

THE CELESTIAL DRAGON #18



Exciting Magnolia Plant Update!

THE CELESTIAL STEAM LOCOMOTIVE #48

HERE BE DRAGONS #81 / HERE BE DRAG #1

SUBPAR #18

THE TANGERINE TERROR #88 /

I AM THE KURIOUS KUMQUAT #18

DEADLINE: Friday 28th August 2026



THE CELESTIAL STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

Track no. 48

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The magnolia plant is still looking a bit sickly (see front cover), but has grown. Very soon there will be cans of boring paint dangling from its branches. Not such good news, alas, on the *Central Serous Retinopathy* front: At one point I was sure it was almost better as I forgot I had it, then it made a comeback. By the time it was photographed at the hospital it was *bigger* than last time! I have another exam in September, and if the cyst is still going strong it will have to be lasered to death.

Some progress on the pension in that I have now had the quote but sending the forms in (electronically) has been a fiddly. I have been told that as my lump sum should now arrive sometime towards the end of August, I won't be getting the *big bag of sand* from Rachel (or successor). It also looks like I won't need to sell the car, though I admit to using a Coinstar machine to pay for a recent supermarket shop.

As I write this, Nigel Farage (following accusations of financial irregularities) has just resigned as an MP and has called a by-election for his Clacton seat, claiming his re-election would be a "victory for the people against the establishment". None of the other major parties are fielding candidates, so he will be up against "novelty" candidates, and Count Binface has declared he will run. If I lived in Clacton I would rather have a comedian as my MP than the odious Farage, so would be voting for Binface. Probably not enough people doing the same for Binface to win, but it would be amusing if he did.

My low-cost DIY is now underway, with good progress on the decluttering. Stuff is either going to the dump, the garage or into my new cube storage, for which I bought the flat-packs some time ago. The only expense so far is £18 for guitar wall-hangers. They free up space though one might be accused of “posing”. I do have a few pictures that have seen better days that can make way. One requirement, however, is the pictures of Riley must be positioned such that he can watch over Raymond and Espeon.



One problem I had with the cube storage was the skirting boards preventing the bottom layer being flush with wall. Google told me my options were to remove some of the skirting board, use feet or a plinth to raise the units above the skirting board, or use larger L-brackets to fix the lower layer away from the wall. The upper layer can then be flush to the wall or the same distance away.

I went for the L-brackets in the end as they are nice and cheap (another £6), and not outside the bounds of my extremely limited DIY skills to fit.

Once I have finished, I will be able to fill the cubes with board games, books and CDs (photo added 11th July, at the top of page 2). The brackets should (hopefully) prevent the units tipping over onto Raymond’s bed. I have also started wall-hanging the guitars – two electric 6-strings, one 5-string electric bass, one 4-string semi-acoustic bass, one 6-string acoustic and one 12-string acoustic. Pic below of the Yamaha Pacifica. If you look closely you can see a couple of holes to the right. I managed to find a metal plate in the wall and had to try again 10cm west.

I am not watching any more *Babylon 5* as season 2 onwards are no longer “included with Prime” due to a recent increase in interest in the show. I’ve replaced it with *Doom Patrol*, the off-beat DC super-team show from 2020. Wonderfully weird, and at times surreal, such as a giant bottom descending from the sky with a jukebox attached that plays *Hot Diggity* by Perry Como, inducing insanity in the people, and turning the police into piñatas. I imagine some may bemoan the high f-word count in the dialogue.

I have also been enjoying *The Pendragon Cycle: Rise of the Merlin*. I’ve only watched the first two episodes so far in which Taliesin goes from a baby in a river to a 15th level bard in the blink of an eye (it’s that easy Druid XP table), Atlantis is destroyed following a bullfight, and the One True God starts to push out the old deities.

So, on to the games. The second outing for *By Wordley Demand* is starting now, and I have produced a scoring spreadsheet which I have also added to the [BPD rules page](#) on the VP website. The website also includes to rules for my [Bridge of Lies](#) conversion (also printed in this issue).



And finally, I have two fitness watches, both made in China, my old one was very cheap (£30) and the newer one, which was a present, a bit more expensive (ca. £60). The newer one developed a problem just after pairing with the phone app, so possibly a dodgy update, with the touch screen not working. Having tried several things recommended in YouTube videos, I resorted to the factory reset, but this didn’t restore the touch screen leaving it stuck on language selection and unable to pair. I now have to wait for the battery to run down, which will take weeks, so the old one is back in action for now!

THE LETTERS BIT



STEVE HAM

So how are you spending your days - I hope it isn't all spent on YouTube shorts -

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/3i_ErW-po80

Being a prog rock fan it's more "longs" for me on YouTube.

At least the World Cup is over now though the song celebrated thirty years of hurt, sixty years of hurt sounds desperately pathetic.

And we might just be still around for ninety. Southgate did OK but his tactics were seen as being too defensive and safety-first. Tuchel was supposed to bring in a braver style, such as the second half against Croatia, but in the end reverted to the notorious "low block".

CHRIS HIBBERT

(in response to last time's mention of the YMCA) The YMCA has an international chain of gyms and other facilities. One of their gyms is only about a half mile from me here, in suburban Mountain View. It's a really nice facility in a prominent location. The cryptic puzzles I do occasionally use "gym" or the like as a clue for the letter "Y". Everyone is familiar with the song by the Village People. It gets a fair amount of play at weddings (I don't get that at all) and at large sporting events. But I think most people think of the gay connection as localized to NYC in the 70s.

The Village People also had a big hit with "In The Navy" that was initially considered by the US Navy for use in recruitment media, but they were (allegedly) pressured into dropping it due its gay connotations.

JIM READER

Still having to keep my feet up and iced, so plenty of time for early orders. (*later*) I'm still under Doctor's orders to avoid putting weight on my left foot. The good news is that I start physio tomorrow after which I'm sure I'll have plenty of home exercises to do. The enforced lack of activity has been good for World Cup watching.

I'm expecting more about the injury in SubPAR. I have been able to watch World Cup games at silly times as I please thanks to being retired. I do think 32 teams is better than 48, but FIFA are now considering going up to 64!

Probably lost in the dusts of time, but I think I bought the belch words to the Crets - my parents, (Mum in particular) used to belch these all the time and my Mum once belched Archbishop of Canterbury 3x in a row without a break. Joy of having 8 brothers, I guess. You bought the grapes / taxi (and others) system for the size of said belch or fart.

I was taught the belching thing by my cousin Tim (the only member of my family who has a [Wikipedia entry](#), as far as I know) way back in (about) 1970, and it was I who introduced it to the Crets. Given its age it is of course perfectly likely that your mum picked it up independently. I think it was you who came up with the extension of "grapes" and "taxi" to things like "vineyard" and "British Rail" for large emissions.

Is it true that the new nickname for Southampton FC is the Sinners?

The FA is still dragging its feet about any possible sanctions against the manager. Update - with the zine about to go out he has now been charged, will there be another excessive punishment? Pelted with rotten fish on the streets of Portsmouth, perhaps?

MICHAEL PARGMAN

I had planned to do my orders yesterday, but I didn't think my excursion outside of town would take more than 12 hours. I rented a car to drive out of town to meet with two old ladies in their 80's, the youngest cousins of my mother, to look at old family pictures and try to identify who were in the pictures. It was all very nice and productive. I even found pictures of my parents from family events before I was born. My grandfather on my mother's side had 11 surviving siblings, so there were a lot of people in the pictures, with all the spouses and kids. I had photos from when we had parties for my grandfather when he turned 70 and 80. And there were a lot of photos from the 40's, 50's and 60's.

Still, I have one old photo album, found in the cellar of my mother, with pictures from before 1920 where no one could be identified.

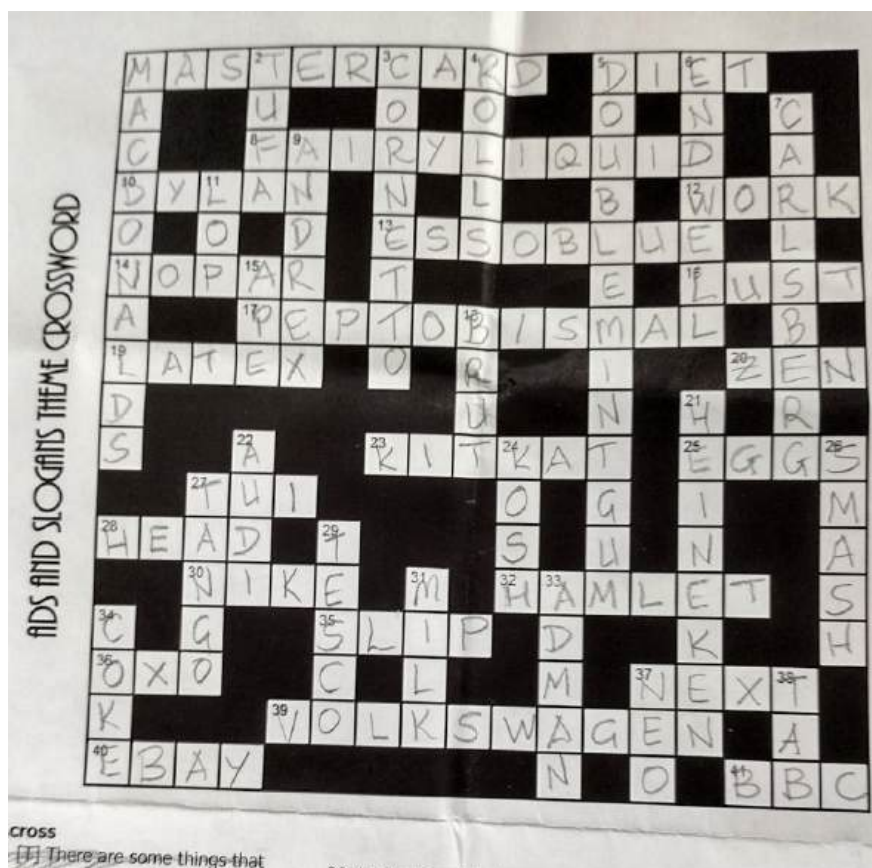
There's something special about old sepia-tinged family photos that may well be totally lost in the digital era. I can also imagine AI taking all the fun out of genealogy, and the veracity of its output would all depend on the content used to create the LLM. Official records may not be available for privacy reasons, and as we all know social media is filled with claptrap, baloney, hogwash, hooey, bunkum and balderdash.

MIKE POLLARD

You mentioned X-ray Spex after Penetration - I've also got their 12" single. A few years ago, I saw Penetration in Islington (sadly, Pauline's voice had gone with age) and the support was Essential Logic, whose band member Laura Logic used to be in Spex, but I didn't know that until after the gig. During their set I was racking my brains to think who they sounded like (they had 2 sax players and keyboards) and I only got it afterwards - like Spex of course!

Despite being a proghead, I do listen to punk and new wave from time to time, and some of the old stuff still sounds fresh today. Also, there are more proggy punk bands than you might imagine: Magazine, Wire, Cardiacs, Television, The Damned and The Stranglers all spring to mind.

STEVE GUEST



You were the only one to attempt the adverts crossword (or at least tell me they'd had a go) - all correct apart from one filler clue (doesn't count) and I've let you off the slight misspelling of Pepto Bismol - the song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mg0MMqKBbyw> is more memorable than the product name.

ALBUM REVIEWS

Gong – Bright Spirit (CD) (2026)



This is Gong's fourth album since the death of band leader Daevid Allen. He was one of many stars associated with the band along with Steve Hillage, Tim Blake, Pierre Moerlen, Gilli Smith, Didier Malherbe, Pip Pyle, Miquette Giraudy, Mike Howlett, Allan Holdsworth, Bill Bruford and more.

The current lineup is Ian East - saxophones, zurna, woodwinds and percussion; Fabio Golfetti - glissando guitar, guitar, vocals; Cheb Nettes - drums, percussion, vocals; Dave Sturt - bass, ebow bass, vocals and Kavus Torabi - vocals, electric and acoustic guitars, synth, harmonium. No "household names" but they are all great on this record. The production is lovely too – warm and inviting to your ears :-)

The album clocks in at a vinyl-friendly 43 minutes:

1. Dream of Mine (10:32)
2. Mantivule (6:22)
3. The Wonderment (5:11)
4. Stars in Heaven (4:01)
5. Fragrance of Paradise (7:39)
6. Relish the Possibility (3:09)
7. Eternal Hand (6:48)

Every track gives you a massive smile on the face, here's the first three:

Dream of Mine <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TB62NIMXuaE>

Mantivule <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQS8MtztPA0>

The Wonderment <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNTpa5dtB90>

Gong did some splendid records in the 1970s – *Camembert Electrique*, *Flying Teapot*, *Angel's Egg* and *You* being their best from their spacey/ trippy era, then they went more jazzy with *Shamal* and *Gazeuze!* The former was the first to heavily feature eastern instruments, rhythms and melodies, and there's quite a bit of that on the new record.

In fact Bright Spirit reprises many of the old sounds, with glissando guitar (very rarely used these days) and lots of sax and zurna. The vocals are quite restrained (no space whispers etc.) and there are lengthy instrumental parts reminiscent of Pierre Moerlen's Gong jazzy albums, such as *Downwind* whose inventive percussion is reimaged on Bright Spirit.

I find myself struggling to pinpoint exactly why I like this album so much. I bought it, ripped it to my phone and listened to it twice on a long walk. I was amazed at how lovely it was to listen to – all the tracks bristle with life and have a pleasing hypnotic quality, and enduring playfulness. Somehow the current band have embraced the classic sounds of Gong but without the slightest whiff of regurgitation - rather it's all fresh, natural, beautifully played and thoroughly enjoyable.

Hawkwind - Psychedelic Selection (CD) (2026)



Psychedelic Selection is a mixed bag of new tracks, old tracks reworked, and archive recordings. Hawkwind's last studio album *There Is No Space For Us* was one of their best in recent years, and the new tracks are all good, my favourite being the synth-heavy instrumental *The Land of Min*. There are couple of tracks written by guitarist Magnus Martin, and they're both very enjoyable - *Ocean's Spiral* is a great instrumental and *The Judge and the Fisherman* is wonderfully silly, with a rare (these days) reference to cannabis usage.



For the old tracks, we get a decent version of *Hurry on Sundown*, this being the last thing the late Huw Lloyd-Langton played on (for Hawkwind).

This is followed by a new version of *The Demented Man* that I don't think is as good as the original or the EBB cover. The CD booklet notes say "*The Demented Man* is perhaps the most beautiful jewel in the crown of Brock's ballads, its keyboard orchestration lifting the melody from its original and suffusing it with something closer to wistful wonder."

There is also a slow minor key rendition of *Days of the Underground* that I didn't like at first but has grown on me, and a banging live version of *Psi Power*.

The Land of Min <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhcxMJAMbjc> .

The Demented Man <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqlzaFBURdw>

Those Days of the Underground <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzRSMsAFG7w>

PSI Power <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pAqCuXplao>

Overall I think this a decent record with lots to enjoy for established Hawkwind fans, but it's by no means an essential purchase. I didn't review *Vox Occulta* in the end, but might do next time, and / or perhaps an old CD from my collection (which is currently being tidied!)

POSTAL RULES FOR BRIDGE OF LIES

A postal adaptation of the popular BBC game show <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0015fn5> for 4-6 players. Version 1.0 By Richard Smith 2026.

Each player has his own *Individual Crossing* to negotiate to accumulate money for the pot. At the same time all the players work together to try to complete the *Final Crossing* of a bridge to claim the pot. Whilst it is a cooperative game, the player raising the most cash gets extra kudos.

Game Start

Each player is given the same choice of categories for his *Individual Crossing* and should give a preference order. There will be one more category than there are players to choose from. The GM will try to allocate the categories equitably according to the preferences given. The categories will be broad like “music”, “geography” and “movies” but will all be based on a specific true or false premise, that will be revealed at the start of the first round proper. For example “movies” might become “Films directed by Stephen Spielberg” and the statements are *Truths* if directed by Spielberg and *Lies* if they were not directed by him.

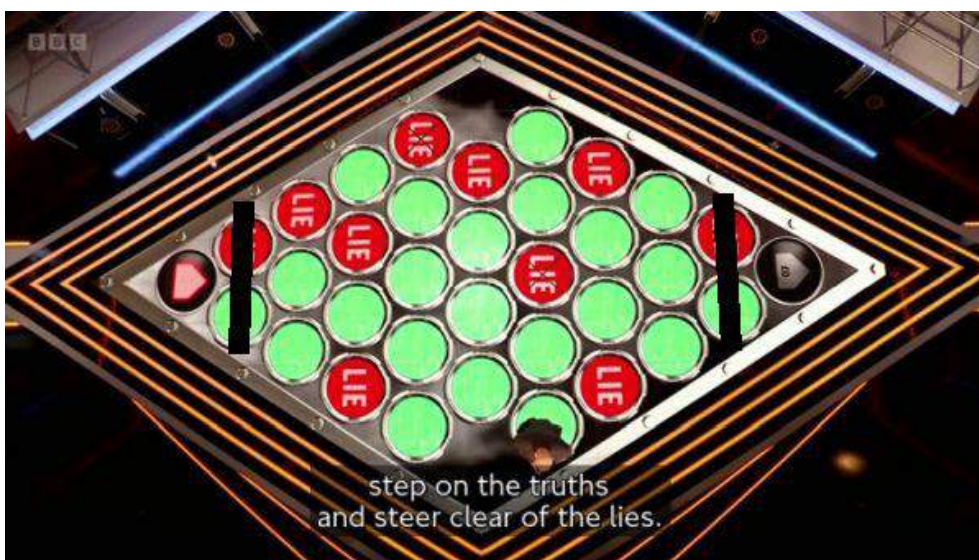
There is no specific topic for the *Final Crossing* – the statements are general knowledge, true or false, with only one in each row being true.

Game End

The game ends when the team successfully crosses the final bridge, or finds the same number of *Lies* as there are players. If the crossing is successful, after one final move, the total pot from all the *Individual Crossings* is calculated and paid to the players. If it fails, the game ends immediately. The *Final Crossing* will take 6 - 13 rounds, depending on the number of players and the number of *Lies* selected.

Individual Crossings

In the TV show, the bridge has 32 statements (22 truths, 10 lies [31%]) and 2 safety squares. For the postal game the initial and final 2-statement lines are omitted and there are 19 truths and 9 lies [32%].



The player starts in one corner of the diamond (the pink arrow in the image). Each round, the player must step on one of the exposed statements. If the statement is a *Truth* £100 is added to the pot, and adjacent unexposed statements are revealed. If the statement is a *Lie*, the pot is halved if it is first or second *Lie*, if the third the player is out and no money is banked (but see panic button rule).



If a player makes it to the grey arrow at the other side of the diamond, the money in the pot is doubled and banked. If the game ends with the player's crossing incomplete, the current pot is banked (not doubled).

Panic Button

If and when the *Final Crossing* is completed, all players with incomplete *Individual Crossings* get one more move in an attempt to boost the score and possibly get to the end step. However, the other players get to vote on whether or not to press the “panic button”, separately for each player. If it is pressed, the pot prior to the final move is banked and this could save the player from going out but also result in a smaller pot.

Safety Squares

Landing on safety square (golden shield) causes a random *Lie* (amongst the visible statements) to be revealed. Apart from that it effectively “wastes” a turn which may or may not be a good thing.

Final Crossing

As per the TV show, the final bridge has the shape 3,4,3,4,3,2 with 4 players. With 5 players it is 3,3,4,3,4,3,2 and with 6 players 3,4,3,4,3,4,3,2.



In each row, only one statement is true. Stepping on the *Truth* clears the row, stepping on a *Lie* causes the player to be eliminated (but they may still vote). Note that if a player selects a *Lie* on the final row, a new pair of statements appear, one *Truth*, one *Lie*.

Players tackle the *Final Crossing* one at a time, in random order.

The Wave

In the TV show, if the player has not selected a statement by the time the wave reaches them, they are out. In the postal game, it is the same but instead of real time being used, the wave hits if no decision is made, as described below.

Voting

All players (including those eliminated) get to vote on which statement should be stepped on. If there is a tie, and one of the tied options is the current player's choice, that is selected. If the current player's choice is not one of the tied options, no statement is chosen in time to avoid the wave. Note that this can only happen with five or more players.

Notes

- Research is not allowed.
- Conferring between players is not allowed. There is no "hotline" step.
- If a player NMRs they choose a random step for their Individual Crossing, vote randomly in the Final Crossing and, if appropriate, always vote against pressing the Panic Button.
- Scores and number of players will be recorded (no names) at the end of the rules web page on the VP site.

Example Round

At the start of the game, Alice, Bill, Carol and Dave all have to tackle the first row of their *Individual Crossings*. At least one of the options is a Truth, but it could be two or even all three.

- ALICE (Books by one of the Bronte Sisters): Shirley, Emma, Carrie
- BILL (FA Cup Winners): Crystal Palace, Fulham, Wigan
- CAROL (Landlocked Countries): Kazakhstan, Eswatini, Belgium
- DAVE (David Bowie Albums): Arrival, Blackstar, Lodger

FINAL CROSSING: Vienna was a UK number one hit for Ultravox, Paula Radcliffe has never won an Olympic medal, The speed of light is 3×10^8 miles per hour.

Bill is randomly selected to be the first player on the bridge.

- Alice chooses Emma for her Individual and votes for Paula Radcliffe in the Final
- Bill chooses Crystal Palace for his individual and votes for Vienna in the Final
- Carol chooses Kazakhstan for her Individual and votes for Paula Radcliffe in the Final
- Dave chooses Blackstar for his individual and votes for the speed of light in the Final

So Alice has found a *Lie* and must choose between the other two options next time. The other three players have found *Truths*, gain £100 in their pots, and more statements are revealed.

On the *Final Crossing*, the team has voted for Paula Radcliffe, the correct answer, and the first row is cleared, giving a choice of four new statements in the second row. Had Bill chosen the speed of light it would have been 2 vs. 2 and his choice would be the casting vote.

CHOICE - SUPPENKASPER VARIANT - ROUNDS 1-3



<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

Scoreboard:

Player	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Steve Ham	(3+6)=9, (5+5)=10 w1	(4+5)=9, (5+5)=10 w1	(4+5)=9, (4+5)=9 w2
Chris Hibbert	(1+3)=4, (5+6)=11 w5	(1+5)=6, (5+5)=10 w4	(2+4)=6, (5+5)=10 w4
Kevin Lee	(3+6)=9, (5+5)=10 w1	(4+5)=9, (5+5)=10 w1	(4+5)=9, (4+2)=6 w5
Dane Maslen	(3+6)=9, (5+1)=6 w5	(4+5)=9, (5+1)=6 w5	(4+5)=9, (4+5)=9 w2
Michael Pargman	(3+6)=9, (5+5)=10 w1	(1+5)=6, (5+5)=10 w4	(2+4)=6, (5+5)=10 w4
Roger Trethewey	(1+5)=6, (3+5)=8 w6	(1+5)=6, (5+5)=10 w4	(2+4)=6, (5+5)=10 w4
John Walker	(1+3)=4, (5+5)=10 w6	(1+5)=6, (5+5)=10 w4	(2+4)=6, (5+5)=10 w4

Player	Score	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Würfel	Würfel	Würfel
Steve Ham	-400								4	2			11-----	2-----	
Chris Hibbert	-800			1		2				2	1		44-----	5-----	
Kevin Lee	-600					1			3	2			11-----	5-----	
Dane Maslen	-400					2			4				2-----	55-----	
Michael Pargman	-600					1			1	4			1-----	44-----	
Roger Trethewey	-600					3		1		2			44-----	6-----	
John Walker	-600			1		2				3			44-----	6-----	

Player	FdH	Null	Kur	-1	-2	Sup	Leftovers Plate
Steve Ham							
Chris Hibbert							
Kevin Lee							
Dane Maslen							
Michael Pargman							
Roger Trethewey							
John Walker							

And they're off! Unsurprisingly given the rolls, 6s, 9s and 10s were popular. No specials used yet, but given the rather perverse rolls for rounds 4-6, I wouldn't be surprised to see a few used next time.

New Rolls:

R4: 1,1,6,6,6

R5: 3,4,5,5,6

R6: 1,1,3,6,6

BY WORDLEY DEMAND (NEW GAME) – ROUND 0 OF 8



Rules on the VP website have been slightly updated
<https://variablepig.org/rules/bypop.html#Wordle>

Words must be valid according to this site
<https://scrabble.collinsdictionary.com/check/>

There will be 8 rounds this time so double-wordling is more doable, and players are less likely to overly benefit from an “easy” Wordle. Note that plurals are now allowed, but target words will not be plurals, will not contain duplicate letters, and will not contain the letter X.

The theme for round 1 is **Drugs**.

- 1) A large pharmaceutical company
- 2) A painkiller
- 3) A disease that has a vaccine
- 4) A popular recreational drug
- 5) A famous song about drugs (title, not performer, ignore “The” and “A” so “The Joker” gets you a J)

Game End Comments part two:

Chris Hibbert: I enjoyed the By Wordley Demand game. Since I got my Wordle on T4, there was no point to aiming for a Wordle word. I did okay with guessing common answers, but not as well as three who went for CLING. Congrats, Bob.

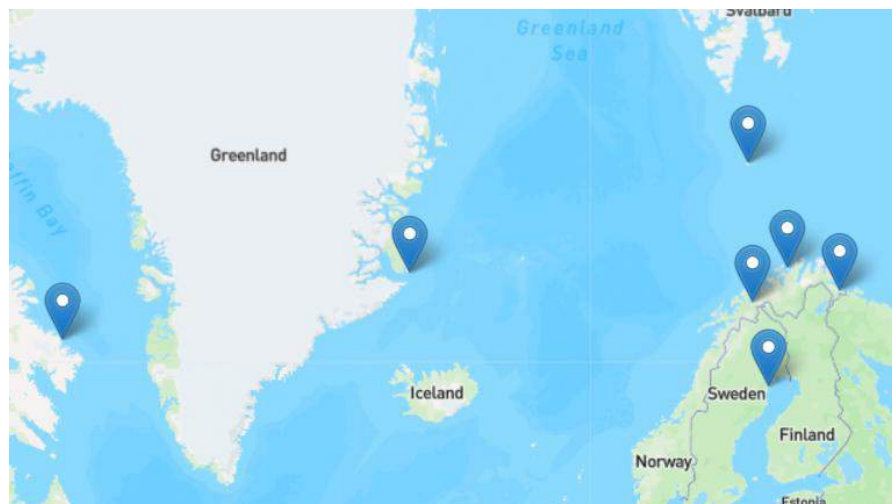
WHERE IN THE WORLD IS KENDO NAGASAKI - DESTINATION X - ROUND 7



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.



We have our first elimination. Bob Pitman is the unlucky recipient of the first red card – the location of his transmitter cannot be revealed but it was not the furthest by much.

As the game may end next round, I was wondering how players feel about another Destination X for the next game, or another Three Wishes or Temperature Control, or the “Classic” original (?) but not London Underground.

Round 7:

Player	Who	Where	Lat	Lon
Bob Gingell	Maggie Beer (1945-)	Mack Brewery, Nordkjosbotn, Norway	69.2174	19.5583
Steve Guest	Bear Grylls (1974-)	Bear Island, Norway	74.44	19.0475
Chris Hibbert	Marilyn Renfree (1947-)	Uunarteq, Greenland	70.418889	-21.972222
Dane Maslen	Marilyn Renfree (1947-)	Qikiqtarjuaq, Nunavut, Canada	67.554722	-64.028056
Bob Pitman		Red card – furthest away		
Jim Reader	Helen Reddy (1941-2020)	Piteå, Sweden	65.316667	21.483333
Martin Walker	Robyn Davidson (1950-)	Hammerfest, Norway	70.6634	23.6821
Brendan Whyte	Jacinta Arden (1980-)	Kirkenes, Norway	69.726944	30.045556

Public response to the player with the closest guess:

There is water between your transmitter and my hiding place, which is on a land mass where you might find earth, wind and fire.

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.

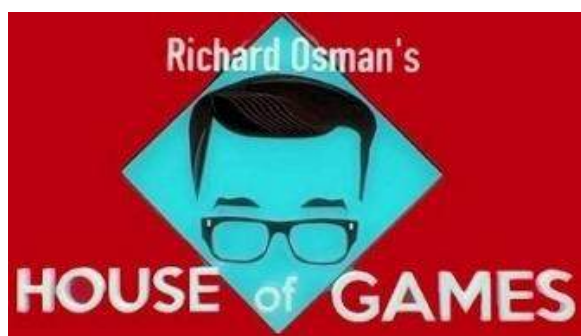
Round 1:

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.

HOUSE OF GAMES - NO RESEARCH VERSION - ROUND 2 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.

For "Wednesday" I have replaced *And The Answer Isn't* with a round of *Where is Kazakhstan?* And *Password123* gets a rest in favour of a *You Spell Terrible*. There will be 18 questions per round (6x3) for a total of 90 in the game.

New players start on the lowest score, currently 6.

Steve Guest and Bob Pitman are the big scorers this time

Distinctly Average: Most players weren't too far out on the beehives and laundrettes values, but there was a big variation on the sperm one, though a remarkably accurate average. I'm not sure how the value of 525 billion was arrived at. If every sperm really was sacred (and resulted in a person) then the two-child cap on benefits would be a bit of a bummer.

I'm Terrible at Dating: No agreement on Ada Lovelace's pioneering achievement (18th, 19th or 20th century). Everyone was close with Deep Throat, and again with Pirates of Penzance (which I thought was early 20th century).

And The Answer Isn't: There's a chance you've heard of Eigengrau but remembering its hex code is unlikely (most people know white is FFFFFFFF and black is 000000). The philosophy quote is guessable and the MacDonald's one is something players might well have heard before.

Password123: The Taylor Swift one is pretty hard – even if you knew it was Reading (Pennsylvania, not Berkshire) you'd probably need the three guesses on the number of albums. The David Attenborough one was quite easy, especially the year as his 100th birthday has been in the news. As for Donald Trump, the president number can be covered with the three guesses, but that won't help if you don't know the name.

Half-arted: Dune was suggested with a sand dune, a palm tree and a worm (though it was pointed out to me that there are no palm trees in the movie). The more cryptic 1984 drawing was meant to be shoulder pads, legwarmers and the miner's strike – all associated with the year. The Hobbit was an easier one to guess, albeit without the hairy feet it might have been Children of Men.

Answer Smash: A little bit harder than last round, with Macy Gray's hit being unknown to some and classic computer game knowledge required. I imagine Duke Nukemi Badenoch would probably like to use the *Shrink Ray* on Nigel Farage :-0

SCOREBOARD:

Player	PTS	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Steve Guest	19(11)	100m	1800	10bn	1875	1975	1905	d	a	a		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Bob Pitman	18(11)	200m	10k	8bn	1840	1971	1870	d	a	c		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Steve Ham	14(5)	4.5m	4950	1.2bn	1793	1973	1876	c	a	c		✓				✓		✓	
John Walker	13(6)	50m	150k	200m	1745	1965	1863	a	c	a		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Bob Gingell	13(7)	2.14m	421	15m	1889	1971	1881	d	b	c		✓		✓		✓	✓		
Jim Reader	10(7)	100m	10k	5tn	1943	1972	1898	d	a	c									
Mike Pollard	9(4)	500k	7k	20m	1865	1972	1908	b	a	c									
Chris Hibbert	6(3)	250k	1k	1bn	1942	1978	1874	b	a	c						✓			
Answer		102m	2213	525bn	1843	1972	1879	d	a	c									
(Average)		57.17m	23146	628bn															

R2 (Tuesday) Answers:

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? **101.7 million**
- 20) How many laundromats were there in the UK in April 2026? **2213**
- 21) How many sperm cells does a healthy male human produce in a lifetime? **525 billion**

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? **1843**
- 23) In which year did Linda Lovelace star in the infamous movie *Deep Throat*? **1972**
- 24) In 1980 Linda Ronstadt starred in a performance of *The Pirates of Penzance*. In what year was the opera first performed in public? **1879** (New Year's Eve in New York City)

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

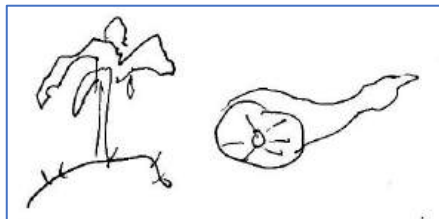
R2: Password123

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.**

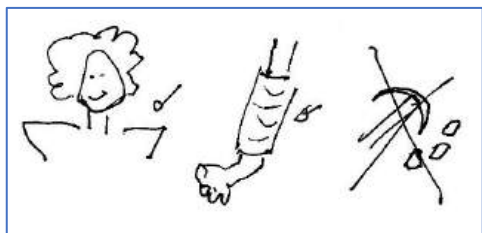
- 28) Taylor Swift: City of birth + number of US Billboard #1 albums **Reading15**
- 29) David Attenborough: University he graduated from + year of his birth **Cambridge1926**
- 30) Donald Trump: First name of his youngest son + his (second) president number **Barron47**

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) **Dune** (sand dune and worm)



32) **1984** (shoulder pads, leg warmers, miners' strike)



33) **The Hobbit** (small person with hairy feet)

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 **DIPLOMACY GRAY**

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

36) First of two 1980s computer games featuring "Lord Chaos" / French comic hero from the 1960s **DUNGEON MASTERIX (THE GAUL)**

R3 (Wednesday) Questions:

Richard's button results in two different games this time ...

R3: 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.

37) As of 17th June 2026, how many confirmed moons does Saturn have?

38) As of 1st July 2026, how many test match runs has Joe Root made?

39) What is the currently accepted best estimate for the number of fish in the ocean?

R3: I'm Terrible at Dating

2 points if exact, otherwise 1 point for nearest player(s). There is an Italian science theme this time.

40) In which year were eyeglasses invented?

41) In which year did Italian polymath Gerolamo Cardano discover complex numbers?

42) In which year did Riccardo Giacconi and his team discover cosmic X-rays?

R3: Where is Kazakhstan?

2 points for anyone getting the correct hex, and if no-one does, the player(s) the least hexes away get a point. Our map today is World Cup 2026 venues:



43) Which hex contains Arrowhead Stadium?

44) Which hex contains Estadio BBVA?

45) Which hex contains BMO Field?

R3: You Spell Terrible

You are asked three questions, each of which has an answer that is tricky to spell. You get one point for getting the answer right, plus an additional point if it is spelt correctly (without recourse to spell-checkers or the internet).

46) The song *Motorhead* by Ian “Lemmy” Kilmister is unusual in that it mentions what particular shape in its lyrics?

- 47) Klaus Teuber's 1990 board game *Hoity Toity* is also known as *Fair Means or Foul*, and what two-word German name? BGG gives two alternative spellings for this name, either will be taken as correct.
- 48) What is the word for the formation or use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to?

R3: Half-arted

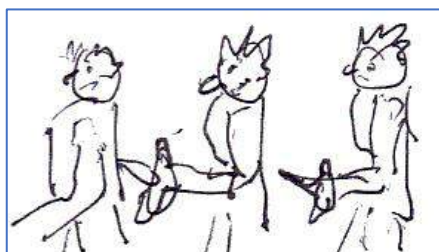
On the TV show three players all add to a picture which the fourth person has to guess what it is (usually a film, TV show, famous person etc.) For the postal game you just get one crappy image hand-drawn by the GM. 1 point each. This time all three are TV shows, the first from the USA, the second the UK, and the third has versions from multiple countries.



49) TV



50) TV



51) TV

(I think, if anything, the above drawings are even worse than last time – maybe I'll do Totes Emoji instead for "Thursday")

R3: 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.

- 52) Baseball team from Boston / military intelligence or deafening silence, for example
- 53) Milk-producing exocrine / former Manchester mayor replacing Keir Starmer
- 54) World's no.1 AI tool / 19th century American dubbed "The Greatest Showman"

CRYSTAL BALL 2026 - ¡Y VIVA ESPAÑA!



- Kier Starmer hints at a public holiday if England win the World Cup. At the time of writing England have just made it to the semi-finals. Update: Spain beat Argentina in final, so both Walkers bag a couple of points.
- Pogacar and Vingegaard are currently scrapping over the yellow jersey in the Tour De France, but it looks like Pogacar will be the eventual winner (Steve and Martin gaining a point on their rivals) as (update) Vingegaard has broken his collar bone!
- As predicted last time, as soon as I switched my F1 selection from Russell to Antonelli, the pendulum swung back to Russell, with the lead down to 25 after the British GP, but Belgium put Antonelli back in the driver's seat as he won and Russell was bumped out of it by Hamilton.
- If the tie-breaker is needed, I am hoping that the appointment of Andy Burnham as PM will take support away from the hateful, xenophobic Reform party, though in reality they will probably lose more votes to the even more extreme *Restore Britain* party (led by a former chairman of Southampton FC).

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 [2]	France	Spain [2]
11L	Cycling	Tour De France	Jul	Pogacar [2]	Pogacar (JOKER) [4]	Pogacar (JOKER) [4]	Pogacar [2]	Pogacar [2]
12L	Tennis	US Open (men)	Aug	Alcaraz	Sinner	Sinner	Sinner	Alcaraz
13L	Golf	Solheim Cup	Sep	Europe	Europe	USA	Europe	USA
14L	Baseball	World Series	Oct	LA Dodgers	Padres	Seattle	Cleveland	LA Dodgers
15L	Formula 1	Champion Driver	Nov	Russell Anotnelli*	Verstappen	Norris	Verstappen	Norris
TB	UK Politics	Reform opinion poll %	Dec	15%	26%	23%	22%	35%
SCORE				8	11	10	5	11

* free change

BUS BOSS YNIS MON (BB423MON) ROUND 6

GM Bob Gingell

ROGER follows CACHU to the mainland while CACHU heads to the north coast and MARS reaches the last unconnected large town. For the first set of races poverty priority means purchasing will be the same as in Round 6. A total of 15 out of 47 destinations have not been connected so there are likely to be some more races carried forward from Rounds 8 and 9.

GM note: There are three races to unconnected destinations so those will be reoffered in Round 8. However, unlike in Railway Rivals, the Bus Boss rules maintain the upper limit of 6 entries per round in a three-player game irrespective of how many races are carried forward from previous rounds.

CACHU, blue (Richard Smith): $39 - 12 = 27$.
Llanfaethlu - Cemaes - Bull Bay [$5+2, 3+2 = 12$]

MARS, orange (John Marsden): $40 - 12 = 28$.
Penysarn - Amlwch - Rhosybol; Dwyran - Newborough [$1+2, 3+2; 2+2 = 12$]

ROGER, green (Roger Trethewey): $42 - 10 = 32$.
Menai Bridge - Llanfair PG - Penrhos Garnedd [$2+2, 4+2 = 10$]

Races for Round 7 (enter any 6):

1. 2D (Church Bay) – JC (Bryngwran)
2. QH (Dwran) – 7D (Amlwch)
3. 7S (Bangor) – QD (Brynteg)
4. 4D (Wylfa) – JD (Moelfre) [*Not possible – reoffer*]
5. 5C (Penrhos) – 6C (Trearddur Bay) [*Not possible – reoffer*]
6. 2C (Holyhead) – 5H (Rhostrehwfa)
7. 6H (Llangefni) – KH (Brynsiencin)
8. AC (Ferry to Ireland) – 5S (Caernarfon) [*Not possible – reoffer*]
9. TS (Menai Bridge) – 7H (Amlwch)

Bid order for Round 7: Richard, John, Roger,

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

BUS BOSS YNIS MON (BB424MON) ROUND 6

GM Richard Smith

Everyone gets their first choice build this time. The GM has yet to create a BB race generator program so had to do it the slow way with a real pack of cards.

BAA Green Bob Gingell	Brynteg - Llangefni; Amlwch - Rhosybol ($5+3+2+2=12$) BANK: $40 - 12 = 28$ <i>BAA = Bob's Adventure Accelerates</i>
NYE Blue Brad Martin	Llangaffo – Newborough; Bangor – Penthosgarnedd; Pentraeth - Benllech ($1+2+3+2+2+2=12$) BANK: $40 - 12 = 28$ <i>NYE = New, Yellow, Electric (Buses)</i>
TAFF Yellow Jim Reader	Caernarfon - Penrhosgarnedd - Bangor ($6+2+2+2=12$) BANK: $41 - 12 = 29$ <i>TAFF = Terrific All-round Ferries and Freight</i>

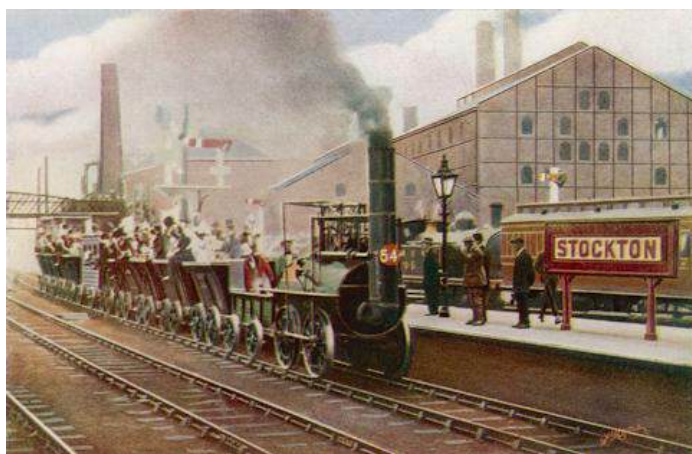
Races for Round 7, enter up to 6:

1. (2S) Snowdonia – (3D) Cemaes
2. (KS) Llangoed – (QH) Dwyran
3. (JS) Beaumaris – (9C) Llanfachraeth
4. (JH) Llangaffo – (KD) Benllech
5. (10H) Newborough (Niwbwrch) – (4C) Llaingoch
6. (QD) Brynteg – (8C) Vally (Y Falli)
7. (QS) Llandonda – (5S) Carenarfon
8. (7H) Llangefni - (AH) Abberfraw
9. (3C) Holyhead (Caergybi) – (8D) Rhosybol

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

Bid order for Round 7: Bob, Brad, Jim (Bob and Brad equal poorest, order flipped from last round as per rule 33)

RAILWAY RIVALS DURHAM 1826 (RR2570DH) ROUND 4



Several more towns are now connected. PUFFING BILLY, LANCHESTER and GEAR have now completed their north-south lines and will be looking to spread out in other directions.

Meanwhile DIADEM are the first to enter the Pennines, with Barnard Castle (a very important town in 1826) also connected.

Not much use of the line upgrades. I am beginning to think this was an unnecessary complication, or could have been done in a simpler way (e.g. pay £50 to upgrade all line at the end of round 9).

PUFFING BILLY

Jim Reader

Yellow

4a. [4] (C44) - SUNDERLAND; (Seaham) - - - N48

4b. [3] (N48) - - - K50

4c. [6] (K50) - J49 - - - Durham

BANK: 31 +6 -1[GEAR,K50] +1[LANCHESTER,P66] = 37

LANCHESTER

Brendan Whyte

Blue

4a. [4] (E56) - - - BISHOP AUKLAND; (E43) - TANFIELD

4b. [3] (Aycliffe) - - - J63

4c. [6] (J63) - - - - - P66

BANK: 39 +6 +6 +1[GEAR,E46] -1[GEAR,N65] -1[GEAR,P66] -1[PUFFING BILLY,P66] = 49

GEAR

Kevin Lee

Green

4a. [4] (N42) --- NORTH SHIELDS; (N42) - SOUTH SHIELDS

4b. [3] (Eaglescliffe) --- YARM

4c. [6] (Washington) - - - - - E46

BANK: 12 +6 +6 +6 -1[DIADEM,H44] -1[LANCHESTER,E46] +1[PUFFING BILLY,K50] +1[LANCHESTER,N65] +1[LANCHESTER,P66] = 31

DIADEM

Steve Ham

Purple

4a. [4] (V20) - U21 (upgraded) - - - R22

4b. [3] (Wolsingham) - - - R14

4c. [6] (R14) - - STANHOPE; (R22) - - R24 - - BARNARD CASTLE

BANK: 38 +6 +6 +1[GEAR,H44] -1[upgrades] = 50

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

R5 Rolls are 5a) 6 5b) 4 5c) 5

RAILWAY RIVALS - SENEGAL & THE GAMBIA (RR2557SG) - ROUND 8



Despite 3 wins and a second, BEAR's lead was reduced. This was in part due to quite a lot of payments but also a crap roll (not a popular choice on the catering menu) in race 13.

FAR was only able to enter 4 races, but won three, paying extra in race 9 proving a good investment. They also collected quite a few payments.

No joy for LIONS from 40s races, but this should change in the next round as 45 and 46 both finally appear.

Looking at the map (link below) further builds are not obvious for any of the four companies.

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
8. Ziguinchor (55) - Touba (35)		20 [17] +3	10 [19] -3
9. Kerewan or Mensa Konko (56) - Guinea-Bissau (Sp4)		20 [6] -2	10 [6] +2
10. Dakar (24) - Saint Louis (11)	10 [10] -3 -3	0 [11] +1 +3	20 [10] -1 +3
11. Mali (Sp2) - Ndibdene Dhara or Linguere (16)	20 [34] +4		10 [38] -4
12. Joal Fadiout or M'bour (31) - Goudin or Kidira (43)	20 [23] -1 -2	+1	+2
13. Thies (25) - Banjul (61)	0 [15] -5	20 [15] +5	10 [16]
14. Tambacounda (44) - Banjul (63)	20 [24] -5	+5	

Last Turn	153	107.5	106.5
Points from Races	55	76	59
Builds	-8 -3	-8 +1	-8 +3 +3 -1
Points Total	197	176.5	162.5

BUILDS:

BEAR: (Janjanbureh) - - - Kolda - - Y13; (K10) - - - Louga [-3 LIONS]

FAR: (J7) - J8 - - Touba; (M10) - - - M13 - - Kaffrine

LIONS: (Richard Toll) --- - - - D14 - PODOR (+3); (Touba) - L10 [-1 FAR]

Races for Round 9: Enter up to 5 races and build up to 6 points of track

15. Guinea (S3) - Kaolack (33)

16. Janjanbureh (65) - Minerals (S5)

17. Dakar (23) - Foundiougne (32)

18. Koumpentoum or Velingara (51) - Richard Toll (12)

19. Sainsoubou or Saraya (45) - Sedhiou (54)

20. Kedougou (46) - Dakar (21)

21. Bassa Santa Su (66) - Louga (14)

RAILWAY RIVALS SYRIA (RR2566SY) ROUND 7



The initial races were mostly long ones, though the short race 2 could have been won by any of the three companies in it. BOOMS took the 20 SYP in this race and again in the close race 7.

Races 5 and 6 were uncontested - a nice tidy JR to Jordan then only BOB had a viable line to Lebanon.

Al-Malikiya is still unconnected but is not being raced to in R8. BOOMS did manage to keep SHIT honest on this one.

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

	BOB Bob Gingell Black	BOOMS Jim Reader Orange	SKR Brad Martin Blue	ROGER Roger Threthewy Green	SHIT Michael Pargman Purple
1. Qamishli (44) - Jableh (25)		+2 +3	10 [37] -3 -2		20 [37] +3 -3
2. Hama (52) - Aleppo (15)	10 [10] -2 -1 -1	20 [9] +1 +2	0 [9] -1 +1		+1
3. Homs (54) - Al-Hazakah (42)		0 [35]		10 [31] +2	20 [28] -2
4. Aleppo (14) - Raqqa (32)			15 [12]		15 [12]
5. Jordan (Sp4) - Abu Kamal (36)	JR 10 [47]			JR 10 [47]	
6. Daraa (66) - Lebanon (Sp5)	20 [22] -1		+1		
7. Latakia (24) - As-Suwayda (65)	10 [26] +4 -3	20 [27] -4 -4 +3	20 [33] +4		

Last Turn	53	31	53	40	43
Points from Races	46	43	45	22	54
Buils	-12 -1 -1 -1 -1 +1 +1 +1	-12 -1 +1 +1	-12 -3 +1 +1	-12 -1 -1 -1 -1 -1 +1 +3 +1 +1	-12 -1 -1 -1 +1 +1 +1
Points Total	86	63	85	51	85

BUILDS:

BOB: (M17) - - O18 [-1 purple, -1 green] - - - - T15; (H43) - H42 - - - K41 - L41 [-1 green, -1 purple]

BOOMS: (Al Hasakah) --- --- - N43 - - - Qamishli: (N42) - - P41 [-1 purple]

SKR: (Raqqa) - - - - - E51 - E52 - - - Deir ez-Zor - H54 [-3 green]

ROGER: (L9) - - - - Afrin; (M19) - --- K18 [-1 blue, -1 black, -1 orange]; (O16) - - - L14 [-1 black, -1 orange]

SHIT: (F54) - - - - J56 - - J58 [-1 green]; (N7) - N6 [-1 black]; (Y11) - - - V9 - V8 [-1 blue]; (P41) - Q41

Races for Round 8: Enter any 4 and build up to 10 points of track.

- 8. Aleppo (16) - Latakia (23)
- 10. Damascus (63) - Salamiyah (53)
- 12. Tartus (26) - Raqqa (33)
- 14. Damascus (62) - Qamishli (45)

- 9. Historic Site (S6) - Afrin (12)
- 11. Deir ez-Zor (34) - Al-Hazakah (43)
- 13. Homs (55) - Iraq (S3)

RAILWAY RIVALS BHUTAN (RR2550BT) ROUND 11



All three companies now have over 300 ngultrums in the bank, with ROGER having the best round with 4 wins out of 4 - narrow wins in 29 and 32 and easy wins in 34 and 35. His fifth race might have been a JR with YETI (route 2 longer than BUTT's) for another 5 or 10 ngultrums.

BUTT is still the favourite going into the final round, and looking at the races should get enough to hold off their rivals. I do think the starts are pretty even in this map, and that leapfrog isn't essential.

	BUTT Bob Gingell Black	ROGER Roger Threthewey Green	YETI Jim Reader Yellow
29. Chhukha (41) - Mongar (62)		20 [30] -2	10 [30] +2
30. Dungkar (51) - Nubding (33)	20 [30]		
31. Tendu (22) - Assam (Sp3)			20 [20]
32. Ha (21) - Samdrup Jongkhar (56)	10 [34] +2 +2 -2 -3	20 [35] -3 -2 +3	0 [43] +3 -2 +2
33. Zhemgang (36) - Sakteng (64)	20 [20]		JR offer to ROGER not accepted
34. Gasa (12) - Sarpang (44)		20 [18] +3	10 [27] -3
35. China (Sp1) - Paro (13)		20 [5]	

Last Turn	321	252	270
Points from Races	49	79	45
Buils	-4		-3
Points Total	366	331	312

Builds:

BUTT: (Jakar) - B33 --- B32 {monastery}

YETI: (K38) --- Tashigang

Races for Round 12: Enter up to 5 new races, no builds. Please send game end comments with orders.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 36. West Bengal / Arunachal Pradesh (Sp2) - Daga (42) | 37. Phuntsholing (26) - Trongsa (34) |
| 38. Monasteries (Sp6) - Pemagatshel (65) | 39. Thimphu (14) - Punakha (31) |
| 40. Laya (11) - Samtse (23) | 41. Gelephu (45) - Samdrup Jongkhar (55) |
| 42. Panbang (53) - Trashigang (63) | |

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

RAILWAY RIVALS BHUTAN (RR2551BT) ROUND 11

GM Bob Gingell

GM note: HEART was wrongly given 30 points last round instead of 20 points for a sole entry win in Race 23. As a result its score has had to be corrected by deducting 10 points

A scoring error from Round 10 made HAPPY look as if it was closer to HEART than it should have been, but this round HEART closed the gap properly and HAPPY did not produce a big score like last round. Two races with a single entry helped HEART and BOTI, but BOTI's big score this round still left it in third place. No builds as the final round starts.

Races for Round 11 (max 5 entries):

29. (11–23): BOTI 20

30. (26–52): HEART 20

31. (34–41): HEART [18] 20 -7b +3 = 16; BOTI [18] 10 -3ht +9 = 16;

HAPPY [20] 0 -2b = -2.

32. (43–64): BOTI [30] 20 -1ht = 19; HEART [32+1 = 33] 10 -6hy +4 = 8;

HAPPY [42] 0 -3ht +6 = 3.

33. (54–#2 (both to M35)): HAPPY [13] 20 -3b +2 = 19; BOTI [13] 10 -2hy +3 = 11.

34. (63–15): HEART [27+1 = 28] 20 -1hy = 19; HAPPY [30] 10 +1 = 11.

35. (#1 (both G9)–31): HAPPY [13] 20 -2b = 18; BOTI [11] 10 +2 = 12.

Scores and no builds:

HAPPY, blue (Brad Martin): 341 +49 = 390.

HEART, purple (Steve Ham): 309 -10 (correction) = 299 +63 = 362.

BOTI, red (Richard Smith): 274 +78 = 352.

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

Races for Round 12 (enter any 4):

36. 14 (Thimphu) – #5 (Any Airport)

37. 25 (Phuntsholing) – 33 (Nubding)

38. 36 (Zhemgang) – 65 (Pemagatshel)

39. 44 (Sarpang) – 12 (Gasa)

40. 51 (Dungkar) – 46 (Gelephu)

41. 61 (Trashiyangtse) – 56 (Samdrup Jongkar)

42. #3 (Assam*) – 24 (Gedu)

* Not I22 as it is too close.

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

Good luck everyone and please send an End Game Statement with your orders.

RAILWAY RIVALS TOGO & BENIN (RR2576TB) - GAMESTART

GM: Bob Gingell

Players: Jim Reader, Brad Martin, Steve Ham, Richard Smith

Map URL: <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/TogoBeninRR.pdf>

Please send your company names, start preferences and colour preferences to Bob.

RAILWAY RIVALS UZBEKISTAN (RR2587UZ) - GAMESTART

GM: Richard Smith

Players: John Marsden, Brad Martin, Steve Ham, Jim Reader, Bob Gingell

Map URL: <https://variablepig.org/maps/rr/uzbekistan.html>

Please send your company names, start preferences and colour preferences to Richard.

RAILWAY RIVALS SOUTH TYROL (RR2572ST) ROUND 7

GM: Bob Gingell

An awful round for STYLE and a great one for NIR sees WIERER slip into the lead closely followed by NIR and STYLE ending in last place. The builds show an interest in the west with the two races carried forward having western destinations.

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 two or more races are carried forward is normally applied when there are 4 entries per round, so in Round 8 players will be allowed to enter up to 6 races.

However, please note that this interpretation of the rules is not accepted by all GMs as more usually 5 entries will be an absolute maximum; 6 entries is therefore only allowed in this particular game and there is no presumption that it will be allowed in future games.

Races for Round 7 (max 5 entries):

1. (12–64): WIERER [25] 20 +4 = 24; NIR [28] 10 -4w = 6.
2. (21–51): (Brixen) WIERER [14] 20 -3s-6n +5 = 16; NIR [16] 10 -3s +12 = 19; STYLE [14] 0 -5w-6n +6 = -5.
3. 34 (Trafal) – 23 (Meran) [not possible - reoffer]
4. (46–#4 (both Canazei): NIR [12+1 = 13] 20 -4w +3 = 19; WIERER [11+1 = 12] 10 -3n +4 = 11.
5. (54–45): NIR [26] 20 -2s +5 = 23; STYLE [29+1 = 30] 10 -5n +2 = 7.
6. (61–35): JR STYLE 10, NIR 10.
7. #5 (Shweiz/Lombardia – 11 (Bozen) [not possible - reoffer]

Scores and builds (max 12):

STYLE, red (Richard Smith): 95 +12 -5 = 102.
(H18) - - - - TRAFOL - D21 --- C22 --- C23 - B23 {Lombardia}. [-12 +6 +1 = -5]
WIERER, purple (Steve Ham): 81 +51 -5 = 127.
(P40) - PRETTAU; (Q18) - - - N19 - Latsch - --- K18 --- Schlanders. [-12 +6 +1 = -5]
NIR, blue (Brad Martin): 58 +77 -14 = 121.
(Meran) – T16 – S16 – R16 – Q16 – P16 – Naturns - --- - Latsch [-1s];
(N45) – M45 [-1w]. [-12-2 = -14]

Races for Round 8 (enter any 6):

- R3. 34 (Trafal) – 23 (Meran)
R7. #5 (Shweiz/Lombardia – 11 (Bozen)
8. 16 (Salurn) – 24 (Meran)
 9. 25 (St Leonhard) – 62 (Sand in Taufers)
 10. 32 (Latsch) – 53 (Sterzing)
 11. 42 (Kastelruth) – 13 (Eppan)
 12. 52 (Franzenfeste) – #3 (Belluno: Cortina d'Ampezzo / Agordo)
 13. 65 (Welsberg) – 44 (Corvara)
 14. #6 (Ski Resort: Bormio / Canazei / Cortina d'Ampezzo) – 31 (Schnals)

Round 8 build allowance: 10 points excluding payments to others.

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

RAILWAY RIVALS SOUTH TYROL (RR2565ST) ROUND 7



A near-perfect round for BUST (three wins and a tie) sees them break the 100 euros mark, closing on early leader STINK, who like ROGER and STIFY only took around 30 euros.

All four companies made useful track extensions, with BUST and STIFY pushing into the west, ROGER to the east and STINK building in the centre and completing the line up to Innsbruck.

A little note on the starts for this game. When I first saw the map I thought Brixen and Meran each having their own "side" would be advantageous earlier on, but the more central Bozen start might be the best in the long run. Maybe it's the best pick for a three-player game but not with four?

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

	BUST Bob Gingell Black	ROGER Roger Threthewy Green	STIFY Bob Pitman Red	STINK Michael Pargman Purple
1. St Leonhard (25) - Landeck or Innsbruck (Sp1)	race not possible			
2. Kaltern (15) - Ski Resort (Sp6)	20 [19] -5		10 [22] +5	
3. Sterzing (53) - Latsch (32)		20 [19] -2	0 [35] +6 -1	10 [31] +2 -6 +1
4. Salurn (16) - Naturns (26)	15 [21] +7 -4	15 [21] -7	+4	
5. St Ulrich (43) - Kiens (56)	20 [10] +1 +1		0 [17] +4 -1	10 [15] -4 -1
6. Antholz (64) - Schanls (31)		JR 10 [37]		JR 10 [37]
7. Sand In Taufers (62) - Kastelruth (42)	20 [39] +3 -1		+1	10 [20] -1 -3 +1

Last Turn	54	73	24	127
Points from Races	77	36	28	29
Builds	-12 -3 -1 +1	-12 +1	-12 -1 +3	-12 -1 +1
Points Total	116	98	42	144

BUILDS:

BUST: (T20) - Lana - R19 - - P20 --- --- N19 - M20 - L19 [-3 red, -1 green L19]

ROGER: (G48) --- - I47 - Kiens - - L48 - M48 - P49 - - - Welsberg

STIFY: (Latsch) - - - - - F15 - Mals; (Bruneck) - N47 - O47 [-1 purple]

STINK: (T19) - Lana; (D52) --- - Kastelruth; (C38) - - A37 - Innsbruck; (D53) - - - G55 - St Ulrich [-1 black]

Races for Round 8: Enter up to 4 races and build up to 10 points of track

R1. St Leonhard (25) - Landeck or Innsbruck (Sp1)

9. Vintl (55) - Lana (22)

11. Welschnofen (41) - Canazei or Cles (Sp4)

13. Leifers (14) - Schlanders (33)

8. Osttirol (Sp2) - Reschen (36)

10. Bruneck (61) - Eppan (13)

12. Toblach (66) - Brixen (51)

14. Terlan (21) - Sarnthein (45)

BAG OF DUNGEON - ROUND 8



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 (and Sirrus has it). Adventurers 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 8:

Turn order: Alendra, Sirrus, Torvok

Alendra moves one space to the south (1AP) and fires her bow (2APs) at the monster guarding the ring...

In a Schroedingeresque moment, the monster is revealed as a (*GM rummages in bag*) Troll [10 health, 2D6+4 attack] just as the arrow strikes it (*GM rolls 5 damage*) and it angrily engages with Alendra who quickly changes to sword and shield. She decided not to tag either of the other adventurers, which means she can escape if necessary.

Alendra Roll	Troll Roll	Alendra Health	Troll Health	Notes
8	10	9	5	shield absorbs 2
5	14	2	5	shield absorbs 2

Alendra escapes to the north (avoiding damage thanks to the boots), and the Troll heals back to full health (but stays put, i.e. does not go back to its original tile) before Sirrus arrives...

Sirrus has used all his APs to get to the monster so cannot ask Torvok for a tag, or run away.

Sirrus Roll	Troll Roll	Sirrus Health	Troll Health	Notes
11	13	9	10	armour absorbs 1
12	11	9	9	
20 (critical 4,4)	12	9	1	
10	8	9	0	troll dies

So Sirrus now has The Ring, and the Troll was carrying (*GM rummages in bag*) a Large Chest and an Acme Insurance certificate (see dungeon map image).

Torvok arrives at the same square as Sirrus, but the Troll is dead so it's just a matter of sorting out the items at the start of next round...

Round 9 Actions:

Turn order: Sirrus, Torvok, Alendra

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.

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)

Health:

6	7	8 (circled)	9	10
1	2	3	4	5

Items:

- Magic Sword: +2 to CBT 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 CBT for one fight

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

Monster Health:

dead!	1	2	3	4	5	6*	7	8	9	10**	11	12	13
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*Take one item on kill **Take two items on kill

Player: Jim Reader

Character: Torvok the Barbarian

Alendra the Elf

Alendra is fleet-footed and a skilled archer. She is a former Calen Taur 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)

Health:

6	7	8	9	
1	2 (circled)	3	4	5

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

Monster Health:

dead!	1	2	3	4	5	6*	7	8	9	10*	11	12	13
-------	---	---	---	---	---	----	---	---	---	-----	----	----	----

*Take one item on kill **Take two items on kill

Player: Chris Hibbert

Character: Alendra the Elf

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)

Health:

6	7	8	9 (circled)	10
1	2	3	4	5

Items:

- Morning Star: +2 to CBT 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

Monster Health:

dead!	1	2	3	4	5	6*	7	8	9	10**	11	12	13
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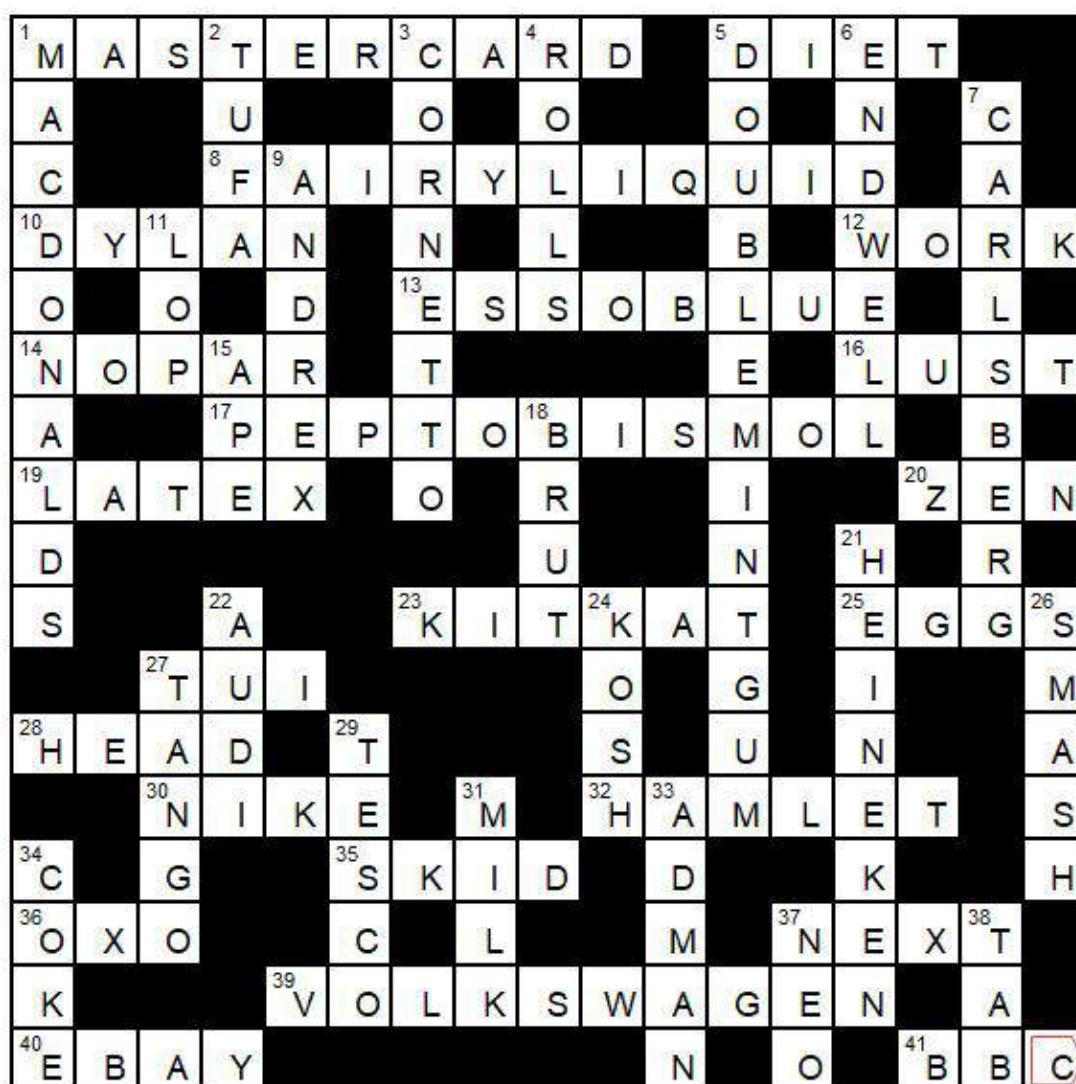
*Take one item on kill **Take two items on kill

Player: Bob Gingell

Character: Sirrus the Fighter

[illegible]

ADS AND SLOGANS THEME CROSSWORD - ANSWERS



Across

1. [T] There are some things that money can't buy (10) ... *and for the rest there's Mastercard.*
- 5 and 34D. [T] Just for the taste of it (4,4) *old slogan for Diet Coke.*
8. [T] It's greasy auntie! (5,6) *old Fairy Liquid ad in which a young lad expresses displeasure when handed a plate his aunt has just washed up with an inferior brand.*
10. His song "Forever Young" was used to promote Pepsi in 2009 with the tagline "Every generation refreshes the world" (5) *(Bob) Dylan.*
12. What comes before rest and play on the red planet? (4) *A Mars a day helps you work, rest and play.*
13. [T] They asked me how I knew ... (4,4) *it was Esso Blue – "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" song that featured in a recent HBD lyrics round.*
14. Stock full of birdies? (2-3) *No-par. A type of stock issued without a value, all birdies means no pars.*
16. Sin one might commit when watching the Flake advert (4) *Lust. I'm not sure if that advert would be allowed today, in which an attractive young woman eats a chocolate flake in a suggestive manner.*
17. [T] If you have nausea, heartburn, indigestion, upset stomach ... diarrhoea! (5,6) *Pepto Bismol. The jingle is far more memorable than the brand name. Workers in a café sing and do actions to suggest the various ailments, culminating in a man with a Welsh accent gleefully pointing to his butt and singing "diarrhoea, uh-uh!"*
19. My girdle is killing me, because it's not made of this? (5) *Latex. The "killing me" line was from an old Playtex advert.*
20. The Liberator's computer (3) *Zen (from Blake's Seven).*
23. [T] Have a break, have a ... (3,3) *Kit Kat (not a Kwik Krap, the rude version of the slogan).*

25. [T] Go to work on ... (4) *an egg – old slogan to promote eggs.*
27. [T] Discover your smile (3) *Long-standing slogan of Tui holidays.*
28. Leader found in the advert (4) *Head (hidden word).*
30. [T] Just do it (4) *World famous Nike slogan.*
32. [T] (air on a G-string) Happiness is ... (6) ... *a cigar called Hamlet. In each of the adverts, a man has an unfortunate experience and consoles himself with a cigar as the famous “riff” in Bach’s Air on a G String plays and the tagline is read out to fit with the music.*
35. Lose control of car via sulphur and a little butter (4) *Skid – S for Sulphur and kid for a juvenile goat who could be cryptically described as a “little butter” (groaner).*
36. [T] Give a meal man appeal (3) *Very old slogan for Oxo gravy / cubes.*
37. [T] One brand two ways of shopping (4) *Next. A huge clothing brand in the 80s, though the slogan was not used until 1993.*
39. [T] Think small (10) *Slogan for Volkswagen cars widely used in the USA.*
40. [T] Buy it sell it love it (4) *One of Ebay’s many slogans.*
41. [T] Nation shall speak peace unto nation (1,1,1) *It’s the good old BBC!*

Down

1. [T] I'm lovin' it (10) *MacDonald's world-famous tagline.*
2. Type of limestone that's more durable? (4) *Tufa (sounds like “tougher”).*
3. [T] Delicious ice cream of Italy (8) *The Cornetto adverts featured a song based on “O Solo Mio” delivered by a tenor in a gondola. Iconic.*
4. Posh car associated with 9D? (5) *(toilet) Rolls.*
5. [T] Double your pleasure, double your fun (10,3) *Wrigley's Doublemint Gum has been around since 1914 and the adverts famously featured twins.*
6. To have a good outcome, stop drinking? (3,4) *End Well (ending a well might prevent people drinking).*
7. [T] Probably ... (9) *Carlsberg. Advertising standards may have had something to say about “probably the best lager in the world” which may or may not have been why it was shortened to “probably”.*
9. [T] Soft strong and very long (6) *AndreX toilet paper. The slogan was often used in conjunction with a video of a cute puppy unravelling the roll of paper.*
11. Cut album about nothing (3) *Lop (LP about 0).*
15. Copy actor in PG Tips commercial, perhaps (3) *Ape. The PG Tips commercial used chimpanzees.*
18. [T] Splash it all over! (4) *Brut (33). Famously promoted by sports stars like Henry Cooper and Kevin Keegan.*
21. [T] The water in Majorca don't taste like what it oughta (8) *Heineken. There were some great ads showing how it “refreshes the parts other beers cannot reach”. In this case it was a woman having “anti-elocution” lessons, with each sip helping her to sound more common.*
22. [T] Vorsprung durch technik (4) *Audi. Despite being in German this slogan is world famous.*
24. Vorlon ambassador mostly observing dietary laws (4) *Kosher from Babylon 5!*
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) *Smash. The Smash robots ads were much-loved by kids (and adults).*
27. [T] You know when you've been ... (5) *Tango(ed). The bizarre ads with the orange bald man assaulting people were very popular and re-enacted by young people causing some consternation.*
29. [T] Every little helps (5) *Tesco. A rather boring slogan, but effective.*
31. [T] Watch out, watch out, there's a Humphrey about (4) *Milk. The ads were actually made by Unigate (a major dairy in the UK) but promoted milk in general. The Humphreys stole people's milk with very long stripy straws.*
33. Commercial peddler hiding in road manhole (5) *Adman (hidden word).*
34. see 5A
37. Matrix character, wild one (4) *Neo (one)*.*
38. [T] A beautiful drink for beautiful people (3) *Tab (low calorie cola). The strapline features in a ghastly 1978 TV commercial featuring Arnold Palmer.*

HERE BE DRAG



Serpents Gambit – GM roll = 5

Richard and Chris both acquire an item; Bob puts his Griffin Feathers up for sale for 3 gold.

Players need to pick one of the three options below. In addition, you may challenge Bob's sale price.

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**"

For any card you choose 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.

Q&A When I sell multiple goods, do I announce a total price for the bundle, or individual prices? *GM Each good needs to be listed individually.*

it also says "You must choose one card to sell. *GM This is indeed a contradiction or at least badly worded, to speed things up I've decided multiple sales is the best option.*

Lyrics 2 of 5 – 1 point will be added, to your singer and song points.

1 I spent a lifetime / Waiting for the right time / Now that you're near / The time is here, at last (1960) **It's now or never - Elvis Presley** (John Hopkins)

2 Matty told Hatty / About a thing she saw / Had two big horns / And a wooly jaw (1965) **Wooly Bully - Sam The Sham & The Pharaohs** (Brendan Whyte)

3 When you're down and out, / When you're on the street, / When evening falls so hard (1970) **Bridge over troubled water – Simon and Garfunkel** (Jim Reader, John Hopkins, Richard Smith, Martin Walker, Brendan Whyte, Steve Guest, Bob Pitman)

4 Okay, you think you got a pretty face / But the rest of you is out of place / You looked alright before (1975) **Fox on the Run - Sweet** (Jim Reader, John Hopkins, Richard Smith, Steve Guest, Bob Pitman)

5 We don't need no thought control / No dark sarcasm in the classroom (1980) **Another Brick in the Wall – Pink Floyd** (Jim Reader, John Hopkins, Richard Smith, Dane Maslen, Martin Walker, Brendan Whyte, Steve Guest, Chris Hibbert (song only), Bob Pitman)

6 There comes a time / When we heed a certain call / When the world must come together as one (1985) **We are the World – USA for Africa** (Jim Reader, Richard Smith (song only), Martin Walker, Brendan Whyte (song only), Steve Guest (song only), Chris Hibbert (song only))

7 Since you been gone, / I can do whatever I want / I can see whomever I choose (1990) **Nothing compares to you – Sinead O'Connor** (Jim Reader, Richard Smith, Dane Maslen, Martin Walker, Bob Pitman)

8 I'm 23 now but will I live to see 24? / The way things is going I don't know (1995) **Gangsta's Paradise – Coolio** (Martin Walker, Steve Guest (song only))

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) **Music - Madonna**

10 Time goes by so slowly / Every little thing that you say or do (2005) **Hung Up - Madonna**

Scores

Jim Reader 11+10=21

Richard Smith 11+9=20

Steve Guest 11+8=19

Martin Walker 6+10=16

Bob Pitman 8+8=16

John Hopkins 6+8=14

Dane Maslen 9+4=13

Brendan Whyte 6+7=13

Chris Hibbert 0+2=2

Comments

Martin - 9. Robbie Williams?

Brendan - 6 we are the world. Banaid.

Jim - 9 - Lady Gaga? 10 - Kesha?

Dane - I think there are two I know and seven that don't ring any bells at all, which is rather disappointing for the older lyrics.

4 A complete guess: YOU'RE SO VAIN by CARLY SIMON

10 Implausibly (given that I stopped listening to the radio round about 1990) this rings a bell.

Steve - 5. (actually 1979, which would spoil your sequence) *GM I'll take that, normally I'm way out.* 6. We are the World - by who? not Band Aid is it

8. Gangstas Paradise? - can't remember who by I'm fairly sure I know (7).

Chris - 6 "We are the World", by Sting and everybody – *GM couldn't see Sting on the list*

9 Is that Flashdance?

Lyrics 3 of 5 – 1 point will be added to your singer and song points.

1 I wonder / I wo-wo-wo-wo-wonder why / Why, why, why, why, why / She ran away (1961)

2 Every other day (Every other day) / Every other day, every other day of the week is fine (Fine), yeah (1966)

3 Jeremiah was a bullfrog / Was a good friend of mine / I never understood a single word he said (1971)

4 You were humming to yourself and softly strumming your guitar / I could hear the distant drums / And sounds of bugle calls were coming from afar (1976)

5 She's precocious, and she knows just what it / Takes to make a pro blush (1981)

6 I hold on to your body / And feel each move you make / Your voice is warm and tender, a love / That I could not forsake (1986)

7 Don't tell me / It's not worth fightin' for / I can't help it / There's nothin' I want more (1991)

8 Dale a tu cuerpo alegría XXXXXXXX / Que tu cuerpo es pa' darle alegría y cosa buena / Dale a tu cuerpo alegría, XXXXXXXX / Hey XXXXXXXX, ay (1996)

9 Underneath the starlight, starlight / There's a magical feeling so right / It will steal your heart tonight (2001)

10 Ring, ring, ring goes the telephone / The lights are on, but there's no one home / Tick tick tock, it's a quarter to two / And I'm done, I'm hanging up on you (2006)

Sprint Finish 2 of 8 – Chris is happy enough at the back as he still has plenty of tools in his bag, including a nice dip finish, should he need it.

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

Josh is currently jogging beside him but has plans of moving up. Steve is saving his energy running on the inside waiting for an opportunity to extract himself. Jacob decides to get involved and gains a couple of places.

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

Richard has plenty in the tank but hopes to get in a better position, he is given the opportunity when Cole speeds up.

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

The inexperienced Australian Cameron tries to up the pace but gets his timing wrong. Bob is waiting for a challenge before deciding what to do.

Q&A

Can you "move alongside" the runner ahead when boxed? *No*

For "refresh card" - do you take back one of your choice that you have played from the discard pile? *Yes, this is represented by cards that have been ~~crossed out~~.*

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 (can only be cards that you have played i.e. in your discard pile)
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/refresh 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 Save Energy	

Devil take the hindmost – Well here's another new game, sort of. I have a recollection of playing a very similar game in the now defunct Psychopath online zine. It's a Breaking Away variant.

Overview – You manage a team of 4 cyclists, scoring as many points as possible over a 10-lap race. You play one lap each turn.

The set up and replacement adjudication is the same as Breaking Away

Where the game differs is from turns 2 to 10 the player(s) on the lowest hex are eliminated (these riders are included in the replacement card calculation). Scoring is also different. On turn three you score double the number of cyclists you have remaining. On turn seven you score triple the number of cyclists you have.

On turn ten you score according to your position the track. 10 points for first place 8 for second down to one for eighth. Tied positions are averaged.

I will be looking for 4 to 6 players. You are welcome to send me your team set up as per the Breaking Away rules on the Variable Pig website.

Postscript – I'm still looking for 6 Nimmit sign-ups, which will be 4 tables of a standard 104 cards.

THE TANGERINE TERROR #88/I AM THE KURIOUS KUMQUAT #18

The “No, It’s Not Like 1976” Issue

Idiotorial



The picture above is Saddleworth Moor near Dovestones Reservoir on fire this week. We used to play there when we were kids. Let’s not talk about diluting Net Zero targets please.

The World Cup is over. I hear that USA is being encouraged to bid again soon because Infantino’s cup overfloweth. As long as he’s in charge, I’ll continue to not watch it. The Mediocrity game went down to the wire, but Kevin managed to hold off a late charge to win by two points. Come on Switzerland, you could have conceded a couple more couldn’t you? Congratulations Kev.

Player	Teams Left	Score	Pot 1 Pick 1	Pot 1 Pick 2	Pot 2 Pick 1	Pot 2 Pick 2	Pot 3 Pick 1	Pot 3 Pick 2	Pot 4 Pick 1	Pot 4 Pick 2
Kevin Lee	0	77	Canada	8 USA	10 Curacao	9 Cape Verde	14 Saudi Arabia	9 Uzbekistan	8 Scotland	9 Panama
Howard	0	75	Belgium	14 Portugal	8 Morocco	10 Croatia	9 South Korea	8 Austria	10 Switzerland	9 Uruguay
Mick Schofield	0	74	Canada	8 USA	10 Curacao	9 Cape Verde	14 Haiti	8 Uzbekistan	8 Jordan	7 Panama
Jim Reader	0	74	Canada	8 USA	10 Curacao	9 Cape Verde	14 Qatar	8 Haiti	8 Jordan	7 Panama
Brendan Whyte	0	73	Mexico	10 Canada	8 Curacao	9 Cape Verde	14 Haiti	8 Uzbekistan	8 New Zealand	6 Panama
Joe Bishop	0	73	Mexico	10 Canada	8 Curacao	9 Cape Verde	14 Qatar	8 Haiti	8 New Zealand	6 Panama
Bob Gingell	0	73	Canada	8 Belgium	14 Curacao	9 Senegal	8 Haiti	8 Uzbekistan	8 Tunisia	8 Panama
Richard Smith	0	72	Mexico	10 USA	10 Paraguay	2 Egypt	13 Sweden	9 Austria	10 Czech Republic	8 Norway
Mike Pollard	0	71	Canada	8 USA	10 Curacao	9 Cape Verde	14 Qatar	8 Saudi Arabia	9 New Zealand	6 Jordan
Henry Schofield	0	70	Mexico	10 Canada	8 Congo DR	10 Curacao	9 Uzbekistan	8 Haiti	8 Panama	10 Jordan
Stephen Agar	0	68	Canada	8 USA	10 Curacao	9 Croatia	9 Qatar	8 South Korea	8 Jordan	7 Scotland
David Midha	0	67	Canada	8 USA	10 Curacao	9 Congo DR	10 Haiti	8 Uzbekistan	8 Turkey	7 Jordan
Allan Stagg	0	61	Canada	8 Netherlands	2 Curacao	9 Congo DR	10 Haiti	8 Iraq	9 Scotland	9 New Zealand
Martin Walker	0	60	Canada	8 Netherlands	2 Algeria	9 Croatia	9 Saudi Arabia	9 Australia	10 Colombia	6 Uruguay
Steve Ham	0	60	Canada	8 USA	10 Curacao	9 Paraguay	2 Iraq	9 Sweden	9 New Zealand	6 Jordan
Mark Fry	0	58	USA	10 Netherlands	2 Paraguay	2 Croatia	9 Sweden	9 Austria	10 Uruguay	7 Switzerland
Colin Bruce	0	57	Brazil	9 Germany	2 Morocco	10 Paraguay	2 Australia	10 Sweden	9 Czech Republic	8 Uruguay

NG Ogle

THE NAME OF THE GAME

ROUND 2

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Paul Evans	2	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Jim Reader	2	2	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Brendan Whyte	2	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Allan Stagg	2	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Richard Smith	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7

Some good scoring this time. #3 turned out to be a lot easier than I expected.

Game 1 is NOT *Shit Biscuits*, *Game Of Thrones* (although I'm almost tempted to offer a point for that guess)

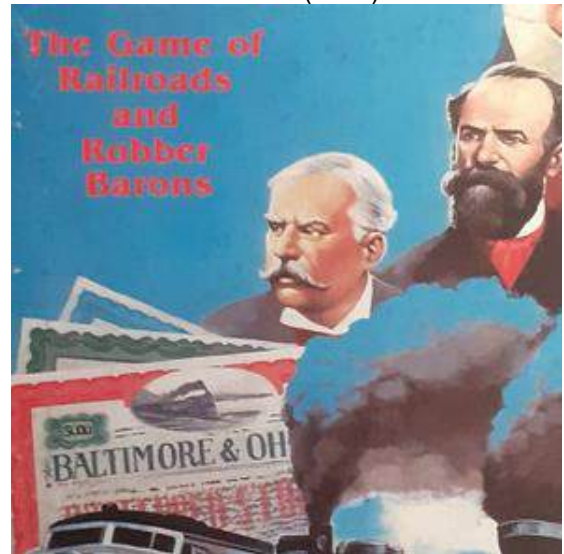
Game 2 is NOT *Clockface*, *Time's Up*

Game 4 is NOT *Wing Commander*

GAME 1 (1 VP)



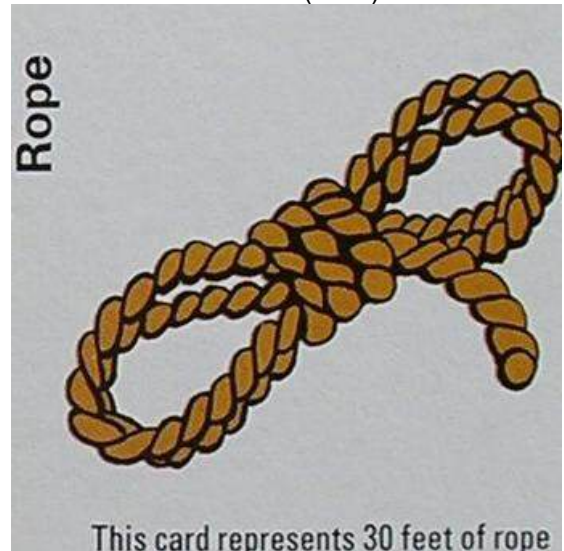
GAME 2 (1 VP)



GAME 3 (2 VP)



GAME 4 (2 VP)



GAME 5 (3 VP)



GAME 6 (3 VP)



	Category	Richard	Allan	Jim	Bob	Chris	Guess	Score
Richard Smith	TRAIN		COACH	TICKET	MEXICAN	TEACH	TRAIN	1
Allan Stagg	ANGEL	DELIGHT		ARCH	BOREANAZ	HEAVENLY	ANGEL	1
Jim Reader	SLIPPER	PUNISHMENT	COMFORTABLE		MOCCASIN	SOFTSHOE	SLIPPER	1
Bob Gingell	VIKING	NORSE	NORSEMAN	LONGSHIP		LONGBOAT		0
Chris Hibbert	FLUTE	MAGIC	CHAMPAGNE	MAGIC	INSTRUMENT		FLUTE	1
Total								4

A full set only marred by Bob having literally clues to guess from, but a solid start nonetheless.

FUTURE SHOCK

The Name Of The Game All readers can enter at any time.

More games to follow hopefully.

ES Quigley

ECOSYSTEM SAVANNA

ROUND 1

Apologies for providing both confusing and inconsistent instructions for your orders. I think we've kind of got there, but just to add yet more confusion, I've changed things again. All your card placements are relative to the first card you played at grid reference (0, 0). A card placed one row above and two spaces to the left of that first card is at grid reference (-2, 1). Remember of course that all cards must be placed adjacent to at least one other card, and the final grid must be 4 rows high by 5 wide.

I hope I've interpreted your orders correctly.

John

West – Tree (0,0) and Gazelle (1,0); **East** – Gazelle (0,0) and Cheetah (1,0)

WEST					EAST				
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	
4									4
3									3
2									2
1									1
0									0
-1									-1
-2									-2
-3									-3
-4									-4

Dane

West – Grassland (0,0) and Zebra (-1,0); **East** – Gazelle (0,0) and Cheetah (1,0)

WEST					EAST				
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	
4									4
3									3
2									2
1									1
0									0
-1									-1
-2									-2
-3									-3
-4									-4

Chris

West – Vulture (0,0) and Vulture (1,0); **East** – Elephant (0,0) and Cheetah (1,0)

WEST							EAST										
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
4									4								
3									3								
2									2								
1									1								
																	
0									0								
-1									-1								
-2									-2								
-3									-3								
-4									-4								

Kevin

West – Watering Hole (0,0) and Elephant (0,-1); **East** – Grassland (0,0), Zebra (0,-1)

WEST						EAST											
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
4									4								
3									3								
2									2								
1									1								
																	
																	
-1									-1								
-2									-2								
-3									-3								
-4									-4								

Richard

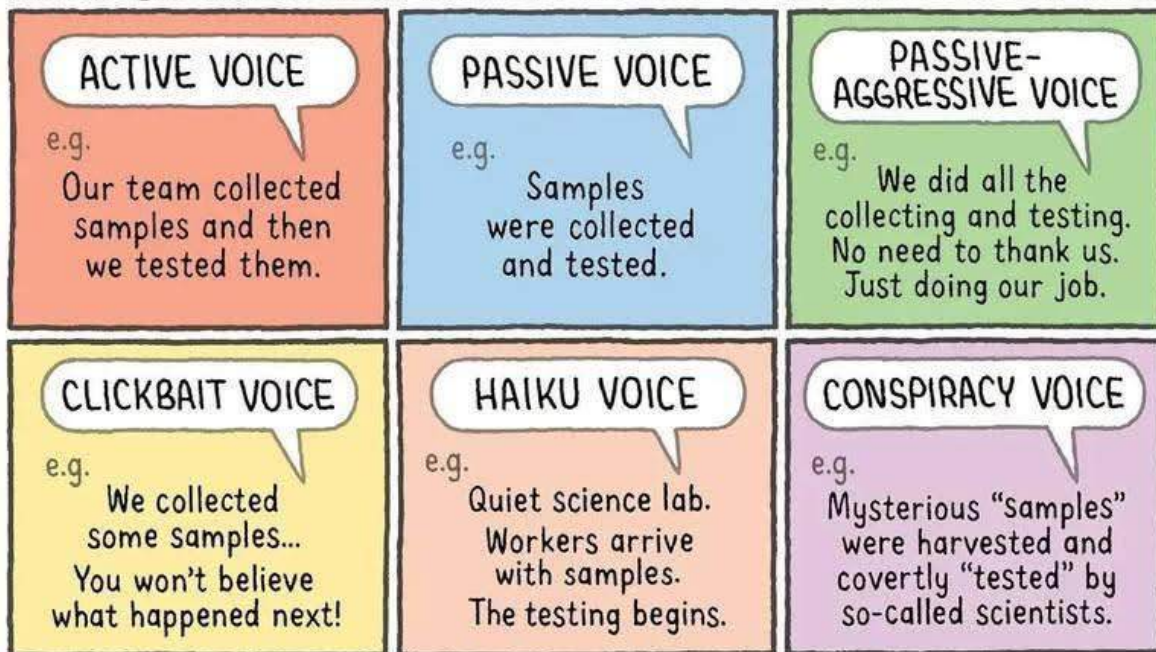
West – Giraffe (0,0) and Tree (0,-1); **East** – Giraffe (0,0) and Tree (1,0)

WEST						EAST								
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
4						4								
3						3								
2						2								
1						1								
0						0								
-1						-1								
-2						-2								
-3						-3								
-4						-4								

SubPAR 18

Pennsylvania Ramblings

SOME GRAMMATICAL VOICES FOR USE IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING



TOM GAULD for NEW SCIENTIST

Torn My plans to increase my exercise were quickly foiled as I tore the Achilles Tendon in my left ankle in early June. This happened at the end of a pickleball game as I stepped back into position for my partner's serve. I had surgery a few days later to repair / reattach the tendon and then spent the next four weeks trying not to put any weight on my foot. Fortunately, I could watch the World Cup. The surgery seems to have been successful, and I'm now starting physio to rebuild strength in the ankle and get my foot weight-bearing again. This could take another couple of months before I'm fully fit again.

Romeo and Juliet Fortunately, a few weeks after surgery I was able to start using a knee scooter and could start getting around. We had tickets (as usual) for the nearby Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival and we were able to change our seats to accessible seating. First up was "The Complete Works of Jane Austen, Abridged" where two actresses and one actor gave highlights or summaries of each novel (plus some short stories) in different styles. "Romeo and Juliet" followed with the two lead roles played by young actors; many of the supporting cast were also quite young which made the play seem a lot more dynamic and real. I think this was one of the best versions of "Romeo and Juliet" we have seen. Still to come, "Coriolanus" and "Moriarty".

Nobody's Diary We were also able to change to accessible seating for the 80s concert we had booked at the Met in Philadelphia although the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile walk on a knee scooter from the car park to the venue wasn't fun. Alison Moyet was first, singing from her solo material and Yazoo. I really enjoyed her set, and her voice still sounded great. "Only You" and "Can't Stop" were highlights, but there were plenty others I had forgotten. Next up was Soft Cell, or at least Marc Almond as David Ball died last year. Jacqueline's first ever concert was Soft Cell in London. Marc's voice has also held up well although he had two great backup singers. There were quite a few songs I didn't know, but I was happy they played "Bedsitter". He changed the original chorus to "Living, Laughing, Dancing, Loving" which I thought lost some of the despair in the original. The headliners were the Human League whom we both wanted to see. They put on a great show and Phil Oakey still sounds great. It was greatest hits set but there is a lot by the Human League we enjoyed and closed with "Together in Electric Dreams" (Oakey and Moroder).

Railway Rivals (Senegal and Gambia) - RR2556SG

Round Ten

Bob asked a question about the online map and a possible error in a round 6 build. We agreed that it is probably too difficult to go back to correct this, but I would like to clarify to all that the online maps (the In game maps published on The Celestial Dragon website) are the maps I use for the games. When I GM a game, I update the builds on my game map files and then send these to Richard when I send the subzine for uploading to the website. Therefore, if there is a mistake in the online map, then there is a mistake in the map that I use. When mistakes are reported and confirmed, I usually update my map and then send this to Richard, although if it is a simple error, I will sometimes ask Richard to fix the online map and note the correction for the next report, when I update my own map file.

	COUER Steve Ham <i>Purple</i>	SETI Richard Smith <i>Blue</i>	ROGER Roger <i>Black</i>	BOGGER Bob Gingell <i>Brown</i>
21. Thies (26) - Banjul (61)	20 + 2 - 5	10	0 - 2 + 5	
22. Kerewan or Mensa Konko (56) - Kaffrine (36)	15 - 1			15 + 1
23. Thies (26) - Louga (14)	15 + 5	0 - 1		15 - 5 + 1
24. Ziguinchor (55) - Dakar (24)	20 - 1	10 + 1		
25. Ndibdene Dhara or Linguere (16) - Guinea (Sp3)		10 - 7		20 + 7
26. Guinea-Bissau (Sp4) - Janjanbureh (65)			20	
27. Matam (42) - Kaolack (33)	5 +1 +1 - 5 + 7 - 1	0 - 1 - 3	20 - 1 + 5 + 3	5 - 7 + 1
28. Banjul (61) - Kedougou (46)			20	

Points from Last Round	137	171	157	178
Points from Races	78	19	70	53
Builds		- 4 + 3 + 1	- 5 - 1	- 2
Correction	None reported this round			
Total	215	190	221	229

COUER: No builds
 SETI: (M26) – N26 - - - KIDIRA.
 ROGER (U21) – T20 – S20 - R19: (G9) - F8 - Saint Louis.
 BOGGER: (R15) - R16 - R17.

The fifth set of races is

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 29. Mali (S2) - Joal Fadiout or M'bour (31): | 30. Dakar (23) - Minerals (Sp5) |
| 31. Bignonia or Dai'aba (52) - Bassa Santa Su (66): | 32. Foundiougne (32) - Dakar (22) |
| 33. Banjul (63) - Saint Louis (11): | 34. Sedhiou (54) - Tambacounda (44) |
| 35. Tiebo (15) - Goudin or Kidira (43) | |

Enter up to 4 races, and build up to 6 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 Six

ROGER Roger Trethewey Black	6a) 5. (K13) – K14 – K15 - - - K16, 6b) 6. (J33) - - - Trashyangtse – L34 - M35 / West Bengal: (I14) – Ha, 6c) 2. (O11) - O10 - N9. BANK: 67 – 1 (BUDDHA) – 3 (Dzong) = 63
BUDDHA John Walker Red	6a) 5. (H13) - - - G14 / Karpo Lhakhang Monastery: (Damphu) - S19 - T19, 6b) 6. (G14) - - - - F14 / Disputed Territory: (T19) - T20, 6c) 2. (T20) – Sarpang: (Daga) - O17. BANK: 72
Dzong Chris Hibbert Yellow	6a) 5. (Panbang) - D44 - - - D45 / Assam: (Z13) - A36, 6b) 6. (Wangdue) - Q11 - Punakha - - - O10 - N9, 6c) 2. (A36) – A35 – Jakar. BANK: 71 + 3 (ROGER) – 1 (BUDDHA) = 73

The first set of races is

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. China (Sp1) - Tendu (22): | 2. Samtse (23) - Thimphu (15): | 3. Dungkar (51) - Mongar (62) |
| 4. Nganlam (54) - Gelephu (46): | 5. Sarpang (44) - Jakar (35): | 6. Airport (Sp5) - Thimphu (14) |
| 7. Punakha (31) - Sakteng (64) | | |

Enter up to 5 races and build up to 14 points, not including payments to other players. 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 Five

Correction

Last round, DUST was reported as paying 6 for junctions and parallel builds to DUST instead of to ROGER, although ROGER was correctly paid. No change to any bank balances.

COP Brad Martin Blue / Light Blue	5a) 5. (L61) – M62 – N62 – O63 – P93 - Q64, <i>all track upgraded</i> 5b) 4. (O21) – N20 – M20 - L19 – MIDDLETON-IN-TEESDALE, <i>all track upgraded</i> 5c) 6. (Q64) – Stockton: (E49) – E48 – E47 - E46 – F4 - G45. <i>All track upgraded</i> Bank: 26.5 + 6 – 7.5 (upgrades) + 1 – 1 (HAB) = 25
DUST Richard Smith Red / Pink	5a) 5. (H39) - G39 - F39 - - - E39, <i>all track upgraded</i> 5b) 4. (E39) – D38 – C38 – RYTON: (Castle Eden) - O53, <i>all track upgraded</i> 5c) 6. (H39) - - - Newcastle: (O53) - N53 - M53 - L53. <i>All track upgraded</i> Bank: 20 + 3 – 7.5 (upgrades) = 15.5
HAB Bob Gingell Green / Light Green	5a) 5. (Tanfield) - C42 - B41 - - - B40, <i>all track upgraded</i> 5b) 4. (B40) - B39 - B38 - RYTON <i>upgraded</i> : (W25) - W26, 5c) 6. (W26) - Staindrop - U27: (Shildon) - C61 - D61 - E62 - F62. Bank: 50 + 3 – 4 (upgrades) – 1 + 1 (COP) = 49
ROGER Roger Trethewey Black / Grey	5a) 5. (U24) – U23 – U22 – U21 – U20 - U19, 5b) 4. (U19) – U18 - U17 – T16 - S16, 5c) 6. (S16) – R15 – Q15 – P14 – O14 – N13 - M13. Bank: 28

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

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. Special 3 is Westmoreland or Cumberland and these will be treated as a single destination, so either a connection on Westmoreland or Cumberland can be used for both races.

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

Railway Rivals (Togo and Benin) - RR2575TB

Round Three

TOBE

Bob Gingell
Black

3a) 3. (M26) - N26: (Natitingou) - I16 - H15,
3b) 3. (H15) - H14 - H13 - TANGUIETA,
3c) 4. (N26) - N27 - N28: (Kara) - G19 - NIAMITOUGOU.
BANK: 62 + 3 + 3

TB

Richard Smith
Blue

3a) 3. (N41) - N40 - LOKOSSA: (I42) - H41,
3b) 3. (H41) - H40 - G40 - F39,
3c) 4. (F39) - KPALIME: (I42) - I43 / Ghana: (N32) - N31 - Savalou.
BANK: 34 + 3 + 6 + 3

ROGER

Roger Trethewey
Green

3a) 3. (Dogbo-Tola) - M39 - LOKOSSA: (L17) - K17,
3b) 3. (N18) - - - N17,
3c) 4. (N17) - O17 - P16 - Q16 - R15.
BANK: 24 + 3

FLAG

Steve Guest
Orange

3a) 3. (I21) - J20: (I33) - H33 - G34,
3b) 3. (J20) - - - J19,
3c) 4. (J19) - J18 - I17 - H17: (G34) - F34.
BANK: 24

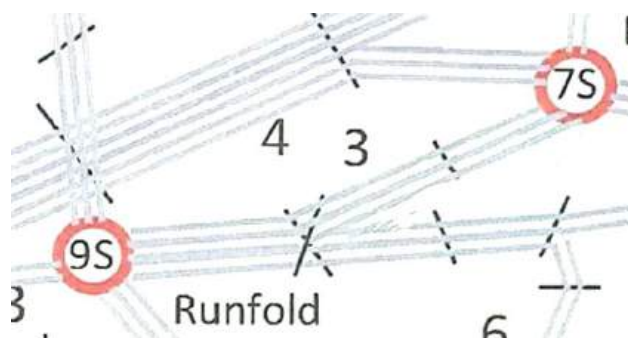
The build allowance for the fourth round is 4a) 5, 4b) 4, and 4c) 5.

The cost for crossing the border between Togo and Benin is 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.

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

Bus Boss (Farnham and Aldershot) - BB422FAL

Round Eight



Bob asked whether the route from Runfold to Hogs Back Brewery is a single or double? It is a double although the lines into Runfold have got compressed on the map where I made a late change on the map Runfold lies just off the Hogs Back and we sometimes stay at the Princess Royal there when we visit. The brewery is also along the Hogs Back, hence the double lines East and West. The Hogs Back (A31) is a dual carriageway all the way from Farnham to the outskirts of Guildford and is a historic route, so I think it justifies a double track.

	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>
5. Folly Hill (9H) – North Camp (10D)	7 - 3		7 - 3 + 2		16 + 3 + 3 - 2
10. Farnham Station (3H) – Badshot Lea (JS)		4 - 2	9 - 4 + 1 + 2	9 - 1	8 + 2 + 4 - 2
11. Beacon Hill (2D) – Rural Life Museum (8C)		30 - 4 - 4		+ 4	+ 4
12. Guildford (KS) – Church Crookham (3D)	16 + 3 + 3 - 6		7 - 3 - 3	7 - 3 + 3 + 6	
13. The Rec (QH) – Runcorn (5C)	3 + 3 – 3 + 1 – 1 + 5 + 1	5 - 3 + 3 + 3 + 3 - 1	6 - 1 – 3 - 1	5 - 5 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1	11 - 1 – 3 - 1
14. Runfold (9S) – Shortfield (6C)			15 - 1 – 7 + 2	+ 1	15 + 7 - 2
15. Dippenhall (6H) – Heath End 2 nd School (7D)		30 - 3			+ 3
16. Upper Hale (JH) – Aldershot Town (AS)	20				10
17. North Town (QD) – Sandy Hill (10H)	20		+ 5	10 - 5	
18. Alice Holt Forest (AC) – Charles Hill Forest (10C)		30 - 6		+ 6	

Bank	59	97	93	97	87
Points from Races	69	85	32	41	73
Builds	- 8	- 11	- 12	- 12	- 12
Corrections	<i>None this round</i>				
Totals	120	171	113	126	148

FAB: Farnham Town Centre - Wrecclesham
CHAMPS: Shortfield – Frensham; North Camp – Farnborough; William Cobbett – Runcorn
BANG: William Cobbett - The Bourne: 6th Form College - Wrecclesham
ROGER: Shepherd & Flock – Heath End Secondary School: North Camp - Aldershot Town Centre
FEAR: Alice Holt Forest – Frensham: Wrecclesham – Bentley:
Aldershot Station - Aldershot Town Centre

The third set of races is

- | | |
|--|---|
| 19. Lido (QS) – Aldershot Station (3S) | 20. Farnham Town Centre (5H) – Hale (KH) |
| 21. Ewshot (AD) – Heath End (8D) | 22. Compton (QC) – Frensham (KC) |
| 23. Farnham Park (8H) – Bentley (4C) | 24. Weybourne (6D) – Aldershot Town FC (4S) |
| 25. Fleet (5D) – Farnham Castle (7H) | 26. Tongham (6S) – Waverley Abbey (JC) |

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

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

Bus Boss (Pays Cathar) - BB4256PAY

Game Start

We have another game start. The following players have signed up for this game - Brad Martin, John Marsden, Michael Pargman, Bob Gingell and Kev Lee. The map is available online at <https://variablepig.org/maps/bb/bb-pc-v21.pdf> and I will create an online map for the game once started. The build order for round 1 is Bob Gingell, Brad Martin, John Marsden, Kev Lee and Michael Pargman. Please note that for round 6, the richest player (i.e. who has built the least amount of track) will go first, followed by the second richest player and so on. Normal Bus Boss rules will apply to build order during the racing stages.

And finally, some space to fill, surely not cat pictures again...?



Er, yes.

THE CELESTIAL DRAGON #18



Deadline for all games: Friday 28th August 2026

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

The Celestial Steam Locomotive	#48	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
 RAILWAY RIVALS - Togo & Benin RR2576TB - Jim Reader, Brad Martin, Steve Ham, Richard Smith – game start inside (GM Bob Gingell).
 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
 RAILWAY RIVALS Wheel of Time fantasy map, Jim Reader, Richard Smith, 2-3 more wanted.
 RAILWAY RIVALS Uzbekistan RR2587UZ - John Marsden, Brad Martin, Steve Ham, Jim Reader, Bob Gingell – game start inside (GM Richard Smith)
 NEW! BY WORDLEY DEMAND – new 8-round game, lots wanted, anyone can join anytime
 NEW! BRIDGE OF LIES – TV game show conversion, 4-6 wanted (to replace HoG)

Here Be Dragons	#81	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.
 NEW! SECHS NIMMT – 4+ wanted
 NEW! DEVIL TAKE THE HINDMOST - cycling game - 4-6 wanted

The Tangerine Terror I Am The Kurious Kumquat	#88 #18	Howard Bishop	latcsexile@outlook.com
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Waiting List / Notes:

ORIGINS OF WW2 - Brendan Whyte, John Marsden - 3 more wanted
 DOS DE MAYO – 2 wanted
 NAME OF THE GAME – continues, early doors so new entrants are fine.

SubPAR	#18	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, Kevin Lee - game start inside