

Positively the last call for TringCon; I'm expecting many of the old faces to come, with a good leavening of newcomers as well. It's always a lot of fun, and the numbers are just right to keep it a group of old and new friends while still giving you the chance to play with a variety of groups. The date is Saturday September 27th and £10 covers fees and food, drink, and hundreds and hundreds of biscuits. More details on request; if you'd like to join us please let me know and preferably send me a deposit as soon as possible.

HH	HH	OOOOO	PPPPPP	SSSSSS	CCCCC	OOOOO	TTTTT	CCCCC	HH	HH	22222	00000	55555
HH	HH	OOOOO	PPPPPP	SSSSSS	CCCCC	OOOOO	TTTTT	CCCCC	HH	HH	22222	00000	55555
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55
HH	HH	OO	PP	SS	CC	OO	TT	CC	HH	HH	22	00	55

Howard Wilcox sent me this e-mail at the end of August:

"I am contacting you to see if you knew that Keith Loveys of Xanth Crusaders fame died at the weekend. I was talking to my immediate boss a few weeks ago & it transpired that she plays Bridge to a very good standard at a club in London. I then asked her if she knew Keith. She said yes & that he was the best player she had seen never to play a full International for England. She said hello to him for me. Today she came & told me that he had died. Apparently he lived in the flat over her Bridge club. He had not been feeling well since a tournament in Brighton a week or so previously. Someone went upstairs to see him on Saturday & found him on the floor. I think he was pronounced dead at the scene. He had just turned 50. ((Alan: I've since seen it stated that he was born in 1949.)

"I knew him from The Sigma Games Club in Central London & also from the 'zine Leviathan which he helped run in the late 1970's. He was a really nice guy."

The news was confirmed by Steve Jones a few days later:

"It has been a sad shock to learn that Keith Loveys died, completely unexpectedly, on Friday 22nd August.

"Keith had been active in the UK games hobby for nearly 30 years, as well as being a superb bridge and chess player. He also played Diplomacy and many of its variants, and was a highly respected 18XX player. In all the years I knew him, he never raised his voice, lost his temper or became irritable - a thoroughly nice, gentle person. He will be greatly missed by many in the games hobby, both by postal gamers and convention goers."

When I launched Hopscotch in 1980 on a platform of running games which had never been tried before there were plenty of people telling me it wouldn't work. Keith Loveys was one of the first subscribers and it was people like him who instantly proved them wrong. For fifteen years or more I had only to announce a new game and I knew Keith would be on the waiting list within a week. In many ways he was a GM's dream - he did his orders as soon as the zine came through his letterbox and posted them straight away. I can't think of anyone as prolific as Keith - he played almost every game you can imagine; Mick Haytack once tried to count all his games up and found over 120, including more than twenty soccerleague and United games and at least ten assorted Diplomacy games. He was even a longterm Magic - The Gathering player.

Keith wasn't one of those who write chatty letters and I spoke to him no more than a couple of times on the telephone; and though we'd say hello at ManorCon he'd spend his time playing everlasting games of 18xx under a cloud of smoke, so I can't recall we ever played a face to face game together. Howard mentions that Keith was part of the Leviathan team, and I'm fairly sure we traded for a while when he ran Snowwood Gazette. This seemed to reflect Keith pretty accurately - no frills, no hobby or other politics, no soul-searching editorials; nothing other than a concentration on the games themselves. He never sought a high profile, but he was part of the hobby before almost any of us and there can't be many subscribers of the 80s and 90s who didn't play plenty of games in the zine with him.

(A) United early deadline and all outside GMs: 5pm, Friday, October 10th, 2003
 (B) United: 5pm, Friday, October 17th
 (C) My other games: 5pm, Wednesday, October 22nd

I'm happy to accept e-mail orders for all games, and this session that includes United. My e-mail address is alanparr@dial.pipex.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 206 should be posted no later than: Wednesday, October 29th

Dates (A) - (D) for Hopscotch 207 may be: November 21st, 28th, December 3rd, 10th, 2003

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

Addressee As far as I can recall, the contact details given last issue for United managers are all correct.

Subscriptions, United gamefees Received, with thanks, from Messrs Winstanley, Loveland, Spaans, and Ms Head. Please note that the deduction of United gamefees means there'll need to be a lot more sub renewals next time. 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 alanparr@dial.pipex.com

Waiting lists, gamestarts, etc Plot Counterplot: gamestart for John Harrington, Arthur Owen, and John Walker.

Railway Rivals: gamestart on the new Michigan map for Denis Arnold, Eryl Jones, Arthur Owen, and Alan Parr.

PENAL: if you missed the first round of PENAL don't worry - just join the fun.

Bus Boss: waiting list; still two needed to join Denis Arnold and Arthur Owen.

The Walker Touch: John Walker's subzine always contains lots of interesting and original games.

This is Hopscotch 205, 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 gamefee - 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. More still, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Your name and address and the games you're in (and no other information) are stored on computer; please let me know if you object to this - though no-one's ever yet complained.

To my rather considerable surprise I had a letter from Gibsons' Games a couple of weeks back. It's a couple of years since I last heard from them and I'd assumed they'd dropped Total Football along with pretty well every other game from their range. But no, they were happy to renew the licence for another couple of years. A good chunk of my surprise was down to the fact that when the game was first launched I'd get quite a lot of correspondence about it. I'd get two or three letters a month from those who'd bought the game - Matthew Finch and Cecil Worthington both joined United via this route - but it must be two or three years since I've had any such letter, so I can't imagine many copies are being sold and I certainly haven't seen copies in any shops. I can only assume that Gibsons produced too many copies and have decided they'll recoup as much as possible by selling a few copies here and there.

If that doesn't make much sense to you, I'll mention that a few years back Gibsons' launched a set of games based on sports and asked me to produce a football game built from the same ideas as United. There were six games in their series, two or three by Reiner Knizia, and it was a nice feeling to know that Gibsons' turned down a football game of Reiner's in my favour. They called it Fireside Football and it sold a few hundred copies every six months for two or three years. Within a couple of years Gibsons' decided to discontinue virtually all their boardgames, but though they dropped the other games in the series they kept Fireside Football going and relaunched it as Total Football. The name and the packaging were both a great improvement, but I've never seen any sales figures.

TringCon

This is the last issue before TringCon; if you've been before you can expect things to be much the same as usual. If you haven't, please consider yourself invited, but do please let us know in advance so we can plan the catering. As ever, we'll be at the usual place (the New Mill Social Centre in Tring) at the usual time (the last Saturday in September) September 27th, 2003. There should be about twenty 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, the famed Tring biscuit mountain and other refreshments throughout the day, and a taxi service from the station.

I recognise that the following is a fairly approximate list; so don't hesitate to correct me. Places are already booked for Annie Shillabeer (£12 paid), John Harrington (£10) plus Mike Eggleton, Keith Thomasson (£10), Rob Thomasson (£4), Dave Thornton (£10), Allan Stagg (£10), Mark Stretch (£10) plus James Pinnion(?) plus x, Denis Arnold, Martin Butcher (£10), Adam Huby (£10), Mick Haytack (£10), Howard Wilcox, Kevin McGowan plus Alan Foad(?), Howard Bishop(?), Sharon Khan plus one(?), Adam Tracey (£10).

After TringCon MidCon can't be too far away. Dates are November 14th-16th and the venue is only a couple of minutes walk from Birmingham's jazz record shop, The Record Centre, at the Thistle Birmingham City Hotel. Details from

Jeremy Tullett, 7 Midland Place, Derby, DE1 2RR. Or you can look up www.midcon.org.uk

Postively the last convention of the year, and the first of 2004 is Hogmanay-Con: information from Tanya Fox, 16 Blacket Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1RL (tanyafoxgal@hotmail.com)

Martin Burroughs has a vacancy or two in his Premier League football game, so if you're interested, please contact him at 15 New Earth Street, Oldham, Lancs, OL4 5ES (0161-626-1580; e-mail martinburroughs@tiscali.co.uk) Mike Parnaby is one of Martin's managers and he's looking for other United games to join, so if you're in a game which doesn't already have Mike as a manager please let him know (01287-637-565; michael.parnaby@ntlworld.com)

United

Here's a revised version of the table I first printed last season. It shows the average team strengths in each division. It's a bit crude, since it reflects the total effective strength of teams in their final home league match of the season rather than over the season as a whole. This total strength includes levels added through home advantage (10 for every team), and hardness (up to 21), and GPPs.

You can read what you like into the current figures; what they tell me is that overall playing levels are healthily steady and aren't suffering from inflation.

	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	84-85	....	94-95	95-96	97-98	99-00	00-01	02-03
	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	....	S 12	S 13	S 14	S 15	S 16	S 17
Division 1		99	102	110	130	....	167	162	164	165	152	166
Division 2		102	83	97	121	....	151	147	145	150	151	142
Division 3		89	94	92	112	....	143	145	137	146	144	142
Division 4		92	89	104	107	....	147	143	147	143	130	137
Division 5		—	82	105	116	....	132	140	144	139	141	129
Division 6		—	80	104	108	....	134	137	131	126	131	129
All teams		95	88	102	115	....	146	146	145	145	142	141

Coaches Here are the results of the coach auction; coaches are auctioned on a single-season contract only - so they leave your employ next close season with no compensation being paid to the club. The total raised in the coach sale was 16428k (compared to 19047k last season). Seven bidding clubs were unsuccessful.

- 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). *To Casablanca for 868k.*
- 20.....John Kenworthy: Age IV and older players age two levels less than normal (no effect on class L players). *To Pippin's Tigers for 410k (only two clubs bid for the coach deemed second most popular).*
- 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. *To Worksop Town for 1575k.*
- 5.....Fred Hemmings: Can coach DF and/or SW up to level 12 (rather than 10) before double VP costs needed. *To Liverpool Trawlers for 355k.*
- 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. *To Singing Scrubbers for 2052k.*
- 11.....Stephen Addison: Age III and above play at +3 levels (but not if this would bring them above level 10). *To Dropout City for 1063k.*
- 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. *To Lathkill Cottagers for 562k.*
- 4.....Malcolm Peltz: Reduces ageing: works (in the following close season) on 3 players to reduce ageing effects by 50% (no effect on classes L or R). *To Baked Alaskas for 936k.*
- 2.....Peter Amass: Hard play expert - hardness levels I, II, III concede no penalties; levels IV and V concede just one penalty. *To Xanth Crusaders for 2400k.*
- 14.....Chris Bullock: Motivation expert: when buying GPPs gets 12 per packet instead of 8. *To Upper for 1304k.*
- 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. *To Tyringe Vikings for 652k.*
- 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). *To Lufbra Jocks for 455k.*
- 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). *To Washington Redskins for 457k.*
- 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 I. No effect on schoolboys. *To Everton for 519k.*

- 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. *To Tyne Pirates for 512k.*
- 25.....Kevin Lloyd: Can coach those outfield apprentices he discovers for ½vp per level providing they play all games in a session. *To Tau Ceti Hyperspacers for 1111k.*
- 6.....Malcolm Smith: Can coach MF and/or FW up to level 12 (rather than 10) before double VP costs needed. *To Conington Thursday for 464k.*
- 22.....Andy Cheesman: 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. *To Cleveland Browns for 400k (next bid 399k!).*
- 23.....Glyn Young: Rookie Draft purchases cost only 75% of normal. *To Cliftonville Utd for 333k.*

.....Early VP, etc: There were no VPs (or early VPs) available, and no requirement to send orders.

.....Waiting list, comings and goings: Welcome to Mike Head, who joins - and is indeed the entire - the waiting list.

.....Contact details: There are only a couple of adjustments to the details given in the provisional list last time: Anthony Melbourne's e-mail address is now anthony.melbourne@btinternet.com The e-mail address for Nicholas Hathaway (Xanth Crusaders) is purplecabbage123@aol.com

Please note that unless you tell me otherwise I will be removing from my address book all other e-mail addresses for you (I know I've said this for the last four years or so, but I really will get around to it one day).

.....Club rosters: There aren't enough amendments to make producing a new version worthwhile.

Kim Head's Southern Supremes squad has been updated and should read: Perez GK, Swindon SW, Brighton DF/FW, Oxford MF, Torquay MF, QPR MF, Cambridge FW, Wycombe UT, Yeovil DF (Rook)

Please note that squads for Athletic Chipping Sodbury and Xanth Crusaders should be looked at with care, as I still haven't received updated rosters.

Surrey Sauces: I omitted Sugden GK and Tate SW - both are age I Rookies.

Delinium Tremens: please add Black Eagle MF(A), Red Cloud FW(A).

In addition, the following players have been flagged up for queries and/or correction. I do apologise for any errors or omissions, either in the roster, or in earlier sessions:

A C Maranello: Gonzales GK is S2 (he should have been recorded as S1 last season).

Ath Puddlesworth: Baby DF/FW was listed twice. Crock, Chris, Clarence are all apprentices.

Delinium Tremens: Shorty Rogers was an apprentice discovered at the start of last season.

HHW: K Williams was an apprentice discovered early last season. K Catchpole is an apprentice.

Jokers Wild: Scholes is an apprentice. Littleover Cloggers: Bennet(t) is MF.

Sunderland IC: McAteer is an apprentice. Southern Supremes: Torquay is age I.

Surrey Sauces: Dingle is an apprentice. Toot & Sponge: Goose was a rookie last season.

Tyringe Vikings: Wat(t)erford was an apprentice last season.

.....Other corrections: No-one has challenged any entries in the cash / GPP, etc given last time. A C Harlequins and Lufbra Jocks: I agree with your assessment of the games played by your schoolboys.

.....Next session's auction: There are a number of rookies who didn't find a club in the draft. They count as normal age I players with the small exception that they can't be transferred during this season. Go ahead and bid for: (10) DF7(I/rookie) (11) MF8(I/rookie) (12) MF9(I/rookie) (13) GK7(I/rookie) (14) FW7(I/rookie) (15) SW7(I/rookie) (16) GK7(I/rookie) (17) DF10(I/rookie) (18) MF12(I/rookie) (19) FW12(I/rookie).

Do remember I'm always happy to receive suggestions for players you'd like to see included.

.....Agent: Last season we introduced an agent who'll locate players, and he's available again this season. See Rule G.7 for more information.

.....F A Cup, draw for Round 1: All 60 clubs go straight into Round 1. There are four vacancies for non-league clubs, and these will be filled by the first four managers to submit sides. Such sides should be made up from 75pts and should carry names which have the same initials as the manager (there's no need to give individual player names/levels - area totals are sufficient). For nonleague sides hardness and home advantage are the same as for league teams: Hamphill v Plum Duffs Dropout v T&S A C Maranello v non-league 1 A C Harlequins v Bucks Lathkill v Tau Ceti HHW v Pippin's ACS v non-league 2 Castle Adamant v Littleover Mill Hill v Edinburgh Liverpool Tr v Astro Horsham v Cleveland Br Upper v Woolpit Singing v Air Force Newcastle V v non-league 3 Everton v Manchester Utd Baked Alaskas v Cassio Cliftonville v Blantyre UN v Surrey Wessex v Delinium Ath Pudds v Xanth Casablanca v Epsom Sunderland IC v Tyne Worksop v Jokers Byzantium v Battles Rainbow Rovers v Washington Redskins Tiddley v Gandalf's Rush v Luddites Boys de Boulogne v Nemesis Southern v Lufbra Conington Thursday v UBF Gamma v Tyringe non-league 4 v Cincinnati

.....**SuperCup draw for Preliminary Round:** As last season, there were 24 entries, which means those who offered the 16 most valuable bribes (average successful bribe was 46k) gain entry into the preliminary round of eight matches: Jokers v Manchester Utd Rainbow v Astro Casablanca v Cliftonville T&S v Pippin's Gandalfs v Wessex Boys de Boulogne v Tau Ceti Workshop v Dropout Horsham v Littleover In the next round the winners will be joined by A C Harlequins, Ath Pudds, Battles, Lathkill, Liverpool Trawlers, Nemesis, Singing, UN.

.....**SuperVase draw for Preliminary Round:** There were 24 entries, which means those who offered the 16 most valuable bribes (the average successful bribe was 73k) gain entry into the preliminary round of eight matches: Conington Thursday v Blantyre Tyne v Tyringe Byzantium v UBF Gamma v HHW Lufbra v Newcastle Vets Woolpit v Cincinnati Everton v Upyer Tiddley v Edinburgh In the next round the winners will be joined by A C Maranello, Air Force, Castle Adamant, Epsom, Hamphill, Luddites, Plum Duffs, Sunderland IC.

.....**Bits and pieces:** (1) The table below shows cash, etc balances. The cash balance figures should include taxes, GPP purchase, SuperCup/Vase bribes, rookie and coach purchases, transfer deals.

(2) You've already had Handbooks and player listings; fixture lists and order forms are enclosed - please complain if you're missing any of these.

(3) I've also deducted your gamefee - thanks. As a result, many of you will need to top up your credit level rather urgently. The great majority of managers have specified the £2.50 option and have just a single order form which you're going to make copies of. Anyone who didn't specify a gamefee has been given the £2.50 version.

(4) We start the season with some £34m in clubs' accounts. This compares with about £54m at this time last season, and £70m and £67m in previous seasons. £11.8m was spent on GPPs, £32.2m on rookies, and £16.4m on coaches - all these figures were about a quarter lower than last season. A further £1.8m went on SuperCup and Vase bribes, and this figure was about a quarter greater than last time.

(5) One manager asks about coaching restrictions: you may coach players as many times as you like, but you may not coach anyone more than once a session. Of course, there are a number of players and coaches around with special characteristics. See Rule F.2 for the general coaching rules.

.....**Next session is!** Time for the big kickoff. There is NOT a session VP available (these are awarded only following playing sessions), but there IS an early VP on offer. League match 1 FACup Round 1 (any replays not till Session II) SuperCup and SuperVase, preliminary round, first leg Home advantage 6 Hardness 2 6 8 12 15.

.....**Balances** The columns show entry into SuperCup/Vase (automatic entry for holders); the level of gamefee you've opted for (3=£3; 2½=£2.50), whether you're carrying a ½VP into the new season; GPPs bought (default value 8); non-league sales from your season's quota, and your club's cash balance. I think the figures are OK, but I can't possibly have got them all right. Upyer's GPP figures have been adjusted following coach purchase.

ACHarq	sc	2½	½	24	1	1468	Dropout	sc	2½	½	24	0	-999	Plum D	sv	?	0	16	2	-568
ACMaran	sv	2½	0	24	4	-759	Edinbrgh	sv	2½	0	32	2	-593	Rainbow	sc	2½	0	40	0	1330
ACS	x	?	0	8	0	111	Epsom	sv	2½	½	8	0	89	Rush N	x	3	½	24	2	171
AirForce	sv	3	½	32	0	-568	Everton	sv	2½	0	32	2	12	Singing	sc	2½	½	32	0	1802
Astro Az	sc	2½	½	32	0	-114	Gamma	sv	2½	0	24	0	302	Southern	x	2½	0	8	0	325
Ath Pudd	sc	3	½	24	0	608	Gandalfs	sc	3	½	24	2	399	Sunderld	sv	2½	0	8	0	1037
Baked Al	x	2½	½	40	0	1241	HHW	sv	2½	0	32	1	439	Surrey S	x	(3)	0	32	0	-165
Battles	sc	2½	0	24	2	154	Hamphill	sv	2½	0	48	4	328	Tau Ceti	sc	2½	½	24	1	-434
Blantyre	sv	2½	0	16	4	-603	Horsham	sc	2½	½	32	3	1071	Tiddley P	sv	3	½	48	3	63
Boys deB	sc	2½	0	40	2	-15	Jokers W	sc	2½	0	40	2	2678	T&S	sc	2½	0	24	1	740
Bucks F	x	2½	½	32	0	952	Lathkill	sc	2½	½	8	2	59	Tyne P	sv	3	½	32	2	-680
Byzantm	sv	2½	0	16	4	-180	Littleover	sc	2½	0	24	0	1486	Tyringe V	sv	2½	½	32	0	1881
Casblnca	sc	2½	½	48	1	1218	Liverpl Tr	sc	2½	0	32	1	-187	UBF	sv	2½	0	24	3	-190
Cassio M	x	2½	0	40	2	632	Luddites	sv	2½	0	32	0	405	UN	sc	2½	0	40	0	2043
Castle Ad	sv	2½	0	24	0	888	Lufbra J	sv	2½	½	32	2	-129	Upyer C	sv	3	½	72	3	-781
Cincinnati	sv	3	0	24	0	441	Man Utd	sc	2½	0	40	3	1539	Washgtn	x	2½	0	32	2	3119
Cleveland	x	2½	½	48	0	-259	Mill Hill	x	3	0	8	2	338	Wessex	sc	2½	0	48	1	3687
Cliftonville	sc	2½	½	8	0	-691	Nemesis	sc	2½	0	24	0	2925	Woolpit	sv	2½	½	40	0	523
ConThur	sv	2½	½	48	0	-807	NewcstV	sv	2½	0	48	2	580	Workshop	sc	2½	½	32	1	2582
DTremns	x	?	0	48	0	1785	Pippins	sc	2½	½	24	0	1053	Xanth Cr	x	?	0	8	0	122

The Hopscotch 50-50 Club

There were 20 entrants again; the prize of £10.00 goes to Richard Smith.

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 Mewse, in his early thirties. The other beneficiaries are (ii) the Brittle 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 your money lasts.

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

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 entries/top-ups by deadline A (any which arrive close to d/A may not be processed till the following issue - this may particularly apply to players indicated by ***).

There were several top-ups last time, but we still have several participants with credit ratings 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, so newcomers are even more welcome than usual.

The Golden Strider											D	M	B	R	S	P	O			
Race 18, turn 13 (steeplechase, 70 sq)	Cards	(Value/Turn Acquired)																		
Adam Huby	8/8	10/9*	10/10	10/11	1/12	0/13	2	8	0	0	46	1	1							
Mark Stretch	1/6*	1/7	8/10	0/11	10/12	1/13	0	1	0	1	45	2	0							
Arthur Owen	4/7*	5/9	1/10	1/11	9/12	1/13	0	3	1	1	40	3	0							
Rex Walford	8/8*	10/9	4/10	10/11	10/12	6/13	1	5	2	6	38	4	1							
Allan Stagg	10/8*	10/9	10/10	0/11	10/12	10/13	4	2	4	10	37	5	=							
Rob Thomasson	0/8	8/9*	2/10	5/11	6/12	10/13	0	4	4	10	37	5	=							
Jed Stone	8/8	8/9	10/10*	8/11	8/12	8/13	2	4	4	8	36	7	0							
Mark Weseman	0/8*	0/9	1/10	2/11	0/12	0/13	0	0	0	0	32	8	=							
Martyn Hathaway	1/8*	2/9	10/10	2/11	0/12	0/13	0	1	0	0	32	8	=							

There's a trip for Arthur at the 40 barrier.

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 overtaking costs incurred last turn, amounts used for movement and for banking, replacement, square occupied, position, and the overtaking 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/7 cards must be played next time. Do please be sure you take overtaking and barrier costs into account when ordering.

Spell Merchants

.....**Game 11** (target 57 points) **Session A spells were:**

Round 1: Spell (g) ingredigits totalling more than 10 Prizes: (kk) 14,5,2
Round 2: Spell (h) all ingredigits odd Prizes: (hh) 15,10,3

Session B spells are (single- or multi-ingredigit acceptable in both cases):

Round 3: Spell (l) no ingredigit numbered 1, 2, or 3 Prizes: (cc) 18,9,2
Round 4: Spell (b) only one type of ingredigit Prizes: (ee) 16,6,2

Session C spells are (multi-ingredigit, none repeated, necessary in Rd 5; single- or multi-ingredigit acceptable in in 6):

Round 5: Spell (d) ingredigits numbered consecutively Prizes: (jj) 20,10,4
Round 6: Spell (a) all ingredigits different Prizes: (aa) 25,10,5

Start	Name	Round 5 Spell	Pts	Round 6 Spell	Pts	Ingredigits now	End
22	Mick Haytack	123456	11	123456	18	2 33 4	51
18	Adam Huby	123456	11	123456	18	2 5	47
2	Arthur Owen	123456	11	126	5	1 222	18
18	Jed Stone	Restock 2245	-4	12345	5	1 22222 3 44444 55	19
14	John Walker	Restock 2234	-4	3	5	111111 2222 333 4444 5	15

Session D spells are (single- or multi-ingredigit spells acceptable in in both cases):

Round 7: Spell (k) no ingredigit numbered 4, 5, or 6 Prizes: (bb) 10,4,1
Round 8: Spell (e) ingredigits totalling a multiple of 3 Prizes: (ii) 25,12,4

Mick, Adam and Arthur all deployed most of their armament, so the prizes ended up being shared. I had to adjust a couple of spells; one player failed to notice that (d) spells may not have repeated digits, and while Arthur made his intention clear in Round 6 he gave the wrong ingredigits. Jed and John look favourites to get points this time, so it's going to be tight.

Middleman

.....Game 36V, Round 6 and last (Variman, within 40 rule applies) Kim wins with some comfort.
 Kim Head (532) plays 95 cards score now 532
 Eryl Jones (196) plays 93 cards score now 728
 Jed Stone (132) plays 78 cards score now 132

Scores doubled by Jed.

.....Game 37, Round 5 (Standard, within 30 rule applies)
 Kim Head (181) plays 78 cards 9 9 score now 411
 Eryl Jones (168) plays 71 cards 2 9 score now 168
 Jed Stone (253) plays 79 cards 6 9 score now 253

.....Game 38, Round 1 (Standard, within 30 rule applies)
 John Walker (0) plays 52 cards 0 1 1 3 4 5 6 7 9 9 score now 0
 Arthur Owen (0) plays 50 cards 1 2 3 4 6 6 7 8 9 9 score now 143
 Jed Stone (0) plays 41 cards 2 3 4 5 5 6 6 7 8 9 score now 0

.....Waiting list: Eryl Jones, Kim Head.

Tribute

.....Game 56, Round 5 (Hyperbute - highest score wins) A slightly better round for Jed, but it's a lot to ask.

Kim Head plays 0 to Jed Stone's 5 points: KH -2 JS +2
 Eryl Jones plays 8 to Kim Head's 8 points: EJ 0 KH 0
 Jed Stone plays 5 to Eryl Jones' 0 points: JS +2 EJ -2

Stakes doubled by Eryl.

Scores now: KH +9 EJ +7 JS -16

Cards left: KH: 1 2 4 5 EJ: 2 2 4 8 JS: 5 6 9 9

Doubles / triples left: none (sorry, I should have recorded last time that Eryl used his triple in Round 4).

.....Game 57, Round 2 (Highest score wins) Even quieter than last round.

Arthur Owen plays 1 to John Walker's 2 points: AO -1 JW +1
 Jed Stone plays 3 to Arthur Owen's 0 points: JS +1 AO -1
 John Walker plays 0 to Jed Stone's 3 points: JW -1 JS +1

Stakes undoubled.

Scores now: AO -2 JS +4 JW -2

Cards left: AO: 2 2 5 5 6 7 8 9 JS: 5 5 5 7 7 9 9 JW: 0 1 1 9 9 9 9

Doubles left: AO: 2 JS: 0 JW: 3.

.....Waiting list: Eryl Jones, Kim Head.

Run For Gold

<u>Race 6</u>	Denis Arnold	3/6*	4/1	5/2	6/8	8/4	BUR	<u>7/7</u>	sq	10
(lap 1)	Adam Huby	3/3	5/7	6/2	7/8	8/1	4/8*	<u>1/7</u>	sq	6
	Geoff Kendall	4/3*	5/5	6/7	7/1	8/7	STA	<u>BUR</u>	sq	6
	Dennis Menear	4/6	5/6	6/1	7/3	8/2	2/8*	<u>3/4</u>	sq	4
	Arthur Owen	3/5	5/3	6/5*	7/5	8/6	STU*	<u>BOX</u>	sq	8
	Jed Stone	4/4	5/1	6/4	7/6	8/3*	1/8	<u>TUC</u>	sq	10
	John Walker	4/7*	5/4	6/3	7/2	8/8	8/5	<u>2/7</u>	sq	6

Probably the first time ever where four players each got their first choice replacement - I doubt whether it will happen again next turn. Almost everyone suffered from Arthur's stumble.

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: TUC 5/8 STU STA 6/6 BOX 3/2 3/8 4/5 3/1 7/4 4/2 3/7 6/5 4/3 4/7 3/6 2/8 8/3 4/8 STU

Plot Counterplot

Apologies for a couple of mistypings in the final report last time, though the final scores and placings were 100% OK. (I should have recorded Geoff Kendall playing to field B, not I; and Arthur Owen's score for field H should have been 28, not 20.).

.....Gamestart: We've three players for a new game, John Harrington, Arthur Owen, and John Walker. This will be Game 7. I've enclosed maps (but not rules - you've all got copies from the last game, though if you'd like another set please let me know.)

In the first month you have 4 plants to use.

PENAL Round 1 GM - Denis Arnold

This is great - 15 takers, albeit including one whose orders arrived 6 days after deadline. You know who are, but don't expect as much leeway in future.

If anyone else wants to join us, it's not too late; newcomers will start with the lowest current score.

After much playing about with MS Excel, I eventually managed to get the Sort sussed out. Firstly, I couldn't find a Sort Descending button; then, when I'd got that, I could only sort one column at a time. So I could sort the Points Totals, but everything else stayed put. However, suddenly everything was in the right place. The trouble is, I'll have to go through it all again next time as I'm not sure how it all happened. Never mind, it helps to pass the time and keeps me off the street.

Right, back to the game. Mick, Peter and Ian have set the early pace, and Arthur, Cecil and Chris have a bit of catching up to do. With 9 more turns though, anything can happen. By the way, before anybody asks, **collusion is not allowed** - fool that I am, I trust you all!!

PENAL	PLANET	U.S.STATE	Round 1			GM - Denis Arnold									
			GIRL'S NAME	CAR MODEL	TOWN/CITY	MOTORWAY	P O I N T S								
NAME							B/Fwd	New	Total						
Mick Haytack	Mars	3+3	Missouri	2	Mary	3	Mondeo	3	Manchester	3	M 1	2	0	19	19
Peter Stanton	Mars	3+3	Missouri	2	Mary	3	Mondeo	3	Manchester	3	M 1	2	0	19	19
Ian Winstanley	Mars	3+3	Missouri	2	Mary	3	Mondeo	3	Manchester	3	M 1	2	0	19	19
Dennis Menear	Mars	3+3	Massachusetts	2	Mary	3	Mondeo	3	Manchester	3	M 25	-	0	17	17
Simon Robertson	Mars	3+3	Massachusetts	2	Marigold	2	Mini	1	Manchester	3	M 4	2	0	16	16
John Walker	Mars	3+3	Michigan	-	Mindy	2	Mondeo	3	Manchester	3	M 1	2	0	16	16
Alan Parr	Mars	3+3	Montana	-	Maisie	2	Mondeo	3	Manchester	3	M 8	2	0	16	16
Geoff Kendall	Mars	3+3	Massachusetts	2	Myrna	2	Mini	1	Manchester	3	M 181	2	0	16	16
Jed Stone	Mars	3+3	Maine	-	Mary	3	Metro	-	Manchester	3	M 1	2	0	14	14
Rob Thomasson	Mercury	1+2	Maryland	-	Mary	3	Mondeo	3	Manchester	3	M 1	2	0	14	14
Richard Smith	Mars	3+3	Maryland	-	Moon Unit	2	Mondeo	3	Manchester	3	M 25	-	0	14	14
Bart Huby	Mercury	1+2	Minnesota	-	Mary	3	Mondeo	3	Manchester	3	M 53	2	0	14	14
Arthur Owen	Mercury	1+2	Michigan	-	Megan	1	Mondeo	3	Manchester	3	M 40	2	0	12	12
Cecil Worthington	Mercury	1+2	Minnesota	-	Mary	3	Mondeo	3	Manchester	3	M 25	-	0	12	12
Chris Chilton	Mars	3+3	Montana	-	Megan	1	Megane		Manchester	3	M 25	-	0	10	10
EXPLODE VOTES			Mississippi			7	xxx								
			Minnesota			1									
			Massachusetts			2									
			Maine			1									
			Missouri			1									
			Michigan			2									
PROD VOTES			6	xxx		2					4	2			

For Round 2, the letter is S and the categories are -

1. Bird;
2. Weapon;
3. Footwear;
4. Boardgame;
5. Car Part;
6. A Sound.

Vote to explode a word under category 1 (Bird).

Vote for a category to be prodded.

In category 4 (Boardgame), the second-most popular ONLY will score 3 points (No others will score).

In category 5 (Car Part), the most popular will score 1 point, the second-most popular will score 3 points.

Good luck.

Nrich Central

Fourteen effective entries, with a total of 9098 and an average was 649.86 and target number thus 650, up three from last time's record. Allan Stagg and Bart Huby cancel each other out, leaving victorious for the second issue running.

Chris Chilton	586	Allan Stagg	651	Stuart Cooper	657
Jed Stone	631	Bart Huby	651	Adam Huby	659
Mick Haytack	634	ERYL JONES	653	Arthur Owen	666
Denis Arnold	640	Kim Head	654	Geoff Kendall	703
Londa Chilton	642	Rob Thomasson	656		
John Walker	647	Dennis Menear	657		

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. (Victorious traders get the £1 in stamps.)

.....
Railway Rivals RR 1844 SD: Round 12, The End GM: D G Watts. August 03

	DENIS	HANDY	PARADE	PTC
36 Brookings - Sioux Falls	x	15 +2	15 -2	x
37 Mitchell - Bristol/Conde	x	C 20 -3 -1	C 10 +3	+1
38 Pierre - Sioux City	30 -1	x	+1	x
39 Rapid City - Leola/Pollock	L 10 -13+9-1*	P 10 -2	10 +13 -9 -1	+4
40 Aberdeen - Platte/Winner	W 30 -2 -1	x	+2	+1
41 Isabel/McLaughlin - Minnesota	M 10	M 20 -3	x	+3
42 Deadwood - Iowa	+1	x	30 -1	x
Total earnings	80 -8	65 -7	65 +6	0 +9

* Run 39: DENIS & PARADE: Exchange of running powers.

Final Scores

DENIS: Denis Arnold, purple	324 + 72 = 396	1 st
HANDY: John Walker, red	315 + 58 = 373	2 nd
PARADE: Alan Parr, green	274 + 71 = 345	3 rd
P T C: Eryl Jones; yellow	269 + 9 = 278	4 th

NMR PTC. Fortunately, this didn't affect placings: I re-ran the races with PTC entering runs 37, 40 & 41, & scores were: D 376, H 354, PAR 338, PTC 322.

Game end statements: Denis: Many thanks for an enjoyable tight game. I've taken one or two gambles (even in the final round) so I hope the dice will be kind. On this type of map, it nearly always pays to go straight across between the larger groups of towns. In this case, it was more important than being first into the lower value 'duplicate' towns. Thanks to the other players and DGW; I'm pleased it was an exciting finish all round.

Alan: I enjoyed this game a lot, but was never up with the leaders - the loss of one of the starters at the bottom of the map distorted the game hombly. Suddenly, rather than having to fight for his life, Denis had a monopoly, & worse still I was the only player who could attempt to put a spoke in his wheel, which meant I had my strategy forced for much of the time. Not that I played well - in particular, I let Denis out-think me in the bottom corner, & if I'd played this better, the entire game would have been closer, & there might well have been only about 40 pts between first and last entering the last round. Thanks to the pther players & DGW; I hope I play better next time.

On the wider front, I've always enjoyed 4 & 5 player games, because the map is less cluttered, & deciding which runs to enter is less of a lottery. But with only 4 players, and 7 races a round, it does become very hard to pick up a significant number of points. There are seven 1st and seven 2nd on offer, so there are 14 prizes. If 4 of you are only allowed to enter 4 races, there are 16 entries, so a mere 2 entries lose out. Consequently, in every round virtually all scores were between 40 and 66, & it seems to me the racing rounds ought to have a much bigger effect.

DGW: A close finish, but DENIS had the best network & deserved his victory. His long straight stretches often gave him the quickest routes, & his short cut-offs made a difference to the results of races several times. HANDY would have done better to build from E48 to Deadwood, cutting 4 off some runs; and Newell - D41 would save 2 on cross-country races. He also suffered from everyone else blanketing his Eastern territory. PTC didn't spend enough on extensions, or get far enough W to enter 4 races most rds, and again his key N area was invaded by the others. PARADE should have built a branch running NE from Blunt, or B61, or B64; and L26-F29 might have taken points off DENIS.

Now on with the first game of Michigan!

Railway Rivals Gamestart Inventor and GM: David Watts

There are four of us for a new game, which will be on the new Michigan map, which is enclosed for players. Maps and rules are enclosed for players; David may wish to clarify amendments to any of the rules. Players should get setup orders to David (start town preferences, company name, and choice of colour).

The players are: Denis Arnold, Eryl Jones, Arthur Owen, Alan Parr. Addresses for two of us and David are on the front page. For Eryl and Arthur:

Eryl Jones, 27 Earl Street, Hafod, Swansea, SA1 2HG (01792-511493)
 Arthur Owen, 6 Llys-y-Foel, Caernarvon, Gwynedd, LL55 2LU

.....
 If you don't like mathematical puzzles you'd better find something more interesting quickly, because the problem Bart Huby set last time has generated some response. The puzzle stated:

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". (R)

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?

I'll turn things over to those who've actually worked at the problem in a moment, but I'll set the ball rolling by observing that there are circumstances when Mr Product definitely would know what the two numbers are. Assuming the two numbers are different, the simplest example is if the product is 6. He has an easy job in seeing the two numbers must be 2 and 3. In fact, he can deduce the numbers for any product which is the result of multiplying two prime numbers, so that even if the product is 7037 he can happily say the numbers are in this case 31 and 227.

Mr Sum's statement R must therefore be saying that the sum is such that no possible partition gives two primes. For example, if the sum is 11, possible partitions are 11 and 0, 10 and 1 (neither of which are allowed since the problem states both must be greater than 1), 8 and 3, 7 and 4, 6 and 5. On the other hand, most numbers can indeed be partitioned into two primes - for example, one partition of 10 is 7 and 3.

That seems to be quite enough from me. I'll turn things over to Bart later, but in the meantime here are your responses:

Peter Stanton was terse: "I'm not giving workings ... but the numbers are 4 & 13 (or, at least, these work and I'm not wasting time proving uniqueness)"

Richard Smith called upon computer power: "I had a bash a Bart's puzzle and concluded that there is no elegant way to solve it. "Suck it and see" seems to be the only way which usually means a computer program (like the bizarre "balls" problem I featured in an old issue of SMEG). So I knocked up a bit of Javascript - on the web at http://www.sholing.force9.co.uk/msand_mrp.htm (which requires you to enter the sum of a and b) I tried all the sums from from 4 to 100 and the only one which worked was 17 (14 and 3) - quite a low number so I might have found this without spending 2 hours writing code (do a "view source" on the page if you want to see how I did it).

"Alternatively here's the logic I used:

"Enter a value for the sum (a+b)

"TEST1: Work out all possible products For each product test that there is more than one possible value of (a*b) If this is true for all products then the first statement is true: Mr. Sum knows that Mr. Product does not know the value.

"If test1 is failed then go no further. Else... Work out all the possible values for (a+b) for the given sum. For each pair, TEST2: work out the product and get the possible sums for this product. If only one of these sums passes test1, then statement 2 is true for the pair: Mr. Product now knows the value.

"TEST3: After Mr. Product declares he knows the value, Mr. Sum knows too only in the case where only 1 of the pairs passes test2."

And here's what Bart himself has to say:

Mr Sum and Mr Product

STEP 1: Mr Sum says to Mr Product "I know you don't know a & b"

Mr Sum knows that Mr Product doesn't know what a & b are. For Mr Product to know a & b, both would need to be prime numbers. Therefore, Mr Sum knows that a & b are not both primes. For this to be the case, the sum (a+b) must be a number which cannot be made up as the sum of two primes - for sums below 100, this can only be the following numbers:

11, 17, 23, 27, 29, 35, 37, 41, 47, 51, 53, 57, 59, 65, 67, 71, 77, 79, 83, 87, 89, 93, 95, or 97.
These numbers are in fact all the numbers which can be calculated as $(2 + \text{a non-prime odd number})$

STEP 2: Mr Product says to Mr Sum "Now I know a & b"

Now that Mr Sum has told him that he doesn't know what a & b are, Mr Product knows that $(a+b)$ equals one of the above numbers. The fact that this information means that he now knows what a & b are, indicates that he knows that $(a+b)$ could equal more than one number, but only one of these possibilities is one of the numbers in Step 1.

Looking at the possibilities if $a+b=11$, then

$a=2, b=9$ is a possibility (as $ab=18$, which can only be factored otherwise as 3,6 which sum = 9, ie not one of the Step 1 numbers)
 $a=3, b=8$ is also a possibility (as $ab=24$, which can only be factored as 2,12 (sum=14), or 4,6 (sum=10))
 $a=4, b=7$ is also a possibility (as $ab=28$, which can only be factored as 2,14 (sum=16))
 $a=5, b=6$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=30$, which can be factored as 2,15 (sum=17), which is one of the Step 1 numbers)

STEP 3: Mr Sum says to Mr Product "Now I know a & b"

For Mr Sum to know what a & b are based on the above information, there must be only one possible combination of a & b which would allow Mr Product to know what a & b are. There are, as shown above, 3 possibilities for $(a+b=11)$, so none of these can be the solution, as if one were, Mr Sum would not know which one it was.

We therefore move to consider possibilities where $(a+b=17)$, as follows:

if $a+b=17$, then
 $a=2, b=15$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=30$, which can be factored as 5,6 (sum=11))
 $a=3, b=14$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=42$, which can be factored as 2,21 (sum=23))
 $a=4, b=13$ is a possibility (as $ab=52$, which can only be factored as 2,26 (sum=28))
 $a=5, b=12$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=60$, which can be factored as 3,20 (sum=23))
 $a=6, b=11$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=66$, which can be factored as 2,33 (sum=35))
 $a=7, b=10$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=70$, which can be factored as 2,35 (sum=37))
 $a=8, b=9$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=72$, which can be factored as 3,24 (sum=27))

This indicates that $a=4, b=13$ is a solution which works.

Checking this solution goes as follows: Going back to STEP 1, Mr Sum knows $(a+b=17)$. He knows that, with $(a+b=17)$, Mr Product cannot know what a & b are, as 17 cannot be made up as the sum of two primes. Moving to STEP 2, knowing that $(a \times b = 52)$, Mr Product knows that either $(a=2, b=26)$ or $(a=4, b=13)$. If $(a=2, b=26)$, then $(a+b=28)$, and if this were the case it would be possible for a & b to both be primes $(a=5, b=23)$ so Mr Sum would not be able to make the statement that he knew that Mr Product didn't know a & b. Therefore, having been told that Mr Sum knows that he doesn't know a & b, Mr Product now knows that $(a=4, b=13)$. Finally, moving to STEP 3, Mr Product telling him that he now knows a & b, enables Mr Sum to tell that $(a=4, b=13)$, because this is the only combination satisfying $(a+b=17)$ which would enable Mr Product to make the STEP 2 statement.

Hope that's all clear now!

Finally, this analysis just provides the 2 numbers with the lowest sum which satisfy these three statements. There may well be others, though not with sums 23, 27, 29, 35 or 37 as shown below:

if $a+b=23$, then
 $a=2, b=21$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=42$, which can be factored as 3,14 (sum=17))
 $a=3, b=20$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=60$, which can be factored as 5,12 (sum=17))
 $a=4, b=19$ is a possibility (as $ab=76$, which can only be factored as 2,38 (sum=40))
 $a=5, b=18$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=90$, which can be factored as 2,45 (sum=47))
 $a=6, b=17$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=102$, which can be factored as 2,51 (sum=53))
 $a=7, b=16$ is a possibility (as $ab=112$, which can only be factored as 2,56 (sum=58), 4,28 (sum=32), 8,14 (sum=22))

if $a+b=27$, then
 $a=2, b=25$ is a possibility (as $ab=50$, which can only be factored as 5,10 (sum=15))
 $a=3, b=24$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=72$, which can be factored as 8,9 (sum=17))
 $a=4, b=23$ is a possibility (as $ab=92$, which can only be factored as 2,46 (sum=48))

if $a+b=29$, then
 $a=2, b=27$ is a possibility (as $ab=54$, which can only be factored as 3,18 (sum=21) or 6,9 (sum=15))
 $a=3, b=26$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=78$, which can be factored as 2,39 (sum=41))
 $a=4, b=25$ is a possibility (as $ab=100$, which can only be factored as 2,50 (sum=52), 5,20 (sum=25), 10,10 (sum=20))

if $a+b=35$, then
 $a=2, b=33$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=66$, which can be factored as 6,11 (sum=17))
 $a=3, b=32$ is a possibility (as $ab=96$, which can only be factored as 2,48 (sum=50), 4,24 (sum=28), 6,16 (sum=22), 8,12 (sum=20))
 $a=4, b=31$ is a possibility (as $ab=124$, which can only be factored as 2,62 (sum=64))

if $a+b=37$, then
 $a=2, b=35$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=70$, which can be factored as 7,10 (sum=17))
 $a=3, b=34$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=102$, which can be factored as 2,51 (sum=53))
 $a=4, b=33$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=132$, which can be factored as 3,44 (sum=47))
 $a=5, b=32$ is a possibility (as $ab=160$, which can only be factored as 2,80 (sum=82), 4,40 (sum=44), 8,20 (sum=28), 10,16 (sum=26))
 $a=6, b=31$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=186$, which can be factored as 2,93 (sum=95))
 $a=7, b=30$ is NOT a possibility (as $ab=210$, which can be factored as 2,105 (sum=107))
 $a=8, b=29$ is a possibility (as $ab=232$, which can only be factored as 2,116 (sum=118), 4,58 (sum=62))

I recently had a plaintive little note from Ian Winstanley in Australia mentioning the plight of the poor colonials suffering the hardships of an Australian winter. I gather things have been so bad that some people have been forced to put on a sweater and even buy a plastic mac. Fed up with having Christmas dinner on the beach they've been forced to try an improvise a more traditional style celebration in June. I'm sure we all sympathise.

Back here in Tring I haven't had to cut the grass since before we went to Brecon at the start of August, and the lawn has now reached that perfect pale yellow colour when it crunches as you walk on it. We too are beginning to lay plans for Christmas dinner. Spending my Christmas bonus taking Jill out to lunch on Christmas Day a couple of years ago was a bad mistake, since it set up an instant tradition she shows no signs of abandoning. This year we seem likely to have Simon joining us, as he has no intention of repeating last year's Christmas Day lunch with friends in Germany. This, if you remember, consisted of dipping pieces of meat into a bowl of hot water, followed by the piece-de-resistance, sharing out the water and drinking it with lots of enthusiastic lip-smacking.

• Be prepared, all reader game planned for when world record concludes.

THE WALKER TOUCH

ISSUE 26

BOBSLEIGH – It was pleasing to see a great variety of tactics employed. It would be difficult to argue with Arthur's, as Owen 1 had the best run of the day and Owen 2 out performed a couple of first string bobs. Dennis must be equally as pleased, being only .05 behind and with a better start in the bank for the next round. Ian Winstanley has dusted off Blue Cow and Smiggin Holes for their second outing. He has learnt a lot from the first competition with both bobs handily placed. Jed's Alfred and Robert took paths that others feared to tread and were caught out more than most by the extraordinary high line needed for corner two. Probably the most interesting strategy was employed by Mike Head, he now has 7 extra numbers, which surely must see, him progress up the table. Even at this early stage Howard may have to take some risks to get Bishbob and Ritasueandbob2 back in the mix.

	Push	Low	Low	Std	Esy	Esy	Com	Sst	High	Time
Best Line		3	5	2	3	3	2+5	3	4	
Owen 1	R3	S3	S3	S3	S3	S3	S34	S34	S456	
	4.98	4.98	4.99	4.99	4.99	4.99	4.99	4.99	4.99	44.89
Menear 1	PR2	S24	S24	S25	S3	S4	S3	S25	S35	
	4.99	4.99	4.99	4.99	4.99	4.99	5.00	5.00	5.00	44.94
Blue Cow	PR2	T123	S2	S4	T34	T34	S3	S25	T5	
	4.99	4.98	5.00	5.01	5.00	4.99	5.00	5.00	5.01	44.98
Robert	R1	T23	T23	S4	T34	T34	S5	S34	T45	
	4.99	4.98	5.00	5.01	5.00	4.99	5.01	5.01	5.00	44.99
Menear 2	R1	S24	S3	S25	S3	S4	S3	S25	S4	
	4.99	4.99	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.01	5.01	5.01	45.01
Owen 2	S0	S23	S23	S3	S34	S34	S4	S3	S5	
	5.00	5.00	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.02	5.02	5.02	45.10
Head 1	E+6	T123	S23	S345	T345	S34	T2345	S34	S45	
	5.03	5.02	5.03	5.03	5.02	5.02	5.00	5.00	5.00	45.15
Bishbob	E+2	S123	S123	S246	S34	S3	S25	S25	S5	
	5.01	5.01	5.02	5.02	5.02	5.02	5.02	5.02	5.02	45.16
Smiggin Holes	PR2	T2	T2	S3	T34	T34	S3	S4	T5	
	4.99	5.00	5.03	5.04	5.03	5.02	5.03	5.03	5.04	45.21
Alfred	R1	S2	S2	T3	T45	T45	S4	S34	S5	
	4.99	4.99	5.01	5.02	5.03	5.04	5.05	5.05	5.05	45.23
Ritasueandbob2	E+2	S12	S12	S25	S34	S3	S25	S25	S5	
	5.01	5.01	5.03	5.03	5.03	5.03	5.03	5.03	5.03	45.23

	Safe Line	Tight Line
Numbers correspond	No effect	1 hundredth gain.
1 away	No effect	1 hundredth penalty
2 away	1 hundredth penalty	2 hundredth penalty
3 away	2 hundredth penalty	3 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

H S & J A couple of boards are getting close to being conquered, the dummies are beginning to slip back as players are starting to use well trodden paths. Thank you for your commentaries, which are always welcome. I try not to respond to them for fear of giving an advantage.

Name	Turn 8			Board position		
	Hop	Step	Jump	Hop	Step	Jump
Denis Arnold	36	26	69	2	3	1
RichardSmith	89	-27	62	1	9	2
Mike Taylor	18	-5	37	6	7	5
Alan Parr	15	47	49	7	1	4
ArthurOwen	6	-25	-13	8	8	9
Frank Main	32	26	18	3	3	8
Jed Stone	19	26	29	5	3	7
Jonathan Edwards	1	35	55	9	2	3
Phillips Idowu	29	25	33	4	6	6

WORLD RECORD 9.94 - At the 40 metre point Dennis backed up his perfect start with a great pick up and already has a healthy lead. Talking of great pick ups after an ordinary start Frank's took him to second place. Arthur and Richard's technique are virtually identical. Arthur leading due to a better reaction time off the blocks. Although running the fastest, the best Jed can hope for is a placing. Matthew has given himself too much to do and will probably coast in.

	Pick up number	30 metre time	10 metre time	40 metre time
Dennis	29	3.23	0.970	4.2
Frank	28	3.2 + 0.05	0.971	4.221
Arthur	31	3.26	0.968	4.228
Richard	31	3.26 + 0.05	0.968	4.278
Jed	33	3.32 + 0.075	0.966	4.361
Matthew	25 (NMR)	3.35 + 0.125	0.974	4.449

Players must now choose one of the following options for the run in.
RELAX – 10 metre time reduces by 1 hundredth of a second for the rest of the race.
BURST AT x METRES – 10 metre time is reduced by 1 second/metres left. This calculation will continue every 10 metres so long as someone is overtaken in every 10-metre block. If not the 10 metre time is increased by 3 hundredths every 10 metres. (x must divide by 10)
RESPOND – 10 metre time is increased by 15 thousandths. If overtaken you change to BURST with no requirement to overtake every 10 metres.
RESERVE UNTIL x METRES – 10 metre time increases by 2 hundredths, until you reach x metres when it reduces 3 hundredths for each 10 metre block held in reserve. E.g Reserve until 70 metres. (x must divide by 10)
NMR's are treated as option a.
 Every time someone is overtaken their 10 metre time is increased by **1 hundredth**.

Powerplay – Having already qualified for the play-offs, Howard employs exactly the right tactics by playing his second string. Amazingly the one first teamer he did play got injured. The Cyclones management decided to lose their dots, which must have been a bad omen as they lost their match quite comfortably to the Blues. The teams swap league positions but both make it to the next stage. The Slushpuppies finally get a win but it's not enough to move off the bottom and go out of the competition along with The Mole Men.

Howard	The Ice Men	DF1	FW1	TFW1	FW4	DF2	GK0
Arthur	Banbury Bulls	DF7	GK10	FW5	BDF9	TFW1	FW1
		A		A	A	H	
Richard	The Cyclones	TFW1	DF7	BDF6	FW5	GK10	FW4
Ian	Perisher Blues	DF5	BDF7	TFW1	FW6	GK11	FW5
		I		R	I	I	I
Frank	The Slushpuppies	DF5	FW7	GK7	FW5	FW4	BDF6
Jed	The Mole Men	GK7	DF4	FW6	TFW1	DF6	FW4
			F		F	J	F

Team	W	D	L	F	A	GD	P
Banbury Bulls	4	1	0	15	6	9	9
The Ice Men	4	0	1	13	7	6	8
Perisher Blues	2	1	2	11	8	3	5
The Cyclones 2	0	3	9	12	-3	4	
The Mole Men	0	2	3	6	13	-7	2
The Slushpuppies	1	0	4	2	13	-11	2

The semi-final matches are therefore:
 Banbury Bulls v The Cyclones
 The Ice Men v Perisher Blues.
 Can players please submit two line ups in case of a draw. Injuries will not count in draws.

Waiting list.
 Eat me (an Allan Stagg game) Allan Stagg, Arthur Owen, Denis Arnold, Jed Stone & Frank Main. Just I needed.

THE WALKER TOUCH is a Hopscotch subzine edited by John Walker
 1 Rose Gardens, Minster, RAMSGATE, Kent. CT12 4AQ Tel. 01843 821710
 E-mail: John.Walker40@btinternet.com 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.