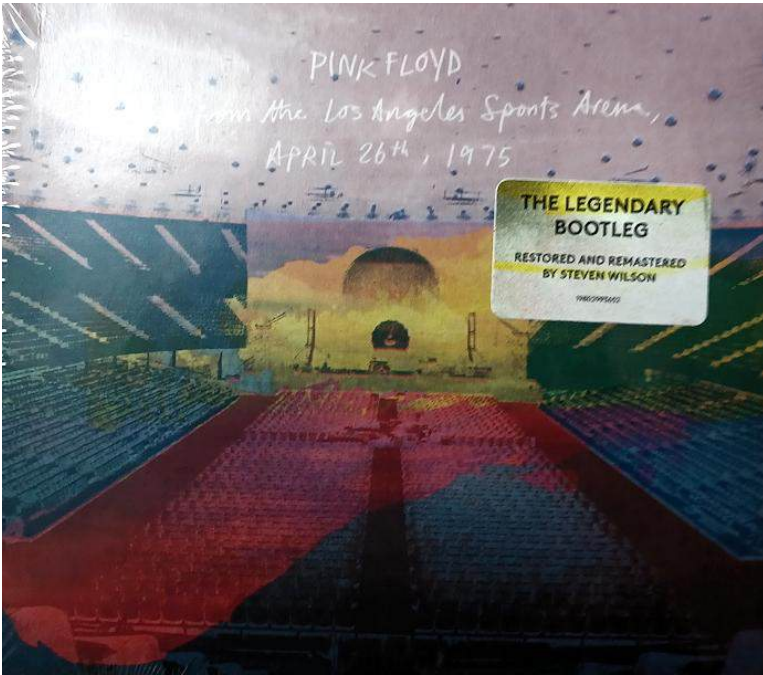
Still, always look on the bright side of life [whistle, whistle]

Many rock vocalists' voices fade with age. Ian Anderson for one. By contrast I though Geddy Lee's vocals were fine on the latest live Rush videos (with the new, very talented, female drummer).



ALBUM REVIEWS

Pink Floyd Live From the Los Angeles Sports Arena, April 26th 1975 (2CD) (2026)



This 51-year-old recording has been described as “the Holy Grail of bootlegs” recorded by the late bootlegger “Mike the Mic” Millard, whose tapes from concerts across Los Angeles in the 1970s became renowned for their surprisingly clear sound quality. To conceal his recording equipment from venue security, Millard would often pretend to be disabled and arrive to concerts in a wheelchair.

The sound quality is indeed superb for an audience recording, enhanced by the expert knob-twiddling of the great Steven Wilson. There are a few distorted vocals but everything else is spot on soundwise, the near-perfect drums reminding you how underrated Nick Mason is.

At the time of the Los Angeles Sports Arena shows, Pink Floyd were in a period of creative transition. While a new album had originally been expected earlier in 1975, the band embarked on their North American tour whilst still developing new material live, on stage. The performance opened with early versions of songs initially titled as *Raving and Drooling* and *You've Got To Be Crazy*, later evolving into *Sheep* and *Dogs* which would feature on their 10th album, *Animals*. *Shine On You Crazy Diamond* in its two parts bookended another new composition, *Have A Cigar*. Following these new compositions, the band performed *The Dark Side of The Moon* in full, with *Echoes* as an encore.

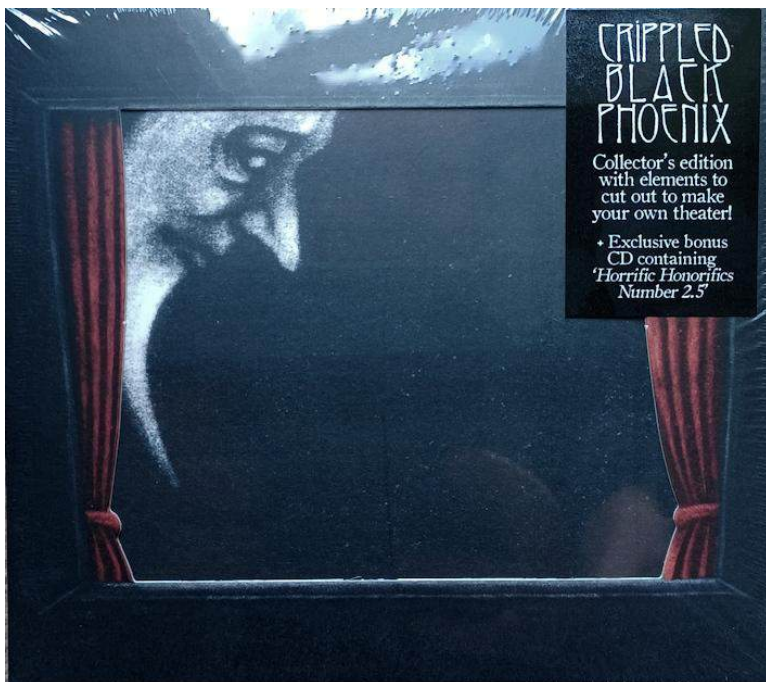
One problem I found listening to the album on headphones when out walking, is that a lot of the time there isn't a great deal going on. Some of the tracks are both long and fairly simple. I'm sure with visuals and *alternative tobacco* at the gig this would be just fine, but compared to, say, the Ayreon live album I reviewed recently it feels a little underwhelming. Of course Floyd have never been an out-and-out prog band, rather the use of repetition, poise and subtlety in their music helps to make it special.

Time <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45DowcMShMw>

Us and Them <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5T24IvGMCwo>

Crippled Black Phoenix – Scaeduhelm / Horrific Honorifics 2.5 (2CD) (2026)





Formed in 2004, I became a fan of this band after buying their compilation album *200 Tons of Bad Luck*. Back then they were more prog rock and post rock than their current sound, which is much more 80s new wave and gothic rock.

I think my favourites of the earlier albums are *The Resurrectionists* and *I, Vigilante*, both pretty proggy.

With *Sceaduhelm*, at times I am reminded of The Pixies, Nick Cave, Bauhaus and Elastica, but they do also have their own trademark “dark rock” sound. The songs tend to have dark themes and are peppered with old radio, movie and TV dialogue (which I like but some don't).

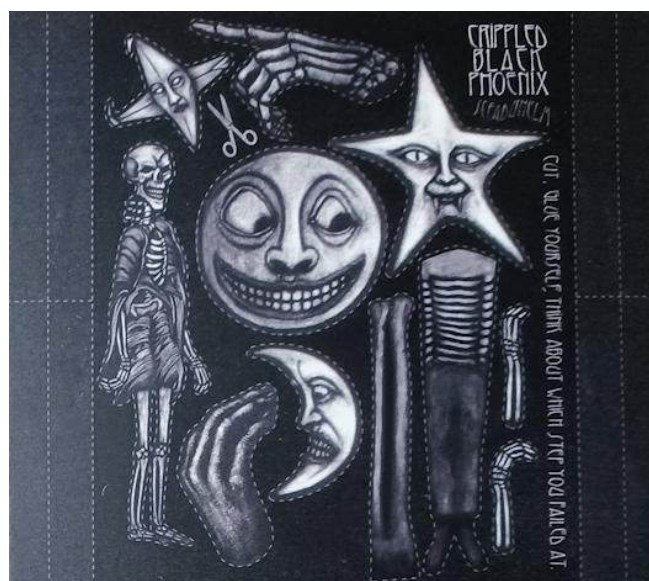
As you can see from the band's Wikipedia entry https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crippled_Black_Phoenix they have released a lot of albums and have had a lot of members and guest musicians.

The modern Crippled Black Phoenix lineup has multiple singers, the female vocals on *Ravenettes* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0u67dWu_jGU really give it plenty of life, and the evil sounding male vocals on *Vampire Grave* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vu9vXjQ2AsY> work well.

The two tracks mentioned above are full-on “bangers” but there are plenty of more subtle and atmospheric tracks to make the album a very varied and entertaining listen. I'm not sure if its mood makes it something that people reach for less often, but it's a first-rate record.

The production is “big” throughout but mostly not excessively compressed, apart from in a few places where it became a bit wearing on the headphones, so I'll let them off my usual “too loud” complaint.

The 2CD special edition has a gimmick in that you can make a cardboard theatre using the inserts provided. I decided not to attempt it.



The special edition also comes with *Horrific Honorifics 2.5* which includes a cover version of A-Ha's *Manhattan Skyline*. More 80s!

For next time I'm planning to review the new Einar Solberg + orchestra disc *Vox Occulta* and the new (actually a mix of old, new and redone) Hawkwind record *Psychedelic Selection*, but this may change if I get distracted by something else.

CHOICE - SUPPENKASPER VARIANT - GAMESTART



<https://variablepig.org/rules/choice.html>

As per the standard game (not using Dane's improved rules), except that only **7 Würfels** are allowed, and each player has 6 special cards that can be played once per game (maximum 1 card per round):

- FdH: Remove any two numbers from the five, leaving one pair plus 1 possible Würfel
- Null: Do not take a Würfel this round
- KUR: Take a Würfel but no numbers this round
- -1: Refuse all the numbers this round
- -2: Refuse all the numbers and decrement the count of one of your Würfels
- Suppen-Kasper: Create an extra round from your leftovers plate

Kevin Lee, Chris Hibbert, Steve Ham, John Walker, Michael Pargman and Dane Maslen are our intrepid German restaurant diners so far, but more can join as it's the first round - just send in some orders. Choice has no direct player interaction, you're just trying to outscore your rivals, so can be played with 2 or 22!

I checked the Geek <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/2203/suppenkasper> for any new content about the original German (somewhat un-PC) card game. Seems it's less well-known than I thought.

I will start with three game rounds per postal turn. This will reduce to 2 and then 1 towards the end of the game. Dice will be taken as rolled no matter what, and this time we have a lot of 5s...

R1: 1,3,5,5,6

R2: 1,4,5,5,5

R3: 2,4,4,5,5

Example Orders:

R1: (6+3)=9; (5+5)=10; W1

R2: (4+5)=9; (5+5)=10; W1

R3: (4+5)=9; (4+5)=9; Play Null (no Würfel)

So with the selection above, the player has opened two numbers, 9 (x4) and 10 (x2) and has established only 1 würfel: 1. He has also used up his *Null* special card. His leftovers plate contains a 2 (the rejected number).

BY WORDLEY DEMAND - ROUND 5 OF 5



The end of this game, a new one will start next issue when I have perfected the scoring spreadsheet.

Rules were published in TCD 12 and on the VP website <https://variablepig.org/rules/bypop.html#Wordle>

Words must be valid according to this <https://scrabble.collinsdictionary.com/check/> and not plurals.

The theme for round 5 was **countries**. Using the "Pointless" definition of a country for all categories except the football. I didn't stipulate it had to be the English name of the country, so must accept (say) E for Espana.

- 1) A country with a large population – China [5]
- 2) A country with a small population – Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Estonia [2]
- 3) A country that is considered authoritarian – Iran [3]
- 4) A country that produces oil – Norway [3]
- 5) A country that has won the men’s or women’s football World Cup – Germany [6]

Some obvious picks for BPD points, and some influenced by Wordle letters. Perhaps a portent for the forthcoming World Cup is Germany beating England 6-2.

Roger and both Steves scored well on the BPD with 19, whilst Charles, John and both Bobs Wordled for 20. Bob G’s second Wordling enabled him to hold off the challenges from Mike and Roger.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BOB GINGELL!

Scorecard

Player	Large Pop	Small Pop	Authoritarian	Oil	World Cup	Score	Tot
Bob Gingell	South Africa [2,4]	Haiti [1,4]	Afghanistan [1,4]	Poland [1,4]	England [2,4]	[7,20]	111
Mike Pollard	China [5,0]	Andorra [1,4]	Russia [2,4]	Venezuela [1,0]	England [2,4]	[11,12]	104
Roger Trethewey	China [5,0]	Lichtenstein [2,0]	Iran [3,2]	Norway [3,2]	Germany [6,2]	[19,6]	103
Charles Raymond	Brazil [1,4]	Romania [1,4]	Indonesia [2,4]	Nigeria [1,4]	Germany [6,4]	[11,20]	94
John Walker	DR Congo [2,4]	Estonia [2,4]	Belarus [2,4]	UAE [2,4]	Turkey [1,4]	[9,20]	87
Chris Hibbert	China [5,0]	Lichtenstein [2,0]	Russia [2,0]	USA [1,0]	Brazil [1,0]	[11,0]	86
Steve Ham	China [5,0]	Luxembourg [2,0]	Iran [3,0]	Norway [3,2]	Germany [6,0]	[19,2]	85
Steve Guest	China [5,0]	Luxembourg [2,0]	Iran [3,2]	Norway [3,0]	Germany [6,0]	[19,4]	85
Bob Pitman	South Africa [2,4]	Palau [1,4]	UAE [1,4]	Russia [1,4]	Norway [1,4]	[6,20]	83
Martin Walker	DR Congo [2,4]	Estonia [2,4]	Belarus [2,0]	UAE [2,0]	Germany [6,0]	[13,8]	69
Brendan Whyte	Britain [1,0]	Rwanda [1,2]	Indonesia [2,2]	Nigeria [1,0]	Germany [6,0]	[11,4]	53
GM Picks (non-scoring)	Russia	Iceland	North Korea	Saudi Arabia	England		

Ungessed Words:

Mike: LARGE; Roger: BEGIN; Steve H: NORTH; Steve G: UNTIL; Martin W: DEPTH; Chris: HOUSE; Brendan: FIRST

BPD / Wordle Balance Analysis

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	TOTAL
BPD	92	115	83	71	134	495
Wordle	52	58	118	106	116	450

Game End Statements (more welcome)

Steve Guest: The game is fun, I’m not so sure about balance. The Wordle feels more important. Also, with only 5 rounds it may be a huge advantage to get a lucky first turn.

Bob Gingell: GES: I was lucky to hit some correct letters early, even if I would like to claim cleverness. Final round is a bit of a crap shoot for most although I expect England for Q5 should score well. Again, I am lucky that I want an E there.

Mike Pollard: I've enjoyed this variant, but it would probably be improved with more rounds and more players. I agree with binning the plurals rule. There's potential for bias if a one player receives "easier" words than others, but I don't know what steps you've taken (or can be taken) to ensure a level playing field? I'm sure that Bob will win this game because his new word can only be SHAPE, which gives him two correct guesses. SHAPE, CLOSE and CHASE (the other two Wordles in round 4) seem a bit easier than my URBAN, but of course I would say that!

Steve Ham: I enjoyed the game but I don't spend ages thinking about my answers, just doing enough to advance my Wordle opportunity. I think 8 rounds would be good as it gives us a chance to get more Wordles - it looks as though Bob will get 2 in 5 - is that all skill? I haven't got a hope. Do you think hard about the order of the categories? The last two rounds had categories with few options in awkward positions. You might have found a better position for some.

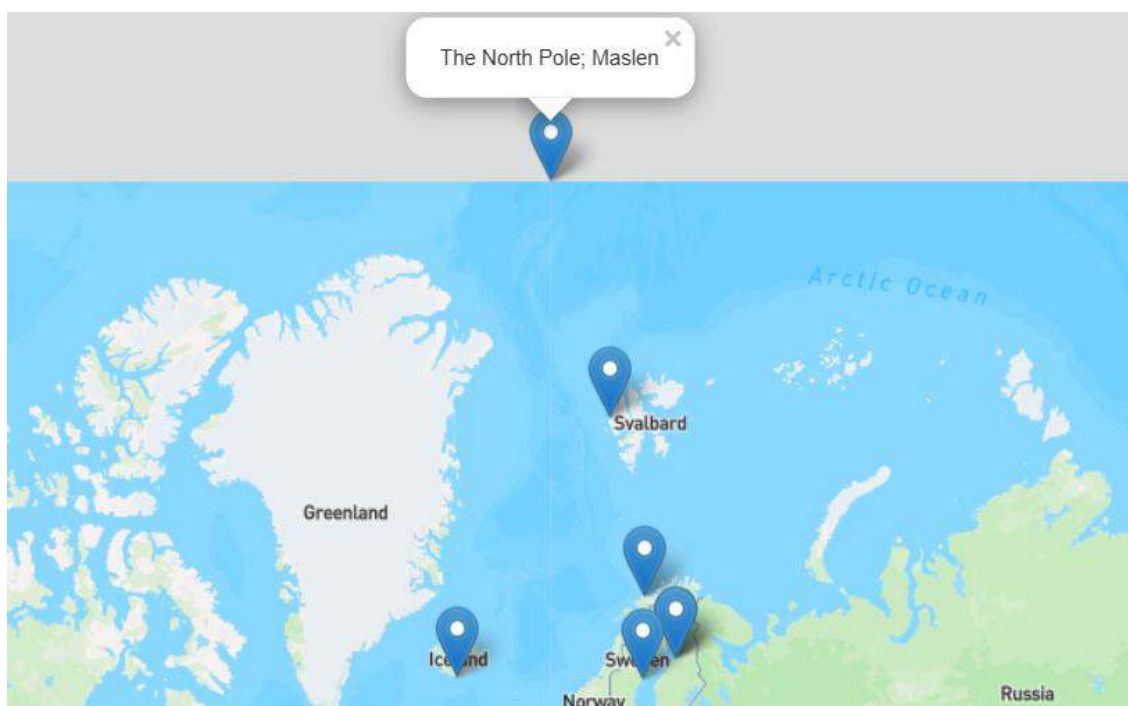
WHERE IN THE WORLD IS KENDO NAGASAKI - DESTINATION X - ROUND 6



Destination X is available now on the BBC iPlayer (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0024pz8>).

The Kendo game is only loosely based on the TV show, with just the elimination element in play (no clues, not limited to Europe). At the end of rounds 1-3, nothing happens. At the end of rounds 4-6, whoever's transmitter is furthest from Kendo gets

their guess blanked out from the turn report, and they receive a *yellow card* (two yellows means elimination) from Rob Brydon the GM. At the end of rounds 7-9, it's the same except they now get a *red card* meaning elimination from the game.



This time *Brendan Whyte* gets the yellow card and his guess is expunged from the report. He may have been furthest by a few km or his transmitter might be in Ouagadougou. Only he knows.

So, no player is eliminated in the “yellow card” section, though the cards are retained due to the NMR rule. Talking of rules, I’ve just noticed it doesn’t say what happens if more than one player is joint furthest away. I have decided it will be done on “countback” so the player who was furthest in the previous round gets the card. I have updated the [online rules](#).

Round 6:

Player	Who	Where	Lat	Lon
Bob Gingell	Germaine Greer (1939-)	Oulu, Finland	65.014167	25.471944
Steve Guest	Michael Vick (1980-)	Örnsköldsvik, Sweden	63.290833	18.715556
Chris Hibbert	Anne Wibble (1943-2000)	Vik, Iceland	63.419444	-19.009722
Dane Maslen	Marilyn Renfree (1947-)	The North Pole	90.0	0.0
Bob Pitman	Margaret Court (1942-)	Tromsø, Norway	69.6517	18.9556
Jim Reader	Patricia Margaret Selkirk (1942-)	Ny-Ålesund, Spitsbergen, Norway	78.925	11.922222
Martin Walker	Suzanne Mubarek (1941-)	Oulo, Finland	65.014167	25.471944
Brendan Whyte		Yellow card – furthest away		

Public response to the player with the closest guess:

I was born just a few years after you but over 15,000 kilometres away. You have sited your transmitter in a place that has a larger population than where I am hiding.

Round 5:

Player	Who	Where	Lat	Lon
Bob Gingell		Yellow card – furthest away		
Steve Guest	Philip Pullman (1946-)	Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway	78.22	15.65
Chris Hibbert	Monica Zetterlund (1937-2005)	Bergen, Norway	60.389444	5.33
Dane Maslen	Jocelyn Bell Burnell (1943-)	Luleå, Sweden	65.584444	22.153889
Bob Pitman	Angela Merkel (1954-)	Vienna, Austria	48.2083	16.3725
Jim Reader	Suzanne Cory (1942)	Skara Brae, Orkney Islands	59.048714	-3.34175
Martin Walker	Debbie Harry (1945-)	Kiel, Germany	54.323333	10.139444
Brendan Whyte	Maddy Prior (1947-)	Budapest, Hungary	47.4925	19.051389

Public response to the player with the closest guess:

We were born less than a year apart, but in different years and on opposite sides of the equator. We have the same number of children, but little else in common.

Round 4:

Player	Who	Where	Lat	Lon
Bob Gingell	Al Pacino (1940-)	Palermo, Sicily	38.111111	13.351667
Steve Guest	Brian Eno (1948-)	St Petersburg, Russia	59.9375	30.308611
Chris Hibbert		Yellow card – furthest away		
Dane Maslen	Ursula von der Leyen (1958-)	Riga, Latvia	56.948889	24.106389
Bob Pitman	Mona Makram-Ebeid (1943-)	Dieveniškės, Lithuania	54.194444	25.625
Jim Reader	Betty Meehan (1933-)	Nordkapp Municipality, Norway	70.978056	25.974722
Martin Walker	Greta Garbo (1905-1990)	Stockholm, Sweden	59.329444	18.068611
Brendan Whyte	Paris Hilton (1981)	Valetta, Malta	35.898333	14.5125

Public response to the player with the closest guess:

We were born in the same country. You were born before me. Our occupations differ, but not if you use a “broad brush” to categorise us.

Round 3:

Player	Who	Where	Lat	Lon
Bob Gingell	Keith Richards (1943-)	Tripoli, Libya	32.887222	13.191389
Steve Guest	Madonna (1958-)	Madona, Latvia	56.8542	26.2206
Chris Hibbert	Johannes Kepler (1571-1630)	Vilnius, Lithuania	54.687222	25.28
Dane Maslen	Adolf Hitler (1889-1945)	Szczecin, Poland	53.4325	14.548056
Bob Pitman	Judi Dench (1934-)	Copenhagen, Denmark	55.676111	12.568333
Jim Reader	Julie Walters (1950-)	Jyvaskyla, Finland	62.241667	25.741667
Martin Walker	Patrick Moore (1923-2012)	Barcelona, Spain	41.383333	2.183333
Brendan Whyte	Diana Rigg (1938-2020)	Wake Island	19.295278	166.631111

Public response to the player with the closest guess:

We are the same sex, and reside on the same side of the Pearly Gates. Our occupations are unrelated, though I share a forename with a notable practitioner of your profession

Round 2:

Player	Who	Where	Lat	Lon
Bob Gingell	Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)	Beijing, China	39.9075	116.39723
Steve Guest	Richard III (1452-1485)	Cape York, Australia	-10.6667	142.5333
Chris Hibbert	Michael Caine (1933-)	Diego Garcia, Indian Ocean	-7.319500	72.422859
Dane Maslen	Shirley Bassey (1937-)	Beijing, China	39.9075	116.39723
Bob Pitman	Mary Tamm (1950-2012)	Odesa, Ukraine	46.485722	30.743444
Jim Reader	Yvonne Goolagong Cawley (1951-)	The Gabba, Brisbane, Australia	-27.484831	153.036166
Martin Walker	Robert De Niro (1943-)	Cairo, Egypt	30.06263	31.24967

Public response to the player with the closest guess:

We are the same sex, and whilst your transmitter is nearest to my hiding place, another's is sited close to my birthplace.

Round 1:

Player	Who	Where	Lat	Lon
Bob Gingell	Tony Blair (1953-)	Jerusalem	31.778889	35.225556
Steve Guest	Bob Marley (1945-1981)	Ganja, Azerbaijan	40.682778	46.360556
Chris Hibbert	Srinivasa Ramanujan (1887-1920)	Guatemala City	14.641667	-90.513333
Dane Maslen	Michel de Nostredame (1503-1566)	Worlds End, Hampshire	50.9	-1.0999
Bob Pitman	Peter Thornley (1941-)	Lewisham Town Hall	51.4452	-0.0208
Jim Reader	Patrick Andrade (1993)	Praia, Cape Verde Islands	14.918	-23.509
Martin Walker	Mother Theresa (1910-1997)	Agra, India	27.18	78.02

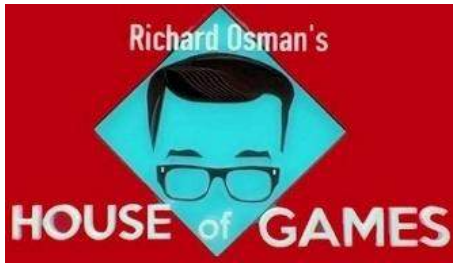
Public response to the player with the closest guess:

We were born less than 10 years apart.

Comments from Steve: I once went to a lecture by Jocelyn Bell Burnell, didn't speak to her though. I've written software that handles poles correctly lots of times (most often looking up). More terrestrially, Google Maps gets it right for one.

Comments from Bob G: A side note about Germaine Greer. I was there at Warwick Uni when she was there and she taught my wife.

HOUSE OF GAMES - NO RESEARCH VERSION - ROUND 1 OF 5



A third (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 in some new rounds from the TV show: *Half-arted* and *Password123*, whilst I have decided to let you off further torment from *You Spell Terrible*.

However, the games included in each round can vary so I might decide to (say) throw in a *Where is Kazakhstan?* There will be 18 questions per round (6x3) for a total of 90 in the game. **New players start on the lowest score, currently 3.**

Good starts for both Steves, but it's early days.

Distinctly Average: The herd massively underestimated the moon rock, were a little under on the USA gold medals, and a little over on the vasectomies (there was a big increase after the pandemic).

I'm Terrible at Dating: John was bang on with the cricket, though one would have thought it would have been in the games more recently – maybe it takes too long (T20 is a recent innovation). Four players were close to Attila the Hun's era, and most people assumed Spacewar! was from the 80s, but it was in fact one of the earliest computer games, from way back in 1962.

And The Answer Isn't: Mike Pollard admitted to be a Penetration fan (oo-er) and I played *Moving Targets* a lot when I was a teenager (along with *Germ-free Adolescents*, the X-Ray Spex classic). A couple of people got the (surprisingly eloquent) Ronald Reagan quote – according to Spitting Image he also said, of Margaret Thatcher, "What a fine woman, pity I'm only screwing her country". Nobody remembered the cat in Hong-Kong Phooey was called Spot – I am very surprised!

Password123: A blank for Lewis Hamilton - he is often referred to as the "7-times world champion" and there are jokes about Stevenage being somewhat less glamorous than Monaco. Most people knew that Tony Blair represented Sedgefield but only two got the date right, the "Dodgy Dossier" *et al* was way back in 2003. Peter Capaldi's password was much more gettable for Dr. Who fans.

Half-arted: The Italian Job was the easiest of the three with bus teetering on the cliff being a very famous scene (along with the Minis). Jaws was, as a couple of people presumed a reference to the "we're gonna need a bigger boat" quote. Predestination is an obscure but good movie based on a Heinlein short story (*All You Zombies* from 1959).

Answer Smash: Some nice easy ones to start you off, though Bettie Page may be before your time.

SCOREBOARD:

Player	PTS	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Steve Ham	9	49	1063	57000	1924	1375	1986	b	c	c		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Steve Guest	8	30	1000	22500	1924	1550	1985	d	a	a			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
John Walker	7	40	1200	100000	1900	1300	1985	d	d	b			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bob Pitman	7	300	1200	40000	1948	600	1975	a	c	c		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bob Gingell	6	14	345	15500	1920	391	1983	d	c	a			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mike Pollard	5	6	1000	10000	1956	680	1984	c	d	b				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Chris Hibbert	3	15	500	50000	2004	1520	1985	c	d	c						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Jim Reader	3	10	300	10000	1928	250	1983	b	a	a							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Answer		381	1105	26365	1900	452	1962	c	a	d									
(Average)		<i>58</i>	<i>826</i>	<i>38125</i>															

R1 (Monday) Answers:

R1: Distinctly Average

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 kilograms of moon rock were brought back to earth (in total) by the Apollo missions?
381

2) How many summer Olympics gold medals have the USA won in total? **1105**

3) How many vasectomies per year are performed in the UK (according to the 2024/25 statistics)?
26,365

R1: I'm Terrible at Dating

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

4) Cricket is due to return to the Olympics in 2028. In which year was it last in the games? **1900**

5) In which year did Attila the Hun invade Italy? **452 AD**

6) In which year was the classic video game *Spacewar!* released? **1962**

R1: And The Answer Isn't

1 point for choosing the correct answer.

7) Which Patti Smith song was covered by Penetration in 1978?

a) Because the Night

b) Dancing Barefoot

c) Free Money

d) Gloria

8) Who said: "Peace is not the absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means"?

a) Ronald Reagan

b) Jimmy Carter

c) Dwight D Eisenhower

d) Harry S Truman

9) What was the name of the cat in Hong Kong Phooey?

a) Henry

b) Penry

c) Cato

d) Spot

R1: Password123

Your task is to deduce the famous person's internet password from two hints, the answers for which are concatenated together. In the TV show players get 3 guesses and after the first two are told if they have one or no parts correct. In the postal game you only get 1 guess (for 1 point) for each question.

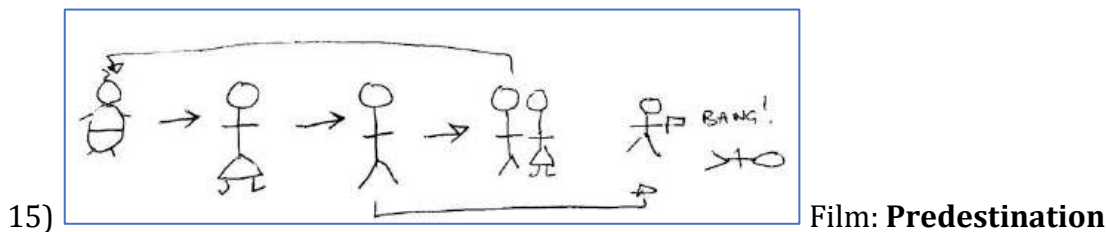
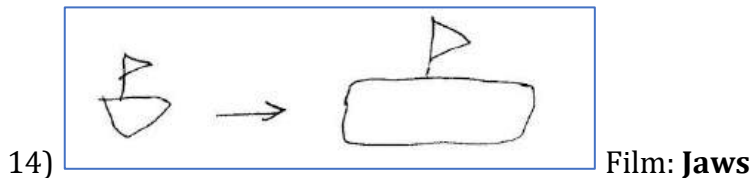
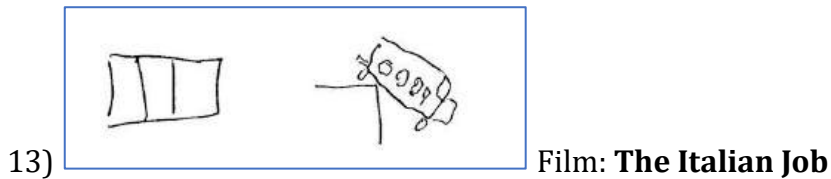
10) Lewis Hamilton: Town of birth + number of F1 drivers' championship wins **Stevenage7**

11) Tony Blair: Name of his constituency when an MP + year he helped Bush invade Iraq
Sedgefield2003

12) Peter Capaldi: Surname of his character in The Thick of It + number of series with him as Dr. Who
Tucker3

R1: Half-arsed

On the TV show three players all add to a picture which the fourth person has to guess what it is (usually a film, TV show, famous person etc.) For the postal game you just get one crappy image hand-drawn by the GM. 1 point each. 13 and 14 are very well-known, 15 a bit more “niche”.



R1: Answer Smash

"Smash" the answers to the two clues together (so the end of the first is the start of the second, so “President of the USA / old-fashioned euphemism for sex” would be DONALD TRUMPY-PUMPY). 1 point for a correct answer, and unlike the TV show, you *don't* lose a point for a wrong guess.

16) Home of the Greek gods / controversial Russian all-female punk band (Mount) **OLYMPUSSY RIOT**

17) US model dubbed the “Queen of Pinups” in the 1950s / chemical herbicide and defoliant famously used by the US military in the Vietnam War **BETTIE PAGENT ORANGE**

18) d12 shape / ghastly 1970s UK sitcom starring Reg Varney **DODECAHEDRON THE BUSES**

R2 (Tuesday) Questions:

R2: Distinctly Average

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.

19) How many managed beehives are there in the world?

20) How many laundromats were there in the UK in April 2026?

21) How many sperm cells does a healthy male human produce in a lifetime?

R2: I'm Terrible at Dating

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

22) In what year did Ada Lovelace write what is considered to be the world's first computer program?

23) In which year did Linda Lovelace star in the infamous movie *Deep Throat*?

24) In 1980 Linda Ronstadt starred in a performance of *The Pirates of Penzance*. In what year was the opera first performed in public?

R2: And The Answer Isn't

1 point for choosing the correct answer.

25) The colour with the hex code #16161D is called

- a) Night Rider
- b) Activated Charcoal
- c) Iron Obsidian
- d) Eigengrau

26) Who said: "Science is what you know. Philosophy is what you don't know"?

- a) Bertrand Russell
- b) Friedrich Nietzsche
- c) Seneca
- d) Aristotle

27) Which is the only US state capital that does not have a MacDonald's?

- a) Juneau, Alaska
- b) Pierre, South Dakota
- c) Montpelier, Vermont
- d) Frankfort, Kentucky

R2: Password123

Your task is to deduce the famous person's internet password from two hints, the answers for which are concatenated together. In the TV show players get 3 guesses and after the first two are told if they have one or no parts correct. In the postal game you don't get feedback, **but I am now allowing 3 guesses.**

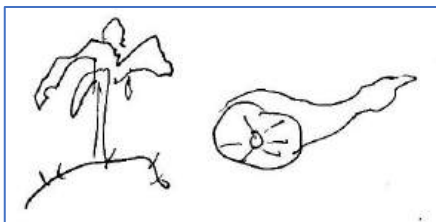
28) Taylor Swift: City of birth + number of US Billboard #1 albums

29) David Attenborough: University he graduated from + year of his birth

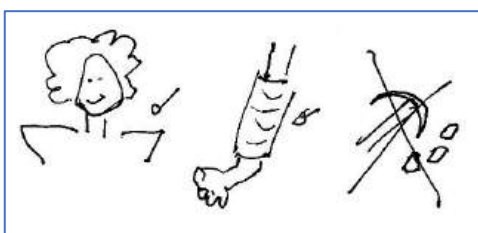
30) Donald Trump: First name of his youngest son + his (second) president number

R2: Half-arted

On the TV show three players all add to a picture which the fourth person has to guess what it is (usually a film, TV show, famous person etc.) For the postal game you just get one crappy image hand-drawn by the GM. 1 point each. This time all three are very famous books that have been made into movies.



31) Book



32) Book



33) Book

R2: Answer Smash

"Smash" the answers to the two clues together (so the end of the first is the start of the second, so "President of the USA / old-fashioned euphemism for sex" would be DONALD TRUMPY-PUMPY). 1 point for a correct answer, and unlike the TV show, you *don't* lose a point for a wrong guess.

34) 7-player board game from the 1950s / "I Try" singer

35) Foul-mouthed 1990s computer game action hero / current leader of the Conservative party

36) First of two 1980s computer games featuring "Lord Chaos" / French comic hero from the 1960s

CRYSTAL BALL 2026 - WORLD CUP WILLIES



- The World cup kicks off, it looks like USA vs. Iran if both teams come second in their groups.
- Poor old Russell has had terrible luck in the F1 so I'm using my change to jump ship to his teenage team-mate Antonelli (who will of course now not win another race).

No	Sport	Event	Date	Richard Smith	Steve Ham	Martin Walker	Jim Reader	John Walker
1L	Tennis	Australian Open - Women's	Jan	Sabalenka [1]	Swiatek	Swiatek	Swiatek	Sabalenka [1]
2L	Winter Olympics	GB medals total	Feb	3	2	2	4 [1]	2 (JOKER)
3L	American Football	Super Bowl	Feb	Buffalo Bills	Eagles	Packers	Buccaneers	Buffalo Bills
4L	Rugby	6 Nations	Mar	England	Ireland [1]	France [2]	France [2]	France [2]
5L	Cricket	World T20	Mar	England	India [2]	India [2]	Australia (JOKER)	India [2]
6L	Athletics	London Marathon (men's)	Apr	Mutiso	Sawe [2]	Aseefa	Nageeye	Sawe [2]
7L	Golf	US Masters	Apr	Scheffler [1]	McIlroy [2]	De Chambeau	Fleetwood	Scheffler [1]
8L	Snooker	World Champion	May	Trump	Wilson	Trump	Williams	Trump
9L	Football	FA Cup: Highest placed non-Premier League team	May	Southampton (JOKER) [4]	Norwich*	Millwall	Ipswich	Coventry
10L	Football	World Cup winner	Jun	England	England	Spain	France	Spain
11L	Cycling	Tour De France	Jul	Pogacar	Pogacar (JOKER)	Pogacar (JOKER)	Pogacar	Pogacar
12L	Tennis	US Open (men)	Aug	Alcaraz	Sinner	Sinner	Sinner	Alcaraz
13L	Golf	Solheim Cup	Sep	Europe	Europe	USA	Europe	USA
14	Baseball	World Series	Oct	LA Dodgers	Padres	Seattle	Cleveland	LA Dodgers
15	Formula 1	Champion Driver	Nov	Russell Anotnelli*	Verstappen	Norris	Verstappen	Norris
TB	UK Politics	Reform opinion poll %	Dec	15%	26%	23%	22%	35%
SCORE				6	7	4	3	7

* free change

BUS BOSS YNIS MON (BB423MON) ROUND 5

GM Bob Gingell

MARS buys routes along the coasts while CACHU crosses the Britannia Bridge to ensure its access to the rest of Wales. ROGER extends from its central route across the island.

ROGER, green (Roger Trethewey): $54 - 12 = 42$.

Llanfachraeth - Llanfaethlu; Pentre Berw - Llangaffo. [$3+2$; $5+2 = 12$]

CACHU, blue (Richard Smith): $50 - 11 = 39$.

Pentre Berw - Llanfair PG - Penrhosgarnedd. [$3+2$, $4+2 = 11$]

MARS, orange (John Marsden): $52 - 12 = 40$.

Penrhosgarnedd - Caernarfon; Brynsiencyn - Dwyran. [$6+2$; $2+2 = 12$]

Bid order for Round 6: Richard, John, Roger,

In-game map at <https://variablepig.org/maps/bb/ingame/BB423MON.jpg>



BUS BOSS YNIS MON (BB424MON) ROUND 5

GM Richard Smith

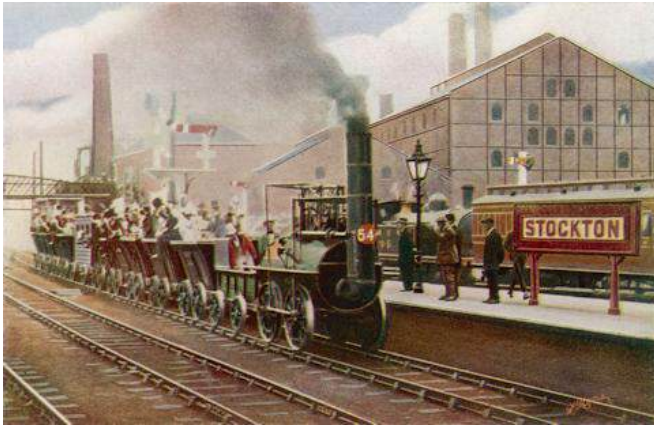
All three companies bridge the gap to the mainland, one going to Bangor and two to Penrhosgarnedd.

BAA Green Bob Gingell	Pentraeth - Menai Bridge - Penrhosgarnedd ($5+3+2+2=12$) BANK: $52 - 12 = 40$ <i>BAA = Bob's Adventure Accelerates</i>
NYE Blue Brad Martin	Pentraeth - Menai Bridge - Bangor ($5+3+2+2=12$) BANK: $52 - 12 = 40$ <i>NYE = New, Yellow, Electric (Buses)</i>
TAFF Yellow Jim Reader	Pentre Berw - Llanfair PG - Penrhosgarnedd ($4+3+2+2=11$) BANK: $52 - 11 = 41$ <i>TAFF = Terrific All-round Ferries and Freight</i>

In-game map at <https://variablepig.org/maps/bb/ingame/BB424MON.jpg>

Bid order for Round 6: Brad, Bob, Jim

RAILWAY RIVALS DURHAM 1826 (RR2570DH) ROUND 3



LANCHESTER and DIADEM arrived at H39 and then Newcastle at the same time, so no connection fees and £3 bonus each. GEAR and PUFFING BILLY also made it to Newcastle.

North Shields and Sunderland should be connected next time, but the west, including Barnard Castle (which also appears on The Crets RR map) is still up for grabs.

As with previous rounds, very few payments for line connectivity.

PUFFING BILLY
Jim Reader
Yellow
3a. [6] (Q43) - Q42 - - O41 - - - SOUTH SHIELDS
3b. [3] (O41) - - - L39
3c. [6] (L39) - K39 - J39 - Gatehead --- Newcastle
BANK: 26 +6 -2[GEAR,J39] +1[GEAR,L39] = 31

LANCHESTER
Brendan Whyte
Blue
3a. [6] (E44) - - - E41 - - - H39
3b. [3] (H39) --- NEWCASTLE
3c. [6] (E49) - - - - LANCHESTER; (E51) - - Durham
BANK: 31 +3 +6 -1[DIADEM,F50] = 39

GEAR
Kevin Lee
Green
3a. [6] (K45) --- K44 (upgraded); (K44) - WASHINGTON - - K41
3b. [3] (K41) - K40 - - Gateshead
3c. [6] (Gateshead) --- Newcastle; (K40) - - - N38
BANK: 6 +6 +2[PUFFING BILLY,J39] -1[PUFFING BILLY,L39] -1(upgrades) = 12

DIADEM
Steve Ham
Purple
3a. [6] (H43) - - - H40 - I40 - GATESHEAD; (H40) - H39
3b. [3] (H39) --- NEWCASTLE
3c. [6] (W17) - - WOLSINGHAM; Witton le Wear --- - V20
BANK: 22 +6 +3 +6 +1[LANCHESTER,F50] = 38

The in-game map is at <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2570DH.jpg>

R4 Rolls are 4a) 4 4b) 3 4c) 6

RAILWAY RIVALS - SENEGAL & THE GAMBIA (RR2557SG) - ROUND 7



A very profitable round for BEAR with FAR and LIONS only having four (realistic) entries and doubling up against each other in the last two races.

Despite me removing the illegally too short races, there was a 3, a 4 and a 6 in this round, so at least companies managed to save some fuel.

Race 3 was the only three-way tussle, with FAR quite a distant third due to bad rolls. Just like British Rail catering in the 1970s.

The in-game map is available at <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2557SG.jpg>

	BEAR Kevin Lee Black	FAR Brad Martin Blue	LIONS Jim Reader Yellow
1. Mauritania (Sp1) - Thies (26)	20 [19] +4	10 [24] -4	
2. Salde or Bakel (41) - Podor or Lagbar (13)	20 [3]		
3. Kaffrine (36) - Banjul (62)	15 [17] +5 +5 -5	0 [18] -5 +3 +5	15 [19] -5 -3
4. Tiebo (15) - Touba (34)	10 [6] -3	0 [14]	20 [4] +3
5. Matam (42) - Town on Gambia River (Sp6)	20 [24]		
6. Kolda (53) - Dakar (22)		20 [17] -5 +2	10 [17] -5 +2
7. Farafenni (64) - Bignonia or Dai'aba (52)		15 [6] +2	15 [6] -2

Last Turn	72	76.5	64.5
Points from Races	91	43	50
Builds	-10	-10 -2	+2 -10
Points Total	153	107.5	106.5

BUILDS:

BEAR: (U28) --- T28 (Mali); (Koumpentoum) - - ----- Janjanbureh (only, it's 5 to cross river in The Gambia)

FAR: (Dai'aba) - - - - - X26 - W27 [-2 LIONS]

LIONS: (X14) - Y15 / Guinea-Bissau; (H7) - Louga; (Tiebo) - J5 - - - M4; (L4) – Thies; (V10) --- W11

Races for Round 8: Enter up to 5 races and build up to 8 points of track

- | | |
|---|---|
| 8. Ziguinchor (55) - Touba (35) | 9. Kerewan or Mensa Konko (56) - Guinea-Bissau (S4) |
| 10. Dakar (24) - Saint Louis (11) | 11. Mali (Sp2) - Ndibdene Dhara or Linguere (16) |
| 12. Joal Fadiout or M'bour (31) - Goudin or Kidira (43) | |
| 13. Thies (25) - Banjul (61) | 14. Tambacounda (44) - Banjul (63) |

Note that I will be using the one extra entry per 2 held over races (round down) for this game.

RAILWAY RIVALS SYRIA (RR2566SY) ROUND 6



All roads (tracks) lead to [Al-Hasakah!](#) Yes, all five companies are now connected or near to the city, home of the Al-Jazeera football team.

Al-Malikiya is still unconnected (not in R7 races, though Al-Hasakah is) but all the specials now have at least one connection.

Looking at the map at the end of R6, all the lines look quite promising. I think maybe purple is the best but not much in it. We will see how the races pan out...

The in-game map is available at <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2566SY.jpg>

BOB Bob Gingell Black	6a. [3] (Z7) - - - C44 6b. [6] (C44) - - D43 - E44 - - Ras Al-Ayn; (M14) - L13; (Daraa) - F36 {Jordan} 6c. [4] (Ras al-Ayn) --- - I44 BANK: 51 -1[SHIT, I44] -1[BOOMS, L13] +1[ROGER, M10] +1[SKR, H43] +1[SHIT, N7] +1[SHIT, M8] = 53
BOOMS Jim Reader Orange	6a. [3] (I53) - - - I50 6b. [6] (I50) - - K49 - - - K46; (M23) - N23 6c. [4] (K46) --- Al-Hasakah [-2 ROGER]; (N23) - O24 BANK: 32 -2[ROGER, K46] +1[BOB, L13] -1[SHIT, N23] +1[SHIT, H17] = 31
SKR Brad Martin Blue	6a. [3] (J28) - - H29 - Damascus 6b. [6] (D45) - - - --- H43 6c. [4] (H43) - - - K42; (H43) - I44 BANK: 55 -1[BOB, H43] -1[SHIT, G44] -1[SHIT, I44] +1[ROGER, M10] = 53
ROGER Roger Trethewey Green	6a. [3] (G16) - Jableh; (I47) - - K46 6b. [6] (K46) --- Al Hasakah - K44 - L43 - L42 6c. [4] (L42) - - L40 {Turkey E} [-1 SHIT]; (N10) - - L9 BANK: 41 -1[BOB, M10] -1[SKR, M10] -1[SHIT, I44] = 38
SHIT Michael Pargman Purple	6a. [3] (Aleppo) - - N7 - M7 [-1 BOB] [-1 BOB] 6b. [6] (K15) - --- I16 - I17 - H17 [-1 BOOMS] 6c. [4] (J15) - I15 {Historic}; (Ras al-Ayn) - G42 {Turkey E}; (Qamishli) - - P41 BANK: 41 -1[BOOMS, H17] -1[BOB, N7] -1[BOB, M8] +1[BOB, I44] +1[BOOMS, N23] +1[SKR, G44] +1[SKR, I44] +1[ROGER, I44] = 43

Races for Round 7: Enter any 4 and build up to 12 points of track.

1. Qamishli (44) - Jableh (25)
2. Hama (52) - Aleppo (15)
3. Homs (54) - Al-Hazakah (42)
4. Aleppo (14) - Raqqa (32)
5. Jordan (Sp4) - Abu Kamal (36)
6. Daraa (66) - Lebanon (Sp5)
7. Latakia (24) - As-Suwayda (65)

Note that I will be using the one extra entry per 2 held over races (round down) for this game.

RAILWAY RIVALS BHUTAN (RR2551BT) ROUND 10

GM Bob Gingell

HAPPY again scored well and now has a clear lead. BOTI and HEART split apart from their level scores with HEART being the more successful in races. HAPPY is now confident about its network so built no further track – can it hold onto its lead?

Races for Round 10 (max 5 entries, ties = *):

22. (16–32): HAPPY [4] 20; HEART [4] 5*; BOTI [5] 5*.
23. (22–66): HEART 30
24. (35–55): HAPPY [19] 20 +1 = 21; HEART [18+1 = 19] 10 -7b-1hy = 2; BOTI +7.
25. (45–21): HEART [21] 20 -6hy = 14; BOTI [23] 10; HAPPY +6.
26. (53–13): HAPPY [25] 20 +1 = 21; BOTI [26] 10 -1ht = 9.
27. (62–#4): HEART [11 to E30] 15* -1hy +5 = 19; HAPPY [13 to E30] 15* -5ht +1 = 11; BOTI [37+1 = 38 from F14**] 0.
28. (#6 both G14 –42): HAPPY [16] 15* -2b = 13; BOTI [18] 15* +2 = 17.

** Races can be run in either direction so this route only counted one mountain hex.

Leaps: HAPPY - 1 over BOTI, 1 over HEART.

Scores and builds (max 6):

HAPPY, blue (Brad Martin): 247 +92 +2 = 341.

No builds. [0+2 = +2]

BOTI, red (Richard Smith): 237 +48 -11 = 274.

(R11) - S12 - T12 - U12 [-3ht-1hy]; (M37) - - O36 - P36 [-1hy]. [-6 -5 = -11]

HEART, purple (Steve Ham): 237 +70 +2 = 309.

(I20) - Phuntsholing [-1 +3 = +2]

Races for Round 11 (enter any 5):

29. 11 (Laya) – 23 (Samtse)

30. 26 (Phuntsholing) – 52 (Lhuntse)

31. 34 (Trongsa) – 41 (Chhuka)

32. 43 (Dampfu) – 64 (Sakteng)

33. 54 (Nganglam) – #2 (West Bengal or Arunachal Pradesh)

34. 63 (Trashigang) – 15 (Thimphu)

35. #1 (China) – 31 (Punakha)

Round 11 build allowance: 4 points, excluding payments to other players.

The in-game map is at <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2551BT.jpg>

RAILWAY RIVALS BHUTAN (RR2550BT) ROUND 10



Three uncontested races this time, and a three-way crap shoot in race 22 won by ROGER, who have clawed back a few points over YETI who were only able to enter four races. BUTT top-scored again and have a healthy lead going into the closing stages of the game.

Just as well we're not using the Bus Boss "no routes more than double shortest" rule as race 26 had two companies racing to different disputed areas, with lengths of 36 vs. 4. I decided not to bother rolling any dice for this one – shock horror!

	BUTT Bob Gingell Black	ROGER Roger Threthewey Green	YETI Jim Reader Yellow
R18. Laya (11) - Jomotsangkha (66)	20 [43] -8	+8	
22. Aiports (Sp5) - Wangdue Phodrang (32)	0 [7] -3	20 [7] +2 +3	10 [7] -2
23. Jomotsangkha (66) - Thimphu (15)	20 [37]		
24. Dampfu (43) - Jakar (35)	10 [25] +3	20 [17] -3	
25. Nganglam (54) - Thimphu (16)	20 [26] +1	10 [28]	0 [34] -1
26. Disputed Areas (Sp4) - Lhuntse (52)	20 [4]	10 [36] -6	+6
27. Gedu (24) - Gelephu (46)		10 [26] -5	20 [13] +5
28. Phuntsholing (25) - Trashiyangtse (61)	+4		20 [38] -4

Last Turn	239	178	216
Points from Races	87	79	54
Builds	-5	-5	0
Points Total	321	252	270

Builds:

BUTT: (Dampfu) - --- Q17 – Daga (Q17- Daga simultaneous with ROGER)

ROGER: (S16) - --- - Daga (Q17- Daga simultaneous with BUTT)

YETI: No builds

Races for Round 11: Enter up to 5 new races and build up to 4 points of track.

29. Chhukha (41) - Mongar (62)

30. Dungkar (51) - Nubding (33)

31. Tendu (22) - Assam (Sp3)

32. Ha (21) - Samdrup Jongkhar (56)

33. Zhemgang (36) - Sakteng (64)

34. Gasa (12) - Sarpang (44)

35. China (Sp1) - Paro (13)

Reminder: This game is not using leapfrog, but the other one (previous page) is. So far it seems the map has just about enough non-mountain hexes to make it not absolutely essential. I think modifying the legend to say leapfrog is “optional” rather than “recommended” is the only change required for a new version of the map, if there is one.

The in-game map is available at: <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2550BT.jpg>

RAILWAY RIVALS SOUTH TYROL (RR2572ST) ROUND 6

GM: Bob Gingell

STYLE now leads as the only company to link to more cities this round, while the others improved their networks ready for the first Operating Round. Three destinations remain unconnected and surprisingly two of those were rolled as race destinations for Round 7.

GM note: With three players the number of race entries is 5. There are two races with unconnected destinations in Round 7; the rule for one extra entry when 2 or more races are carried forward will be applied, so in Round 8 players will be allowed to enter up to 6 races.

Round 6 build allowances: 6, 5, 6.

NIR, blue (Brad Martin): 60 -2 = 58.

6a. (Y20) --- --- W19

6b. (W19) - - - Meran; (Y22) - Bozen; (C45) - C44

6c. (Toblach) - - - X48 {Osttirol}; (C44) - C43 [-1s]; (C44) - B43 [-1s]; (N46) - N45.

STYLE, red (Richard Smith): 80 +12 +3 = 95.

6a. (C38) - C37 - - Innsbruck; (Schlanders) --- I18

6b. (I18) - - - - MALS - E15

6c. (Schlanders) - I19 - H18; (E15) - - - E12 - RESCHEN

WIERER, purple (Steve Ham): 82 -1 = 81.

6a. (T19) - T18 - - R17 - Q18 [-1s]; (O42) - O41 - P40.

6b. (Q18) --- Naturns; (Q48) - - S49;

6c. (J55) --- - Canazei; (S49) - - Toblach.

Round 7 build allowance: 12 points excluding payments to others.

Races for Round 7 (enter any 5):

1. 12 (Bozen) – 64 (Antholz)
2. 21 (Terlan) – 51 (Brixen)
3. 34 (Trafol) – 23 (Meran) [not possible]
4. 46 (Klausen) – #4 (Canazei/Cles)
5. 54 (Brenner) – 45 (Sarnthein)
6. 61 (Bruneck) – 35 (Mals)
7. #5 (Shweiz/Lombardia – 11 (Bozen) [not possible]

The in-game map is available at <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2572ST.jpg>

RAILWAY RIVALS SOUTH TYROL (RR2565ST) ROUND 6



All four companies made connections for special runs, and / or moved closer to a connection point.

No big payments this time, so STIFY have made it to the operating stage without going into debt.

The house rule change on held over races comes into play as first race “out of the bag” is the unconnected Sp1 - the somewhat distant Landeck and Innsbruck.

BUST
Bob Gingell
Black
6a. [5] (T19) - S19; (J55) --- - Canazei
6b. [3] (Prettau) --- R40 {Osttirol}
6c. [3] (G50) --- Brixen
BANK: 53 -1[STIFY,S19] +1[ROGER,H48] +1[STIFY,I55] = 54

STIFY
Bob Pitman
Red
6a. [5] (H53) - I54 - I55 --- I56
6b. [3] (I56) --- I57
6c. [3] (I57) - Canazei; C44 - - C42
BANK: 25 -1[STINK,C42] +1[BUST,S19] -1[BUST,I55] = 24

STINK
Michael Pargman
Purple
6a. [5] (Brenner) - - - C38; S52 - - S54
6b. [3] (S54) - R54 - Cortina D'Ampazzo; (Antholz) - S44
6c. [3] (S44) --- T43 {Osttirol}
BANK: 126 +1[STIFY,C42] = 127

ROGER
Roger Trethewey
Green
6a. [5] (D12) - Reschen; (C46) --- - E47
6b. [3] (E47) - Franzensfeste - G48; (Trafoi) - D21
6c. [3] (G48) --- H48
BANK: 68 -1[BUST,H48] = 67

The in-game map is available at <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2565ST.jpg>

Races for Round 7: Enter up to 4 races and build up to 12 points of track

1. St Leonhard (25) - Landeck or Innsbruck (Sp1)
2. Kaltern (15) - Ski Resort (S6)
3. Sterzing (53) - Latsch (32)
4. Salurn (16) - Naturns (26)
5. St Ulrich (43) - Kiens (56)
6. Antholz (64) - Schanls (31)
7. Sand In Taufers (62) - Kastelruth (42)

Note that I will be using the one extra entry per 2 held over races (round down) for this game.

BAG OF DUNGEON - ROUND 7



Game rules were printed in TCD8 and are available at <https://variablepig.org/rules/bagofdungeon.html>

All of the dungeon has now been discovered, and the exit, guarded by the Dragon revealed. The Ring is now in play (guarded by a fresh monster). Adventurers no longer have to lose APs for discovery, and are now permitted to attack each other.

See also F2F rules PDF for more about what happens now, and also the rules for the “old spikey” trap that is blocking the way to the exit

https://variablepig.org/rules/bod/bodrules_v3.pdf

Report for Round 7:

Turn order: Torvok, Alendra, SIRRUS

Our three heroes swap items and group together ready for the upcoming assault on The Ring and The Dragon ...

Torvok carries the fireball spell into the corridor and drops it for SIRRUS to collect. He returns to collect the bomb, and after carefully placing it in his backpack, returns to the corridor to rendezvous with SIRRUS.

Alendra moves to meet SIRRUS and collect his Imp's Teeth, then moves one further tile towards The Ring.

SIRRUS gives Alendra the Imp's Teeth then moves “south” 3 tiles to collect the Fireball from Torvok.

Round 8 Actions:

Turn order: Alendra, SIRRUS, Torvok

Discovery: No further discovery is required, no APs deducted.

Inventory: Characters may rearrange items (no AP) cost, and characters can also swap items and this requires conditional orders from both, unless they are on the same square at the start of the turn.

Move, Collect Items, Use Items, Combat: Characters can use some or all of their remaining APs moving to known tiles. Collecting items does not cost an AP, but using items usually does (cost on tile). Combat is always the last action but remaining APs can be used to deploy items and / or escape.

The Ring is now in play. Last time the GM rolled 2D6... it's a 4. The m4 tile now has a fresh monster guarding the Ring. Alendra is only two moves away but the other two characters just out of reach with 6, so may have to waste another round getting into position. Alendra could use the Imp's Teeth to swap places with another character.

The Red Dragon has 20 health, has a 4D6 attack, and is immune to arrows. Adventurers killed by the dragon return to their Start (unless all lives lost) but items go to the Healing Pool.

Player: Jim Reader

Character: Torvok the Barbarian

Barbarian

Your barbarian is a savage, mighty-thewed, and masterless warrior.

Actions: 5
Combat: 3 D6

Special: +1 to combat roll for every 3 points below maximum health (+1 at 7, +2 at 4, +3 at 1).

Lives: 1 Solo, 2, 3 (circled) Lives

Health: 6, 7, 8 (circled), 9, 10

Monster health: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6*, 7, 8, 9, 10**, 11, 12, 13

Items: Magic Sword (+2 to CRT roll, view adjacent monster*), Bomb (1 ap, 1 use, Range 0-4, 2D6 dmg to all in 0-2 tile radius*), Strength Potion (1 ap, 1 use, +1 dice to CRT for one fight)

aps: 5 (circled), 4, 3, 2, 1

Character Stats: 10 health (2 DICE +3), 10 health (2 DICE +1)

Notes: Cannot use (Shield or Wheel icon), *take one item on kill, **take two items on kill

Player: Chris Hibbert

Character: Alendra the Elf

Alendra the elf

Alendra is fleet-footed and a skilled archer. She is a former Calen Gaur watch commander.

Combat: 2 dice +1

Special: Dead-eye. Inflict an instant kill when you roll a 6 on a bow attack.

Lives: 1 Solo, 2, 3 (circled) Lives

Health: 6, 7, 8, 9 (circled)

Monster health: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6*, 7, 8, 9, 10**, 11, 12, 13

Items: Magic Shield (-2 damage), Elven Bow (2 aps, Range 1-4, 1 dice damage), Magic Boots (+1 move, take no damage when escaping*), Imp's Teeth (1 ap, swap places with another adventurer)

aps: 6 (circled), 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0

Character Stats: 7 health (1 DICE +4), 8 health (2 DICE +4)

Notes: *take one item on kill, **take two items on kill

Player: Bob Gingell

Character: SIRRUS the Fighter

SIRRUS the fighter

Sirrus is a skilled warrior and renowned blademaker, brave and capable in battle.

Combat: 2 dice +2

Special: Lethal Blow. Once per game you may double your combat roll result.

Lives: 1 Solo, 2, 3 (circled) Lives

Health: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (circled)

Monster health: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6*, 7, 8, 9, 10**, 11, 12, 13

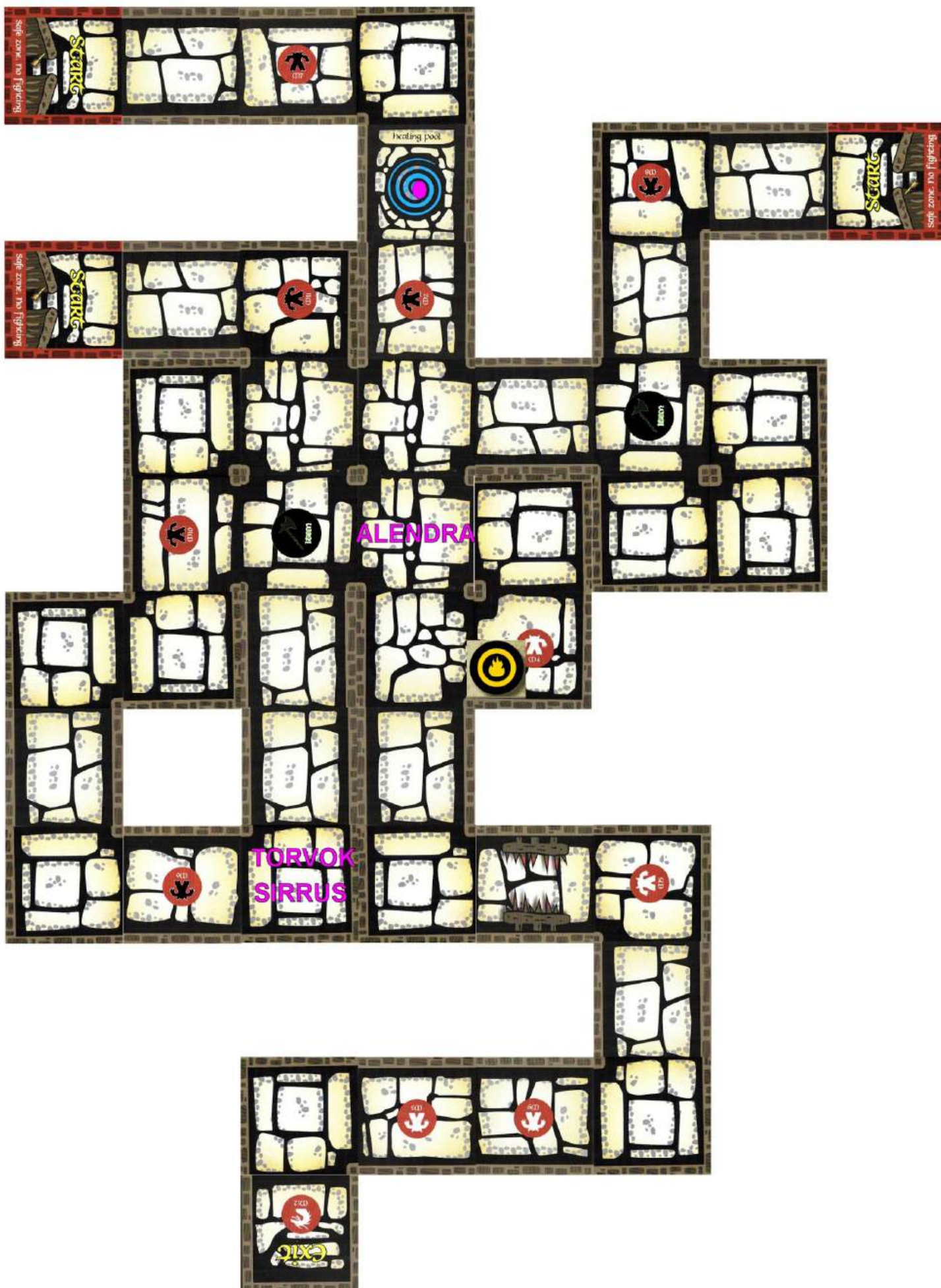
Items: Morning Star (+2 to CRT roll), Steel Armour (-1 damage), Vampire Teeth (2 aps, drain and gain 5 health from any adventurer*), Fireball (2 aps, Range 1-5, 3 dice damage to all on tile)

aps: 5 (circled), 4, 3, 2, 1, 0

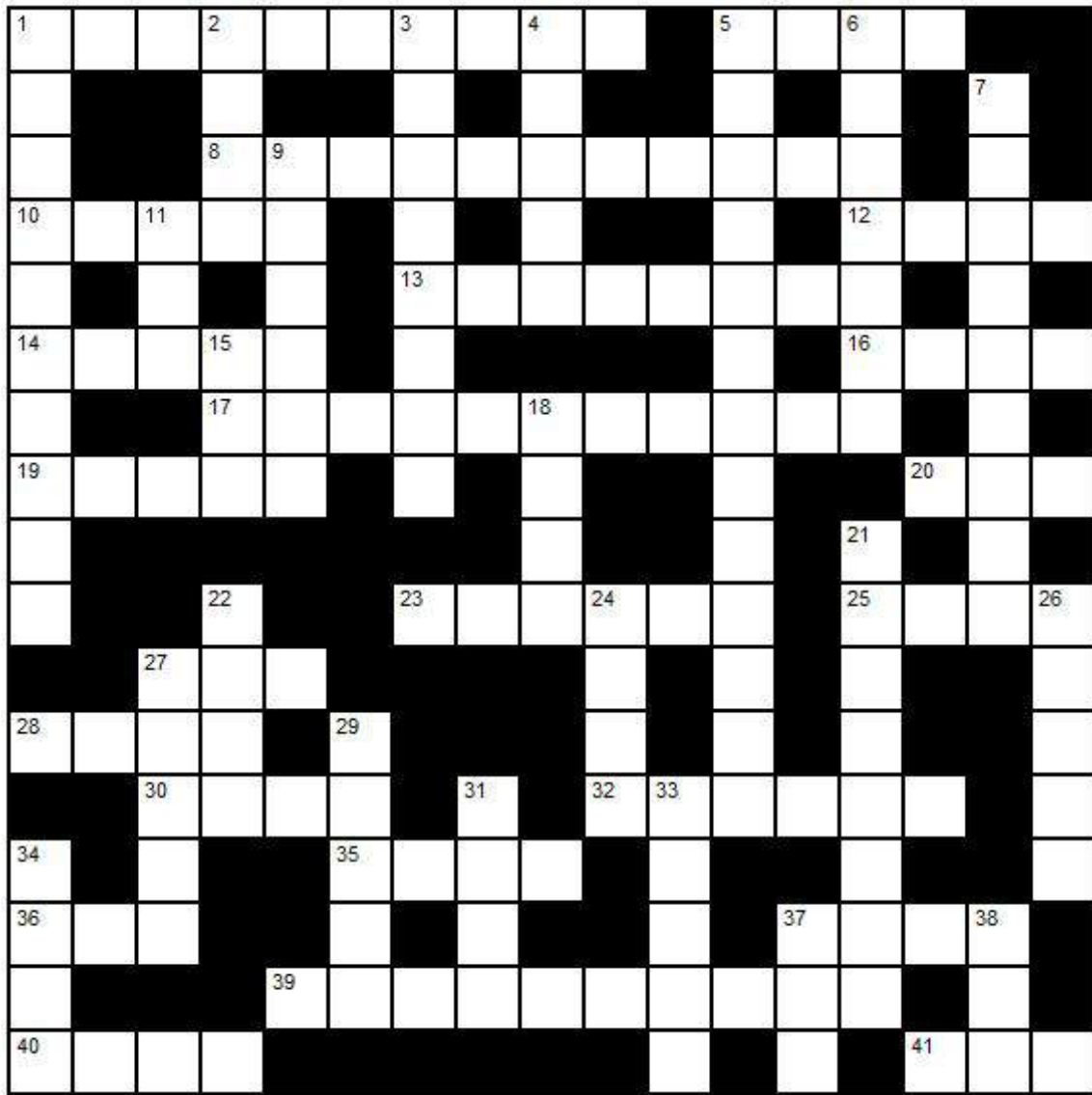
Character Stats: 9 health (2 DICE +2), 10 health (2 DICE +4)

Notes: *take one item on kill, **take two items on kill

Dungeon Map:



ADS AND SLOGANS THEME CROSSWORD



Clues starting with a T in brackets are the theme answers and are all products or brand names. There are 28 to get, 1 point for each. Filler words do not have to be solved but may help.

Across

1. [T] There are some things that money can't buy (10)
- 5 and 34D. [T] Just for the taste of it (4,4)
8. [T] It's greasy auntie! (5,6)
10. His song "Forever Young" was used to promote Pepsi in 2009 with the tagline "Every generation refreshes the world" (5)
12. What comes before rest and play on the red planet? (4)
13. [T] They asked me how I knew ... (4,4)
14. Stock full of birdies? (2-3)
16. Sin one might commit when watching the Flake advert (4)
17. [T] If you have nausea, heartburn, indigestion, upset stomach ... diarrhoea! (5,6)
19. My girdle is killing me, because it's not made of this? (5)
20. The Liberator's computer (3)
23. [T] Have a break, have a ... (3,3)
25. [T] Go to work on ... (4)
27. [T] Discover your smile (3)

28. Leader found in the advert (4)
30. [T] Just do it (4)
32. [T] (*air on a G-string*) Happiness is ... (6)
35. Lose control of car via sulphur and a little butter (4)
36. [T] Give a meal man appeal (3)
37. [T] One brand two ways of shopping (4)
39. [T] Think small (10)
40. [T] Buy it sell it love it (4)
41. [T] Nation shall speak peace unto nation (1,1,1)

Down

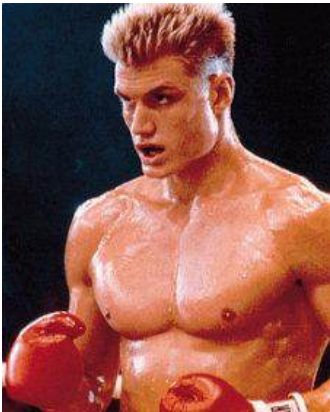
1. [T] I'm lovin' it (10)
2. Type of limestone that's more durable? (4)
3. [T] Delicious ice cream of Italy (8)
4. Posh car associated with 9D? (5)
5. [T] Double your pleasure, double your fun (10,3)
6. To have a good outcome, stop drinking? (3,4)
7. [T] Probably ... (9)

9. [T] Soft strong and very long (6)
11. Cut album about nothing (3)
15. Copy actor in PG Tips commercial, perhaps (3)
18. [T] Splash it all over! (4)
21. [T] The water in Majorca don't taste like what it oughta (8)
22. [T] Vorsprung durch technik (4)
24. Vorlon ambassador mostly observing dietary laws (4)
26. [T] They peel them with their metal knives, boil them for twenty of their minutes, and then they smash them all to bits! (5)
27. [T] You know when you've been ... (5)
29. [T] Every little helps (5)
31. [T] Watch out, watch out, there's a Humphrey about (4)
33. Commercial peddler hiding in road manhole (5)
34. see 5A
37. Matrix character, wild one (4)
38. [T] A beautiful drink for beautiful people (3)

The subzine seems to have lost yet another letter.

HERE BE DRAGO

Issue 80



Serpents Gambit – GM roll = 4

Richard gains a skill. Chris and Bob attempt to acquire goods.

Players need to pick one of the three options below.

1 Acquire: You attempt to acquire a common or rare, good.

Example Order: "**ACQUIRE Common.**"

GM Action: The GM draws a new card for you, which will be sent to you if its value is equal or less than the GM dice roll.

2 Sell Goods: You attempt to sell one or more cards from your inventory.

Order: "**SELL for x**"

You must choose one card to sell. You can choose to bluff and say the card's value is higher than it is. The GM announces your intention to the other players, revealing only the bluff value.

Bluffing: Other players can challenge your value. If no one challenges you, you get your declared gold. If you are challenged, the GM reveals the card's real value. Challenges do not count as an order.

If your value was false: You get nothing for the sale and pay a penalty of 3 gold to the challenging player.

If your value was true: You receive the full value, and the challenging player pays you a penalty of 3 gold.

3 Gain Skill Card:

Order: "**Gain Skill.**"

If the GM roll is 2 or higher, you gain the skill card, which will be sent to you.

Some skill cards will be revealed once they have been used.

Any sales are processed before the players' orders. So, any skill obtained will not affect last turns sales/challenges.

Winning the game

The first player to accumulate 25 or more gold wins the game. Richard and Bob currently have 10 gold, Chris has 12.

If 2 or more players achieve this on the same turn any player with the most gold will win.

Lyrics 1 of 5 – no themes for this batch of five.

1 They asked me how I knew my true love was true / Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh, I, of course replied (1959) **Smoke gets in your eyes** – **The Platters** (Jim Reader (song only), John Hopkins, Richard Smith (song only), Bob Pitman, Dane Maslen (song only), Steve Guest (song only), Brendan Whyte (song only))

2 I can't hide / I can't hide / I can't hide (1964) **I Wanna Hold Your Hand** - **The Beatles** (Jim Reader, John Hopkins, Richard Smith, Bob Pitman, Dane Maslen, Steve Guest)

3 Pour a little sugar on it honey / Pour a little sugar on it baby (1969) **Sugar Sugar** - **The Archies** (John Hopkins, Richard Smith, Steve Guest)

4 Together we've climbed hills and trees / Learned of love and ABCs / Skinned our hearts and skinned our knees (1974) **Seasons in the Sun** - **Terry Jacks** (Jim Reader, Richard Smith, Bob Pitman, Dane Maslen, Martin Walker, Steve Guest)

5 When I was young, it seemed that life was so wonderful / A miracle, oh, it was beautiful, magical (1979) **The Logical Song** - **Supertramp** (Jim Reader, Richard Smith, Bob Pitman, Dane Maslen (song only), Steve Guest, Brendan Whyte (singer only))

- 6 No April rain, no flowers bloom / No wedding Saturday within the month of June / But what it is, it's something true / Made up of these three words that I must say to you (1984) **I Just Called to Say I Love You - Stevie Wonder** (Jim Reader, Dane Maslen, Steve Guest, Brendan Whyte)
- 7 I'm down on my knees, I wanna take you there / In the midnight hour, I can feel your power (1989) **Like a Prayer - Madonna** (Jim Reader, Dane Maslen (singer only) Brendan Whyte)
- 8 When it's love you give / I'll be your man of good faith / Then in love you live / I'll make a stand, I won't break (1994) **All for Love – Brian Adams, Rod Stewart & Sting** (*GM Not surprised nobody got this, it passed me by as well*)
- 9 She never drinks the water / Makes you order French Champagne / Once you've had a taste of her / You'll never be the same (1999) **Livin la Vida Loca – Ricky Martin** (Richard Smith, Martin Walker)
- 10 Beauty queen of only eighteen / She had some trouble with herself (2004) **She will be loved - Maroon 5** (Martin Walker)

Steve Guest 11
 Richard Smith 11
 Jim Reader 11
 Dane Maslen 9
 Bob Pitman 8
 Martin Walker 6
 John Hopkins 6
 Brendan Whyte 6
 Chris Hibbert 0

Chris - 1 That's got to be "It's in his kiss". 4 Is that from "To Sir, With Love"? 10 Sounds like something by Prince.
 Bob P #1 It's also the Esso Blue paraffin advert song sung, I think, by Max Bygraves!! *GM that's how I remember the song as well, never knew it was Max Bygraves.*

Martin - Definitely know most of these but.... 1. Everly Brothers - dream lover? 3. I know it's not Def Leppard but they had a song like that. 7. Billy Idol

Dane – 5 Having initially make a wild guess at LEO SAYER even though my subconscious thought it was by a group, I've now come to the conclusion that 10 C.C. might be the group in question. Perhaps the title was LOGICAL, though for some reason I think it might have been THE LOGICAL SONG. I'll go with the former.

7 Something by MADONNA, I think. Was it called FEELS LIKE HOME? I'm sure that those three words appear in the lyrics, but they don't ring a bell as a title.

Steve - I'm sure I know (7). 1. Inkspots? 9. Robbie Williams?

Brendan - 5 Breakfast in America / Supertramp

Lyrics 2 of 5 – no themes for this batch of five.

- 1 I spent a lifetime / Waiting for the right time / Now that you're near / The time is here, at last (1960)
- 2 Matty told Hatty / About a thing she saw / Had two big horns / And a woolly jaw (1965)
- 3 When you're down and out, / When you're on the street, / When evening falls so hard (1970)
- 4 Okay, you think you got a pretty face / But the rest of you is out of place / You looked alright before (1975)
- 5 We don't need no thought control / No dark sarcasm in the classroom (1980)
- 6 There comes a time / When we heed a certain call / When the world must come together as one (1985)
- 7 Since you been gone, / I can do whatever I want / I can see whomever I choose (1990)
- 8 I'm 23 now but will I live to see 24? / The way things is going I don't know (1995)
- 9 Hey, Mr. DJ, put a record on / I wanna dance with my baby / And when the music starts, I never wanna stop / It's gonna drive me crazy (2000)
- 10 Time goes by so slowly / Every little thing that you say or do (2005)

Sprint Finish 1 of 8 – The runners shuffle about on the start line in their drawn order.

Steve Jacob Richard Cole Chris Bob Josh Cameron

The gun fires. Bob sprints to the front, followed by Cameron. Richard and Cole are next. Steve and Jacob tuck in behind these two. Chris and Josh settle in at the back.

Lane 1	Bob	Cameron	Richard	Steve	Chris
Lane 2			Cole	Jacob	Josh

Richard, Steve and Chris are boxed but will have no worries at this early stage.

Players now need which card (listed below) they wish to play. The NPCs will select a card at random. I wasn't expecting players to opt for less cards than there are turns, but it's not a problem. Bob or indeed anyone else, can select a card as and when you like.

1. Overtake 3 (can only be played on turns 2 to 5)
2. Overtake 2 (cannot be played on the last turn)
3. Overtake 1
4. Save Energy (add one to next card e.g. Overtake 2 becomes Overtake 3)
5. Hold line (cannot be played on last turn)
6. Increase pace (must be in the lead, tied or otherwise). Players need one extra to overtake. Does not affect move alongside)
7. Move alongside
8. Refresh Card
9. Dip (Played on any turn but used on the last turn. Will win any ties on the last turn. If two dips used the winner will be the player on the inside. If a joker dip is used along with a card dip, this will out dip a single dip)
10. Joker (Can be played as any card)

Hold Line cards played first then the cards are processed from back to front, inside to outside.

If the game does not get eight players, the remainder of the runners will be made up of NPCs, who will select a random number of initial cards from 7 to 10, then will randomly play one of their cards each turn.

Anyone attempting to overtake someone who has played hold line would need an extra overtake i.e. if they played overtake one, instead of moving ahead they would move alongside.

Richard Smith	Bob Gingell	Chris Hibbert	Steve Ham
Overtake 3	Overtake 3	Overtake 3	Overtake 3
Overtake 2	Overtake 2	Overtake 2	Overtake 2
Overtake 1	Overtake 1	Overtake 1	Overtake 1
Save Energy	Save Energy	Save Energy	Save Energy
Hold Line		Hold Line	Hold Line
Increase Pace		Increase Pace	Increase Pace
Move Alongside		Move Alongside	Move Alongside
Refresh Card		Refresh Card	Refresh Card
		Dip	Dip
		Joker	

Cole Hocker	Cameron Myers	Josh Kerr	Jacob Ingerbrigtsen
Overtake 3	Overtake 3	Overtake 3	Overtake 3
Overtake 2	Overtake 2	Overtake 2	Overtake 2
Overtake 1	Overtake 1	Overtake 1	Overtake 1
Save Energy	Save Energy	Save Energy	Save Energy
Hold Line	Hold Line	Hold Line	Hold Line
Increase Pace	Increase Pace	Increase Pace	Increase Pace
Move Alongside	Move Alongside	Move Alongside	Move Alongside
Refresh Card		Refresh Card	Refresh Card
		Dip	Dip
		Joker	

Fragments GES Chris Hibbert - Prominent People commentary, and replies to commentary The only hints I used were the word breakdowns. I tried to do one every round. This helped with 1, 2, and 3, and allowed me to recognize the parallel between the person 2 hint, (which I had mostly deciphered) and the one for person 6. I wouldn't have gotten #10 (Boutros Boutros-Ghali) without it. The word breakdown gave me "The First African United Nations", which was all I needed to know.

Lyrics GES Bob P Lyric quiz – I won a game!! Thanks to everyone for playing and John for choosing lyrics that I could make a decent stab at!

THE TANGERINE TERROR #87/I AM THE KURIOUS KUMQUAT #17
Coming Soon!

SubPAR 17

Pennsylvania Ramblings



Farewell, Farewell I retired on May 1st after nearly 38.5 years in the chemical industry. My colleagues organized a fantastic retirement party a few days before I left with over 40 people attending. This included a bagpiper, as our sales manager in Cleveland Kyle, plays the pipes and a full-sized cardboard cut of me and a picture show gathered from different places in my career. One present was a specially made of “Quacks of Evonik” based on the popular “Quacks of Quedlinburg” game, only making paint not potions and with ingredients that I used to work with. I was really touched.

Lazy Since retiring, I have spent a lot of time doing paperwork trying to get my retirement benefits, in particular medical insurance, sorted. I was given a package by Evonik on my last day that explained what I needed to do, but a lot needed extra information that would be sent to me. Most mornings, I have been working on websites, calling agencies and filling in forms. Even trying to sign up to volunteer at ArtsQuest (a local non-profit) required background checks that took over a week. One month in and I’m hopefully nearly finished and can concentrate more on different things.

Baby Love Fortunately, it hasn’t all been paperwork. Hannah and Michael came to visit for a long weekend, and we had our first evening of babysitting Phoenix while they had their first night out since the birth; they went to see Lorna Shore in concert in nearby Bethlehem. Phoenix is a very sweet girl that mostly sleeps through the night but tends to get very active and hungry in the evening so we had our hands full, but it was great fun. We also travelled back to Indy to enjoy a long weekend there with both Phoenix and Kyler.

Five Hundred Miles I’ve also been trying to get more exercise. I’ve restarted walking most days, beginning with the old 2.5-mile circuit I used to take during the pandemic. Jacqueline and I have also taken a couple of longer walks along the Saucon Valley Rail trail. I plan to increase the length of my daily walks once Lehigh County has finished spreading oil and chips everywhere to resurface our local roads. I’ve also had my first couple of pickleball lessons and have signed up for a beginner’s league in June to learn more. So far, it’s going quite well as the memory of other racket sports hasn’t completely faded.

Three Lions The World Cup is nearly upon us. Recently, the States of New York and New Jersey (possibly others) launched an investigation into FIFA’s ticketing practices. Mysteriously, a few hours later, FIFA released some more, lower priced tickets for certain games. I’m sure these events were purely coincidental and not related. The latest release seems to have had little effect on the price for the Ecuador – Curacao game that I was hoping to see cheaply. current prices still start around \$750. Meanwhile, various travel agency and hotel organizations are reporting room sales are below expectation. I’m looking forward to seeing (on TV) the packed stadia that Gianni Infantino promises.

Railway Rivals (Estonia) - RR2542EE2

Round Twelve

Correction

There was an error in ET's races last round. ET did not enter race 30 but entered race 31 instead. There are no changes to the payments for race 30 as ET finished 3rd and the payments he made to BENDY and MARS would be made in race 31. I reran race 31 and ET won, so + 20 to ET and -10 to MARS.

	ARVO Richard <i>Blue</i>	BENDY Bob <i>Black</i>	ROGER Roger <i>Green</i>	MARS John <i>Orange</i>	ET Michael <i>Red</i>
36. Valga (46) - Elva / Otepaa (36)	15 - 2 - 1		+ 2	15 + 1	
37. Parnu (55) - Western Islands (Sp1)				20	
38. Kivoli or Mustvee (26) - Keila (64)	10 - 4 - 1	20 + 4		0	+ 1
39. Vijandi (44) - Haapsalu (51)		+ 6		20 - 6	
40. Kohtla-Jarve (15) - Jogeve (25)		20 + 2 + 8	0 - 2		10 - 8
41. Sillamae (13) - Tartu (31)	20 + 1 - 3 + 1 - 1	0 - 1 + 3 + 3 - 1	10 - 1 - 3 + 1	- 1	
42. Russia (Sp4) - Tallinn (63)	10 - 2	20 + 2	0		

Points from last round	195	329	157	220	145
Correction				- 10	+ 20
Points from races	43	86	7	49	3
Total	238	415	164	259	168

Congratulations to BENDY (Bob Gingell)

Final map: <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2542EE2.png>

Game End Statements

BENDY (Bob Gingell), 1st: The East - West northern route served me well but I do not think my extension towards Parnu paid for itself. The Central and Southern parts of the map were difficult for me to reach but my core routes in the North (with my target of Tallinn to Narva achieved) worked well. A number of destinations were not connected so I think it is worth reconsidering the map layout for future games. Was my starting position too good or should other players have built differently early on? I was 100 points ahead at the end of Round 9 which is pretty significant. I am surprised that the two starting in Tallinn had the lowest scores at the end of Round 11 but I have not checked whether their competition resulted in sharing too many races. Thanks to Jim for the map and running the game, and to the other players who kept up the pressure such that I never felt secure in the lead.

ARVO (Richard Smith), 3rd: Congratulations to Bob on a stonking win. I think the starts are quite well balanced in this game and I quite liked being out in the sticks in Tartu, though it did mean a bit of a long trek to get to the lucrative northern destinations. A good line "across the top" is essential and the black line was the shortest. Interesting that pretty much all the companies ended up with some kind of X or Y shaped line. Red and green both went for fast diagonals which perhaps were less profitable. Note that the map features in Lars Olsson's [YouTube video](#).

GM (Jim Reader)

Firstly, my thanks for everyone for trying out this new map, a rare occasion when I have tried to rework an earlier design. Secondly, congratulations to Bob for a very emphatic victory. I am surprised that the game was so one-sided, especially as I have not been successful with the Tallinn – Kohtle-Jarve – Narva route in earlier games and I thought that the map was more open with the revisions. Looking at the game map, the BENDY track is by far the most direct East-West line to connect the capital with the eastern cities, and his southern spur to Tartu effective. MARS strategy to dominate in the West was quite effective and earned a comfortable second place.

Railway Rivals (Senegal and Gambia) - RR2556SG

Round Nine

	COUER Steve Ham <i>Purple</i>	SETI Richard Smith <i>Blue</i>	ROGER Roger <i>Black</i>	BOGGER Bob Gingell <i>Brown</i>
15. Kedougou (46) - Dakar (21)	20 - 3 + 5 + 1		5 + 3 - 5 + 1	5 - 1 - 1
16. Touba (34) - Guinea-Bissau (Sp4)	0 - 2 - 3	20	10 + 2 - 1 + 5	0 + 3 + 1 - 5
17. Foundiougne (32) - Tiebo (15)	0	15 + 6		15 - 6
18. Ndibdene Dhara or Linguere (16) - Matam (42)	20			
19. Ziguinchor (55) - Banjul (62)		20	10	
20. Minerals (Sp5) - Kolda (53)	5		20 - 1	5 + 1
21. Thies (26) - Banjul (61)	<i>No entries!</i>			

Points from Last Round	103	122	110	170
Points from Races	43	61	49	17
Builds	- 10 + 1	- 10 - 1 - 1	- 9 - 1 + 1 - 1 - 2 + 1	- 10 + 2 - 1
Correction	<i>None this round 😊</i>			
Total	137	171	157	178

COUER: (V25) - - - V26 - - - V27 - U28 - U29 - Saraya: (V17) - Bassa Santa Su.
 SETI; (Koumpentoum) - Q18 - Q19 - Q20 - Tambacounda - R21 - R22 - R23 - S24 - T24 - U25.
 ROGER (O6) - Joal Fadiout - N4: (I21) - H20 - G20 - Salde: (O18) - P18 - Q19 - R19: (K11) - J11.
 BOGGER: (T14) - T13 - T12 - T11 - Mansa Konko: (T14) - Janjanbureh: (Kedougou) - X27: (St Louis) - - - E7 / Mauritania.

The fourth set of races is

22. Kerewan or Mensa Konko (56) - Kaffrine (36): 23. Thies (26) - Louga (14)
 24. Ziguinchor (55) - Dakar (24): 25. Ndibdene Dhara or Linguere (16) - Guinea (Sp3)
 26. Guinea-Bissau (Sp4) - Janjanbureh (65): 27. Matam (42) - Kaolack (33)
 28. Banjul (61) - Kedougou (46): 21. Thies (26) - Banjul (61)

Enter up to 4 races, plus the held-over race 21, and build up to 8 points of track, not including payment costs to other rivals.

In-game map at <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2556SG.png>

Railway Rivals (Bhutan) - RR2552BT

Round 5

ROGER Roger Trethewey Black	5a) 6. (F32) - F31 - E31 - E30: (Lhuntse) - - - H32, 5b) 3. (H10) - H9 - G9: (H32) - I33, 5c) 4. (I33) - - - J33: (J13) - I14. BANK: 67
BUDDHA John Walker Red	5a) 6. (R17) - - - Q17 - Daga: (X19) - Y20 - Z20, 5b) 3. (Z20) - A44 - B44: (E19) - D18. 5c) 4. (D18) - C18 - <u>TENDU</u> : (Phuntsholing) - I22. <i>1 short.</i> BANK: $63 + 6 - 1 + 4 = 72$
Dzong Chris Hibbert Yellow	5a) 6. (F32) - F31 - - - <u>DUNGKAR</u> : (Trashigang) - M37 - N37 5b) 3. (N37) - O37 - P36 - <u>SAKTENG</u> , 5c) 4. (B44) - A45 - Z21 - Y20 - Gelephu. BANK: $62 + 6 + 6 + 1 - 4 = 71$

The sixth-round die rolls are 6a) 5, 6b) 6, and 6c) 2. There has been 1 leap so far - Dzong over ROGER.

In-game map at <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2552BT.png>

Railway Rivals (Durham 1826) - RR2571DH

Round Four

Correction

COP's 3c build should have read (Aycliffe) - H61 - I61 and not (Aycliffe) - I51 as reported.

COP Brad Martin Blue / Light Blue	4a) 3. (V22) - V23 - V24 - V25, 4b) 6. (V25) - <u>STAINDROP</u> : (T23) - S23 - R22 - Q22 - P21 - O21, 4c) 3. (I51) - J60 - K61 - L61. Bank: $25.5 + 6 + 1$ (ROGER) - 6 (<i>all track upgraded</i>) = 26.5
DUST Richard Smith Red / Pink	4a) 3. (South Shields) - - - <u>NORTH SHIELDS</u> , 4b) 6. (L40) - K40: (R54) - S55 - T55 - U56 - V55 - <u>HARTLEPOOL</u> , 4c) 3. (K40) - J39 - I40 - H39 Bank: $20 + 6 + 6 - 6$ (DUST) - 6 (<i>all track upgraded</i>) = 20
HAB Bob Gingell Green / Light Green	4a) 3. (F46) - E46 - D45 - D44 (<i>upgraded</i>) 4b) 6. (D44) - D43 - <u>STANFIELD</u> (<i>upgraded</i>); (Wolsingham) - T15 - S15 - R14 - Q14 4c) 3. (Q14) - <u>STANHOPE</u> : (Y24) - X24 - W25. Bank: $41.5 + 6 + 6 - 1 - 2.5$ (<i>upgrade</i>) = 50
ROGER Roger Trethewey Black / Grey	4a) 3. (G66) - F65 - E65 - D64, 4b) 6. (D64) - C64 - B63 - A63 - Z26 - Y26 - X25 4c) 3. (X25) - W25 - V24 - U24. Bank: $22 - 1$ (COP) + 6 (DUST) + 1 (HAB) = 28

Reminder - track can be upgraded to fast track at a cost of 10/- (or 0.5) per half hex. The first color listed for a player is for their track that has not been upgraded. The second color listed is their upgraded track. During races, a roll of 5 will be treated as a 4 on regular, not upgraded track. The minimum race length is 5 hexes. Note, Richard has changed the rules for fast track in his game, but I have chosen to leave them as originally stated for this game as the game had started. The map states that upgrade tokens "must be applied to track as it's built". I interpret this to mean that previously built (or purchased) track cannot be upgraded.

The build allowances for the fourth round are – 4a) 5, 4b) 4, and 4c) 6.

In-game map at <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2571DH.png>

Railway Rivals (Togo and Benin) - RR2575TB

Round 2

The cost for crossing the border between Togo and Benin is 4 in rounds 1 –3 (pre-WW I), 2 in rounds 4 –6 (post war rail expansion) and 1 in rounds 7 –9 (post WW II). These are paid from the player's bank. There is also a 1 pip administration cost that applies throughout the game. The bank costs apply to both racing and building in rounds 7, 8 and 9.

TOBE 2a) 6. (Bassila) - M24 - M25 - M26: (H25) - H26 – SOTOUBOUA: (K23) - TCHAMBA,
Bob Gingell 2b) 6. (K22) - J21 - I21 - H21 - G22 - BASSAR; (Djougou) - M17
Black 2c) 5. (M17) - L16 - K16 – NATITINGOU: (I21) - H20 - KARA.
BANK: 25 + 3 + 3 + 6 + 6 + 6 + 8 (ROGER) + 5 (FLAG) = 62

TB 2a) 6. (Q41) – P41 - - - OUIDAH - N41; Porto Novo - B90,
Richard Smith 2b) 6. (N41) - - - - M41 - M42 – Aneho,
Blue 2c) 5. (Aneho) - K42 - - - Lome - I42.
BANK: 32 + 6 – 4 (border) = 34

ROGER 2a) 6. (M29) – M28 – M27 – M26 – M25 – M24 - Bassila,
Roger Trethewey 2b) 6. (Bassila) - N22 – N21 – N20 – N19 - N18: (M34) - M35
Green 2c) 5. (N18) - Djougou - L17: (M35) - M36 – M37 – DOGBO - TOLA.
BANK: 26 + 6 – 8 (TOBE) = 24

FLAG 2a) 6. (I32) – I31 – I30 – I29 – I28 – I27 - I26,
Steve Guest 2b) 6. (I26) – I25 – Sokode - - - I23: (J36) - K37,
Orange 2c) 5. (K37) - L37: (I23) - - - I22 - I21.
BANK: 29 – 5 (TOBE) = 24

The build allowance for the third round is 3a) 3, 3b) 3, and 3c) 4.

In-game map at <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/ingame/RR2575TB.png>

Bus Boss (Farnham and Aldershot) - BB422FAL

Round Seven

CHAMPS: The Bourne – Shortfield; Aldershot Town Centre – North Camp
BANG: Compton - Charles Hill Forest: Beacon Hill - Fleet
ROGER: Hogs Back Brewery - Runfold - The Sands
FEAR: Wrecclesham - Shortfield; Rowledge - Alice Hall Forest
FAB: Folly Hill - Farnham Castle - Farnham Town Centre: Aldershot Station - Aldershot Town

The second set of races is

10. Farnham Station (3H) – Badshot Lea (JS) 11. Beacon Hill (2D) – Rural Life Museum (8C)
12. Guildford (KS) – Church Crookham (3D) 13. The Rec (QH) – Runcorn (5C)
14. Runfold (9S) – Shortfield (6C) 15. Dippenhall (6H) – Heath End 2nd School (7D)
16. Upper Hale (JH) – Aldershot Town Centre (AS) 17. North Town (QD) – Sandy Hill (10H)
18. Alice Holt Forest (AC) – Charles Hill Forest (10C) 5. Folly Hill (9H) – North Camp (10D)

Enter up to 5 races. The build order for round 8 is Richard, Brad, Bob, Kevin and Roger.

In-game map at <https://variablepig.org/maps/bb/ingame/BB422FAL.png>

	FAB Richard <i>Blue</i>	FEAR Kev <i>Red</i>	BANG Bob <i>Black</i>	ROGER Roger <i>Green</i>	CHAMPS Brad <i>Brown</i>
1. Farnham Town Center (4H) – Tilford (9C)		15 + 8	15 - 8		
2. Ash (KD) – Shepherd and Flock (10S)	5 + 3 + 6		16 - 3	9 - 6	
3. Ash Vale (5S) – William Cobbett (AH)		4 - 5 + 3 - 1	13 + 5 + 2 + 2	5 - 3 - 2 + 2	8 + 1 - 2 - 2
4. Tweseldown (4D) – Rowledge (2C)		+ 5		30 - 5	
5. Folly Hill (9H) – North Camp (10D)	<i>Race not possible</i>				
6. Aldershot Town Center (2S) – Wrecclesham (3C)	+ 1 + 4	13 - 1 + 6 + 6 + 2	4 - 6	8 - 4 - 2	5 - 6
7. Hogs Back Brewery (7S) – The Sands (8S)				20 + 3 - 5	10 - 3 + 5
8. Farnborough (JD) – 6 th Form College (2H)	5 - 2 - 3	+ 2 + 1 + 1	16 - 1	+ 3 + 4	9 - 1 - 4
9. The Bourne (7C) – Dollis Hill (9D)					30

Bank	51	50	50	50	48
Points from Races	19	59	55	57	50
Builds	- 11	- 12	- 12	- 10	- 11
Corrections	<i>None this round</i>				
Totals	59	97	93	97	87

And finally, Raymond is 10!



THE CELESTIAL DRAGON #17



Deadline for all games: Friday 17th July 2026

Website: Still using the Variable Pig URL: <https://variablepig.org>

The Celestial Steam Locomotive	#47	Richard Smith	richard530smith@btinternet.com
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Waiting List / Notes:

BAG OF DUNGEON - game 2: John Walker, John Hopkins 1 or 2 more wanted
 KENDO NAGASAKI (Destination X Variant) – now entering elimination stage, so no new players
 RAILWAY RIVALS - Togo & Benin RR2576TB - Jim Reader, Brad Martin, 1 to 3 more wanted (GM will be Bob or Richard who are both playing in the game in SubPAR).
 CHOICE Suppenkasper Variant – Kevin Lee, Chris Hibbert, Steve Ham, John Walker, Michael Pargman, Dane Maslen – game start inside but more can slip in at the start.
 GOLDEN STRIDER Tarnished Variant 3-5 required (6-10 runners, 2 per team) – Steve Ham, John Walker
 HOUSE OF GAMES (no research) – light-hearted all-reader game continues, more can join
 NEW! RAILWAY RIVALS Wheel of Time fantasy map, 4-5 wanted (will run 2 games if demand, Jim, Richard and Bob will make up numbers as appropriate).
 NEW! RAILWAY RIVALS Uzbekistan 4-5 wanted (will run 2 games if demand).

Here Be Dragons	#80	John Walker	hbdragons@btinternet.com
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Waiting List / Notes:

NEARLY THE BEST GAME IN THE WORLD – Chris Hibbert, Richard Smith, 3 more wanted
 LYRIC QUIZ – game continues – anyone can play except Mr. Google.
 WORLD RECORD 9.762 - Richard Smith, Chris Hibbert, Steve Ham – 2-5 more wanted
 SNAKES AND LADDERS - Richard Smith, Bob Gingell, Chris Hibbert, Martin Walker – at least one more wanted.
 SPRINT FINISH – New running game – Chris Hibbert, Bob Gingell, Richard Smith, Steve Ham – game start inside
 NEW! SECHS NIMMT – 4+ wanted

The Tangerine Terror	#87	Howard Bishop	latixexile@outlook.com
I Am The Kurious Kumquat	#17		

Waiting List / Notes:

ORIGINS OF WW2 - Brendan Whyte, John Marsden - 3 more wanted
 DOS DE MAYO – 2 wanted
 ECOSYSTEM SAVANNA – John Walker, Richard Smith, Kevin Lee 3-6 wanted
 NAME OF THE GAME – continues, early doors so new entrants are fine.

SubPAR	#17	Jim Reader	jim_reader@hotmail.com
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Waiting List / Notes:

BUS BOSS - Shikoku (BB418SHI) - Brad Martin, Kevin Lee, Michael Pargman 1-2 more wanted
 BREAKING AWAY – Richard Smith, Chris Hibbert, Allan Stagg - 3 more wanted.
 BB Pays Cathar (BB4256PAY) - Brad Martin, John Marsden, Michael Pargman, Bob Gingell game start next issue, room for 1 more