

# Outbreak of Heresy 91

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*[ostensible deadline for next issue: Halloween]*

**NK:** No significance in that other than it's a weekend. Start this issue straight into the Surreal World of...

*...W Marcus Arnold: Just received the Sept OoH, I had consoled myself to bimonthly issues but no you swine I am not Palmer Eldritch with his 3 stigmata as it has never been tele/filmovisualised ...*

**NK:** Guessing this last is a reference to the “Quicksilver” game, which we'll get to later. How much later? Well for once I think I can put the probable CONTENTS here on the front page:

2... “**Take it Back**” (*Take it Back*), inevitably setting up  
to 5: the 'Lang' section, including Out & About from Norfolk to Cov and even more exotic places.  
6-7: So we need to start the 'Lit' section, leading to “**See Emily Play**” (*Who, of Whom, and Whence*)  
8: and thus the Music section, which naturally develops into...  
9-11: Radio, TV, films, rapidly settling on *Dune* etc (film, book, historical inspiration), giving way to  
12-13: “**Quicksilver**” (*Just Who*), which itself suggests...  
14-15: *The Invention of Science* and a not-so-related matter (demographically speaking).  
16-17: “**Run Like Hell**” (*Who/What/Where/When/Why*), ending on a Footie note and so:  
also17: “**Us and Them**” potential *World Cup Game* email playtest (suggestions/participation invited!), then:  
17-19: “**Pigs on the Wing**” (*Aquarius Football* results courtesy of the EBC) & game-theory aftermath etc.  
20-21: More games (via issue of plastic), random comments and “**See Emily Play**” extracts for next turn.  
22-23: A *Diplomacy* conundrum (courtesy of Mark Nelson), thus finally...  
24: “**One Slip**” (*Still Less Intimate Diplomacy*) and wrap up (that's not an instruction).

*W Marcus Arnold: ...In (the year of our lord / anno domini) Two Thousand No Hundred and Twenty-one, on the Eighth Day of the Ninth Month it being a Woden's Day, it behoved me to inaugurate this missive which upon its completion would be delivered with due despatch and after solemn consideration to his most Kinzett of Nicks. So here goes. Yours credulously, Sir Heargoes of Whatever...*

*Fear not for an orderly consecutisation of commentary. For it is said – and who is it that says it is taken for granted when ne'er a grant was even an option – that Wednesday's child is full of Woke and he that proceeds in ever-diminishing circles...*

...is on a  
downward path  
spiralling out  
of control...

**NK:** Ironically, I was a Sunday's child. I think! (Grief, at one time I could confirm this mathematically.)

*Marcus: So saith the Mocking Turtle. But to get back to printing, not script, I shall order this letter in no order but as it occurs and try to balance the paper on my scalp while writing on it. (How do automatic algorithmic translators translate “off the top of my head”? Literally I presume.)*

**NK:** As you and others have no doubt noticed before, I rarely publish *OoHer* communications in the order they were composed/sent anyway, but rather as appropriate to the subject at hand. Assuming there is one. [Marcus breaks off at this point to include a cutting headlined **Cult Leader found dead in fairy lights** and commencing “The leader of a religious cult who claimed she was divine and had spent the last 19 billion years trying to save humanity has been found dead...”]

Lefty-ho, opening game, then back to the lettercol proper...

**“TAKE IT BACK”** (*Take it Back*)

**Turn 2**

**(GM-still-penitent NickK)**

**Andrew Fisher:** *Thanks for OoH90 printed off and read cover to cover (except for the games I don't understand, which I think must be all of them by now). And not a mistake could I find in it. I also didn't particularly want to try to find one either; the Peking / Bombay confusion having confused me rather than having been a pointing-out-of-an-error-on-your-behalf matter. I'll have a look in OoH89 for the second mistake later, but if I'm honest I hope I'm unsuccessful! Errare humanen est and all that jazz, or however it's spelt.... ((Score 1 vp for sheer honesty.))*

**W Marcus Arnold:** *Here methinks the Worm of Gades must be dealt with, that Hydra-like beast that when one head is removed another game of words appears from its stump... ((+1 vp for sheer observation))*

**Colin Day:** *“Take it Back”, now there's another provocation and a challenge. I assume you're going to exclude your more dubious, sorry heretical, assertions of 'fact'. Otherwise I can spot only two mistakes, one being in Marcus's letter (“accents” twice when he presumably meant “acutes” second time, may be your mis-keying anyway). The other error being ‘complement’ when you clearly meant to type in ‘compliment’, as indeed Dr Asimov or his proofreader would have done in his original tale (see See Emily). And as both of these are likely to be accidental rather than deliberate... ((Have a vp apiece all the same.))*

**Paul Regan:** *I've read Nick Mason's **Inside Out**. So I know that the guest reviewer for “See Emily Play” was not Robin Trower but instead Gary Brooker. Who as Procol's keyboard player was much more likely to be the one being rude about Rick Wright's organ (oh-er). ((Correct for 3 vps!))*

**Karen Day:** *You never got back to the subject of Cov Cathedral as promised ((er, also correct for 3 vps)). The one from the previous issue must be your use of standard English ‘Dwarfs’ when, as you've insisted repeatedly, it's ‘Dwarves’ when they're in Tolkien. ((Indeed what I had in mind, +2vps))*

SCORES ON THE DOORS: KarenD 5, PaulRg 3, AndrewF 3, ColinD 2, Marcus 1, everyone else 0. It's going to tickle Karen that she's outscoring Colin on this one. Now see if you can spot this issue's deliberate mistake(s) – and identify its/their inspiration, *ie* literary sauce (er, source).

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**Marcus:** *As for Peking Duck, perhaps it was a related species to Bombay Rabbit. Now Mr Fisher might be a bit more understanding of people who use the term schizophrenic in a way not used by psychiatrists, after all it is based on the Greek schizo (to split) and phren (mind). So it literally means split mind. Psychiatrists often mis-use the term to mean a wide range of neuro-divergent behaviours that are too easily classified as schizophrenia, it means they can pretend to understand it.*

**Colin Evans:** *Schizophrenia. I watched a TV programme years ago which attempted to define this word but this definition seemed to cover so many things I felt the term was meaningless. I think the usual meaning is multiple personality disorder. (You're never alone with schizophrenia.)\_*

**Dave Berry:** *I enjoyed the discussion about changing language, but I do agree with Andrew when it comes to seeing some technical terms misapplied in the popular press. The one that currently gets my goat is the increasing misuse of the word “exponential”, with many journalists seeming to use “exponential increase” when they just mean a “large increase”. I'd like to ask these journalists what the size is of the exponent they're referring to in each case; I suspect most of them wouldn't even understand the question. Now, one could say that this is just language evolving, and you'd be right, but it is obscuring an important meaning. If someone uses the word to describe the rate at which something is increasing, we have little idea as to whether they really are talking about exponential growth or not. I'd have hoped that the experience of the pandemic would have increased understanding of this, but it seems not.*

**NK:** From my usual semi-mathematician stance, I have to agree on this one.

**Colin E:** *Americanisms are creeping into our language. It is annoying when an American (Amerish?) phrase is adapted but already has a different meaning in UK English. Pissed (pissed off), passed (passed away). Ripe for misunderstanding. "He was really pissed" – was he angry or drunk?*

*...On 'rammed': if I say I rammed your car, does it mean I've squeezed as many people into it as possible or that I've deliberately crashed into it? I think you can see that the correct use of words is important.*

**NK:** [smiles] Well you do have to read in context. And, as each term in your opening paragraph can be a euphemism in both American and UK usage, you're arguably being overharsh anyway. Also, I'm tolerably sure that in 'English' English *passed* (as in died, and presumed to be proceeding to another state of being) precedes *passed away* by some margin. Your 'UK' usage actually yields multiple meanings, for example the intransitive *passed* (*by/on/the*), which requires qualification and which we now unconsciously truncate in reference to examinations etc (and even when skipping questions in quizzes); or the transitive *passed* as in *the ball* or similar sportive object, which is another latter-day truncation and so adaptation. Thus even UK English can be confusingly colloquial, and not all 'Americanisms' are American.

...Colin has a heap of other examples but we could be here all night – and he does concede the point about pronouncing his own forename (hi Co-lin Powell). So while we're mentioning the Cousins:

**Steve Jones:** *I enjoyed the discussion about pronunciations, and in particular, how Americans have managed to mangle spoken English. My particular bugbear is the word "route", denoting a road or line of travel between two points. I pronounce it "root", but some Americans have taken to pronounce it as "rowt" which conjures up what happens to the vanquished in a battle. And yet they used to pronounce it correctly when I was young because I remember watching a Disney film when I was little about the first conquest of the Matterhorn in Switzerland; the young hero discovered something on the mountain and exclaimed "my father's route!", pronouncing it the 'correct' way. ((Again, this could be merely regional variation.))*

*...On your point that we tend to pronounce things because of the environment we were brought up in. Being a colonial, I tended to approach unfamiliar words by pronouncing them phonetically. When I received my British Commonwealth Scholarship to study for a PhD at Cambridge, I was reading up on the stuff sent about the University, and came across one of the colleges Gonville and Caius; I was flummoxed by the second word and tried pronouncing it as "Cay-is", only to subsequently find that it is "Keys", go figure!*

**NK:** If it's any comfort his non-colonial did exactly the same, after all so far as I was aware it wasn't 'Geeze' Caligula (or 'Geeze' Yulius Seezer).

**Steve J:** *Another of my bugbears on pronunciation concerns the Scandi-noir detective Wallender. Having done a Science German course at University, I knew that "w" in Germanic languages is pronounced as "v". Thus, I get very annoyed at Kenneth Branagh's BBC production of the same character, in which he pronounces the character's name as "Well-end-der", when it should be "Vel-end-der".*

*...On the theme of phonetic English spelling, I recommend to you reading Dolton Edwards' classic science fiction short "Meihem in ce Klasrum", the title of which is perfectly understandable once you have read the whole story (all three pages of it) – it is hilarious!*

**NK:** Not come across that one. As for the Germanic use of W, this is as nothing compared to the Welsh:

**Karen Day:** *Just to assure Colin the Heavenly Evans, I'm half-Welsh (English father, Welsh mother) and spent my early childhood in Wales so I'm quite used to the lie of the Llans and our Kingdom Cwm. Which may also explain my lovely lilting 'accent' (thank you for noticing, I must phone more often) but of course I don't think of it as an accent! To me it's you full English Breakfast types who talk all funny (even my Colin).*

**NK:** Well in Col's case he comes from the wrong side of the Trent (if not the Tyne) anyway... Your influence-of-childhood is not dissimilar to two of my nephews, who at thirty (many happy returns lads) still have noticeable Welsh accents despite time in even more exotic places (Kenya and, uh, the US again).

But speaking of Colin D, even before seeing the foregoing he's getting his own back already:

**Colin Day:** *A point you haven't made yet is that few of us WRITE how we actually SPEAK. I know I don't, and my abiding memory of you is that face-to-face you never came over as the erudite Prof you can still be in print (should we still call it print?). Though this may have more to do with the gnome-like appearance...*

**NK:** This issue definitely the one to be lightly abused by the Days (see Karen's bit later in "Quicksilver"), anyway I'll have you realize that Gnomes (once pronounced with the G of course) are traditionally the wise and knowledgeable ones.

**W Marcus Arnold:** *Which leads me to Grammar and Style and the correctness or not of the "British" use of the "English" language. Ballet pointed shoes/pumps...*

- *Most people think that what they have been taught is how everyone should be taught.*
- *English ain't what it used to be or what it will be.*
- *Incorrect or novel conjugation are not illegal. (Yet.)*
- *Shilly shallying about Shant, Shalt, Shalt Not and Shall Not is pointless and blunt.*
- *Hyphen is as Hyphen does. Hash signs do what it says on the can.*
- *Ampersand is short for and a corruption of "and per se and" and is the sign used to represent And.*
- *I have yet to hear of Literary Puritans and Talibans objecting to the modern usage of @ to represent at as in nick.kinzett at gmail.com or N.Kinzett @ Doleway Reed Fineham.*

**NK:** ooh, be fair, it's years, *decades*, since I was last on the dhole. But all the above is suggestive of a wider point, which Colin E now illustrates with reference to Chinese:

**Colin E:** *Traditional Chinese writing sounds hideously complex with thousands of pictograms. However, each pictogram is usually made up of two symbols of which there are only (!) several hundred. Most combinations are apparently logical, for example 'field' and 'man' together mean 'farmer'. We in the West actually read in a similar way, we don't read letter by letter but, as Nick suggested, by whole words at a time, else reading anything would take much longer. We learn to recognise hundreds (thousands?) of words. We only hesitate on unfamiliar words or if reading quickly and misread a word, thinking a word is something else, or if it is (or seems) misspelt.*

*...China is 'Chung Kuo' I think, meaning the 'middle kingdom' or the land in the middle, between heaven and the rest...*

**NK:** Ah, Middle-earth! But we'll be getting Out & About shortly (and to TLoTR plus analogues a bit later).

**Marcus:** *Having got off the point I shall metaphysically sharpen my pencil of a biro/ballpoint pen and curse those who taught us that anything other than (fountain or dipping) pen and ink was "common" and being common was "vulgar". Perhaps certain observers write in pen and ink as that is the way they 'was' taught... But I sing the praises of the biro whose ink flicks not on the backs of unsuspecting teachers, whose ink doth not blur with the spilling of water or the tears of rage against the ink bottle leaking. Perhaps script (joined-up writing) will in these computerised screenic days become obsolete and a resort for archivists. P'raps even writing on the wall is not something to be Banksied upon...*

**NK:** Follows this with speculation that the scriptal **S** may become as obscure as using an incomplete **f** for **s** (an obsolete archaism whose disappearance I don't in the least regret despite excellent use in *Molesworth*), and challenging me to find a font that can represent any of these things (which I decline, it took me years to find **Σ**, serious handicap even for a mere semi-mathematician like me). Now, did we just mention Banksy?

**Gary Lyon:** *Latest on the local Banksy – one has been covered (thought to be in bad taste as referred to the death of a young girl in a beach accident), one defaced (improved? Adapted?). One protected by Perspex. Another is portable – in a model village – so secured in plastic box and only brought out for couple of hours each day with an attendant. Owners of village reportedly already looking at selling it. One on side of building that is for sale has seen the Price of said building go up by £200 k. Considering many of the pieces make social comment on capitalism it's somewhat ironic how much money they attract.*

**NK:** Again, quite. I must do a sweep of the corresponding Coventry pieces some time.

**Marcus:** *Now where was I, oh yeh sitting in the chair. FARGO, Coventry's cultural centre in Far Gosford Street. It's a good idea but it needs a bit more vibrancy, not to mention Youth, Energy and Rebellion. Somewhere the Tiger... might have been castrated by New Agism Oldies, I fear. You remark on the number of barbers, a lot specialising in Afro-Caribbean styles...*

**NK:** I thought they were more Indian sub-continent myself but then with my natural Mad Scientist / Loremaster look (see above) I'm perhaps not one to pass informed comment on this topic.

**Marcus:** *...If you add on the food outlets it's quite weird. The Chinese restaurant seems to cater for Coventry's Chinese student community. Other ethnic foods and pizza/chips/chicken shops get the drunken people walking back from the city centre, it can get a bit "Parson's Nose" at weekends. Lower Stoke is now mostly student houses of multiple occupation and has mostly lost its Irish character and its genuine Irish pubs: The Golden Cup, Hand & Heart, Gosford Park Hotel, Hare & Hounds. The next thing you know the area will be gentrified.*

**NK:** All names forbid. Time to leave the city for pastures old (& your earlier email as opposed to letter):

**Marcus:** *Yesterday I traversed by canal from Congleton to Macclesfield very pleasantly, by split ticketing Cov to Wolves and Wolverhampton to Macclesfield with discount £223, more than I usually spend on travel but hey I deserved a "post Covid" treat. The Macclesfield Canal skirts the edge of the Peak District and its use of Millstone Grit for Bridges makes it very Handsome. When you hit Macclesfield with its Silk Mills you know you are "oop North" . // ((attached)) These are some of the things I saw walking along the canal from Congleton to Mowcop and along a ridge of millstone grit with great views and great weather.*

**NK:** Alas, once again my limited electronic assets/skills (or anyhow time/patience) prevents me from reproducing these images in *OoH*. Maybe after I retire I'll be able to include the sort of things that you now can in *WELCOME*, or that Pevans effortlessly does for *To Win Just Once*, or Jim & co in *Variable Pig*...

**Jim Reader:** *Thanks for the latest OoH and the plug for VP – glad you liked the Bezos cartoon although I have to credit Richard ((Smith)) for that one. // I'd like to comment on Marcus remark "Cycling is so popular in Holland, may well be because it is so flat". Having lived for 9 years in a small commuter town outside of Utrecht, it is definitely flat. However, there is much more to it than the local geography. There are well designed, clearly marked and laid out cycle paths everywhere with plenty of space of multiple bicycles. Traffic laws are also designed to favour cyclists and pedestrians, plus most Dutch drivers know to look for cyclists. It took me some time to get used to.*

*The Dutch also like being active and outdoors, despite their miserable weather (half bewolkt). If the temperature is cold enough for the water to freeze, you will find a large part of the population skating. We moved there in 1996 which was a very cold winter. We listened to the BBC warning about the dangers of skating on natural ice and then left the house to find more than half our village skating along the River Vecht, including couples pushing babies in strollers, people walking dogs and people of all ages (including pensioners). Sadly, this was the last year that the Elfstedentocht was ran, but it was a massive event.*

*P.S. I wasn't joking about Utrecht – it's the crossroads of Holland (or the Netherlands if you prefer) and so often missed, but it's a great city.*

**NK:** Lorraine and I have been to parts of the Netherlands (went by coach/ferry), alas not to Utrecht. We found the polderland approaches and bulb-fields lovely but Amsterdam rather grubby – and the privileged cyclists perhaps a little too careless of pedestrians within the city itself. This trip was the occasion when, with my usual over-optimism, I had yet another shot at local lingo. Only to be politely advised (by the local shopkeepers, concierges etc themselves) to please not struggle, their English was well up to the task. And about three hundred times better than my Dutch. Which therefore only proved of use when we returned over the Belgian border for a short stop in Bruges, sorry, Brugge.

**still NK:** Okay, that's this issue's "Lang" section (via Out & About) done and dusted, we have one last bit of Out & About then we'll start on the "Lit"-and-related-matters...

***Dave Berry:*** *It seems that we've been slightly more bold than you in our post-lockdown socialising, with mixed results. A family wedding resulted in both my son and my father-in-law catching Covid-19. Both have recovered, fortunately. Michael's graduation ceremony was socially distanced until the large celebratory feast in the evening, but we were more fortunate this time. We went to two concerts in the Edinburgh Festival, both of which were outdoors and with socially distanced seating; then last weekend we saw Steve Hackett in the Playhouse, which holds nearly 4,000 people, and we seem to have survived that. PPE2 masks seem to help (or perhaps we've just been lucky)...*

*...I feel a bit like a cyborg when I go to gigs now. I'm wearing glasses so that I can see the band, earplugs so that my hearing isn't damaged, and a mask to protect against Covid-19. This wasn't the future we were promised!*

**NK:** Speaking as one who's worn specs since seven years of age and been donning earplugs for gigs since seventeen... (pause while Nick & Dave go into one-upmanship mode re *attending louder gigs than thee AND having to muck out t'cesspit when we got home*).

...Actually on the cyborg thing I have a standing invitation to Tom McGrath to expand on what he's looking forward to in this regard (see last issue's We Also Heard From), for the instruction/edification of us old gits. In any case, Dave, are you sure this wasn't the promise in Science Fiction literature? Aha, link, still via the light abuse:

***Colin Day:*** *Anyway I see you're applying your gnome-like odd mix of the weird and traditional to another literature game so I'll have a go at "See Emily Play" later in the email. And "Take it Back", and another shot at "Quicksilver". "Run Like Hell" has even me baffled, however, though I may have to have another try if only not to leave the field to Steve...*

**NK:** As of typing (deadline evening), nothing at all from Steve B!

***Mark Nelson:*** *I have read several winners of the Booker Prize since I last wrote. These include the inaugural winner (in 1969): P.H. Newby's "Something to Answer For". Not a name that was known to me, but certainly a prolific author – writing 23 novels, 16 of which were published whilst he was working for the BBC. I don't usually bother looking at the reviews of books I've read, but since I had an adverse reaction to this one I checked them out and they had a bimodal distribution. However, whilst I didn't enjoy the novel I am interested in the setting: it's set in Cairo immediately before and during the Suez crisis.*

*During my first two years in Secondary School we were taught a generic "humanities subject", so that it was only in the third form that we were taught History as a subject in its own right. Then came the watershed moment when it was time to pick five subject to study for the next two years and although I was interested in history it did not make the cut – I took geography instead. The only topic that I remember covering in History were the names of various Portuguese and Spanish explorers who sailed down the west coast of Africa. The Suez crisis is one of the parts of history that whenever I come across it I think "I should learn more about this", but I never do and probably never will!*

*Am I exaggerating to think that every subsequent British foreign office failure has been described as "the worst crisis since Suez?" (If anyone has a list of failures that have been described in such a way please let me know!) I see that the debacle in Afghanistan has been so described, though it appears to me to be rather more an example of Santayana's adage about the perils of failing to learn the lessons of history. (It's now 65 years since Suez – I wonder if all the relevant cabinet papers have now been released?)*

**NK:** Mark goes on to wonder if the appellation will one day (say in 2081) be applied to Brexit or more accurately to *Leaving the Single Market*, but again this threatens to subvert house policy on these subjects. So with apologies we'll go back to the "Lit" and thus (as prompted above by Colin D) our second game:

**NK:** Well it got a few responses. Including an epic battle between Karen and Colin Day (KD/CD below) who reckon the only way they're not going to help each other's blind spots is if they individually pile in... Joined for this first foray by Lorraine (LT), Neil Carson (NC), Paul Regan (PR) and a game one-off entry from Colin Evans (CE), good on yer Col. We can score this one similarly to “Keep Talking” (Turns Won, Cumulative Score and Skewed Average), though it'll end when out of suitable extracts. As it is I'm dividing this into two – partly for statistical virtuosity reasons, normalizing to 25 pts max via a participation bonus.

**One:** Emily Brontë / Wuthering Heights naturally naturally (as Karen put it, game title was a *blatant clue*). Character **1a** is Zillah, **1b** Hareton Earnshaw with Heathcliff himself and narrator Lockwood also present. KD6, LT5, NC4, CD3, PR2.

**Two:** Jane Austen / Persuasion, famous slice of irony concerning **2a** Lady Russell and **2b** Sir Walter Elliott. KD4, LT4, NC4, PR2, CD2. [**ColinD:** “guessing *it's Austen and from KTalking* guessing *it's Persuasion.*”]

**Three:** Susanna Clarke / Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell, with the latter being **3a**, Lord Pole is **3b** and the young lady his fiancée Miss Wintertowne (later Lady Pole). I suppose I'd better give Karen a bonus point for remembering that Mrs Wintertowne was also present. This one stumped everyone save KD6, CD5.

**Four:** JRR Tolkien / The Lord of the Rings. Easiest of the lot despite the attempt at a trick question (apparent exhaustion of TLotR's named female characters in “Quicksilver”) and the addition of Captain **4c** (Shagrat not Gorbag/Gothmog). **4b** is of course giant spider Shelob, **4a** the Lord o' Rings hisself Sauron. CD5, KD5, LT5, NC5, PR4, CE4. Right, add the participation bonus 4 to each and...

Total Scores for Turn1: Karen 25, ColinD 19, Lorraine 18, NeilC 17, PaulRg 12, ColinE 8, everyone else 0.

**Five:** Robert Graves / I. Claudius, who is the Narrator and he is discoursing of **5a** Livia and **5b** Augustus, the “other two” being of course Tiberius and Gaius Caligula (most of you overlooked this precious pair). NC7, CD5, LT5, PR5, KD4.

**Six:** Charles Dickens / A Tale of Two Cities... another famous passage, **6a** is the ruthless Madame Defarge out to confront **6b** Lucie “the wife of Evrémonte” only to encounter **6c** the formidable Miss Pross. Some of you realized it must be Dickens and even AToTC but had to draw a blank on all or most of the characters. NC5, KD4, CD3, PR2, LT1.

**Seven:** Mervyn Peake / Gormenghast, where **7a** Dr Prunesquallor is the unlikely ally of Countess Gertrude in her campaign against **7b** Steerpike, enough said (I should have highlighted this with a SPOILER alert). CD5, KD5, NC5, LT2, PR2.

**Eight:** Isaac Asimov / “Lenny” later collected in The Rest of the Robots (not I, Robot), with Lenny himself being **8b** “it”. From the context a number of you gathered 'it' must be a robot, leading correctly to Asimov; but you might have to be aficionado to identify **8a** as Asimov's celebrated robo-psychologist Susan Calvin. CD4, PR 3, LT1, NC1. (And see “Take it Back” for the misspelling of 'compliment'.)

**Nine:** Joanna Russ / We Who Are About To... Hardest of the lot although guessable from “Keep Talking” and other OoH comment, although only ColinD did. And he couldn't remember that the Narrator **9a** remained pointedly unnamed throughout. CD2 (of in end only a possible 3). Add bonus (only 1 each)...

Total Scores for this Turn Two: ColinD 20, NeilC 19, Karen 14, PaulRg 13, Lorraine 10, everyone else 0.

Cumulative Scores: ColinD 39, Karen 39, NeilC 36, Lorraine 28, PaulRg 25, divide by 3 for skewed avg. Colin E 8 (divide by 2). [Everyone else 0 divided by 1, of course.] The tie for top was another good reason for splitting this initial foray into two turns! (So Karen & ColinD have each won one turn.) Another being doubt as to how many extracts I can do at a time, or even think of, see some point later (p17?) for next lot.

**Andrew Fisher:** *But See Emily Play is a pop song purely because it's a single, as I've no doubt said fifteen times before. (It's also quite frightening – “Soon after dark, Emily cries” ... “Float on a river, forever and ever” – that don't sound too good to me.) Singles (as in just the one 78 disc) are all pop songs, because you need an album of them (like a photo album, hence the name) to hear what I would call classical music, and that all the people who like it get annoyed if you call it that. I remember a letter in The Times saying it should be called Serious Music. Anyway, the first single to sell in this country massively was what I'd call classical music – Oh For The Wings of a Dove (Hear my Prayer) by the Choir of the Temple Church – but it's still a pop song. Another top selling single, Take Five by Dave Brubeck, is fairly pure fifties jazz, but it's still a pop song even though it has no words. (Surely its 5/4 to 4/4 transformation into a rocksteady song called The Russians are Coming by Val Bennett in 1967 is the best heretical pop song ever, as used for the title music of Tim Hunkin's Secret Life of Machines tv programme.)*

*Ernest Lough, the soloist for Wings of a Dove, went on to be a fireman in WW2 and was one of the firemen in Fires Were Started, the Humphrey Jennings documentary. Humphrey Jennings was one of the Sussex-based surrealists with Roland Penrose and Lee Miller and so on. His book on the genesis of the industrial revolution, Pandaemonium, was the basis for the beginning of the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in 2012. And you could say that without Ernest Lough, whose financial success spurred EMI on, including employing Alan Blumlein (who basically invented stereo, and made TV a practical possibility, before dying in an accident in WW2), Pink Floyd might not have been able to make See Emily Play. Funny old world.*

*Talking of 1957 and minds blown by tiny changes in grammar, as we weren't, one of the songs on the CD I'm going to send you is Variation No.1 on “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen”, by the Modern Jazz Quartet with Guest Artist Jimmy Guiffre. Heck of a title, but that comma after Merry just completely blew my mind. I'd always heard and sung it without the comma, as in, the gentlemen are merry by nature and are being implored to rest. NOT that they are common-or-garden Gentlemen who are being implored this one time to rest merry. Am I going to have to reassess everything in my life now? Am I going to have to read the words of things and actually try to understand them properly now?*

**NK:** Confess I've never bothered much when it comes to the meaning (as opposed to the cadence) of lyrics. Many thanks for the CD, by the way. Especially loved the sustained keyboard piece.

**Colin Evans:** *Marcus mentioned Tom Lehrer among with some other more normal singers of the 50s. Tom Lehrer is definitely not normal and is worth a listen. Very funny. ((I'm intrigued!))*

**Marcus:** *The most popular albums of the 50s may not be very inspiring but they were Abbaz Jazz Baby, Thelonius Monk, Parker Ellington etc, dig it. The end throes of Be Bop and the arisal of “Modern Jazz”, not to be confused with Freeform. Well worth exploring the wells of underground jazz club obscurity string bazz oh yeh. // Which brings me to Soft Machine (jazz rock). True confession: I was in Gosford Street Books and asked the proprietor if the music playing was Soft Machine. Any pretentiousness on my part was soon dispelled when he informed me that it was Pharoah Sanders whose style Soft Machine imitated. Ouch... I've yet to get any Pharoah [however it is spelt ((that's it))] Sanders on CD or vinyl and to be honest am not too sure if it's a person or a group.*

**NK:** Person, highly regarded U.S saxophonist both solo and as band-member (own and e.g John Coltrane), 81 this month and still going, apparently. Info courtesy of Wikipedia. I shouldn't worry about the *faux pas*, at least you nailed the Soft Machine connection and got a worthwhile lead from it (probably). I have precisely one Soft Machine album, *Third*, obtained on the strength of the marvellous “Out-Bloody-Rageous” excerpt first heard via my brother's copy of the celebrated CBS compilation *Rockbuster* (incidentally displaying a young Arnie Schwarzenegger in full Mr Universe mode, but see later for “Quicksilver”). And which also featured at least one other sort-of Jazz/Rock combo in the form of Skin Alley whose debut album *To Paghram and Beyond* I still find excellent, alas they went downhill after that. [Other *Rockbuster* highlights: Robert Wyatt, Soft Machine's drummer, in solo mode; and an absolutely haunting version of Black Widow's “Mary Clarke”, much better than the one featured on their eponymous second album.]

...Still with music (albeit via a couple of surreal comments out of nowhere) before we get back to ‘Lit’:



**Colin Evans:** *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Nowadays they would be The Four Motorcyclists of the Apocalypse ((as in Pratchett/Gaiman's **Good Omens**, presumably)). As depicted on the cover of the album "Braver Than We Are" by Meatloaf. (Which is most excellent.)*

**W Marcus Arnold:** *...The influence of Molar Iconography in post-prandial Progressive Rock Music is perhaps a subject best kept in the dark. ((Which Marcus illustrated as his next page was entirely blank.)) And now Breakfast calls out, or rather my stomach does. So this is the beginning of the end, as Churchill said of ITV.*

**NK:** Or was that not TV in general, as distinct from other media?

**Gary Lyon:** *Always been a fan of the Goons and Spike Milligan – slightly too young for the live radio shows though have listened to them since. Books of the scripts available of which I have a couple, plus loads from Spike like his wartime memoirs.*

**NK:** I always liked Spike's wartime memoirs, and oddments like *A Book of Bits, or a Bit of a Book*, although the former became increasingly less funny and more painful as they progressed – unsurprisingly in view of the events they were recording. This isn't an invariable rule-of-progression, however:

**Marcus:** *WOT, I still have another six series of Big Bang to keep me up till 3 in the morning with compulsive (just one more episode) lying to myself? I am currently suffering from a bad case of GRIM, series Two and Three. A rather silly Monsters Are Among Us in the Buffy Naked Vampyre Sealer mode. Great fun once one accepts its internal logic. It's about time for psychiatry to invent Box Set Syndrome, work out how to diagnose it and then expand the concept, re-define it and change its name to Television Spectrum Disorders. So that celebrities and others can give interviews telling how despite being successful it was only when being diagnosed as on the Television Disorders Spectrum that they could realise their full potential...*

*...I diverge from the televisual **Army of Valhalla** the DVD, which I described as fantasy Vikings, was in fact not – and was excellent watching. It was a case of creative blurb calling a herd of horses a donkey. It's actually one of a sub-genre of foreign language films, sort of semi-historical/semi-legendary nationalist epics with much sword play, some superstition and glorious costumes. **Braveheart** was one. A Brit-English equivalent would be about Hereward the Wake and involve Alfred's cakes and of course Vikings...*

*(To diverge again, where would the world be without Monty Python's Viking chorus, there would be no SPAM mail, spam spam spam spam spam spam spam spam bake beans and spam.)*

**NK:** Bake beans are off. Whereas the **DUNE** movie, to all intents and purposes, is still On:

**Andrew Fisher:** *Caitlin Moran, straight outta Wolverhampton, wrote in her celebrity column last Friday...*

**NK:** goes on to quote her essentially light-hearted preview of **Dune: Part One** in full. Her main theme was that far from being Like Nothing You've Seen Before it would in fact be not dissimilar to the previous film, the book(s), the two TV series and even the boardgame, enabling...

**...Andrew to sum up:** *Boardgames mentioned in Broadsheet celebrity column. Whatever next?*

**Alex Richardson:** *If you'll forgive me for doing something so passé as quoting from The Simpsons, your geode must be acknowledged, so... Regarding ((Dune)) Guild Navigators, I would guess that they started off on some sort of gateway drug before they reached Arrakis and discovered blancmange. Perhaps a nice hot cup of tea? Which might be either a reference to Douglas Adams or Toby Frost's 'God-Emperor of Didcot', I can't decide.*

**Colin E:** *SteveJ, Dune and Melange. Presumably melange is so much better than previous methods. The Guild of Navigators probably wiped out the competition and suppresses use of the alternatives. // I also don't think the star around which Arrakis orbits is relevant. ((To the story, it isn't, absolutely agree.))*

**Marcus:** DUNE... *is still with us ((and bursting out all over)), but ignoring the fillums I find myself trying to work out the rationale behind the novel, i.e what was Mr Herbert hiding behind the plot. Isaac Asimov in his Foundation series is a close companion, it tells of a Galactic Empire reduced to neo-feudalism but mitigated by the Foundation and the secret Second Foundation with psychic powers behind the scenes. Possibly Messrs Asimov/Herbert both read and enjoyed (along with me) the superb writing of Mr Gibbons' The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, a true tale of a decadent realm finally destroyed by barbarian Christians ostensibly defending a pseudo-mythological Holy Land against weird desert tribesmen inspired by the words of the Prophet, Mu'ad Dib or the Mule as part-analogue for Mahomet (blessed be his name). (That protects us from Salman syndrome.)*

**NK:** Gibbons is an unmistakable and very direct influence where Asimov's *Foundation* was concerned, down to certain character names (*Bel Riose* for *Belisarius*, for example). Less so with Herbert's *Dune* but you here make a good case:

**Marcus:** ...*The Holy Land as Arrakis, the Catholic Church the Bene Gesserit ((stretching it a bit)), Fremens as Saladin's Kurds, the Spacing Guild are Venetians and the Spice itself (now going outside Gibbon) inspired by the Dutch mercantile East Indian Empire of the spice growing regions fought for by the English and others in quest of economic imperialism. Space ships as galleons with rudimentary navigation. Hey, as Columbus was trying to get to the East Indies by going west so I think that with Dune Mr Herbert may have been playing around with the interaction of different cultures, belief systems, geographical determinism and the creation of "new orders" on a tapestry of epic size and colour.*

*Will the new film version pull out too many threads from the tapestry and script-writer moths leave too many holes in it, will the colours have faded or been re-dyed in Day-Glo, the world awaits. How long will it take to end up on DVD and how long before the DVD is charity shopped so I can make a judgement based on empiricism not second hand promotion-spurred reportage?*

**NK:** Well that was the trouble with the original movie (1984) despite a good try along Bakshi/*TLotR* lines. But previews of the now-imminent effort suggest something more like Jackson's take on the famous fantasy analogy (a very apt one, if I may say). That is, very much more in the spirit of Herbert (as Jackson & co were to Tolkien) down to barely-noticeable details but not slavishly so, and so not afraid to put their interpretation on the tale. All of which, I trust/hope, will raise the new *Dune* to the status of *feigned history* (as per *TLotR* both novel and film-trilogy), as distinct from just a routine fantasy. Which brings us back to what you were first saying. It's possible of course to take the historical analogue model too far, something which Tolkien himself was wary about to the extent of accusing analysts of confusedly thinking *allegory* when they should have said something like *applicability*. Here I am in total agreement with the late great Prof. And so must emphasize that, parallels notwithstanding, Herbert's development of Paul Muad'Dib (and indeed Asimov's of his Mule) is not meant as Mahomet (peace be on his name...). Incidentally, another plausible influence on *Dune* is Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (just to bring us back to that again).

I publish all this as an alternative view to those inclined to dismiss both *TLotR* and *Dune* as "mere fantasy". They are fantasies, in *Dune*'s case a science fictional one, but there's nothing 'mere' about either. The same goes for a number of other works that for one reason or another will persistently endure in the estimation of enthusiasts. Chiefly because in them there is *much more than meets the eye*, although that 'more' may not necessarily be conscious on the part of the author (as Tolkien again pointed out). // Which is not to say that such works would/should be to everyone's taste, but that's another issue entirely. Not a million miles away:

**Marcus:** *Methinks old Bill Shakespeare's works contain much of psychiatric and sociological truth, perchance his "genius" stature in literature belies a genius in intelligence that lacked the "the invention of science" to channel them into Newtonian/Einsteinian realms of Cosmogony... Or perchance he was just a hack writer of potboilers full of sound and fury signifying nothing?*

**NK:** Or something between the two. I always liked that Asimov timeslip tale (speaking as we were of Asimov) where a revived old Bill is enrolled on a modern-day course in his own works and characters – and gets flunked. // Still on things vaguely Shakespearian:

**Marcus:** *A dew sweet prince, there are more meteorological phenomena than are imagined in my philosophies. Said Haratius as he considered the synchronicity of fog and phantoms and paranoid delusions of persecution, and thus if Hamlet were a **schizophrenic** and a sword-wielding maniac and a danger to society or just a conspiracy theorist...*

*...ANYHOW in a mix & max promotion at the SENSE charity shop on Ball Hill Cov one was offered 5 CDs/DVDs/books for the princely sum of £1. So, four episodes on one CD of The Dick Van Dyke Show, three Westerns, The Leopard Fist Ninja and The Warrior's Way (according to blurb "from the Producer of LOTR"...). Besides these I acquired three paperbacks by "Arthur C Clarke and Stephen Baxter", all apparently published this century. And post- Clarke's endless revisioning of the **2001** universe.*

**NK:** Always an occupational problem when one (especially if over-optimistically) nails a specific Vision to a specific Year.

**Marcus:** *Now I wonder, having known (thought?) he was dead... I am not sure how much is Clarke and how much is Baxter. If an author conceives a plot and gives it out to be fleshed with words from another author, that is an extreme of collaboration.*

*The titles are The Light of Other Days, Time's Eye and Sun Storm. The first sentences are "Bisesda Dutt gasped and staggered", "For 30 million years the planet had cooled and dried" and "Bobby could see the Earth complete and serene within its cage of silvery light". Originally all three published by Gollancz.*

*I ask three questions. 1. Will they be as good as I remember Arthur C Clarke to have been? 2. Is Arthur C Clarke as good as I remember him to have been? 3. Does it really matter if it is by Arthur C Clarke? A tin of beans by any other name would taste as Heinz. ((Again, I wouldn't know.)) I suppose brand loyalty to an author can blind one to generic budget brands...*

**NK:** Interesting case. Not come across them myself and was only dimly aware of this collaboration, presumably a full one (titles published before Clarke, ah, *passed* in 2008). The opening sentences do not sound particularly Clarke, so I presume they're Baxter striving for instant effect in the half-thriller manner of rather too much SF. As to your questions, only you can answer no.1 while for no.2 I'll again offer my nostalgic memory of Clarke as a brilliant short story writer but for me not quite so effective at longer works (there are exceptions). So does it matter if Clarke was involved at all? It might, because if you liked his stuff for the sheer ideas (as I did) it would be interesting to see if these shine through the still-harder-SF Baxter prose in quite the same way as they did with genuine olde Clarke prose.

But now in genuine Marcus manner we pass from one legendary Arthur to another (no idea what brought this on at all, but Marcus' tongue is so far into his cheek he's beginning to resemble a Roald Dahl character):

**Marcus:** *Excuse me but King Arthur was an elitist military leader, a white male privileged Celto-Roman with no tolerance for cultural minorities such as Angles, Saxons and Jutes, imposing strict border controls to prevent refugee farming communities from settling in Britannia. He was involved in the genocide of indigenous Pictish people and was misogynistic (just ask Guinevere or Morgan le Fay). He tried to maintain government policy of the Roman Slave Empire and during his reign was responsible for the extinction of Dragons in Britannia...*

**NK:** I always liked Tolkien's quip in *Farmer Giles of Ham*: "So knights are mythical!" (slightly premature conclusion of the younger and less experienced dragons).

**Marcus:** *And as for his PR man, Merlin... that whole Sword in the Stone scandal that 'proved' Arthur's claim to the throne, pull the other one. He had scant respect for the poor peasant communes working in harmony with Nature and growing organic crops free from pesticides and fertilisers. I bet he worked for Monsanto and other franken food genetic modifiers.*

**NK:** Get a feeling you've been re-watching *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (scene where Palin's peasant has a Spartist rant at Chapman's King A.) **Okay**, time at last for the next game...

...The pace quickens, two more down, two (and a half) to go...

**Dave Berry:** *For your LoTR character, perhaps we should start with the different nations of Men? So, is your character from Gondor? If yes, this is interesting; you have ruled out Faramir from one of my earlier guesses. I also mentioned Boromir but without specifically picking him as a guess and I notice that you haven't explicitly ruled him out, so I'm tempted to read this as a deliberate ploy on your part. I'll then guess Boromir (and surmise a connection between all of our chosen characters...)*

**NK:** Interrupt you there because your connection isn't quite right and because:

**John Riches:** *BOROMIR. No? ((No, but/and...))*

**Paul Regan:** *Going back through the clues, I note that you very carefully did not say that 'your' LOTR character wasn't Boromir (this in response to Dave's speculations a couple of issues ago). And he is sort of heroic, in fact I'd say he was definitely heroic, especially in the end. So, is your character Boromir?*

**NK:** No. But it so nearly could have been on other grounds (the connection between all characters), so all three score +1vp. For I had originally considered Boromir, but realized he'd provide a separate and possibly confusing (as trivial) link to one of the other characters. See ColinD opposite (and others below).

**Paul Ratcliff:** *Thanks for the reminder that it was the ((grand))son of Bard the Archer by the time LOTR rolled around. Not picking the books up for a couple of decades leads to some degradation in character recollection. Damn I feel old. I need to get back to the UK so I can be the youngest one at the game table...*

*...So, male human LOTR character. Not one of the obvious ones. Grima who stands up to his bullying boss and takes down one of the most powerful wizards is not heroic enough. Bill Ferny who defies the Dark Lord to supply the Fellowship with a pack animal is not heroic enough (perspective dude, it's all perspective). OK. Aragorn/Arathorn? Did we narrow it down to humans north or south of the Shire? East of the Misty Mountains? Please don't tell me it's that wet blanket Faramir...*

**NK:** Fear not, Faramir had already been eliminated via Dave. But I'm afraid (see Marcus' bit below) it isn't Aragorn either, or his decidedly off-stage (because long-since-deceased) father. To answer your other questions, we have not yet narrowed down the geographical provenance of 'my' character, but good thought, so 1vp. Your “perspective”, of course, comes straight from Saruman's own *Art of Diplomacy* (another vp).

**W Marcus Arnold:** *Right, I was on Word Gaming or Worm Grading not Word Playing, so back on the fast track to frustration. I am running out of characters I can remember from LOTR. But ARE YOU...*

*((Pause as he passes to a fresh page, only he's again skipped one which he later fills with another cutting.))*

*...THAT RANGER. ((Strider aka Aragorn. As PaulRt, afraid not.)) Surprising how much endurance running the filmic Rangers, Dwarves, Elves and Hobbits are capable of, incidentally. What I have never quite grasped from Tolkien's novel is how many leagues, taking a league as a 3-mile boot step ((correct)), the events occur over. If the Shire were in Coventry/Brum, would Mordor be in Scotland, Norway, Moscow, Beijing ((more Balkans, Tolkien once agreed.)). A pedant might calculate approximate distances/answers from the travelling time and velocity of walking, gallumphing (orcs) or horse galloping. ((+1 vp as...))*

**Dave Berry (again):** *But if not Gondor, then Rohan ((land of the horse-riders))? Here, I'll pick...*

**John Riches (again):** *Just realised we haven't yet eliminated...*

**Karen Day (in effective chorus with Dave & John):** *THEODEN KING. S'obviously Nick's character. Old geezer, but more importantly he revives (or is revived) from some sort of trauma.*

**NK:** Cheers Karen... But **Theoden** it is (3 pts to you/Dave/John). Connection-wise, still not quite right...

**Marcus (resumes):** ...AS FOR 'ME'...the PKDick work is impossible to say if well-known, true I should have added to non-science fiction fans, but even that is not sufficient so I shall leave it lying. As the work has been tele/filmicised, for the time being I shall rule out Scanners but with quiet confidence ask IS IT based upon a short story ((yes)) and if so (with its play on the nature of reality) IS THAT work "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" i.e TOTAL RECALL...? ((Yes! +1 vp. And therefore:))

**Dave Berry (again):** If Marcus's character is from a Philip K Dick story that has been made into a film, is it from "We can remember it for you wholesale", which of course was the loose inspiration for Total Recall (twice)? Or is it from "A Scanner Darkly", which is a well-known Dick story but a less well-known film by Richard Linklater? // Unfortunately, I don't recall the stories in any detail. Wikipedia (sigh) reminds me that the protagonists are Douglas Quail and Bob Arctor, respectively, but would these be too obvious?

**NK:** In the case of **Douglas Quail**, not too obvious (the films made him "Quaid" and it kind of tickled me to make Marcus' character an Arnie one). Which part-excuses your use of Wikipedia, have 2vps anyway (Marcus also gets his 2 as this was his next conclusion). But this may in turn confound your connection conjecture (yet again, *still not quite right*). Reiterating my tease of last time, there's also a bonus Dick character that better fits the theme (certainly not Palmer Eldritch as per the first page, Marcus).

**Marcus (continued):** ...Now for Colin D. Is 'his' character in the space navy? ((Er, yes. I think all the named non-civilian personnel in *Mote* are, so this doesn't narrow it down at all from last time.))

**Colin Day:** OK, I'm confused now. We've got Duncan from Dune, Arkady Bogdanov from Mars and Arabella rather than Lady Pole (I note she's in "See Emily Play" instead) from J.Strange, and the obvious connection between the first two doesn't quite fit the third or have you ever-so-slightly mis-remembered? ((Nope, but you're close.)) For that matter a variant connection between Duncan/Arabella doesn't fit Arkady the Bog. ((So close.)) Until I get this it's hard to keep casting around for 'my' character from Mote, let alone the rest. Still, nothing ventured and all that, so I'm going to allow release of my conditional guess from last time: Midshipman Horst Staley (who, maybe not incidentally, hails from planet Sauron).

**NK:** No, but +1 vp on the same grounds as everyone opposite re Boromir (except there wouldn't have been an analogous 'extra' connection between Staley and one of the other six characters.)

**Marcus (finally for this game):** ...And now for Colin E. Is the work 'his' character appears in either a science fictional or a science fantasy one?

**NK:** No. Meaning I consider it one of outright Fantasy from our previous clues, so no vp (and see below). All targets indeed from "SF&F", SF defined as either Science Fiction or Science Fantasy according to taste.

**Colin D (contd):** As for Colin E, your hint in the previous adjudication stumped me for a time because although he's expressed great enthusiasm for (above all) **Game of Thrones**, I thought this was for the TV adaptation rather than the books. However, thinking about it again and given the way you've expressed answers so far, this wouldn't be an obstacle. But on the gripping hand (I'm doing it now) you yourself said that **GoT** had largely passed you by! Or has that since changed too?

**NK:** It hasn't but thanks to the aforesaid ColinE enthusiasm and those of others (thank you NeilD, AlanO) I've learned just enough to be able to provide a character within the common theme. So +1vp for finally identifying **Game of Thrones** as the source text for ColinE's character.

Progress made, works now identified and all but two characters (plus possible bonus Dick work/character). Male heroic human for the remaining targets, main two from *GoT* and *Mote*, with the latter Navy though not Renner/Staley. There is an abstruse connection between all final targets (those remaining and Duncan, Bogdanov, Arabella, D.Quail and Theoden); and had Boromir been correct there could have been a further though rather trivial connection between his character and one of the others. SCORES ON THE DOORS: DaveB 12, Marcus 11, Karen 10, JohnR 9, ColinD 7, SteveB 4, PaulRt 4, PaulRg 2, SteveJ 1, and really must now add 1 for NeilD, AlanO and ColinE himself for inadvertent contribution. Everyone else 0.

**NK:** So from Science Fiction/Fantasy to actual Science:

**Marcus:** ...on *The Invention of Science* ((revisited)). 1: This book may be intended as history, in which case it should be treated as an interpretation of selective data. 2: This book may be intended as philosophy. 3: This book may be intended as sociology. 4: This book may be intended as entertainment. 5: And this little book went to market and went \*\*\*\*\*

**NK:** It's possible of course that the book was intended as all four (even all five, he added slightly cynically). Your one notable omission is whether *The Invention of Science* was intended as science itself, thus running dangerously close to the half-informed approach (and so error) that Dawkins made with *The God Delusion*. But we won't know that until tackling the book itself.

**Marcus:** All I can say (all I will say), and with the right to plausible deniability, is that I refuse to believe that "unless something is hypothesised, evidenced by experimentation, reviewed by peers and the experiment capable of being repeated with similar evidences arising" it is unscientific. ((I agree.)) Exercising my plausible deniability I will say that, further to this, Science is but the accretion of Knowledge. ((Agree with qualification.)) Newton's LAWS of Gravitation are still science despite being shown to be not absolutely correct by Einstein, who may be on the cusp of being used as a footstool by some theoretical physicist who adds another layer of understanding/knowledge on such matters ((example of qualification))

**Steve Jones:** Regarding Marcus' comments about my review of Wootton and your own thoughts, I shall give my two pennies worth. First of all, from my many readings (through multiple books) on the history of science, it is unfortunate that a single word is used nowadays to describe human's attempts to understand the Universe, and that word is science. This brings to mind my reading of some indigenous tribe's language which had something like twenty different words for "water" (running water, still water, etc) depending upon context. The same idea should really be assigned to the word "science". In the modern context, science (or technically, modern science) involves using observation, hypotheses, theories, and testing by experiment to advance our knowledge of some aspect of the Universe. What the Greeks practised was nothing like this, and similar things could be said about Egyptian "science", Babylonian "science", Chinese "science", Mayan "science" and any other similar means of acquiring knowledge practised by ancient societies. Trying to shoehorn, or procrusteanise, all these processes of acquiring knowledge into a single word, science, is simply not helpful.

**NK:** Fair point, and in a way referencing what Colin E and others were saying about the importance of using words (especially technical terms) correctly. But see Marcus above on what constitutes being scientific (or, rather, not being non-scientific). The suspicion, you see, is whether Wootton is employing an admittedly exhaustive means of singing paeons to the generally received modern scientific method.

**Steve J:** Second, The main theme, or thread, running through Wootton's book is the role of language evolution in the "invention" of "modern science". For "modern science" to arise out of medieval "science" and all the "sciences" that preceded it, new words, thinking and processes needed to be "invented" or developed, or evolved (take your pick as to which word is appropriate!). Also, this would not have been possible without several critical technologies appearing in Europe in the late middle ages and renaissance period. The most important was probably the printing press. Wootton's critical date was 1572 when a new star appeared in the heavens, and was observed by Tycho Brahe. This type of event had occurred before, for example the supernova of 1054; however, there was no record of it being observed or noted in Europe (although Chinese astronomers observed and noted it). What was different about 1572 is that it was observed by a superb observer who wrote about it and published a book about it which spread throughout Europe. This single event shattered the immutability of the heavens and started the process of destroying the Ptolemaic world view.

**NK:** One interpretation, yes, though according to Koestler in *The Sleepwalkers* it was long being undermined anyway. We need to be slightly careful about the impact of single events and single individuals. As again Hoyle/Wickramasinghe show, these processes are more like an accumulation of evidence that eventually overwhelms previously-held paradigms (which die out more when those that stick by them die).

**Steve J:** *To answer Marcus' question, my recollection is that Wootton did, more or less, define what he meant by Science, and he does distinguish it from technology. There is some truth in Marcus' observation that the modern "European" concept of science was stimulated by the Arabic (I would object here, and say Islamic world), but even Islamic "science" was different from what arose after 1704.*

*Moving to your thoughts, Nick, yes, there is a lot of validity in Wootton's overall thesis as you say. With regards to the medieval (yes, European) mindset, I was paraphrasing Wootton in saying that "they believed there was nothing new under the sun". You may say that it is at best disreputable, and at worst just modernist propaganda. However, Wootton provides a lot of evidence that most, if not all, medieval scholars did believe that if something "new" was found, it was already known by the Ancients. As an example of this, I was taught at school that most people in medieval Europe believed the Earth was flat, but this is not correct; indeed, any educated European knew that it was not flat...*

**NK:** As indeed I observed when discussing Flat-Earthism as a relatively modern phenomenon, and therefore the contrary view is an example of relatively modern (rather than medieval) mis-thinking. Incidentally, I was not mis-taught as you seem to have been. In fact I don't actually remember any of the relevant teachers referring to the matter, and suspect it's merely modern apocrypha. Of course, that educated Europeans knew the Earth wasn't flat (and uneducated ones didn't think about the issue at all) is still quite a way from our current concept of the globular Earth, as you now explain:

**Steve J:** *What was believed was various "models" of earth and water spheres, which as Wootton shows, was only sorted out when the results of the European Age of Discovery became known. Wootton provides a great deal of evidence that the word "discovery" had to be invented, backing up his contention that the medieval mind was stuck in a rut. At the end of the day, one needs to read the book in order to make a proper judgement about his thesis. However, I should point out that it is a heavy, dense book, and I may have gotten some things wrong. Nevertheless, reading it was an eye opener for me.*

**NK:** Yes, I accept I'm slightly pre-judging based on previous understanding. But I'm sure that Wootton will provide insight, including points not previously encountered or that simply hadn't occurred to me. // Right, while we're still in Real World / Nick's Field mode, a piece from Colin E that I can't fit in elsewhere:

**Colin Evans:** *The Social Market Foundation has recently urged Britons to have more children for economic Reasons. This is astonishing for an already overcrowded island. It seems to be old-fashioned economics where essentially children are expected to care for their elderly parents, though nowadays this is more likely to be through taxes than personal. Even financial support is often not possible due to unemployment or other financial constraints. // Personal care (living in the same house or very close by) is not always possible nowadays in Western society. Children are **expected** to leave their parents to pursue further education or their careers. They will often end up living in a different town far away, and probably with spouses and children. The elderly parents may not be able to move in with their children and probably would not wish to. Perhaps more to the point, is one expected to care for the parents of one's spouse?*

*People are now living longer and in better health. Usually we no longer require some sort of care as soon as we reach our sixties. Retirement age is gradually rising as it is an economic necessity that we live longer. Yes, it is necessary for workers to increasingly financially support, through taxes, the growing number of retired, but having more children to replace retired workers is not the answer. An increasing population will put an even greater strain on the British environment and what about the global environment impact of having to import even more food and goods? // We have fewer children usually for sound reasons, economic, environmental etc. Though possibly also for selfish reasons, but isn't it also selfish to have a lot of children? Our economic system has to adjust, is already adjusting somewhat, to an aging population.*

**NK:** With qualifications I broadly agree with all this, at least because it's a Global not merely a UK issue and has been for some time. I also have personal experience of the practical side! (as do quite a few *OoHers*). "Selfishness" does not really enter into it, people do what they do, but may not be very sound in what they do (beyond a certain point it's personally, not merely socially, unviable to have large families). But I invite comment. // And now, going back in time...

...we still have this 20<sup>th</sup> Century event to identify...

**W Marcus Arnold:** *Run Like Hell. Hmm, I still must rule out the Space Race as a theme. Negative questioning works better. 1: Is it correct to rule out the Space Race as a theme ((Yes. Think you had.))*

**Marcus (contd):** *2: Is WHO ‘white’ (census ethnicity wise). ((One of the principals, Yes. The other, No.))*

*3: Is WHEN after or during 1950 exclusively. ((Yes.))*

*4a: Is WHAT to do with the works of nature? ((Yes)); and/or 4b: Is WHAT to do with the works of Man?*

**NK:** Yes, sort of. As you're at pains to remind me using the Aswan Dam as example, it could be both, indeed almost has to be both for the *Who/What/Where/When/Why* structure to make any sense. But it's not the Aswan Dam or anything like it (i.e it's not some feat of engineering).

**Marcus (contd again):** *5: WHERE. Now shall I here get conceptual rather than continental? We have the ‘Old’ World, the new ‘New’ World (North Americas) and the ‘Third’ World... Damn, is WHERE somewhere other than Europe (established) and/or North and South America? ((Yes and see Dave’s addendum below))*

**Marcus (finally):** *6: WHY. You're asking for it and I can't resist it... Is WHY because of something/somethings? ((Yes, definitely. The very quip I'm looking for contains the word “because”.))*

**NK:** Going to give Marcus 3vps altogether, for his questions 2,3,5. I consider he'd already ruled out no.1 while 4 is arguably redundant and 6 mischievous (and I've given away another couple of clues anyway). Suspect also that Marcus studiously ignored some of the things established by SteveB / PaulRg last turn! Nothing at all from Steve himself this time, but Paul and Dave have taken up his dropped baton re sport:

**Dave Berry:** *I'm struggling to think of sporting-like events that take substantially long times (I assume we are discussing an event that is longer and more tortuous than a cricket test match!). Is it some sort of overland race, e.g. a car rally or bike race, akin to the Tour de France (obviously it's not actually the Tour de France, because that takes place in Europe and we know it's not there). Could it be a chess match, perhaps leading to a defection from a totalitarian state? ((No to both.))*

*... you said that the event in question took a long time, and I said presumably longer than a test match, but that still leaves a range of possibilities. This has been bugging me all day, so questions on the duration of the event. Was it less than a month? More than a year? More than five years? ((No to all, +1vp))*

*... Was the event widely reported at the time, e.g was it covered by The Times of London? ((Yes! +1vp))*

**Paul Regan:** *So you would consider it a “sporting event”. And so would many of its practitioners. Meaning that some might not?*

**NK:** As to its practitioners, I couldn't possibly say. I do have a vague notion that some non-practitioners wouldn't regard it as a proper sport. Score +1vp.

**Paul Rg:** *Assuming you're being slightly facetious regarding the sport, I'm guessing football. Was the event pre-WWarII? If so I'll go for the inaugural World Cup. So Uruguay, first winners, in Uruguay itself, 1930, and because it seemed a good idea at the time – though I understand that several footballing nations who were invited “ran like hell” from the (arduous) opportunity.*

*If the event was post-WWarII, I'll go for England, won at last, in England itself (regarding ourselves as “outside the continent of Europe” as we now seem to do), in 1966, and apparently made a fuss of because we invented the damn game and have never quite been able to forget it since... (I'm quoting my father here, I wasn't born in 1966, let alone 1930. Though what the extra “run like hell” bit would then be for the 1966 competition I have no idea.)*



**NK:** That's the spirit, Paul! +1vp for sheer entertainment even though completely astray. It's not football. But your instinct that it had to be notable within its kind (thus 1930/1966) was spot on, as you were with your "race to be first to the South Pole" guess last time. **NB** from Marcus opposite we now know that the Answer was **1950-on** (to and including CE 2000), outside of the Americas as well as Europe (inc England and the rest of the British Isles, nice try though) and involves **two principal individuals** (one ethnically 'white', the other not), though that's not to say that others weren't involved. **NB2:** a late addendum by Dave has further narrowed it down to **Asia** and **pre-1975**, the latter of which incidentally just eliminates a rival possible answer (so another vp to Dave).

**Paul Rg:** *In case I'm completely barking up the wrong tree here, and I should have asked this first given the way you put it last turn: are YOU a practitioner of this 'sport', or have you ever been?*

**NK:** No and No, leastways in anything like its 'proper' form. Though flattered you think that I, at 63, might still have been physically capable.

SCORES ON THE DOORS: PaulRg 9, Marcus 8, DaveB 7, SteveB 2, SteveJ 1, ColinD 1, everyone else 0. Remember that if anyone (anyone at all) submits the right answer they will score points equal to the current leader (which is why it could be important to get at least a point on the board if you can).

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Now, as PaulRg's foregoing speculation has reminded me, I invite interested parties to consider:

**"US AND THEM" (*The World Cup Game*)** (close variant thereof) potential by-email sesh (GM NickK)

Although I haven't yet figured out how to run (much less play) this by email without becoming impossibly bogged down in hidden-from-public info (i.e the actual cards), which is why it'll only be a close variant. (Vaguely recall that it has been run by post/email somewhere & momentarily can't lay my hands on details.) This not-inconsiderable point, and indeed the very scenario that we run (Shaun eventually published or roughed out the lot from 1930 to 2018 and there's scope for a non-historical one), will be very much down to interested parties. If any. So comment invited. For the time being, then, just:

The Kinzett Shameless Pink Floyd Reminiscence Files (21): **US AND THEM**. Rather lovely slice from the altogether too-celebrated *Dark Side of the Moon* (1973). I put it that way because it's one of the two tracks (the other being the following and still better "Any Colour You Like" instrumental) that will eventually move me to stick the album on at all, though I quite like some of the others (and can take or leave the rest). It's impossible for me to explain to those brought up on *Dark Side*, or to whom it was Floyd's defining moment, just how relatively disappointing it seemed (to this then not-quite-sixteen year old) after the heady excesses of *Ummagumma*, *Atom Heart Mother* and *Meddle*. And so it still seems, "Us & Them"-plus-one aside. But there you go.

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**"PIGS ON THE WING" (*Aquarius Football*)** **McCone Cup 2** (GM Tony Ross)

Ireteam of Ov 2 Pinewood 3; Nottingham Forest SBC 4 Brentford B 2; Barrow Inf 2 Perfidious Alb 1; Saffron W 4 Wookey Wand 4; Shaddongate Utd 3 Burton Sw 2; Newcastle Utd 1 Swathlings OB 2; Hermits 2, New World Order 2; Middle Piddling Rovers 3 Mankcaster Limited 1.

**NK:** I now understand the McCone Cup better! Its mini-table (covering to five games) in part determines the next round-robin tie (I think Tony's done it like this so that an early cup-run or elimination won't unduly effect finances and so in the longer term the league proper). Mini-table after two games now reads thusly: NttmF, Pinewood, Barrow, Saff, Shaddongate, Ireteam, Swaythlings, PerfAlb, Brentford, MPR, Hermits, Wookey, NWO, Burton, Newcastle, Manks.

Having sorted that out (full details as usual in *Royal Leamington Spa Gazette*), back to the league proper...

“..sion One. Barrow Infirmities **two**, Saffron Walden **two**. Brentford Bees **four**, Wookey Wanderers...one. Burton Swifts two, Swaythling Old Boys **THREE**. Ireteam of Overham **one**, Nottingham Forest SBC **one**. Mankcaster Ltd one, Hermits **TWO** ((**new manager!**)). Middle Piddling Rovers **one**, Perfidious Albion...nil. Newcastle United one, New World Order **THREE**. Pinewood Old Boys **five**, Shaddongate United **five**.”

| Table after nine games: |                          | W | D | L | F  | A  | Pts |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Nttm Forest SBC         | (Paul Ratcliff)          | 8 | 1 | 0 | 27 | 11 | 25  |
| Barrow Infirmities      | (Steve Titterrell)       | 6 | 2 | 1 | 30 | 21 | 20  |
| New World Order         | (Mike Parnaby)           | 5 | 2 | 2 | 35 | 21 | 17  |
| Ireteam of Overham      | (Nick Kinzett)           | 5 | 2 | 2 | 27 | 20 | 17  |
| Saffron Walden          | (Brian Henstock)         | 4 | 5 | 0 | 25 | 19 | 17  |
| Brentford Bees          | (Richard Breese)         | 4 | 2 | 3 | 26 | 24 | 14  |
| Shaddongate Utd         | (Ian Wilson)             | 4 | 2 | 3 | 25 | 29 | 14  |
| Pinewood Old Boys       | (Andy East)              | 3 | 4 | 2 | 35 | 29 | 13  |
| Burton Swifts           | (Simon Drew)             | 3 | 2 | 4 | 17 | 21 | 11  |
| Hermits                 | (Dave Harriman, welcome) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 17 | 22 | 9   |
| Swaythlings OB          | (Graham Staplehurst)     | 3 | 0 | 6 | 17 | 25 | 9   |
| Perfidious Albion       | (“Sam Rollderdyce”)      | 2 | 2 | 5 | 13 | 17 | 8   |
| Mankcaster Ltd          | (“Ginger Solcounty”)     | 2 | 1 | 6 | 12 | 16 | 7   |
| Wookey Wandrs           | (Andrew Harding)         | 2 | 1 | 6 | 23 | 29 | 7   |
| Middle Piddling Rvrs    | (“Ecks the Unknown”)     | 2 | 1 | 6 | 19 | 29 | 7   |
| Newcastle Utd           | (“Ken Bruce”)            | 1 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 27 | 5   |

**NK:** note the now-accurate number of draws for Shaddongate in the above table – last time’s error was definitely mine not Tony’s, sorry if it was inferred otherwise! Incidentally Tony does full Home-and-Away tables in *Royal Leamington Spa Gazette* (partly for player information), but here in the bare summary only the simplified form is needed (or will fit)...

...In the wake of the relevant *RLSG* appearing a fortnight back, I received this firmly tongue-in-cheek (or cheek-in-tongue) email from my late opponent whose 100% run someone (me) brought to an end:

**Paul Ratcliff:** *Re Aquarius and the all-powerful NFS&BC. So what’s your definition of stymied? A draw? A loss? Falling out of first place in the league? ((That draw will do...)) I suspect you were thinking more of the latter than the former but you’ll have to content yourself with ending the “perfect” run while accepting that it’s possible I might not give up first place for the rest of the season (that should incentivize the other Managers if nothing else does). I never thought winning all the games was likely, but I might complete the first half of the season without a loss. // Of course there was a fair degree of luck winning for 10 games straight, but I was marginally unlucky not to make it 11. Actually, given that you got your lucky goal against my backup right back AND you subbed in your back ups last week to (by extraordinary luck) take the injury hit so you could be at full strength against me speaks volumes. Volumes of what I dunno, but you were lucky to escape with a draw, and back at our place it will be a different story...*

**NK:** [grins] I daresay. Still think you're astray about the 'luck', though, both for and against. As I've maintained for years (if not a lifetime), it's not luck (usually implying something unearned or undeserved) but rather the more neutral 'chance'. We can play any game with chance factors with a degree of skill provided one has some awareness of *and control over* those chance factors. As you have consistently proved in *Aquarius*! But in this case, for once, so have I, e.g it was quite deliberate to play my subs (as a hedge against injury to key players) in the not-so-vital cup match, it maximized my chances against you for this clash and it came off. If we can so describe getting out of it with a mere draw... (I also got my star striker injured this time. Which isn't “bad luck”, just something that was likely to happen sooner or later.)

**Paul Rt:** *To murderously mix two OOH conversation lines... “The hobbitses of Ireham have escaped with a draw, sire” // “We will see them again, with Saruman back to full strength, and down on our turf. Send the crebain to keep an eye on their practices and training” ((The trees are strong, Sire. Their roots go deep.))*

**NK:** And since sending that email Paul has had further thoughts, taking up an alternative hypothesis:

**Paul Rt:** *Hi again Nick! Hope you're well. Re Aquarius: one last observation for the OOH intelligentsia to noodle on... // My recollection from our days at the Cov war games club (what was that, 5, 10 years ago?) ((and the rest...)) was that sports games were not your thing. However, suddenly you're not only managing a soccer team but making deft adjustments between cup and league games. Your team is balanced, skilled going forward and displays a depth of knowledge of the beautiful game...*

*My suspicions are aroused. The post game interviews hint at the real brains of the operation and it's time to come clean – you are the Curtis to Lorraine's Sillett, the Clough to her Taylor, the McFarland to her Todd. You do the interviews and submit the orders but the tactical brains of the operation belong elsewhere! Admit it! The non-paying public have a right to know! All of my machinations foiled because I was influencing the wrong manager!*

*...Kind regards, Presidente and El Supremo de la Nottingham Forrrest Soccer and Bandy club.*

**NK:** Ah but Paul, the local (and for all I know wider) consensus was that I was generally an enthusiast almost whatever the game – not exactly a skilled player (of anything) but with a certain cunning and keenness in manipulating whatever mechanisms there were to manipulate. Anyway, blame TonyR for persuading me, against all my inner doubts, to play! Though Lorraine will be chuffed at the idea that she's Taylor to my Cloughie. (We've watched *That Damned United*. Which is another non-SF&F film for Andrew's list, incidentally. And your sign-off reminds me that *JUNTA* could have made his games list.)

Less incidentally (and NB **Alex R**) it occurs to me that Tony's *Royal Leamington Spa Gazette* (now beyond a dozen fortnightly issues 'proper' and counting, and with a dozen-plus participants) must be eligible for the remote-play **UK Games Zine Poll**. It's not an *OoH* sub-zine, I only do a summary of the results here for promo purposes and possible entertainment of *OoH* readers (and maybe a bit of light-hearted games theory as above/opposite). Indeed *RLSG* is actually a model of how detailed these sport-management games can be if the GM is keen enough, and in essence it's no less a games zine than any other candidate (a number of which exist for the sole purpose of running a single fantasy football league). All of which is a reminder that Alex' Poll deadline is the end of October (rate zines seen from 10.0 high to 1.0 low, send to alex.bokmal@googlemail.com from your own account please). As for the possible entertainment...

**Tony Hedges:** *I like the football thing you've been featuring. Don't think I'll join in myself but it looks fun to follow. You won't mind if any of us root for teams other than your Ireteam I'm sure! For very good reasons (born in Furness) I'm going for Barrow Infirmities...*

**NK:** There you go Steve(T), you have a fan! Of course the classy thing to do is pick a club to follow that gives a sense of Lessons in Hard Life and Fortitude (actually you could say that of the real Barrow FC), such as our heroes the Rovers of rustic Middle Piddling...

[But then as a long-suffering Coventrian I would say such things.]

Actually it's interesting to speculate on the reasons the various "PotW" players concocted the teams they did. Some of them are obviously based on places of present residence if not birth/upbringing or otherwise ancestral. My Overham (Ireteam of..) is, naturally, pure parallel-England fantasy. As would be MPR, though the latter is partly a sop for even-more-long-suffering QPR fans. Or "SPQR for the Cup" as a Romanized Triumvirate-period Eric Morecambe once had it during one of Ernie's more ambitious plays, and complete with the number 5 – not Romanized – on his shirt. (And if I remember rightly Eric was actually a Luton Town enthusiast...)

[It's little details like that that fully justify my assertions of a few issues back re the proposed elite league. Without the mass and mess of non-elite clubs, the elite ones are as nothing, at least in this country.]

Late Footie simulation news: after announcing the retirement of his long-running *United* league (see last issue), Alan Parr has happily announced that **Mike Parnaby** will be assuming the reins. Best wishes Mike!

**NK:** right, enough Footie, onto other games-related matters:

**Gary Lyon:** *Colour blindness – comes with age? I seem to have some problems with light colours – grey, blue, green. Personal bugbear with some new games – the quality of pieces has got to be very good but sometimes the variety of colours chosen (given the palette available) is poor, light green and blue pieces or white/grey combinations that can be confused (especially in the wrong light) when there are other colours like orange, purple, black (waiting for the pedants to state that black is not a colour but instead an absence of light).*

**NK:** Agree absolutely. And where games pieces are concerned (anything from just-another as in *Ark* etc to the slightly dodgy colour-coding of the Harkonnens in *Dune*), black is a colour and the pedants can go hang.

**Gary L:** *A nice little card game we enjoy as a filler at end of games might is Mamma Mia – pizza making. Cards for ingredients which are used to make the pizzas, one of which is cheese. Or pineapple as some of us insist on calling it. Is pineapple an approved topping? Discuss. ((Pineapple sounds an ideal topping...)) Can you curry sausages? (Memories of a very nice currywurst at Essen).*

**NK:** Pineapple also an ideal ingredient in curries, though not as good as sultanas (see last issue) or coconut.

**Gary L:** *Whilst on the subject of games – should we be more ecologically aware? Personally, no, band wagon is too crowded already. Plastic or wooden pieces? Recycled cardboard? Or more print and play rather than buying a physical copy? Might reduce size of games collection – I'm up to about 120 now. Would say that need to get to a bring & buy at a show but would probably only show a net gain after being attracted to various "bargains".*

**NK:** Occupational hazard for me too, though it postpones the potential chuck-out that Colin E hinted would be an in-a-way long-term problem. Incidentally he takes me to task on my estimates but (a) I'm well aware that lots of a tree couldn't be used (which we agree can be for other purposes in well-managed forestry) and (b) my analogy was therefore a bit closer to the reality than his!

**Karen Day:** *I wasn't really upset that our HALMA set had plastic pieces, just remarking it. I suppose painted wood could be just as bad as plastic in some ways.*

**W Marcus Arnold:** *HALMA: pieces of plastic (or painted wood) are at least less objectionable than ebony or ivory. ((Point.))*

**Marcus moves on to another cited use of plastic:** *Tea bags. Cheap ones tend to be paper. To find out try burning one with a cigarette lighter and see if it melts...*

**NK:** Not an item I possess for obvious reasons. Also, arguably, Don't Try This At Home.

**Marcus:** *...If plastic ((or even if not)) keep an old yoghurt cup next to a pair of scissors, cut dead tea bags in half and empty the contents into carton before later putting them on your garden. Tea leaves are loved by soil and soon enrich it.*

**Alex Richardson:** *My father used to collect our old tea bags, allow them to steep awhile and then break them up, separating the leaves from the plastic/paper. It was great for the soil, even if a corner of the garden did start to resemble the quicksand pit that claimed so many villains at the end of the black-and-white Tarzan movies.*

*(We have since tried the new, non-plastic tea bags, but the failure rate is so high that you might just as well use a teapot.)*

**NK:** Y-e-s-s-s, once again we're up against time-practicality obstacles (for rather mundane reasons it's impractical to get anything other than robust tea-bags for my father, loose leaf not an option). We seem to have drifted slightly from the topic of games; so as with you and now Marcus, on with the kettle:

**W Marcus Arnold:** *Now to get back to a cup of tea and some needle work... ((verbal or actual?))*

**NK:** [grins again] Otherwise known as the RANDOM COMMENTS section. (We're not done with games, see Mark overleaf, but it's an involved one I typed up earlier and merits a facing-page treatment.)

**Karen Day:** *Please assure Colin (the other Colin), and for that matter Marcus, that I look forward to their wilder comments every issue...*

**Colin Evans:** *In The Great Escape film the attempt to jump over the border fence on a bike was done by a stuntman, but as Steve McQueen was such a keen motor cyclist he took the part of a German in pursuit on a motor bike. Thus he was chasing himself.*

**Dave Berry:** *I'm afraid I have bought many things from Amazon, though rarely books, as these are easy to purchase elsewhere, and I buy my e-books (and e-Reader) from Kobo. I also have an Amazon Prime subscription, which I took out mainly to watch The Expanse, but which has also come in useful some times during lockdown. I don't particularly like Amazon as a company, but they are not to blame for the amount of tax they do or don't pay; that is squarely the fault of governments who set the tax rules. The rules should be changed, and we should be directing our complaints to our governments.*

**NK:** Oh, agreed, and governments have been spineless in this regard, but as I say my aversion to Amazon is more to do with their sociological impact. As Alex R (not for the first time) has observed in *Obsidian*, these were the things that SF (or at least Phil Dick) was promising/threatening us. // OUT OF SPACE as must do:

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**“SEE EMILY PLAY”** *(Who, of Whom ((+ this time What)), and Whence) contd (set-up for Turn 3)*  
Clues: respectively Fantasy, Mainstream, SF, Horror, Ambiguous; in author range D to L of “Keep Talking”

**Ten:** *Mistress 10a he now claimed for his partner in the stately pavane, kissing her hand (the nails whereof he noted were polished and sharpened to claw-like points) and looking across it as he did so, from under his brows, into her yellow lynx-like eyes... // ... But, ‘Madam’, he heard a man’s voice say at his side, ‘I pray you pardon me.’ Then, ‘My Lord 10b, her serene highness ((10c)) desireth your presence.’*

**Eleven:** *Whether the utilitarian or the intuitive theory of the moral sense be upheld, it is beyond question that there are a few subtle-souled persons with whom the absolute gratuitousness of an act of reparation is an inducement to perform it; while exhortation as to its necessity would breed excuses for leaving it undone. The case of Mr 11a and Mrs 11b particularly illustrated this, and perhaps something more.*

**Twelve:** *Abruptly, 12a climbed dripping from the bath, strode wet and naked into the training chamber... The chamber, oblong and skylighted, contained the gross and subtle instruments which toned a 12b 12b adept into ultimate physical and mental awareness/preparedness. There were mnemonic amplifiers, digit mills from 12c to strengthen and sensitise fingers and toes, odor synthesisers, tactility sensitisers, temperature gradient fields, pattern betrayers to prevent her falling into detectable habits...*

**Thirteen:** *...13a 13a was thirty-two years old when she came to 13b 13b. The only person in the world she hated, now that her mother was dead, was her sister... // Her name had turned up on Dr 13c’s list because, when she was twelve years old and her sister was eighteen... showers of stones had fallen on their house, without any warning or indication of purpose or reason, dropping from the ceilings, rolling loudly down the walls, breaking windows and pattering maddeningly on the roof.*

**Fourteen:** *... For the inmates of 14a College, Sunday the fifteenth of February was a day of nightmare indecision: half dream, half reality; alternating, according to temperament, between wildly rocketing hopes and sinking fears. // The Headmistress ((also 14a)), after a night passed in staring at the wall of her bedroom interminably whitening to the new day, was on deck at her usual hour with not a hair of the pompadour out of place. Her first concern this morning was to ensure that nothing of yesterday’s happenings should be so much as whispered beyond the College walls. ((Ah, the joys of late summer...))*

**Mark Nelson:** *Some time ago you asked me if I was interested in your Diplomacy rules project. Unfortunately, my interest in such matters has faded away over my decades of non-active participation in the hobby. However, is it time for you to dust off your Diplomacy director's hat? // I ask because I woke up in the middle of the night last week and whilst I was tossing and turning in what appeared to be a lacklustre attempt to fall back to sleep I remembered the Great Controversy of the 1999 New Zealand Diplomacy Championship. (Which happens to have been the last time I played Diplomacy.) The following is not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, but in all essential aspects it is correct.*

*Have you found your director's hat. I have no idea when the last time you wore it - hopefully you do - and perhaps it will require a good dusting? // There is a great uproar on one of the boards and the Director is summoned to sort it out. As might be expected, the details eventually percolate to the rest of the players. The question was (and is): did the French player cheat and if so what should have been the punishment?*

*The circumstances are these. It is Winter 1907 and France has captured a seventh supply centre. He should therefore build one unit. Unfortunately, he already has seven units on the board! (I am not limiting the names of the possible guilty party by using the male pronoun...) Now, this is not your common or garden flying Dutchman. Instead, what happened is that in Winter 1906 France built a unit when he was not entitled to. // The French player explained it as follows: "in Autumn 1906 I supported a unit into Belgium, evicting the Germans. At the start of the Winter session I told the other players 'I've kicked out the Germans out of Belgium. I've therefore gained Belgium and am due a build'. What I forgot is that I already owned Belgium, Germany slipped a unit in there in the Spring session."*

*As it's twenty-two years after the fact we don't have the opportunity to interview the players involved. But over to you:*

- 1.) Did the French player cheat?*
- 2.) If so, how should he be punished?*

*Twenty-two years after the event some other questions spring to mind...*

- 3.) Suppose that France had not gained a supply centre in 1907. Then he would have to disband a unit. Should he have the choice of which unit to disband or should he disband the unit that he should not have built?*
- 4.) Suppose that it had been noticed in the Spring (or Autumn before adjustments) that France was playing with an extra unit. What should the TD do when they are called over?*

**NK:** That's put me on the spot! Mark in fact sent this email in two parts, with the second detailing his thoughts. I'm going to do the best I can without consulting those thoughts and see if we broadly agree. // First, on Question 1, from the way it's expressed there is no way anyone can prove that the French player deliberately cheated. Which therefore obviates Question 2. I look at the situation this way: since no one spotted the error (or at least chose to comment on it) until the current adjustments (actually the last phase of Autumn[Fall] in standard Dip rather than "Winter"), the players have in effect tacitly agreed to play that game-year with the extra unit. Indeed, it would be impossible to retrospectively revise the recent adjudications (complete with their concomitant negotiation, partly based on the unit's presence). This has to include the unit's survival in the adjustments, since it is only now discovered that he has 7 centres and units.

This explains what should happen given Question 3. Had France not gained a centre, and it's only now plain that he has six centres but seven units, the players have still effectively agreed to play the game-year with the extra unit. So he can write a normal disbandment, he is not obliged to remove the unit he shouldn't have built in the first place (even assuming the players can readily work this out). If he fails so to do, then the Civil Disorder Removal rule will be applied.

Which in turn explains the situation of Question 4. Were the anomaly spotted earlier, CD Removal must apply since one can only order adjustments in the final phase of Fall. However, it would be technically impossible to apply this in a negotiation phase (players are not even obliged to be present), you could only do it at the beginning of the order-writing phase (assuming the session/tournament formally has these, which lots don't) or at the beginning of the adjudication phase. Scope there for 'suddenly' spotting the anomaly!

**Mark N:** ...For what it's worth if you take the French player's explanation at face value then I do not think that he "cheated", rather he made an honest mistake. And if you think the French player "cheated" and should be "punished" then what about the other players? Are they not culpable? ((Exactly.))

If you think the French player "cheated" then the next issue to consider is, "so what". My impression is that in the early days of Diplomacy the attitude of many players towards the 'Flying Dutchman' was "good on you" if you got away with it. Attitudes later swung against this. It is something that really should be covered in the tournament rules. (My collection of Diplomacy rules did not make it out to Australia...)

I am also brought to mind of those long-ago days when I played Bridge (not since I moved to Australia!) where the EBU were supposed to keep a track of occasions when a player "psyched". The intention was to see if a partnership might have an inkling that a psychic bid had been made because a similar bid had been made in a similar situation in a previous tournament/game. Should international Diplomacy TDs keep a record of occasions when a player has indulged in suspect behaviour? I don't think that's likely to happen!

So, I don't think the French player cheated and I don't think that they should be punished. Onto the other questions. I'm not sure what decision I would make for the third question. On a different day I'd possibly make a different decision. But today I would argue that it's too late to correct the fact that a specific unit should not be on the board – the French player can remove the unit of their choice.

Onto the final question. Tournament games should be run to a strict schedule and the boards must be playing the same season: you can't have one board playing a season or a year behind everyone else. I think the TD should wave on play – in effect allowing France to have the extra unit for the remainder of the play in that game-year.

**NK:** We're in broad agreement except for the final bit. (A) I'd rest easy about allowing a board to drop a season behind everyone else because these days I'd rate unfinished games on the "Short Game Win" criterion, so it doesn't matter at what season they run out of tournament time. Whereas (B) I think once an error has been formally identified it needs to be corrected as soon as possible, where there is a practical mechanism by which this can be done. Which there is in the form of the Civil Disorder Removal rule. (And, as suggested, judicious revelation of the anomaly could result in a nasty setback for the offending player.) The only problem with CDR is that this rule too has been... ambiguous. Happily I'm confident that my long-standing interpretation of it is watertight; and in any case as long as CDR is formally clarified in the tournament rules (or house rules) there should be no issue. I don't believe a GM or Tournament Director would need much more.

I'm curious, though: how did the New Zealand Tournament Director rule back in 1999? The way you've expressed the incident, I rather fear an OTT reaction! Which, if the case, would have been needless. If the actual players believe individually or collectively that France had been underhand, and if he has difficulty persuading them otherwise, well that's all part of the future negotiation on that board. I suppose then the only problem is if these particular tournament games only ran to 1907. In theory there's always future games/tournaments, though I'd cheerfully ignore attempts at formal records as in your Bridge analogy. Once a game gets to that level of formality it has ceased to be fun. (Bridge, Chess, Scrabble, though of course all of these – in common with most games – lack Dip's inbuilt superiority in respect of player-interaction.)

(He said smilingly and just ever-so-slightly provocatively.)

Now I'm guessing that Mark sent me that partly in response to me going all mock-Dip-authority last issue, this in respect of the "One Slip" JUSTIFICATION (for the so-called Unwanted Convoy). But I only received one direct comment from outside of the players (who are either perfectly happy or saying nowt):

**Colin Day:** "One Slip" – nice one Nick. Quite right too.

**NK:** Oh, absolutely right, surely... (When I have on my side Colin, my long-standing Conscience and Check-to-over-enthusiasm, I know I'm on the right track.) // Last page looms, and speaking of "One Slip":

Turkey (neutral) has F(Smy) in Civil Disorder.

FRANCE (Tony Hedges) A(Lvp)-Edi, F(Lon)-NTH [*fails*], A(Pic)-Bur [*stood off by superior force*], A(Mar)sA(Pic)-Bur [*cut*], F(Spa/sc)sA(Mar), F(Bre)-Gas, A(Par)sF(Bre)-Gas, A(Tyl)-Boh, A(Naf)-Tun.

...Russia... F(Tun)-ION.

GERMANY (Neil Carson) F(NTH)cA(Nwy)-Yor, A(Nwy)-Yor, A(Gas)-Bur, A(Ruh)sA(Gas)-Bur, A(Bel)-Pic [*fails*], A(Kie)sA(Mun), A(Mun)sFreA(Tyl)-Boh, A(Ber)-Sil, A(War)sA(Ber)-Sil, A(Mos)-Ukr [*stood off*].

AUSTRIA-H (Paul Regan) A(Sev)-Ukr [*std off*], A(Sil)-Gal [*dislodged\*, st.off with..*] A(Boh)-Gal [*dislodged\**], A(Vie)-Tyl, A(Tri)sA(Vie)-Tyl, A(Tus)-Ven, A(Pie)sF(GOL)-Mar, F(GOL)-Mar [*fails*], A(Nap)holds, A(Con)-Bul.

\*retreat phase: Austrian A(Boh) to Vie, Austrian A(Sil) to Pru.

/Press/ Paul – all: Kind of regretting getting rid of Italy now!

**Summer:** FRANCE grants 1cr to Russia (13cr left);  
GERMANY grants 1cr to Turkey (14cr left);  
AUSTRIA-H grants 1cr **in a proposal to revive ENGLAND** (13cr left).  
[Merc credits then half, odd halves lost:  
remaining credits Eng(exile) 7, Rus 3, Tur 5, Ita(exile) 6]

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**LAST BITS:** Phew, 24 pages. Achievable in prompt time post-deadline as I’ve done the bulk of this issue in advance and modified as needful. All possible as (1) I had all the orders for “One Slip” above, but for once not early enough to give the players enough negotiation time for their usual two-turns-per-issue caper; (2) there were enough submissions for all the word games to be viable, none having gone “beyond reach”; (3) Tony had done “Pigs on Wing” McCone Cup 2 and League Match 9 (adjudicating League 10 as we type but unsure if the relevant *Royal Leamington Spa Gazette* will appear before I have to get this *OoH* away); (4) I already had and typed up enough correspondence/response to bring the page count up to 20+ anyway! Usual thanks to all contributors (anything left over can kick-start the process again for the November issue) and indeed the rest of you for continuing to tolerate us (please do say when you’ve had enough).

Speaking of the November issue, its **Halloween deadline** is even more ostensible in that (if I can do much the same then as I’ve done this time) it’ll be the day I hope to actually transmit the zine. So the earlier your responses, the more likely they’ll make the final cut. (Not a Shameless Floyd reference). // At this stage I usually include a WE ALSO HEARD FROM section but (besides eds/zines duly consumed, ta) I think it’s just **Janey Cage**, who notes this time her relief at being back in the office and shrewdly notes one more drawback of the “working from home” mindset (on which we might expand in a future issue).

Games Waiting Lists: **The World Cup Game** if anyone interested! (and if viable, see page 17). As usual anyone can join **word games** (Quicksilver, Run Like Hell, See Emily Play, Take It Back) any time. Finally I’m always open to running another **Not-so-Intimate / Still Less Intimate** Dip game.

Spacefill with another of **Marcus’ newspaper cuttings** (this is the one he slotted into his “Quicksilver” submission, just to bring us full circle): *A Spanish bishop and exorcist known for his ultra-conservative views has stepped down to be with his lover, a writer of erotic satanic novels.* As Marcus put it, have sympathy for his flights in *WELCOME DORMOUSE*, “plagiarised by reality!” // FARE WELL, **NK**