

I'm pleased to say we've more or less reached the end of my busy period, much of it spent in marking SATs. (You're not really supposed to call them that, but everyone ignores this rule). The first half of May is spent in training, and the next three or four weeks spent marking and looking after my team of markers. In the middle of this there's a week of marking the 2004 Pre-tests, which follows some earlier visits taking the pre-test papers into schools. Some of us spend the first chunk of July in special marking to analyse children's performance, and I mustn't forget a conference or two to consider the form that computer-based tests might take. This year there's also an August exercise in Milton Keynes, experimenting with e-marking over the internet. A varied and rounded existence. I think you'll agree.

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HH	HH	00	PP	SS	CC	00	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	44	44
HH	HH	00	PP	SS	CC	00	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	44	44
HH	HH	00	PP	SS	CC	00	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	44	44
HH	HH	00	PP	SS	CC	00	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	44	44
HH	HH	00	PP	SS	CC	00	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	44	44
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(A) United early deadline and all outside GMS:

(B) United: 5pm, Friday, August 22nd, 2003

(C) My other games: 5pm, Friday, August 29th

I'm happy to accept e-mail orders for all games, and this session that includes United. My e-mail address is alanpar@daliplex.com. Please check with me BEFORE sending attachments to e-mails. If you do need to send an attachment it should not be anything that my Word 6 can't handle.

I don't have a fax, but I can usually receive faxed orders (including United) on 070-920-24173. I ought to remind you that (a) this method has been known to give some users difficulty and so using it to guarantee last minute delivery is unwise and (b) though it doesn't cost me anything it probably costs you a fair bit for the use of a premium-rate number.

Anyone wanting to play in games run by Denis Arnold and John Walker (but not the other GMS) can send their orders to reach me by first post (say 10am) on deadline A and I'll forward them.

(D) Hopscotch 205 should be posted no later than:

Dates (A) - (D) for Hopscotch 206 may be: Wednesday, September 10th

October 10th, 17th, 22nd, 29th, 2003

The Walker Touch John Walker: 1 Rose Gardens, Minster, Ramsgate, Kent, CT12 4AQ 01843-821710
Grand National Denis Arnold, 19 Sunray Avenue, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 9QG 01394-274145
Sodwith Rob Cullender, 21 Sandford Down, The Warren, Blacknell, Berks, RG12 9YS 01344-452995
Railway Rivals David Watts, Rosherne, 102 Priory Road, Milford Haven, Dyfed, SA73 2ED 01646-692752

Addresses United managers should clear that their contact details in the United handbook are 100% correct.

Subscriptions United gametees Received, with thanks, from Messrs G Smith, Bruce, Stretch, Wassail, Parraby, Simpson, Owen, Draper, Carter, McLaughlin, A Malbourn, Mensar, Brooks, O'Brien, Chilton, Walford, Harrington, M Head, R Smith, Ben Israel, Taylor. Do please renew if your sub gets below about 50p; if your credit (scribbled on the envelope) falls below the cost of posting you may not receive the next issue. Blue stars on the envelope indicate varying low credit levels. British, stamps and Scottish and Euro and USA notes are all welcome. International transfers are very expensive and best avoided if possible; you ought to be able to pay electronically (in sterling, euros, or dollars) via Paypal to the address alanpar@daliplex.com

Waiting lists, gametees, etc With one exception there's not much to report, but the exception is worth emphasising still once more. There's a start in Denis Arnold's new game PENAL, which is like a psychedelic version of By Popular Demand. This is the game where you have to nominate words in particular categories, but Denis has added lots of extra features. There's likely to be a new game soon of **Railway Rivals**, possibly on the new Michigan map (Denis Arnold, Eryl Jones, Arthur Owen, and Alan Parr). We still need two more for Bus Boss to join Denis Arnold and Arthur Owen. There's a waiting list open for **Plof Counterplot**. As always, there are lots of interesting games in John Walker's subzine, **The Walker Touch**.

This is Hopscotch 204, from Alan Parr, 6 Longfield Gardens, Tring, Herts, HP23 4DN (phone: 01442-824173). Hopscotch includes an extensive variety of games run by outside GMS. The price is 80p so that with inland postage the price is exactly £1. Apart from United most games don't have a separate gameteer - though in games such as Railway Rivals you should expect to pay for any rules and maps which are necessary.

Your credit balance is scribbled on your envelope: a blue star on the label indicates a low subscription level: two stars are worse, and four or five awful. Me's still, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

The Hopscotch schedule ensures that once a year a new issue has to be prepared around ManorCon, and much of this one is actually being typed up on the Sunday evening at the convention itself - shades of the days when no convention would be complete without a typewriter and stenics to produce an on-the-spot zine. It's not something I normally expect to do, but this year I'm staying the three nights and returning on Monday morning, thanks to Mike Taylor acting as chauffeur. Not that there's anything wrong with me or the car, nor is it a statement of conservatism; beliefs, but last summer I spent three days at a university conference centre and had to use a car park 400m away. My car was broken into on the very first night, and the building works at Birmingham University meant we were told to park some distance away and I had no wish for a repeat performance. In practice things weren't as bad as expected and I don't know of any problems, but I've had a rare ManorCon where I've been to all the usual places but haven't had to drive an inch.

There were dire warnings about the food as well: not only were people asked to order meals in advance but the food had to be prepared elsewhere and brought in specially. Remarkably this not only seemed to do it no damage, but there were plenty of suggestions that it actually showed an improvement on previous years. Not difficult, you might say, but there were one or two occasions when I fleetingly thought of at least trying a ManorCon sandwich.

Where things were difficult was in this year's room of the second-hand games sale, which Denis Arnold, Mike Taylor and I have run for some years now. Fortunately I'd decided not to take any games this time, but I certainly didn't envy those who had to cart several heavy boxes along corridors and up and down far too many stairs. As usual, the sale itself offered several hundred games and some £2500 changed hands. And as always I don't enjoy having £2500 of other peoples' money in my wallet so I'm always pleased to get it to its rightful owner as soon as possible.

Once that's out of the way there's the chance to concentrate on actually playing some games. I play far fewer than many, but I still manage to notch up seven or eight new ones each year. This time many of us particularly enjoyed Coloretic, yet another card game that has incredibly simple rules and yet others tricky decisions at every turn. Each move you have the choice of picking up a card or cards to improve your score, or alternatively adding a card to the display. Picking up early is likely to give you a small number of points, but at the cost of you having to sit out the rest of the round. Adding to the display means you're going to be able to pick more cards but not only will others perhaps get the cards you want, they may ensure that those you do pick up actually make your score worse rather than better. As with pretty well all my favourite games, it's easy to grasp, requires you to make choices, and is great fun.

I also enjoyed **Mystery Rummy**. As you'll guess, this is basically a rummy game given just enough tweaks to make it a new creation and done cleverly enough to add suitable atmosphere - we had raids, search warrants, and the like. Our set was set in the period of Al Capone, but the are two or three other versions. I can't imagine anyone would want to buy them all, but I'd happily play any of them.

For the third year there was a Treasure Hunt in which teams tackle a wealth of puzzles. These are spread over three hours and a good part of Chamberlain Hall. As far as I'm concerned this has become an unmissable highlight of the weekend. It makes enormous demands upon the solver, last year Chris Dickson and Martin Burroughs, this year Chris Boothe, so the Treasure Hunt may have a limited life expectancy, so I'd suggest you make sure you experience it while you've got the chance. It's suggested that the winners draw up the next year's scenario and puzzles, and fortunately our team was nowhere near having to face that possibility.

TringCon

Rather smaller than ManorCon is TringCon. This year's version will be the eleventh and should be more or less identical to usual. In other words it'll beat the usual place, the New Mill Social Centre in Tring) and time (the last Saturday in September) September 27th, 2003. There'll be about twenty nice people and at least five times as many games to play. We'll hope to be able to keep the price at £10, which includes lunch, tea, biscuits and other refreshments throughout the day, and a taxi service from the station.

Places are already booked for Annie Shillabeer (£12 paid), John Harrington (£10), Keith Thomasson (£10), Roo Thomasson (£4), Dave Thornton (£10), Allan Slagg (£10), Mark Stretch (£10), Martin Butcher (£10), Adam Hudby (£10).

The second DiceCon will be at the Quality Hotel in Glasgow on Sunday August 24th. The website www.dicecon.com says: "We play all sorts of boardgames. For example, over the last year we have played games like Acquire, Age of Steam, Air Baron, Battelion, Bohanza, Carcassonne, Chadders, Gallipong Pigs, Gladiators, Ivanhoe, Keyrdrical, Legend of the Five Rings, Lost Cities, Metro, Mexico, Princes of Florence, Puerto Rico, Rome, Santa Fe Rails, Settlers of Catan, Six Nimmi, Tobruk, Turf Master, Union Pacific, Up Front, Waterloo, Way Out West, World Cup Soccer and Zoo Sim. And that's just a sample! So, if you like these types of games, you'll be in good company. You can also get full details from DiceCon, c/o 9 Fereneze Avenue, Clarkston, Glasgow G76 7RU."

Gareth Bealy's got a couple of vacancies in his football game **Jumpers for Goalposts**, and if you're interested in trying another version of postal football then he'd like to hear from you. (Gareth Bealy, 11 Sandown Close, Kirkham, Preston, Lancs, PR24 2EE. GazBT@pbealy.freemove.co.uk) ... Martin Draper's offering Grand Slam. I played this some years back, perhaps even in an earlier version run by Martin - it's a tennis game that works very well. Very easy, indeed to play, and if you want to play it well then you have lots of opportunities to make deductions and adjust your play accordingly, though it's a sports game it feels a little like deductive games like Snakes and Ladders and Hop Step and Jump. Martin credits the rules to Paul Holgate, but I suspect it goes back further and that it originated in Germany 20 years back. You can get rules and a copy of Martin's football zine **Sticker** from him at 124 Lord Street, Hoddesdon, Herts, EN11 8NP (01992-420786. stiker@tutword.com) ... I've been sent details of a free PBEM strategy game called King of Kings, which has been played by mail, in zines, in newsgroups, at cons and now fully automatic on a webserver. We had text

reports, html reports, coloured maps, GUIS and many fancy tools for computer (and other) freaks. We've played fantasy scenarios, historical, modern and fictional ones. From hoplites to aero-netics, from underground cities to the elevated plains of Gorgoroth we have seen times and strategies pass through our gaming worlds. From game 36 on we have stopped counting but we realize a certain decay of the hobby, and so we count our players, especially the new ones. Playing KOK has become rather a club for most of us, and you'll meet the same opponents in almost every game. But because KOK was designed as a game for everybody, we are hereby seeking to promote our favourite game and hope for a steady influx of fresh players. It's free! It's fun! It's easy! You can get more information from <http://kok.sepic.org>

Bart Huby obviously realised I'd be a bit short of original and creative material this time, and he's sent a puzzle a friend located:

a and b are two integers, both greater than 1.
 Mr Sum knows only their sum (a + b).
 Mr Product knows only their product (a x b).
 Mr Sum says to Mr Product: "I know you don't know what a and b are".
 Mr Product then says to Mr Sum: "Now I know what a and b are".
 Mr Sum then says to Mr Product: "Now I know what a and b are".
 What are a and b?

Bart says the problem is quite mind-boggling, and I'm not going to argue. Comments and solutions - from Bart and others - will be more than welcome.

Game 56, Round 4 (Hytribute - highest score wins) A gimn round for Jed.
 Kim Head plays 9 to Jed Stone's 5 points: KH +6 JS -6
 Eryl Jones plays 9 to Kim Head's 9 points: EJ 0 KH 0
 Jed Stone plays 5 to Eryl Jones' 9 points: JS -6 EJ +6
 Stakes doubled by Kim and tripled by Eryl!
 Cards left: KH: 0 1 2 4 5 8 EJ: 0 2 2 4 8 8 JS: 5 5 5 6 9 9
 Doubles / triples left: KH: OD / OT EJ: 1D / 1T JS: OD / OT

Game 57, Round 1 (Highest score wins) A quiet start.
 Arthur Owen plays 9 to John Walker's 2 points: AO +1 JW -1
 Jed Stone plays 1 to Arthur Owen's 0 points: JS +1 AO -1
 John Walker plays 0 to Jed Stone's 1 points: JW -1 JS +1
 Stakes undoubled.
 Cards left: AO: 0 1 2 2 5 5 6 7 8 9 JS: 3 3 5 5 5 5 7 7 9 9 JW: 0 0 1 1 2 9 9 9 9 9
 Doubles left: AO: 2 JS: 0 JW: 3
 Waiting list: Eryl Jones

Game 11 (target 57 points)
Spell Merchants
Session A spells were: (multi-ingredient spell needed for Round 1; single- or multi-ingredient in Round 2)
 Round 1: Spell (g) ingredients totalling more than 10 Prizes: (kk) 14.5.2
 Round 2: Spell (h) all ingredients odd Prizes: (hh) 15.10.3
Session B spells are (single- or multi-ingredient acceptable in both cases):
 Round 3: Spell (i) no ingredient numbered 1, 2, or 3 Prizes: (cc) 18.9.2
 Round 4: Spell (b) only one type of ingredient Prizes: (ee) 16.6.2

Start	Name	Round 3	Round 4	Ingredients now	End
		Spell	Spell		
-3	Mick Hayrack	4	9	555	16
2	Adam Hubby	4466	18	Restock 4556	-2
5	Arthur Owen	Restock 1226	-1	Restock 2345	-2
14	Jed Stone	Restock 3455	-2	66	6
17	John Walker	Restock 1134	-1	Restock 1135	-2

Session C spells are (multi-ingredient, none repeated, necessary in Rd 5; single- or multi-ingredient acceptable in in 6):
 Round 5: Spell (d) ingredients numbered consecutively Prizes: (jj) 20.10.4
 Round 6: Spell (a) all ingredients different Prizes: (aa) 25.10.5

Middleman

Game 36V, Round 5 (Varman, within 40 rule applies)
 Kim Head (532) plays 78 cards score now 532
 Eryl Jones (0) plays 69 cards score now 196
 Jed Stone (132) plays 49 cards score now 132
 Scores unmodified. I had to adjust Kim's play again to make it legal, but it's again put her in a good position.

Game 37, Round 3 (Standard, within 30 rule applies)
 Kim Head (181) plays 46 cards score now 181
 Eryl Jones (168) plays 85 cards score now 168
 Jed Stone (59) plays 65 cards score now 253

Game 38, Round 0 (Standard, within 30 rule applies) John Walker chooses 0 1 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 Arthur Owen picks 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Jed Stone must have missed this gamestart, so I've given him: 1 2 3 4 4 5 5 6 6 7 8 9.
 First round plays, please

Waiting list: Eryl Jones.

Plot Counterplot

Game 6	Month 1 (7)	JHamngm	7F	GKendall	7D	A Owen	4J	3K	J Walker	7E
	Month 2 (6)	6B	6B	6B	6B	2J	2K	2L	6E	6E
	Month 3 (5)	5K	5H	5H	5L	5L			5J	5J
	Month 4 (8)	8G	8D	8D	8G	8G			8J	8J
	Month 5 (4)	4K	4I	4I	4G	4G			4F	4F
	Month 6 (10)	2B	8F	10C	10H	5G	4H	5G	4H	9F
	Month 7 (9)	9F	9F	5I	4H	5G	4H	5G	4H	9F
		F 59*	K 23*	B 28**	C 18**	G 40**	H 20**	E 21*	J 29*	
				D 26***	I 14*	L 14**				

The final row shows the fields you control and the basic score for each, with each * showing a 50% bonus.

John Harrington out-thinks John Walker in F, but only wins the fight for third place. It wouldn't have made any difference to the result, but putting a single plant into the empty field A would have scored another twenty or so for either Geoff or John W. For what it's worth, you were playing on a map of the counties of the south-eastern corner of England, and the final scores were:

Geoff Kendall 178 Arthur Owen 164 John Harrington 124 John Walker 76

I'm happy to offer another game - three or four wanted, pleased. It's very easy to play: it's basically a game of sowing virtually mutating plants into adjoining fields of different shape and fertility. I can send the rules on request, or you should be able to find them at Teun Spaans website: www.xs4all.nl/~spaansztr/Number/Number_Plaza.html

Run For Gold

Race 6	Dennis Arnold	3/6	4/1	5/2	6/8	7/4*	8/4	8/4	BUR	sq	7
(lap 1)	Adam Hubby	3/3	4/5*	5/7	6/2	7/8	8/1	8/1	4/8	sq	4
	Geoff Kendall	3/2*	4/3	5/5	6/7	7/1	8/7	8/7	STA	sq	3
	Dennis Menear	3/8*	4/6	5/6	6/1	7/3	8/2	8/2	2/8	sq	3
	Arthur Owen	3/5	4/2*	5/3	6/5	7/5	8/6	8/6	STU	sq	4
	Jed Stone	3/7*	4/4	5/1	6/4	7/6	8/3	8/3	1/8	sq	3
	John Walker	3/1*	4/7	5/4	6/3	7/2	8/8	8/8	8/5	sq	3

Three runners got their first choice of replacements and one got his second preference. An aggressive STU pick by Arthur looks like benefiting Dennis and hurting everyone else.

Key: In your card holdings * shows cards just played and hence no longer available to you, underlined shows replacements received. In the replacement section cards underlined are those which are available in the coming turn (3/6 = movement 3, spike number 6).

Replacements: This turn: 2/7 BOX 7/7 1/7 3/4 TUC BUR
 Future turns: TUC 5/8 STU STA 6/6 BOX 3/2 3/8 4/5 3/1 7/4 4/2 3/7

I suspect that runners may find this race even harder to complete than earlier ones. My guess is that you may have to make good use of the hazard cards - bad news for all those liable to drop a point or two next turn.

Nitch Central

Down to thirteen effective entries. Their total was 9402; the average was 646.31 and the target number thus 647, up seven from last time and probably the highest ever. Paul Mercer narrowly misses out to allow victory to Eryl Jones.

Jed Stone	648	Adam Hubby	636	Linda Chilton	661
Allan Stagg	625	Bart Hubby	642	Mick Hayrack	665
Geoff Kendall	629	Paul Mercer	645	Rob Thomasson	666
Denis Arnold	631	ERYL JONES	650	Deniss Menear	667
Arthur Owen	633	John Walker	652	Chas-Children	999

Anyone can play: it's worth your while to do so, since all you have to do is submit a positive whole number between 1 and 999 (inclusive) and the winner gets their copy of Hopscotch free - there's a single prize of £1, all of which is added to the credit of whoever plays the lowest unduplicated number which is greater than the average of all the submitted numbers excluding the highest and lowest. Winners are advised to check they actually get credited with the £1, as it's by no means unknown for me to forget.

The Hopscotch 50-50 Club

There were 20 entrants; the prize of £10.00 goes to FRANK MAIN.

Each issue those involved contribute £1, with 50% going to the winner and the remainder goes to three charities. These are (i) for research into Histocytosis X, an awful disease that killed a hobby member and former pupil of mine, Clive Mewe, in his early thirties. The other beneficiaries are (ii) the Britle Bone Society, in tribute to Ian Curry, a Hopscotch player of long-standing, who died shortly before his thirtieth birthday; and also (iii) the Leonard Cheshire Foundation.

Anyone can join: it makes life much easier if you can send me a separate cheque: it helps still more if you put 5050 on the back of the cheque. You'll automatically be entered into each draw as long as you're still playing.

After this season's draw, the current 50-50 credit ratings are Chris Chilton £2, Neville Cooper £8, Jill Parr £0, Alan Parr £0, Ellis Simpson £7, Geoff Kendall £4, Martyn Hathaway £8, Bart Hubby £3, Dave Thornton £5, Eryl Jones £0, Martin Draper £6, Mick Hayrack £6, Frank Main £6, Arthur Owen £0, Kim Head £0, Stuart Cooper £3, Jed Stone £4, Adam Hubby £9, John Cossall £1, Richard Smith £9, Rob Thomasson £4, Linda Chilton £2.

Do please check your level carefully: it's very easy for me to muddle things up. Publicity from other editors is always much appreciated. Please let me have entrees/top-ups by deadline A (any which arrive close to dl A may not be processed till the following issue - this may particularly apply to players indicated by **).

Several still have credit of either £0 or £1, so top-ups will be particularly welcome. I've always said that if we drop noticeably below twenty players the scheme doesn't look very viable, and newcomers are always wanted.

Railway Rivals RR 1844 SD. Round 11. GM: D.G. Waits. July 03

	DENIS	HANDY	PTC	PARADE
29 Huron - Aberdeen	X	15	15	X
30 Roscoe/Getysbg - Phillip/Faith	GP 5-2+3	F 12	X	GP 13-3+2
31 Murdo/Wood - Custer Hot Spigs	MC 30	X	X	X
32 Cmbin/Wess.Spr - Elk Pvc/Canton	WC 10+4	X	WC 10-4+2	WC 10-2
33 Newell/Sprfsh - Salem/Madison	SS 10	NM 20-5	X	+5
34 Watertown - Wyoming/Montana	X	20	+2	10-2
35 Yankton - Minnesota/Iowa	X	X	(#)	30
Total earnings	55 + 5	67 - 5	25 + 0	63 + 0

In run 33, HANDY paid to shorten his route by 3, and so gained 1st! Dice seem to be friends of PARADE several times. DENIS & PARADE scores would have poor without those 30s.

In run 35 PTC's entry was disallowed; with BB scoring, runs over 2 x shortest aren't allowed.

Buils PARADE: (Bnstol) F66 Conde: (A46) A45: -3 -1 D. Last rd DENIS built to 118 not 16

<u>Scores</u>	DENIS: Denis Arnold, purple	263 + 61 = 324	HANDY: John Walker, red	253 + 62 = 315
	P T C: Eryl Jones, yellow	244 + 25 = 269	PARADE: Alan Parr, green	215 + 59 = 274

Last Runs:

37: 33 - 11 Mitchell - Bristol/Conde	36: 16 - 22 Brookings - Sioux Falls
39: 43 - 61 Rapid City - Leola/Pollock	38: 52 - 24 Pierre - Sioux City
41: 54 - x4 Isabel/McLaughlin - Minnesota	40: 65 - 36 Aberdeen - Platte/Winner
	42: 45 - x5 Deadwood - Iowa

All set up for a close finish for first and last places. Please send game end statements.

Ready to start Michigan? Probably better with 4 than 5 players. (Alan: There are indeed four of us on the waiting list - Denis Arnold, Eryl Jones, myself, Arthur Owen. I'd like to start the new games when this one finishes.)

Denis' new game has certainly tickled the fancy of many of you, with at least a dozen - many commenting approvingly that it looks too silly for words - signing up. The prospective players include Simon Robertson, Arthur Owen, Dennis Menear, Mick Hayrack, Peter Stanton, Bart Hubby, Geoff Kendall, Chris Chilton, Eryl Jones, Allan Stagg, Richard Smith, Jed Stone and no doubt Alan Parr. BUT ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN IN even if you haven't previously signed up. As a reminder, I've reprinted the rules below.

PENAL Gamelist Inventor and GM: Denis Arnold

It looks as though we have enough volunteers to make a start.

For the first turn, the letter is M and the categories are -
1 Planet; 2 U.S. State; 3 Girl's Name; 4 Car Model; 5 English Town or City; 6 Motorway (i.e. Mn, Mnn or Mmm).

What I now require from you are -

- a) Six relevant words (beginning with M), one for each of the above categories.
- b) Your vote for a word under category 2 (U.S. State) which you wish to EXPLODE.
- c) Your vote for one of the six categories which you wish to PROD.

To clarify this:

- a) The words occurring the most in each of the categories (and not exploded) will advance those players 3 steps up the ladder. Second-most popular will advance 1 step. If there is more than one most-popular, they will each advance 2 steps, but there will be no second-most.
- b) (This is a slight change to the original rules.) The U.S. State(s) receiving the most votes will Explode and score nothing; the points will be awarded to the next most popular word(s) in that category.
- c) The category(ies) receiving the most votes will be Proded; the most popular word will get 3 extra points, and the least popular will get 2 extra points (assuming there is more than one word).

Finally, in category 6 (Motorway) both the most- and least popular words will each receive 2 points. And, in category 3 (Girl's Name) the least popular word(s) will each receive 2 points (assuming there is more than one word).

Explosions will occur before any prodding, followed by any other points allocations. Hopefully there won't be too many cumulative cases!

I suggest we play 10 rounds, so off you go. If you find this rather confusing, don't let it put you off - just remember I've yet to design the report layout so that it will fit economically into the zine.

Good luck.

PENAL (POPULAR EXPLOSIVE NATIONAL AARDVARK LADDERS) Inventor and GM: Denis Arnold

Although I cannot claim original credits for this game, I've attempted to combine four quite popular games which have been played in Hopscotch in the not-too-distant past.

As this is entirely experimental, it may be necessary to adjust the rules if things appear to be getting silly/ier or out of hand. Players will, of course, be forewarned.

- a) By Popular Demand: Each round, the GM gives 6 categories and a letter of the alphabet. Like the old parlour game, players then submit a word under each category, each beginning with the given letter. Points are scored according to how many players have chosen any of the words, i.e. if 4 players submit a particular word, they each score 4 points.
- b) Explosions are the equivalent of Trapdoors in Snakes and Ladders, hence also the idea of climbing ladders.
- c) Grand National: the idea of most and least popular movements are similar to the special jumps in GN.
- d) Aardvarks: the 'prodding' in the original Cycling Aardvarks game is also used in PENAL.

RULES

1. The GM will give 6 categories and a letter of the alphabet before each round. Players then submit a word under each category, each beginning with the given letter. (NOTE: this next bit is different from the original By Popular Demand.) The word(s) occurring the most (and not exploded - see later) will advance those players 3 rungs up the ladder (well, if aardvarks can ride bikes, I reckon most of them should be able to climb ladders!). Second-most popular word(s) will advance 1 rung; if there is more than one most-popular, they will each advance 2 rungs, but there will then be no second-most.

2. Each round, players vote to explode a word in any category they choose (they assume at this stage that the word will occur; if not, hard luck!). The word(s) receiving the most votes will explode and score nothing, with the points for the next most popular word(s) in that category counting towards movement.

Similarly, players will Prod a category; the category(ies) getting the most prods will add 3 to the most popular and 2 to the least popular words' movement.

NOTE: it may become necessary to amend this previous sentence as follows - but, obviously, players will decide which one shall apply.

"Players will prod an (at that stage unknown) word in a pre-selected category as advised by the GM....."
 In either case. Explosions will take priority over Prods.
 3. In one of the 6 categories (decided by a GM die-roll and pre-advised), the least popular word(s) will climb 3 rungs instead of the most popular. In another category (again decided by GM die-roll and pre-advised) both the most and least popular words will each climb by 2 points (assuming there is more than one word).
 NMR's will simply miss that turn, and after two consecutive NMR's will be eliminated.
 In all cases, the GM will refer to the New OED of the Times Atlas (and/or any other good relevant reference book) if necessary.

The Golden Strider

Player	1/5	1/7	9/9*	9/10	0/11	10/12	0	4	5	10	44	1	0
Mark Steer	3/5*	9/8	10/9	10/10	10/11	10/12	2	7	3	1	39	2	2
Adam Hubby	4/7	9/8*	5/5	1/10	1/11	9/12	0	4	4	3	37	3	0
Arthur Owen	10/7*	10/8	10/9	10/10	0/11	10/12	0	5	10	35	4	4	0
Lee Steeg	5/5*	0/8	8/9	2/10	5/11	6/12	4	0	2	6	33	5	0
Bob Thompson	9/7*	9/8	10/9	4/10	16/11	10/12	2	2	4	10	33	5	1
Max Malford	0/7*	0/8	0/9	1/10	2/11	0/12	0	0	0	0	32	7	2
Jack Masman	9/6*	9/8	9/9	10/10	8/11	9/12	0	4	4	3	32	7	2
Ed Stone	1/7*	1/8	2/9	10/10	2/11	0/12	1	0	0	0	31	9	0

The mode of report used is as follows: after your name are the cards you hold (including new replacements), with the card just played asterisked; 4/1 shows a 4 card given after the round 1 movement - remember that all cards must be played within seven turns of being received. The columns D, M, B, R, S, P, and O show the deduction made from your card due to overraking costs incurred last turn, amounts used for movement and for banking, replacement, square occupied, position, and the overraking restitution which has to be made next turn (which will be zero for all runners for the first two turns). The basic positional bonus is 1 for 2nd/3rd, 2 for 4th to 6th.

In the case of an NMR the card at the extreme left of your holding will be played, using all available points for movement and banking none.
 Do not forget the seven-round rule: remaining x/6 cards must be played next time. Do please be sure you take overraking and barrier costs into account when ordering.

United

This is never my favourite session - no games to play and nothing to do apart from receive, check, and transcribe information. Even if I get this 99% correct, there'll still be dozens of errors. But at least I've not fallen behind schedule, and in fact I'm probably more advanced in processing all the paperwork than ever before. Next session won't be much more fun, but at least the new season will get underway the session after that - and once again we can stay at six divisions.

..... Early VP, NMRs, etc Early VP not won by Delirium Tremens, Cassio Marauders, Gamma Hackers. NMRs from Athleticso Chipping Sodbury, Xanth Crusaders, Southern Supremes.

..... Waiting list, and comings and goings There's a big managerial change, my brother and Mike Wassall have exchanged clubs, so you'll find that Singing Scrubbers are now managed by Peter Parr and Epsom Egotists are now managed by Mike Wassall. Relegated into Division 6, with no substantial money, Epsom will provide the sort of challenge Mike enjoys, while Peter will have some job to match last season's performance of winning the league by seven clear points. The waiting list is empty.

..... Addresses There are no CoAs to report, but do PLEASE check your entry on the back page of the Handbook is correct. Should a significant number of corrections be necessary I'll do a revised version next time.

..... Transfers A proposed deal between Hamphill Rangers and Cincinnati was not confirmed.

..... Corrections None this time, but do draw mistakes in the table below to my attention.

..... Press One free apprentice available. Please phone Mike Wassall on 01789-204383.

..... Bills and pieces (1) You should have your roster sheet returned, with my notes added in a fetching shade of pink. I've kept photocopies so we both have a record.

(2) Unless something's gone wrong the Handbook should be enclosed. There are no significant rule changes, apart from the fact that I've somewhat loosened the rule concerning the number of schoolboys. You may still discover only one schoolboy a season, but I put a schoolboy in the auction or if you are able to persuade another manager to sell you his then you can have two at once. I'm not completely convinced this is a good thing, so we'll regard it as experimental. I can't see that any manager in his right mind would sell a schoolboy, but I suppose if you get a good enough deal it could be worth it.

(3) There's one tiny change that's unlikely ever to come into effect. I hadn't noticed that Tau Cell Hyperspacers picked Newcastle Veterans for promotion by the narrowest of margins - with points and goal difference level. Tau Cell went up on

goals scored. This is as stated in the Handbook since time immemorial, but I'm sure it's the first time it's been called upon. What I have changed is the procedure that would have been followed if they still couldn't be separated. The rules have always stated that a playoff would be used. I've introduced a further criterion before this is needed - the side with the better results in matches between the two will gain preference.
 (4) Unlike the normal procedure, I've also been able to include player listings this time. Again, PLEASE check these and draw errors to my attention. While this sheet is monumentally boring to most, there are managers who find it possible to glean very considerable information from it, and it's not fair to deprive them of this opportunity. Please note that it has not been possible to update entries in italics.
 (5) That still leaves fixture lists and order forms to be sent next time, together with revised versions of the manager contact list and player listing should these be needed.

(6) Adam Hubby has pointed out that were we to introduce three points for a win - which I'm not really inclined to do - this might imply that a win should bring 1/3 for a win and 1/6 VP for a draw. The sheer awkwardness would be enough to dismiss the possibility, and the effect on squad building would be disastrous.

(7) Bart Hubby's end of term report points out that his player Grandiose has now scored 139 goals in two seasons. He scored 62 last season and 73 the season before, which doesn't necessarily imply a decline in his performance - the nature of goalkeepers is another area where the inquisitive manager can draw many interesting lessons (Study Rule D.4 with some care. As I'm sure Bart appreciates, somehow he's managed to coach Grandiose to become the highest-level player in the history of the game). As Bart suggests, I'm not crazy enough to keep records of goalkeepers, but you're welcome to offer noteworthy performances - this feels like time to remind you of my own goalkeeping record for Nonsuch Albion over forty years ago, three seasons and joint top scorer with an aggregate of one.

(8) Of course I'm reluctant to see anyone leave the game, but if you're not going to be able to continue please let me know straight away, preferably first completing your club's roster sheet. Apart from anything else, this will save you being charged the new season's gametele.

(9) And for those newcomers who haven't been part of the game at the start of a season, your regular subscription of 80p plus postage an issue needs supplementing by a one-off gametele for the season. Most managers pay £2.50 and make their own copies of the order form, but some pay £3 and get ten copies supplied.

(10) Which reminds me, Graham Smith asks if an electronic version of the order form is possible. I don't have one, but several managers use their own version, some of which I like better than others - if you'd like to help Graham you can contact him via 106464.2000@compuserve.com

..... Next session is Close season II Please let me know of inaccuracies in the draft version of the phone and e-mail contact list (entries in italics have not been updated). The amended version will be incorporated into the Handbook next time. Please also tell me of errors in the player lists and in the table below. Last season was not a playing season, so there is no VP available, nor will there be an early VP. All you need to do is make your bids (if any) in the coach auction and report any errors (see above and below) - I'm happy to accept e-mail orders for this session.

..... Balances The columns show the entry into SuperCup/Vase (automatic entry for holders); level of gametele (which will NOT be deducted just yet) you've opted for (2½-£2.50, 3=£3); whether you're carrying a 1/4 VP into the new season; GPPs bought; players counting towards next season's non-league sales quota; and your club's cash balance after this season's business has been transacted. There are hundreds of opportunities for mistakes, so corrections are welcomed.

Player	SC	2½	1/4	24	1	1468	Dropout	SC	2½	1/4	24	0	53	Plum D	SV	?	0	16	2	-568
ACHartq	SC	2½	1/4	24	1	1468	Edinburgh	SV	2½	0	32	2	-593	Rainbow	SC	2½	0	40	0	1330
ACHMaran	SV	2½	0	24	4	-759	Epsom	SV	2½	1/8	8	0	89	Rush N	SC	2½	1/4	24	2	1771
ACS	X	?	0	8	0	111	Everton	SV	2½	0	32	2	531	Singing	SC	2½	1/4	24	0	3854
AirForce	SV	3	1/2	32	0	-558	Gamma	SV	2½	0	24	0	302	Southern	X	?	0	8	0	325
Astro Az	SC	2½	1/4	32	0	-114	Gamma	SV	2½	0	24	0	302	Southern	X	?	0	8	0	325
Astro Pudd	SC	3	1/2	24	0	608	Gamma	SV	2½	0	24	2	399	Sunderly	SV	2½	0	8	0	1037
Baked Al	X	2½	1/4	40	0	2177	HHW	SV	2½	0	32	1	439	Surrey S	X	(3)	0	32	0	-166
Battles	SC	2½	0	24	2	154	Hamphill	SV	2½	0	48	4	328	Tau Cell	SC	2½	1/4	24	1	577
Blantyre	SV	2½	0	16	4	-603	Horsham	SC	2½	1/4	32	3	1071	Tidley P	SV	3	1/2	48	3	63
Boys deB	SC	2½	0	40	2	-15	Jokers V	SC	2½	0	40	2	2678	Tidley P	SV	3	1/2	48	3	63
Bucks F	SV	2½	1/4	32	0	952	Lathkill	SC	2½	1/4	8	2	621	Type P	SV	3	1/2	32	2	-168
Byzantium	SV	2½	0	16	4	-180	Lithover	SC	2½	0	24	0	1486	Tymge V	SV	2½	1/4	32	0	2533
Casbonca	SC	2½	1/4	48	1	2086	Liverpi Tr	SC	2½	0	32	1	168	UBF	SV	2½	0	24	3	-190
Cassio M	X	2½	0	40	2	632	Luddies	SC	2½	0	32	0	405	UN	SC	2½	0	40	0	2043
Castle Ad	SV	2½	0	24	0	888	Lutbra J	SV	2½	1/4	32	2	326	Upper C	SV	3	1/4	40	3	328
Cincinnati	SV	3	0	24	0	441	Man Hill	SC	2½	0	40	0	1539	Westing	X	2½	0	32	2	3575
Cleveland	X	2½	1/4	48	0	-358	Mill Hill	X	3	0	8	2	338	Wessex	SC	2½	0	48	1	3687
Cliftonville	SC	2½	1/4	8	0	-343	Nemesis	SC	2½	0	24	0	2925	Woodpit	SV	2½	1/4	40	0	523
ConThur	SV	2½	1/4	48	0	-343	NewcastV	SV	2½	0	48	2	580	Workop	SC	2½	1/4	32	1	4157
DiTems	X	?	0	48	0	1785	Pippins	SC	2½	1/4	24	0	1463	Xanth Cr	X	?	0	8	0	2522

.....Coaches Following your nominations last time, the following nineteen coaches are up for auction this session. No further coaches will be offered this session. The auction will be in the usual style, so they will be offered in the order shown, and any bids may be made conditional upon the result of earlier bids.

The coaches are auctioned with clubs being limited to having no more than one (though if you sack or sell your coach you can then buy another). Generally speaking it should be clear whether or not the coach can usefully move to another club during the season and take his ability with him, or whether his effects stay with the club after he leaves - but please discuss doubtful cases with me if you're in any doubt about any aspect of any coach's abilities. Where relevant, a coach's effectiveness is rounded down. In all cases the names are those of past managers in the game, though there's no suggestion that the characteristics are in any way a reflection of their own performances.

No coach may leave a club and return to that club later in the session or at any time during the rest of the season. Coaches, like players are not allowed to change clubs after the transfer deadline.

Coaches are auctioned on a single-season contract only - so you'll buy their services until next close season, at which point they leave your employ with no compensation being paid to the club.

Bidding is of course optional, and you are not restricted to bidding for the coaches you nominated.

All the coaches who made it to this stage received at least 24 votes: the largest number was 60. For what it's worth, I note that the three who finished top of last season's poll only make it to 6th, 16th, and 14th this year. The remaining nine coaches (nos. 1,3,7,9,15,18,19,24) received between two and 15 votes and will not be available for signing this season.

13.....Robert Northcott: Club can discover only two apprentices a season, but they need play no qualifying games - they start at level 2 and can be coached immediately. (RN can do this for only one club per season).

20.....John Kenworthy: Age IV and older players age two levels less than normal (no effect on class L players).

8.....John Froment: Club can discover only two apprentices a season. Usual qualification rules apply, but they may be coached at schoolboy rates while JF is at the club.

5.....Fred Hemmings: Can coach DF and/or SW up to level 12 (rather than 10) before double VP costs needed.

17.....Bruce Dawson: Can coach players twice a session, no effect on players level 10 and above. Can work on individuals a maximum of three times in the season.

11.....Stephen Addison: Age III and above play at +3 levels (but not if this would bring them above level 10).

26.....Nigel Cook: Each session his club is in 8th, 9th place he brings an extra 0.5VP. 1VP if the club is bottom of the table.

4.....Malcolm Peitz: Reduces ageing, works (in the following close season) on 3 players to reduce ageing effects by 50% (no effect on classes L or R).

2.....Peter Amass: Hard play expert - hardness levels I, II, III concede no penalties; levels IV and V concede just one penalty.

14.....Chris Bullock: Motivation expert: when buying GPPs gets 12 per packet instead of 8.

16.....Ray Norton: Can coach any SW/DF (once per season only) at half cost as long as he doesn't play during the session.

27.....Ian Ferguson: When with a club which was relegated the previous season he has an extra 4GPP per session (7GPP if the club finished bottom).

21.....John Dodds: Club can use rookie draft at the end of the season even if not relegated (JD can do this for only one club per season).

12.....Anthony Froggett: Those apprentices discovered and qualified during AF's time at the club rise on qualifying to level 4, but cannot be sold till age 1. No effect on schoolboys.

10.....Ian Reid: Can work on one player a session and raise him an extra level for no additional VP cost; the player cannot play during that session or the next. May only work on a specific individual once per season.

25.....Kevin Lloyd: Can coach those outfield apprentices he discovers for ½VP per level providing they play all games in a session.

6.....Malcolm Smith: Can coach MF and/or FW up to level 12 (rather than 10) before double VP costs needed.

22.....Andy Chiesman: Good teacher: when he coaches a player three times the cost of the third (and only the third) coaching the cost is only half the amount it normally would be.

23.....Glyn Young: Rookie Draft purchases cost only 75% of normal.

That's it for another issue. Yes, I know there's an odd number of pages again, but I'm a day or two later in the Hopscoch cycle than I'd like to be, so you're going to have to put up with that and pass on hurriedly to John's The Walker Touch and blow my editorial pnde.

Dont forget to join PENAL and you can also sign up for Plot Counterplot.

This blank page is not the fault of the editor's computer, software or printer, nor the photocopier. It is also not due to any inadequacy of readers, GMS, nor the editor's wife, cat, car, or lawnmower.

Get set, go.....

THE WALKER TOUCH

ISSUE 25

BOBSLEIGH GAMESTART Howard Bishop is offering a bobsleigh game in his excellent zine, 'The Tangerine Terror'. He has made some clever enhancements, the changes are so good I have included some in this game. I've added the new corners, but not the push start alteration as this would make it a different game to the one you signed up to play. Here are the improved hybrid rules:

The aim of the game is for players to navigate the best way down a bobsleigh course. The course is divided into 9 segments, a push start and eight corners. The time taken for each segment is determined by the push start then adjusted according to how each corner is taken.

Players get 15 points each run, these can be used either on the push start or on any corner.

A standard push start takes 5 seconds. This can be reduced by 1 hundredth of a second by using 1 point. Each further hundredth costs double the previous cost, i.e. 2 hundredths=1+2, 3 hundredths=1+2+4 etc. Alternatively players may opt to ease up on their start, which gives them two points for each hundredth they ease up. Players may opt to double the points used when reducing the push start which gives a permanent reduction for all of the remaining runs.

There are several different corner designs. The design of each corner affects how the best line is allocated, and the time/result calculated. **The best line is recalculated for each run.** The course will be designed and notified to the players before the first run.

For each corner players select which lines they are planning to cover by picking numbers between 1 and 6. They have as many choices as points remaining after their push start allocation. **Players must select at least one number for each corner.** They must also tell the GM if they are planning to take a safe or a tight line into the corner.

Corner Type	Standard	Easy	Low	High	Combination	Slingshot
Best line calculation	D6 die roll	Average die roll (2,3,3,4,4,5)	Roll 2D6 and take the lowest	Roll 2D6 and take the highest	Roll 2D6 for two separate best lines.	D6 die roll.)
Special rules					Deviations from each best line are added	1/100 is added to gain or penalty.

The time for each corner segment is then adjusted according to how close the player's nearest choice is to the best line. These adjustments are as follows:

Numbers correspond	Safe Line	Tight Line
1 away	No effect	1 hundredth gain
2 away	1 hundredth penalty	1 hundredth penalty
3 away	2 hundredth penalty	2 hundredth penalty + add 1 away to next corner
4 away	3 hundredth penalty + add 1 away to next corner	5 hundredth penalty + add 2 away to next corner
5 away	5 hundredth penalty + add 2 away to next corner	Crash
6 or more away	Crash	Crash

When players choices correspond with the best line (for either safe or tight line) that number is fixed for any remaining runs on that corner, i.e. they get that number free for all future runs. They can add further numbers and change the line on subsequent runs.

The push start plus the eight corner segment times are added together to calculate each run.

Each player may opt to run a second or third bob but will only have 12 points each run for the extra bob(s)

The game will last four turns. The winner will be the player with the lowest cumulative time for the four runs.

NMR = Previous turn will be repeated.

Corners 1 to 8 will be: Low, Low, Standard, Easy, Easy, Combination, Slingshot & High.

First turn orders please from Arthur Owen, Dennis Menear, Jed Stone, Howard Bishop, Ian Winstanley and anybody else who fancies a game.

WORLD RECORD A perfect start from Arthur and Dennis (10), closely followed by Richard and Frank (8). Jed was a fraction behind (7), with Matthew slowest to react (NMR 5). Pick up numbers now required.

PICK UP

The next round each player must choose a number between 25 and 35 (NMR=25). This number is known as the P.U. Time for 30 metres is calculated as per the following table.

P.U POSITION	TIME FOR 30 METRES
1 st	3.2
2 nd	3.23
3 rd	3.26+
4 th etc	3.29+
1 st	

Any penalties for a slow start are added to this time (0.025 per point difference)

The 10 metre time is calculated thus: 0.9+(99-P.U.)/1000

The 40 metre time is then calculated by adding the 10 and 30 metre times.

Powerplay - The Ice have it in the battle of the men. The Cyclones... confirm The Slushpuppies will not be in the play offs and virtually guarantee their own spot, with a fine win. An away win by The Bulls secures their route into the next stage, which leaves the Blues sweating, but still favourites to progress. The final league matches are:

The Ice Men v Banbury Blues
The Cyclones... v Persher Blues
The Slushpuppies v The Mole Men

Howard	The Ice Men	DF6	BDF9	FW7	FW4	TFW1	GK11
Jed	The Mole Men	GK7	BDF5	FW6	TFW1	DF6	FW4
			H	H	H	J	
Richard	The Cyclones...	TFW1	BDF5	FW4	GK10	FW8	DF7
Frank	The Slushpuppies	FW7	TFW7	GK7	DF5	BDF6	FW5
		F	R			R	
Ian	Persher Blues	GK11	FW5	DF5	FW5	FW6	BDF7
Arthur	Banbury Bulls	FW5	DF7	GK10	BDF9	TFW1	FW7
			A	A	A	I	

Team	W	D	L	F	A	GD	P
The Ice Men	4	0	0	12	4	8	8
Banbury Bulls	3	1	0	12	5	7	7
The Cyclones...	2	0	2	8	8	0	4
Persher Blues	1	1	7	7	0	0	3
The Mole Men	0	2	2	5	10	-5	2
The Slushpuppies	0	0	4	2	13	-11	0

H S & J Results have been double checked and should be okay. I'm really looking forward to the next double turn.

Name	Turn 7				Board position			
	Hop	Step	Jump	Jump	Hop	Step	Step	Jump
Dennis Arnold	33	35	54		2	3	3	1
Richard Smith	65	-29	48		1	9	9	3
Mike Taylor	13	-10	32		5	8	4	4
Alan Parr	9	45	31		6	2	2	6
Arthur Owen	2	3	9		8	7	9	9
Frank Main	26	35	14		4	3	8	8
Jed Stone	13	35	26		6	3	7	7
Jonathan Edwards	0	48	54		9	1	1	1
Phillips Idowu	28	24	32		3	6	4	4

Waiting list

Bobsleigh (Sport simulation) GAMESTART More players are welcome but must submit order this turn. Eat me (an Allan Stage game) Allan Stage, Arthur Owen, Dennis Arnold, Jed Stone & Frank Main. Just 1 needed.

THE WALKER TOUCH is a Hopscotch subzine edited by John Walker

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Orders accepted by post or E-mail

You can either send orders/correspondence to Alan by deadline A or me directly by deadline B in the mainzine