

Of Dice and Meeples



Issue 5

September 2026

Colophon

Introduction

Of Dice and Meeples is a digital monthly APA about board, card, and similar hobby games, and is published under the Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license. See <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> for details.



The opinions expressed within each zine are solely those of the individual contributors and do not reflect the opinions of the APA or its management. All material in this issue, unless expressly noted otherwise, is contributed by its respective authors for use only in this publication in its various print and electronic forms, including public archival into perpetuity. All other rights are retained by each author/contributor, and therefore other use of any portion of this publication requires the permission of the original copyright holder(s).

If you'd like to be informed when new issues become available for download, please join our forum at <https://discussion.tekeli.li/c/23>, or you can check our website at <https://tekeli.li/of-dice-and-meeples/>. The APA is assembled with the free software [apatools](#).

Contributor Guidelines

Contributors are expected to stay on topic and remain civil to each other. *Of Dice and Meeples* will be available to the public for free, so matters you don't want publicly known should be discussed elsewhere. Please adhere to all the normal rules of public discourse: no libel, no inciting violence, no infringement of another's copyright or trademark, and no pornography.

Zines should use reasonable page dimensions (if it's not roughly A4 or 8.5"×11" there should be a reason). Maximum zine length is 16 pages/10,000 words. Discussion of contemporary politics is discouraged but permitted with a maximum length for political content set at 2 pages/1,200 words. AI-generated material is not allowed. All artwork must be attributed to its creator, unless it is in the public domain.

When you submit your zine to *Of Dice and Meeples*, you are granting the APA a perpetual, non-exclusive right to publish your zine in a single issue of the APA, meaning that you retain the copyright to your work, and so you can publish it elsewhere, but you cannot force *Of Dice and Meeples* to unpublish your zine once it has been published.

Contributors may submit their PDF zines via email to of-dice-and-meeples@tekeli.li

Submission deadlines and Ignorable Themes for the next several issues are as follows:

Issue #6 — 6 October: Games you wish you had the time and/or table space for

Issue #7 — 6 November: Essen Spiel and other conventions

Issue #8 — 6 December: Rulebooks: the good, the bad, the weird

Suggestions for further Ignorable Themes are welcome!

This project is explicitly inspired by [Ever & Anon](#), the digital APA successor to *Alarums & Excursions*.

Contents

Peruse and Possibly Play.....	Christopher Taylor-Davies.....	6
Frank Cavi!, Issue 5, September 2026 - Bumper Issue!!.....		15
	Matt Elliott	
Little Wooden People #5.....	Roger Bell_West.....	27

Cover art by BGG user chansen2794, CC-BY-NC-SA.

This issue's Ignorable Theme is: Print and Play

What is This?

A Newbie's Guide to APAs

Q: What is this?

A: An APA.

Q: What's an APA?

A: An Amateur Press Association.

Q: What's that?

A: A collection of zines. It can also refer to the community of people writing the zines.

Q: What's a zine?

A: A fanzine. A small, amateur magazine usually distributed for free or at cost.

Q: So this is a collection of free fanzines written by amateurs?

A: Exactly.

Q: And each one has a separate author?

A: Right.

Q: But I see the same names appearing again and again throughout.

A: Those are comments. We comment on each other's zines. When you see "RogerBW: blah-blah-blah...", if there are no quotes around the blah-blah-blah, that's probably a comment to Roger.

Q: And everyone is doing all this for free?

A: Yes. It's like a cocktail party, but all written out. Come join us, if you like. Amateur Press Associations date back to the late 1800s and started to become popular among fantasy and science fiction enthusiasts during the 1930s. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amateur_press_association

Q: But now there are blogs and various online forums, so why do APAs still exist?

A: Because one type of forum isn't necessarily any better or worse than the others. One advantage of the APA model is longevity. Because they have multiple contributors and don't rely on making money, APAs are more durable than individual blogs or traditional magazines. Also, because websites come and go, whatever is posted online will probably eventually vanish into the electronic ether. But whatever is put into a publication that can be downloaded and archived is more likely to survive due to the sheer fact that multiple copies will exist. And the back issues become an indelible record of what people used to think. They provide insight into a world that used to be.



Send us a zine. Or some cover art. Or comments. Or a blurb.

Or tell us why we're wrong.

Send your thoughts to of-dice-and-meeples@tekeli.li, and provided they aren't laced with powergamer profanity (or maybe even if they are), we'll likely publish them for the enlightenment & edification of the entire APA. Please include your name, collection size, and why *Flash Point: Fire Rescue* is the best game of all time, and be sure to feed your workers.

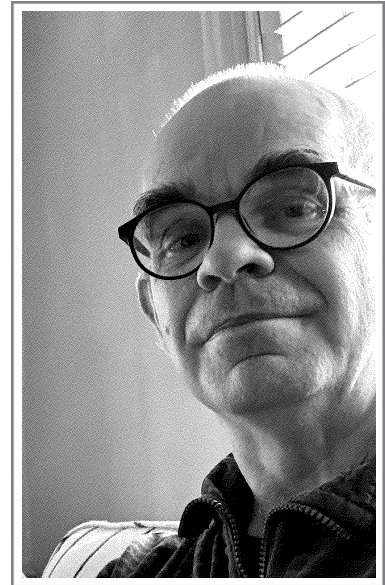
Abbreviations & Acronyms You May Need to Know:

- APA: Amateur Press Association
- Async: a slow online game where you're called back to take your turn
- BBG: Big Bad Guy/Gal (a major villain)
- BGA: Board Game Arena, a site for playing games online
- BTW: By the way
- XdY: X Y-sided dice added together; omit the X if it's 1.
- Frex: For example
- FWIW: For what it's worth
- IgTheme: Ignorable theme
- IIRC: If I recall correctly
- IM(H)O: In my (humble) opinion
- Monopoly: we don't talk about this "game"
- Nextish/Thish/Lastish: Next, This, Last issue
- (N)PC: (Non-)Player Character
- ODaM: *Of Dice and Meeples*
- PBEM: Play-by-Email
- PBF: Play-by-Forum
- RAE(BNC): Read and enjoyed (but no comment)
- Re: Regarding
- RHCT(M): Regarding his/her comment to (me)
- RYCT(M): Regarding your comment to (me)
- RYQT(M): Regarding your question to (me)
- TTS: TableTop Simulator, a physics engine for playing virtual boardgames
- WRT: With respect to / With regard to
- YMMV: Your mileage may vary
- Zine: A writer's contribution

Peruse and possibly play

How to use as many p's as you wish

Christopher Taylor-Davies
@ctd@mastodon.social



Definitions

Like most of the ignorable themes we have addressed, or ignored, so far, the category of Print and Play games is a very broad church. A narrow definition would be a game you have to first print the rules and possibly components before you can play it. Sold or provided in an incomplete form in other words. If you recall from the first edition of “Of Mice and Meeples”, I mentioned Sid Sackson’s book, *A Gamut of Games* as a formative work for me. Is this a print and play? It kind of is, because it requires you to bring your own components to be able to actually play most of these games. In some you literally draw the board or game sheet as you go. I realise this stretches the definition



Mark your post

somewhat, but for me the idea is that you have a ruleset somewhere, online, printed yourself, or in a book, that you use with your own bits and pieces to make a playable game. In my definition “Print” is replaced by “Provide” perhaps, which doesn’t really trip off the tongue readily. It will never catch on, but you get the idea anyway.

With that out of the way, we can look at some of my favourite entries in this genre. Print and Play games have been around for many years, of course, but recently Postmark Games, founded by Matt Dunstan and Rory Muldoon, have made a name for themselves by leaning into the idea wholeheartedly. A model of Kickstarting tightly designed, beautifully presented, print and play games neatly sidesteps the usual Kickstarter pitfalls of extended fulfilment and expensive delivery, while still leveraging that Kickstarter FOMO. It also helps that the price of their games is always very reasonable, and well supported afterwards with additional content. So much additional content, in fact, that I am ashamed to report that I have several unplayed maps in their games.



Voyages was their first game, all the way back in December 2021. Does anyone even remember things that long ago? I certainly remember downloading and deliberately not printing it. Is that heresy? No, they very clearly allow for people to play these digitally as well, and for the most part they work very well that

Point the way

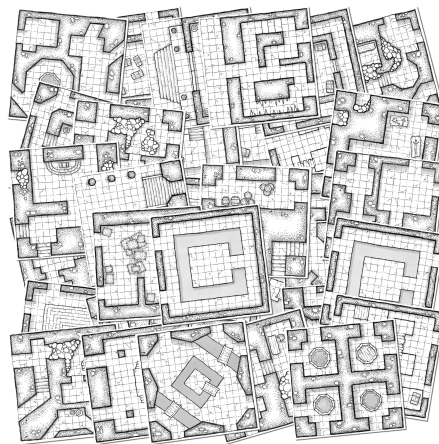
way, using Notes Plus X on my iPad Pro. I could also forgo the dice and use a “dice-rolling app like Dice by Pcalc”, but that gets a bit messy, and rolling physical dice is still more fun. I did compromise and printed the rules though, as it was easy just to use the iPad as the writing surface and the dice and rules as physical artefacts. What of the game? I like it, choosing how to allocate your dice adds some interesting choices, while still allowing for you to be royally screwed over by poor rolls. It also has the satisfaction of drawing a route on a map. I am very partial to maps, either creating them as you go, as in the Cartographers game, or drawing a route through gameplay, a pattern that Postmark started in Voyages and continued with Waypoints.



This is another attractive game, with a simple theme, leading to a tangible artefact at the end, a map annotated with your journey. A journey, not a voyage. That’s a different game. The premise is similar to Voyages, in that you are traversing a map. The maps in Waypoints are of parkland, with contour lines, points of interest and creatures to spot. You have to manage your supplies and cope with the weather while visiting as many places as possible.

This has been my favourite of their games, it plays quickly and still scratches that mapmaking itch. I even did the whole print and play thing with this one, printing out all of the maps and laminating them for reuse.

Postmark Games have continued to release new games with new themes and ideas regularly, and these have also found their way onto my P&P shelf, such as it is. It's more a folder on my computer than a shelf. Nestling in there are several more of theirs, such as 52 Realms and Koala Rescue Club, but lest this read as an advertorial for them I will finish with a brief mention of their very latest, Master of Coin, which I have yet to actually play, for the simple reason that I don't think I have 20 coins easily to hand. A victim of our cashless existence these days. Some folk have resorted to 3D printing their own coins for this game, which adds an extra dimension to the concept of Print and Play. Literally.



Another place to find P&P titles is itch.io, and taking a peek at my shelf there I find a couple of titles by Ways Unseen, including some forest and dungeon tiles that you can print out and arrange on a table to create pleasing maps. Did I mention I like maps? I very much like the Ways Unseen art style, so I also tried their Village Emporium game, which features a map, of course, and the titular emporium which you are entrusted with running. One of the themes I am noticing as I write up these games is that the scope of many of them is usually quite small, with a price tag to match. You can try these out for a modest outlay, and even if you only play them a couple of

Icabod is itchy and so am I

times, your cost to play ratio remains pretty favourable. Unlike that monster, tricked out, Kickstarter game, full of minis and stretch goals that ends up costing more than you expect and sits on the shelf, unplayed. Not that this has happened to me. This is just a hypothetical situation. That may arise. If you are not careful...

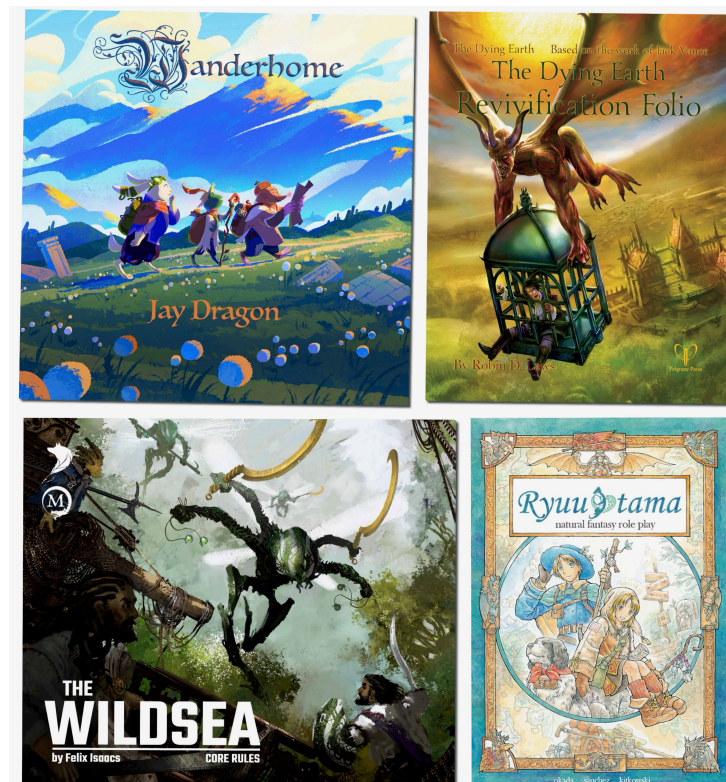
Also on my itch.io are a few games from Robin David, a prolific creator of print and play games. Some, like their series of Ada Lovelace games, resemble the Postmark pattern, maps and grids to fill in based on directions from dice or cards. Others demand that you print unique components in order to play the game, which is a slightly higher barrier to entry. This is an interesting stress point for me. If I have to print components that are used in game play, like a deck of cards for instance, I am less likely to attempt this. It tests my toner reserves, and assembly abilities. I am not averse to printing and cutting out decks of cards, then sleeving them behind Pokemon cards so that they have the requisite heft, but I have to be reasonably sure I will then use them.

Poking into obscure corners of my board game shelves, physical and virtual, I have come across some P&P titles, conventional and unconventional. There is something called Villagers of the Oak Dell, which I went so far as to print out and laminate. I don't actually recall playing it though. This is, however, an authentic experience for a board game collector. Many games sit on the shelf with 0-1 plays. Why should P&P games be any different. One of the key advantages of these games is convenience. You can acquire them easily, no shipping needed, and then be immediately ready to not play them. Efficiency is thereby augmented.

Space to write down the P&P Games you own but haven't played. (2 VP per title)

RPGs FTW (or not)

I have accumulated a number of RPGs from various crowdfunding campaigns where I only backed the digital version, on the basis of saving space and with the understanding that I was unlikely to actually get around to playing them. That would require an actual TTRPG group, and you can't just print them. Still, some of these RPGs are remarkably attractive. Wildsea has excellent art and an intriguingly weird fantasy world. The same applies to Wanderhome, an RPG featuring a gentle journey through a pastoral fantasy setting where you play as animal-folk. When I mention Ryuutama you will sense a trend. This is a Japanese "Natural Fantasy RPG" in a medieval setting. Players go on a journey, exploring and encountering and emphasising community and companionship instead of combat. All three of these are technically not P&P, and when I purchased the P&P versions of them, I knew full well I would not print them. They have lovely art though, and I can leaf through the manuals digitally, thinking wistfully of taking part in a campaign in these settings. See also the full Pelgrane Press Dying Earth series of handbooks and rule books that I purchased in a bundle one time.



BYO P&P

While spelunking in the big folder of game related stuff on my Mac, I came across some items that could be considered in the P&P category. Scenarios for Wizard Kings. Llamaland Solo Rules. The Boardgame Remix Kit, an interesting collection of games you can play with bits from games you already have. Hey, even the Pax Pamir Public Print and Play edition. Says so in the title, but I just bought the real thing in that case. What about the infinite supply of player aids, rule summaries and other files you download and definitely print? Probably stretching the point too far, but I am sure everyone has a folder full of board game related stuff to print. When you get around to it.

There is one final sub-category of P&P games that some of you will have dabbled in as well. That is your own prototypes, which you have to print in some form to bring them to life. My favourite one of these, of course, is my cricket deck building game, Five Wickets Down, which currently lies moribund on my shelf. It has actually been printed out, and through various play test cycles, many times, but hasn't got "finished" yet. These prototypes can be as polished as you wish, but diminishing returns sets in for creating elaborate sets of components that typically have a half life shorter than something that has been shot into the Large Hadron Collider. Definitely fits my definition of Print and Play, even when not generally available for everyone.



Stretching a point

It wouldn't be proper to get this far on this journey without including a bonus Print and Play game exclusive to Of Dice and Meeples. Building off my love of maps I have been experimenting with generating maps using assets from the excellent vintage cartography sets at K.M. Alexander's [#NoBadMaps site](#). It occurred to me that I could create a simple game for readers to print and enjoy. Or at least play. Enjoyment optional, given that it hasn't been play tested. Print it out and be one of the first people in the WHOLE WORLD to try this out. Such exclusivity.

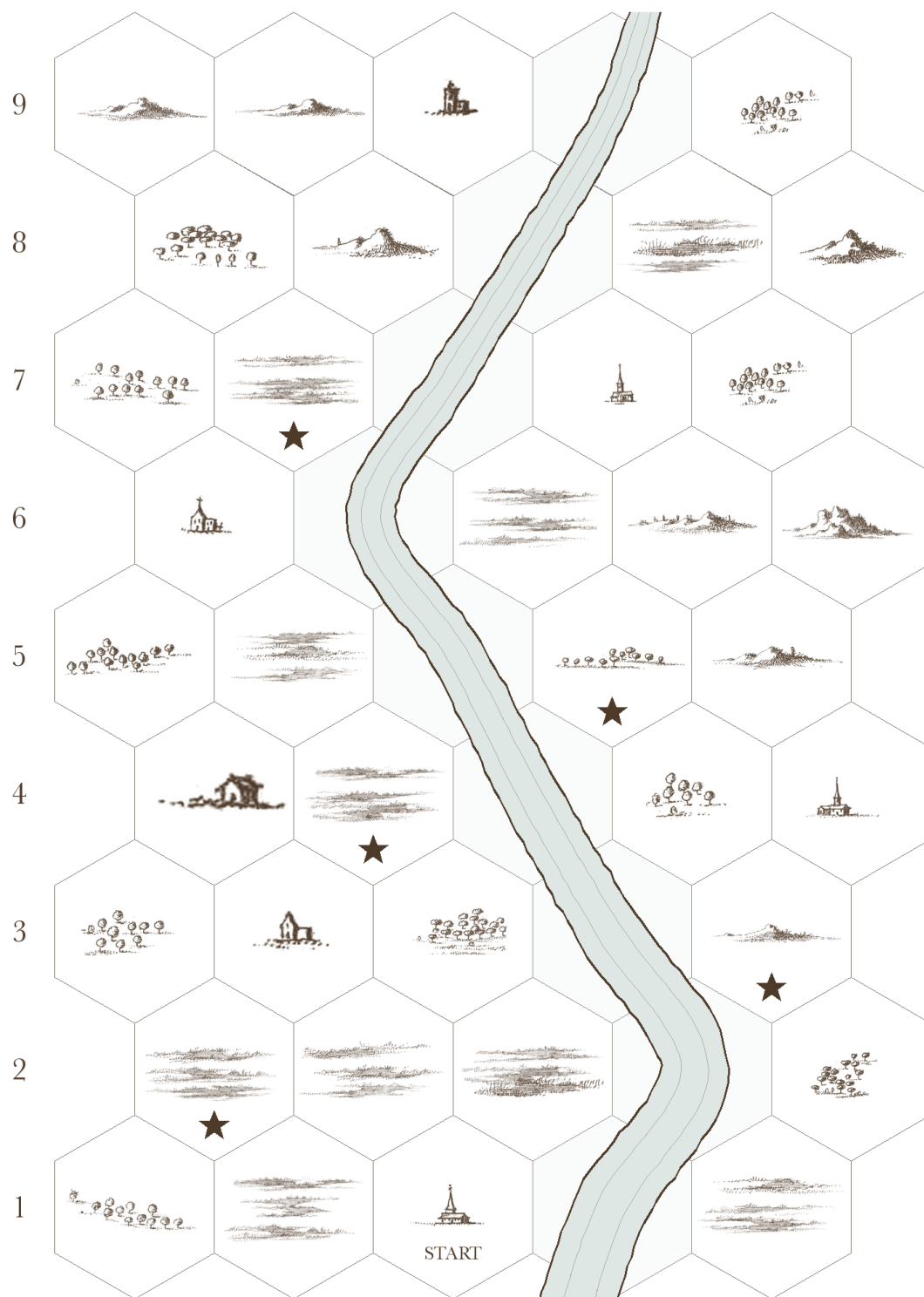
The rules are simple. You have 8 turns to get as far across the map as you can. Start by placing the meeple, counter, or Lego Minifig of your choice on the start spot on the map. Each turn tick off the turn in the turn counter. No cheating now.

Then roll 2d6, and try to move your marker to an adjacent hex, where the terrain matches the number on one die. If you roll a 6 you can use this die to move to any adjacent hex that doesn't have a star in it. If you enter a hex with a star, using a 1-5, then you can immediately move to any adjacent hex for free. If you can't move, or don't want to move that is fine too, but no refunds on your turn. You don't go anywhere that turn, unless you are lucky with your marking below.

Use the other die, or one of your dice if you choose not to move, to mark off a check box in the matching number in the terrain key chart. If you tick the third box you can immediately move to any adjacent hex that doesn't have a star in it. This is a one time bonus, you don't get to repeat it for that number.

Your final score is the row number you ended up in, plus the number of unticked boxes on the Turn Count row. Amazing prizes await the highest score reported. Probably.





Turn Count ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

1	2	3	4	5	6
 ☐ ☐ ☐ ★	 ☐ ☐ ☐ ★	 ☐ ☐ ☐ ★	 ☐ ☐ ☐ ★	 ☐ ☐ ☐ ★	Any Hex except Star

On your turn, tick off the turn in the turn count row, then roll 2d6. Use 1 die to advance your explorer to an adjacent hex matching that number. Use the other die to tick a box in the appropriate terrain box at the bottom. When you tick the last one you may immediately move to an adjacent hex of your choice. The goal is to get to the end of the map in row 9. Your score is the final row reached plus one for every unused turn.

Entering a hex with a star lets you immediately move to any adjacent hex for free

Map symbols from the Popple Cartography Brushes by K. M. Alexander, released CC0 via #NoBadMaps — kmalexander.com/2019/02/27/nobadmaps

IT'S ALL UP IN THE AIR

You should probably start your Print and Play journey small, and a game from Button Shy, no matter its theme, consists of very little. Entire games are built on the idea that you need no more than 18 playing cards, and on rare occasions some dice and tracking cubes.

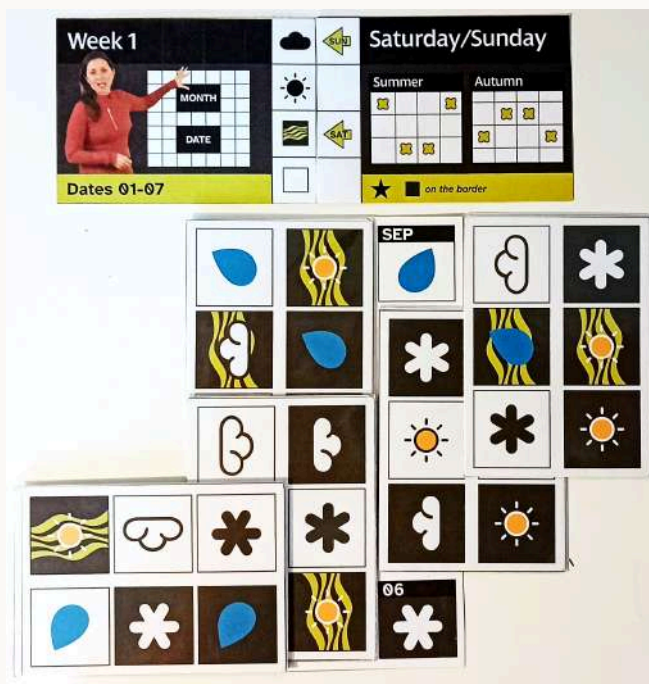
When a game is that small, I always consider whether it can be printed as is, or whether it could be made even better (in my opinion) with a different coat of paint.

Take *The Daily Weather*, for example. It's a simple little solo puzzler where the date you're playing the game serves up your daily goal, and how you'll score should you be able to achieve it. If you manage to cover every icon on the Month and Date cards that *isn't* the current date using all your weather cards, *and* you've made the required pattern to meet your goal, then you can score your solution and compare it against other folks, or try and better it in another game later in the day. Simple.

And it looks simple too. Not bad, not bland, but safe and straightforward. We can surely zhuzh it up a touch without too much effort.

I check the forecast of the UK Met Office, so a few scraped assets here and some recolouring there and I have my own copy of *The Daily Weather*, complete with forecasters who, to my knowledge, haven't made a fool of themselves on live television...

I'll tell you who has made a fool of themselves though: Me. Since writing this, I've learned that there is a tiny expansion available for \$1, and that past me deleted the assets used to retheme the base game, and will have to recreate them all.



I've a case full of Button Shy games and this isn't the only one I've rethemed. Two others of note are *Dionysia* and *Revolver Noir*.

The former is 'a Greek Tragedy in your pocket', seeing up to 2 players putting on a play to impress the audience, but it is functionally a card drafter where you have to match a bunch of icons to your chosen scoring conditions as best you can. It is now called 'Dirtsheets', and features some of the many over the top tragedies found throughout WWF/WCW history, what with me being an on/off wrasslin' fan.

The latter is a hidden movement deduction game that plays like a first person shooter, of all things. I played a lot of *Killzone 2* multiplayer back in the day, and now I can race through Radec Academy hoping to land the fatal shot first - assuming I can read the teeny tiny text I wrote all the player actions in.

Past me making a fool of present me again...

Matt Elliott regrets buying an HP ENVY Photo 6220. While it is a stretch to say that it is holding him hostage, the fact that he pays £3.49 a month for the privilege of printing up to 25 sheets of paper doesn't feel right. Sadly, the damn thing just doesn't want to break down, and will soon enter its 9th year of extortion operation.



“NOW LET’S PRINT THIS THING AND GO HOME!”

As you can see, I have a small case full of PNP games that weren’t big enough for me to make a box for (other than a tuckbox), and space within this case is now at a premium. If there’s more to go into it, then something will have to come out of it - or whatever is going in will have to be really rather small...

BoardGameGeek hosts regular design challenges, and the 2025 9-Card Nanogame contest threw up a couple of games whose files I’ve saved for the future. Most of the awards went to *Math Knight*, a solo dice-based battler where you need to use a strictly limited set of mathematical operations to defeat the foe in

front of you, but it’s not the game I want to explore first.

That honour goes to *Bullet Run!*, a solo WW2 dogfighter where you need to earn 7 medals before falling out of the sky. It’s ready to print of course, but I’m a rethemer and a video gamer, and one series popped into my head when seeing this game: *Star Wars: X-Wing*.

Thus begins ‘the Project’...

PROJECT DAY 1

So what do I need to get this game off the ground? Nine double sided cards, meaning two sheets of paper (28p, according to the Hewlett Packard accountants). It’ll be a lot of black ink if I set it in the depths of space, but that’s a design problem I’ll tackle later.

Onto those cards go a bunch of tracking cubes for hits, misses, and status. If I don't have any leftover from *The White Box* then they're probably in use elsewhere in the PNP case. *Under Falling Skies* and *Twin Stars* are probably using them, so there's a good chance I'll be storing *Bullet Run!* alongside other solo Sci-Fi nanogames and sharing the components.

Finally, I need 5d6, with one 'preferably red'. That's not even a challenge.

Regarding the graphics then, we need a bunch of targets to shoot. A trip to Wookieepedia and I'll know more about the Imperial Navy than I'll ever need or want to know, so no worries there. I wouldn't be surprised to find every single medal, ribbon, and military rank that has ever existed in *Star Wars* on that site too, so all we'll need to tie (haha) everything together is an X-Wing cockpit.

I played all the *Uncharted* video games to get screenshots for a *Lost Cities* retheme, so I could do the same here, but there are some problems with that: They're not installed any more, my flight stick is under the bed, and I suck at all things *X-Wing*. But in principle I could (and probably should) find what I'm looking for in the very games that inspired this retheme...



I have a few screenshots from the last time I played TIE Fighter vs. X-Wing but none of them show me doing anything competently.

PROJECT DAY 2

I've been watching some videos to get a reminder of the *X-Wing* look. There are lots of cockpit designs to pull ideas from, but nothing I can use as is.

But I also have the problem of what to look at through the window. The vast emptiness of space isn't terribly engaging, and that's about all you end up staring at in *X-Wing*, so I think I'll have a look into the *Rogue Squadron* series too, as they would be more colourful experiences.

I think I'll be letting things bubble away at the back of my mind before returning to this...



I used to blog about video games, so I've even got some screenshots of *Rogue Squadron* for the N64 too.

PROJECT DAY 3

I've decided to use *Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader* as the main inspiration, notably because the very first level is that of the Battle of Yavin, so I don't have to get good and play through an entire game before getting to one of the most memorable dogfights, and can therefore get straight into screengrabbing.

These days, even on ol' faithful, emulating older video game consoles is usually a doddle, as is upscaling their internal render resolutions to provide crisp visuals, though annoyingly the TIE Fighters I'm supposed to shoot down have a habit of staying right in the middle of the screen, camouflaged against the blackness, so I'm going to need to focus on getting some clean plates of any interesting backgrounds

and worry about sticking ships on top of them later.

There aren't too many things to look at, though. There's the surface of the Death Star, and Yavin looming overhead, and that's about it. We could make it work. We could even make sets of cards based on different levels to give us a broader range of targets and locales to look at - but I'm getting ahead of myself. Besides, the name *Trench Run!* is right there...



I saw this cutscene a few times before I figured out the art of slowing down to let chasing TIE Fighters whizz past me...

PROJECT DAY 4

Rogue Leader's Official Player's Guide uses an X-Wing cockpit as the background image for the contents pages, but I would have to do a fair bit of work to it if I were to make use of it.

The guide also has detailed lists of various upgrades, with proper *Star Wars* terminology we can pull from to replace the names of the abilities for that extra bit of flavour, like changing 'Missile/Bomb' to 'Proton Torpedo'.

But while *Rogue Leader* does award players with medals, they're generic (not that I've been able to earn them to see for myself), so we will probably look back to the *X-Wing* series there.

PROJECT DAY 5

I've got typefaces on my brain. I'm not writing everything in Aurebesh, that'd be stupid, but I've seen (and owned) so much printed material over the years that I just *know* they favour certain looks over others. But what were they?

Turns out it's more a sign of the times than a design language from on high. Rotis Semi Serif takes me right back to *The Phantom Menace* days and Trade Gothic is an option too, but Square 721 and Eurostile (basically identical; come at me, font nerds) are stronger contenders. Not that anything is set in stone - I've not even opened an image editor yet...

PROJECT DAY 6

If there's one thing you need to know about X-Wing cockpits it's that everyone seems to agree on the general shape but not the details. *Perfect*. Make it various shades of grey, stick some blinky lights somewhere, job done.

The original *Bullet Run!* graphics feature a photograph of a woman in a bikini tucked into the dash. It'd be *trivial* to replace that with a similar image of Princess Leia but that'd be wrong on a number of levels.

As expected there are a bunch of medals we can include, and because I don't care whether Disney considers them 'Canon' or 'Legends', I can choose whichever I like the look of. While there aren't too many with an image in a modern resolution, there are enough to work with, certainly at the small scale they'll end up at. I'll forget what they're all called in a few days.



You can look around the cockpit in Rogue Leader. It's fully 3D and reacts to the light sources and everything. Great for getting some ideas of what to include.

PROJECT DAY 7

I've stumbled upon Sketchfab, a website for 3D modellers to show off their 3D models. There's a basic viewer allowing me to see TIE Fighters and the like from any angle, with some small control over the light source, too. Such a thing might come in handy for dropping whatever I want into whichever space I need it to fill.

Bullet Run! features planes and ships, and I was thinking of TIEs and Star Destroyers, but all those triangles might lead to some awkward looking targets, especially if I'm matching their placement to the original cards. Luckily for me, the only Star Destroyer present at the Battle of Yavin wasn't used. See, there's a benefit to knowing all this pointless detail!

But is there a world in which I set my sights on the Battle of Endor instead? I do have a soft spot for *Return of the Jedi*, and it would offer more variety... It would also mean having to get good at *Rogue Leader* though, or finding a completed save file.

Is *Trench Run!* going to turn into *Rogue SquadRun!* I wonder...

PROJECT DAY 8

Cheats! Of course! *Rogue Leader* was released in the glory days of video gaming, meaning I can not only skip straight to the Battle of Endor, but be armed with infinite lives too - perfect for a wandering cameraman just looking to get some screenshots.

It's definitely going to be more interesting to look at, but it is *chaos*. I may end up having to make backgrounds from scratch, but as far as inspiration goes, consider me inspired.

After capturing whatever I could, I'm now armed with folders of assets to work with and just need a starting point. There's no game without an X-Wing cockpit, so I guess I'll tackle that first.

I prefer image editing in Affinity Photo v2, before Canva came in and wrecked it all. I've done rethemes in GIMP, but I think I'm going to need to be comfortable for this one (make your own joke there if you want). If I'm going to be fighting, it's going to be against the finished picture I have in my mind, not against the software I end up using.

There is a lovely render of an X-Wing cockpit by Maha Knox on Sketchfab which I've been pulling apart and collaging back together in a fashion that suits my needs, and by the end of the day the first card is pretty much done - and as is usual for me, readability has been flung out the window for the sake of whatever looked good. Whoever ends up playing this will just have to know what goes where, because there's no room to spell it out in this skeuomorphic design.

It does mean that I've set myself some high standards that the rest of the cards have to live up to, so lets hope I don't burn out before I finish...



A sensible designer would have mocked up a cockpit, tested it, see what needed moving or replacing, but I am not a sensible designer. Hell, I'm not even a designer - but I can spend a long time fiddling around with images and distorting text to give a hand drawn aesthetic. Just don't ask how those medals are attached to that wire, how that wire is attached to the cockpit, or how gravity even works at this point.

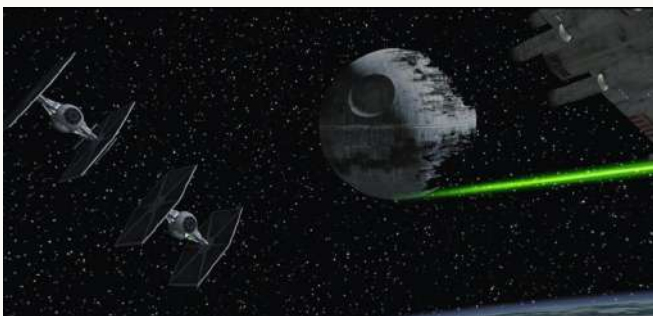
PROJECT DAY 9

Eh, I don't think these side panels are as interesting to look at as the main cockpit card, but as they need to contain all the ability text, the damage tracker, and space for dice, there's only so much you can do: grime and some blinky lights, mostly.

The 3 cockpit cards done then, I can now focus entirely on the window cards and all the Imperial targets within them. It looks like I have a good few background screenshots that need little work, so I don't think I'll have much to do when it comes to building anything from scratch, unless there's a composition I really want.

Looking over the Work In Progress thread for *Bullet Run!* reveals some ideas regarding flipping and spinning these window cards for even more variability, which would make more sense in space where 'Up' and 'Down' depend on who you ask, but if the designer is going to point out that there are graphical elements to determine which way is up, I'm going to honour that intent.

The X-Wing cockpit has a fairly open view out the front, but we can make use of the two hefty pillars on the sides to help point out the orientation and give the impression that all these cards belong to the same game. I've also grabbed a good few images of TIE Fighters in flight, so I may not have to rely on Sketchfab at all. Should I need to grab some more screenshots, Endor is but a cheat or two away...



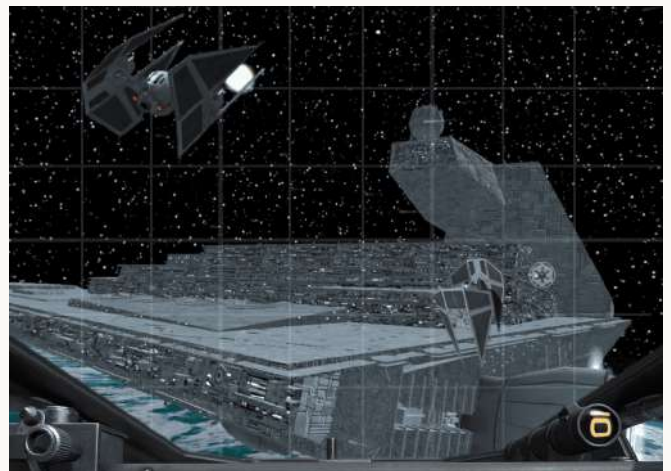
You should be able to hear this picture.

PROJECT DAY 10

My side pillars looked terrible, so they've been replaced with just the right view through the X-Wing cockpit model to give the window cards a lovely base, which should sit nice and flush above the main cockpit card. I do lose two or three spaces of the playing area however, right in the bottom corners. This has an impact on just one card, so I'll probably have to wiggle some targets around somehow.

I quickly whipped up a card and didn't really like how empty it was, then stuffed it with ships and whatnot and wasn't liking how full it was. Somewhere in between 'voids of space' and 'nowhere to move for all this blaster fire' is a nice balanced look, I just haven't found it yet.

In other news, HP have emailed to tell me a replacement ink cartridge is on the way. Didn't know I needed one. Hopefully it's black ink.



We're going to need to do better than this.

PROJECT DAY 11

I ʘᵒᵒᵒᵒᵒᵒ despise TIE Fighters.

PROJECT DAY 12

It was indeed a black ink cartridge that was sent out. Not sure why, as the display estimates half a cartridge is still left. I follow instructions, so no replacement is going in until sheets start coming out blank.

The thing about *Bullet Run!* is that it is graphically functional, there's nothing to give you any idea that something is 'off'. But here, all I can see is weird angles, incorrect lighting and odd scaling. You'd think "square ship, square grid, what's your problem?", but it's just not looking like I want it to.

I go through this with many a project, especially miniature painting. I *know* that there will be a moment where it just looks awful, and I keep having to tell myself the best is yet to come: dunking it in Agrax Earthshade to hide all the mistakes and blend it all together.

The equivalent here is that the print quality will not produce the same result that I can see on my screen, and after that it'll be sleeved, so we can add glare and fingerprints to the mix, and then of course it'll get covered in cubes and, within a minute or two, replaced with another card to worry about instead.

It's slow going but it'll be fine in the end.

PROJECT DAY 12

I do enjoy it when inspiration strikes.

Rogue Leader has a targeting computer. Targets are highlighted in purple, outlined in yellow, objectives similarly in yellow and white. All I've got to do is cover the worst images with a targeting computer, et voilà.



I would have had a better chance of actually earning a medal if I'd have used this feature earlier.

PROJECT DAY 13

That's all the cards done, but not complete. I'm happy with the stuff that's present, but layers can get fine tuned, filters can be applied, I want to add a load of blaster bolts tearing through the empty spaces, and I need to finally settle on how visible the playing area grid lines actually are, because if I can't see them, I can't play the game. Probably worth spending a bit of time to get that bit right...

PROJECT DAY 14

I think I'm done.

I completely abandoned the idea of finding a happy medium between 'sparse' and 'busy', so most of the cards skew towards busy - but hey, if it's what I feel when playing the video game, the cards might as well try and evoke that, no?

The last few steps are all boring: sleeping on it for a day or two, checking for any glaring errors, notably the spelling, and then it's time to print. Huzzah!

Oh, wait. I suppose I better get the rules written down somewhere too...

PROJECT DAY 15

As is usual, I rather phoned in the PocketMod rulebook, but it's functional. It seems HP phoned it in as well, as there are the telltale streaks of an ink cartridge in need of replacement (or use in general, we don't print colour too often) that either mar these wonderful cards, or give it that worn out, beaten up look George Lucas was going for - depends on how generous you want to be, I guess. Either way, it still isn't time to replace any cartridges.

The next steps are obvious: cut everything out, slap a playing card between the sides (even when not needing to shuffle a card, I like them to feel like a playing card and not two sheets of cheap A4 paper), sleeve them, and, oh, I don't know, play it maybe?



GAME DAY

Oh, this was a good idea. Well worth the effort. Even worth getting annoyed with the stupid shapes of every kind of TIE Fighter there is. But as ever, there are things that could be tweaked. Print quality, obviously. The sleeves are 3mm too tall. The first dice I found were a little on the short side for a Stormtroo-sorry, got carried away a bit there.

I suppose I should explain the game.

Each round you roll 5 dice, one of which acts as your Radar and determines your starting zone, and the others are used in whatever way you see fit. One has to tell you how many shots you can fire, and the others are placed on abilities like performing barrel rolls, evading damage, and dishing out extra shots.

Once you've fired your blaster bolts, hopefully scoring a bunch of hits (I managed 6 hits here, and my Proton Torpedoes missed), you re-roll the Radar die, which now acts as the Empire trying to deal damage to you. If you're

still flying, meaning the damage tracker hasn't reached its last space, then you score 1 point per hit, replace the window card with the next and start another round.

Score 35 points (which can also be done outside of hits, but rarely) before you run out of window cards or get shot out of the sky, and you win - but the more you score, the harder the Empire retaliates, dealing extra damage depending on how many medals you've earned.

What's more, some abilities stress your ship and dish out damage themselves, which will see you uhm-ing and ah-ing over the choices, especially if you roll a load of low numbers.

It went down to the wire here: a victory just three or four spaces away from the bottom of the damage tracker. I'll play a few more games before flipping over one or more of these cockpit cards to their harder sides, which increase the damage dealt and reduce the amount of it you can take before losing.

The Empire won't know what hit 'em...

GOING TO BE HERE A WHILE

There are close to 11,000 entries on BoardGameGeek that are linked to the Print & Play category, so it is safe to say that none of us will be running out of things to print any time soon, but where do you even begin wading through these vast lists?

Just bumbling your way into something works. I have no idea where I first encountered *Going Knowhere*, a standard deck card game that sees you try to capture 12 Knowstones in a single game, but the catch is that this is an impossible task, at least to begin with...

Each round you reveal a Face card and a numbered card, which together dictate your target score and the minimum number of cards you must play to reach it. A Jack and a 4, for example, requires at least two cards from our hand to make an exact total of 15. If we manage it, we claim that Jack as a Knowstone and we're on the path to victory.

But as I say, the game is designed for failure. The King of Clubs is always paired with two numbered cards, and Kings require you to play at least four cards to hit the target score. Matching suits increases your problems: minimum requirements are raised, and cards you play may end up having a value of 0 - not too useful with a target score close to 30.

Upon your inevitable failure to collect all 12 Knowstones you arrive at the appropriately named 'Wit's End', where Lady Knowmad allows you to trade insight for power (so the rules leaflet says). The more Knowstones you did manage to collect, the more stuff you can unlock to make life easier next time out. Decks can be played face up so you know what the future holds. Discards can get recycled so that you have more to work with. Hand size can be increased, and minimum card requirements reduced. Aces can finally be counted as 11 instead of 1, if that's what I need.



Eventually, you *will* win. And I have, though regrettably the one thing I didn't explicitly track on my character sheet was how many games it took. I stuck *Going Knowhere* in the front of my satchel and played it while waiting for game nights to start. It's quick to set up, doesn't take too much space, and is quick to finish too, seeing as it usually ends in failure. It's also quick to print - two trifold leaflets. It's not much, component wise, but this is technically all you need to be eligible for the Print & Play category.

For some reason, I stumbled upon its itch.io page recently, where I learned that it has not only been updated, but there's some kind of Adventure mode to play as well. More of the same, I suspect, but that's not a bad thing.

"While I'm here," I thought, "I might as well see what else is available."

That was a bit of mistake. There are some 5,000 projects tagged with Print & Play, with 71 uploaded just this week, apparently.

Where to begin...

“if they are enjoying it that is OK.”

— Roger BW

Our former group had a guy who wanted to play the likes of *Careers*, *Mine a Million*, classic *Risk*, that kinda thing. Everyone gets to play their games at some point, and while *Mine a Million* usually turned into *Mine a Half Million* on account of it taking so damn long, we could have a laugh while doing so.

He'd be game for our games too, but teaches were *always* interrupted with variations of “How do I win?”, often in the tone of “This is getting boring now, I just want to play.” He generally worked out what he was doing by the time the game ended...

One day we returned to the group after many months away and *Celestia* was being set up, a game we'd played with this group a few times but had ultimately sold on before we moved away.

“Ah, cool, who brought this?”

“I did.”

“*You did?*”

“Yeah, I like it, and you're not here anymore.”

I was stunned. Never expected a guy like that to go out of his way to buy a new(ish, compared to his collection) game. Fantastic.

CAN YOU READ ME?

Yes, Marcus, I do want to talk visual accessibility, mostly because I'm living in ignorance over the scale of the problem, and want to do what I can, where I can.

Since learning of Atkinson Hyperlegible's existence years ago I make heavy use of it, both as personal preference and in the hopes that it is actually useful for folks. Is it the Gold standard of readability in typefaces? I've no idea, but it looks good to me.

But I've slapped it on a pale peachy/creamy/off white background because I wanted *FRANK CAVIL* to look a little bit like an old newspaper. Is that better or worse? I wouldn't know where to begin trying to work that out.

I watched a video a few months back that talked about how board games fail colorblind players (and that's the YouTube title if you want to search for it), where it suggested that these

eight colours might be a better go-to choice, but nobody in my gaming life has said they were colourblind (just blind, to some degree, and sometimes with an eyepatch to prove it), so I wouldn't know how to test them.



We did own the original *Isle of Trains*, and I think we got it, ironically, as part of a blind bundle, in that we didn't know what games we were getting. Evidently we only *liked* trains, and sold it on...

But back to the point. As someone who dabbles in the graphics of their games and wishes to expand their accessibility, what's the next big thing to pay attention to, or do we have to get a move on and actually double code things as a bare minimum first?

While I await your reply, I'll be wondering just how inaccessible my game shelves are...

REGRETS?

TOO FEW TO MENTION

I am positive that we've owned a few duds here and there, but I can't say for certain that I've had any sinking feelings of regret and disappointment, so in answer to Joshua, let's crawl through the Previously Owned list and see what stands out.

The highest rated game that comes closest is the alchemical deductioner that is *Alchemists*, which we picked up because it looked interesting and put down before completing a single game because we couldn't quite grasp it.

We similarly didn't finish a game of *Farsight* before selling it on. I'd backed that at whatever tier allowed me to name one of the units, but what I should have done was asked if the primary person I'd be playing against would ever be interested in actually playing a convoluted Mech battler, where the answer was always going to be 'No'.

Speaking of my partner, she once took a gamble on *Snowhere*, presumably because the boxed looked interesting, with its 'No Plastic' branding and theme of putting out fires. The game involves dumping/splaying/spreading a bunch of fire cards on the table, then picking up one of those cards that isn't covered by any other card, turning it over into a snow card, and returning it to the pile to cover a bunch of fire with snow. Cover all the fire cards with snow to win, obviously.

"Is that it?"

"It seems so, yeah."

"That's rubbish!"

I couldn't really argue with her on that point.

So no sinking feelings. A flat feeling here and there, and the desire for the right time, place, and opponent to be more readily available, sure, but I'm not going to lose sleep over any of that - not when there are other games to be disappointed with coming out all the time!

EMERGING NARRATIVES

I too thoroughly enjoy the stories within and around a game, so CTD once again speaks to me, and in the process unlocks a memory.

Descent doesn't come up in conversation often, and I'm surprised that my partner says she likes it, having generally hated RPGs she's been involved with *unless* everything goes so utterly off the rails as to become a moment of joy in itself, by which I mean her highlight of playing *Pathfinder* was the rest of us having to behead her character to finally put an end to her confusion spells.

One of the unfortunate targets of those confusion spells, after he stopped his incoherent babbling, invited us around for a game of *Descent*, the only game we've ever played of it. I remember basically nothing of it, my partner, as I say, remembers liking it, but I don't know exactly why - though I have my suspicions...

Also at this game was a new puppy.

"D'aww... Lookatthelittlepuppydog! Hello! How are you? Oh, you're tasting my fingers, lovely; let's just wipe the dribble on your coat, there we go..."

Anyway, yes, emergent stories can give a bit of oomph to a game or a session that needs that little something extra. I'm no stranger to narrating turns for the benefit of teaching, so giving personalities to whatever components I find in front of me isn't too much effort on top of that - and pointing the finger at something is even easier if the poor meeple in your sights is named...

Such a thing shouldn't be forced, though, which is perhaps why *Once Upon A Time* needs the pieces to all fall into place for it to work well. *Gloom* similarly asks players for some degree of storytelling, but in a choice between "This card will get me more points" and "This card is a more interesting story development", there is likely only going to be one winner, with whatever story that comes out of it being a bonus.

TINY, EPIC, ONE OR T'OTHER

I have bought too many *Tiny Epic* games. I've sold some of the worst, but those that remain still sit on my shelves close to bursting with expansions that simply do not inspire folks to get the game out and play it in the first place.

Tiny Epic Galaxies is always mentioned first because it's a solid game, but with the others you have to be interested in the theme and/or be willing to sit down to play what is often a dense game that desperately wants to be bigger than it is allowed to be.

Naturally it has an expansion to bulk it out in the form of *Beyond the Black*, adding skilled pilots to your ships and a Void to explore for another way to score points, but I don't think either make for a better game of *TEG*. Rather they make for a different game bolted onto a basic one.

I don't know if 'more stuff' would push *Galaxies* over the horizon into greatness for you, but in the other direction is the comically small *Ultra Tiny Epic Galaxies*, which is as fiddly and awkward as it sounds.

Trio has been added to the box of games at the local library as of the last few weeks. I've only played the spicy rules the once, but from what I gather you can fold them into the base game with no issues, allowing players to win by getting either 3 trios, or 2 linked trios, or the 7 trio. I'll have to suggest it next

time it hits the table and report back - though given this prolonged medium through which we're communicating, you might have already decided it's not worth keeping.

It's one of those games that I find hard to justify a purchase of, knowing that it could be played with a standard deck of cards, or, what with this being the Print and Play issue, a custom deck of cards that accommodates a few similar games. But I haven't gotten around to working out which ones yet...

All this colour talk makes for an obvious joke: Insert XKCD #927 "Standards" here. As I say in response to Marcus, where do you even begin? Is a new language, of a sort, really a road to venture down when there could be simpler options out there, like not designing based on colour in the first place?

I can't answer that myself, not being colour-blind and struggling to think of a game where problems might occur simply for having not lived the problem in the first place. In a sense it's like not noticing the lack of wheelchair access until you've gone somewhere in a wheelchair (as well as not noticing that the ramp to the door isn't the end of the problems) - we can only see so much from our perspective, and need that lived experience to see the rest.

Whatever the solution(s) turn(s) out to be, give me the ^ pieces while they're still part of the colour palette...

Little Wooden People

Number 5: by Roger BW

- Blog: <https://blog.firedrake.org/>
- Gaming stuff: <https://tekeli.li/>
- Rulebooks: <https://tekeli.li/rogers-rules/>
- Mastodon: <https://discordian.social/@RogerBW>
- Licence: AI0-BY-NC-SA-1.0 <https://www.humanscommons.org/>
- This zine contains no content produced by AI tools.
- Photos without individual credit are by RogerBW.



Recent Games

When this comes out I'll be at Tabletop Scotland, which I'll talk about next time, but otherwise it's mostly been local gaming and Thirsty Meeples. New stuff:

[Great Western Trail](https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/193738) (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/193738>) played on BGA. I skimmed the rules but had very little idea of what I was doing, which made it a bit embarrassing that I won. Not really my sort of game, but I value the people in this playing group.



[Coldwater Crown](https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/200934) (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/200934>) always leaves me thinking that I should play it more often. I know nothing about fishing, but the core mechanic (put down your token on an empty space and do its action, then pick up another token from a different space and do *its* action, and flip over that token so that they swap between minor and major effect) engages me enough that I don't

really care. (Reducing that to "Worker Placement", as BGG's categories do, misses the point I think.)

I first played [Tenby](https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/407233) (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/407233>) at Airecon in March this year. It's tableau-building with an enjoyable play order mechanism (in last turn's order, you each choose a card that has a descending level of turn priority and an ascending amount of actions you can do this turn) and then drafting from various types of card. Meanwhile the tableau offers various ways to score, many of which are incompatible with each other.

And it's fine. There is nothing offensive about it. I know people who enthuse about it. I would play it again if they suggested it. But there was nothing in the experience to make me think "I will ask to play this again" or "I will buy this".



[Otters](https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/424575) (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/424575>) is a first game from three

Polish designers, and for my taste was much too random to the point of having almost no decision-making. I did like the art, though, which reminded me of Darby Conley's work on *Get Fuzzy*.



Print and Play

Yeah, I agreed with this Ignorable Theme when Matt proposed it, but my guilty secret is that I've actually done very little of this. Though I have sidled up on it from various angles.

For example, "grab some spare dice and use them like *this*" — no problem. I'm a role-player, I have way too many dice. "Print out a table with a standard playing card symbol by each entry", sure. But "print a sheet, chop it up and put it in card sleeves" has never happened. I'm more likely to keep a P&P game in electronic form and build it virtually, for example in Inkscape (it's a vector editor, but if you bring bitmaps into it they continue to exist as separate objects, which makes it easy to move them around while playing a game).

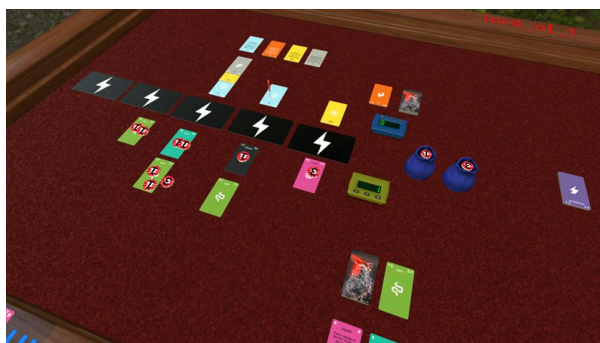
But what I have done quite a bit with is *Tabletop Simulator*, commercial software available on Steam. (Yes, it runs on Linux.) It's not super expensive, and last time I looked it was reliably on half-price sale three or four times a year. This is essentially a 3D virtual environment and physics engine, with extensions to make it work for boardgames: for example, you can have a deck of cards that can

be shuffled, throw dice, have a hand of cards that's not visible to other players, and so on. There is no rule enforcement built in at all; you have a table full of bits, go to.

You can also get sneaky. For example, I have written code which converts a Rallyman GT or Dirt track in the RGT file format used by the original track editor, and by the far superior [Rekee](https://rekee.net/) (<https://rekee.net/>), into a saved object which can be imported directly into a Tabletop Simulator session (using the now-abandoned mod version that I worked on with Squabbit). So if you're playing the ISGOYTRA monthly challenges, you can have the latest track set up and ready to go.

The way they *want* you to play is all about the central services: upload your material to the Steam Workshop, players can search for it. Play live on-line using the built-in player finder. And so on. But none of those things is necessary. I can save an object or a full game as a file, give it to you, you put it in the right place, done. And so asynchronous games can work too: I send you my save file, you load it, take your turn and save the results, and pass it on to the next player. (Though you need to trust people not to peek at the decks.) It's much more flexible than I think it was intended to be.

So as a result I've built various prototype games within the system to be shared privately with playtest groups, as well as various public implementations of published games. (There are some questions of legality, particularly when original artwork is used, but nobody seems to care except for Steve Jackson Games who come down very hard on illicit implementations of *Munchkin*.) It's a great prototyping system because it's very quick to change something and rebuild it into a playable game.



Unreleased implementation of Riftforce

One can even do some programming; Lua is available to tie to objects and actions on those objects. It's fiddly and poorly-documented, and the debug cycle is more tedious than I might like, but that's definitely the thing I plan to do more of next time I get back to using it. (Especially since I now actually know a bit of how to write the language.)

We Also Heard From

Comments on OdaM number 4

CTD: Quicksand was definitely one of those things that, during my youth, it was implied that everyone would encounter quite often. Also for some reason Martin Bormann, who was the favourite returning Nazi of popular fiction for many years even after his body was verified in 1973 (presumably on the basis of his having been relatively young compared with the other senior figures).

I'd argue that (TT)RPGs can be more or less sandboxy; often there is some kind of overarching narrative, a goal to work towards, even if not everything that happens need serve that goal. (I've also played with a very *dirigiste* GM who essentially wanted to write his own fantasy novel, but either didn't realise it or didn't have the skills to do it himself.) The classic game of my youth tended to be "we keep going down dungeons and fighting tougher and tougher monsters, until the GM gets bored or goes to university" and I do prefer, if not formal

end points, at least good break points, with the PCs relatively happy and no immediately impending threat.

As I see *Hanabi* the "real game" is working out the unspoken language with your fellow players, and once you've done that you can't really play it with those people any more as it becomes too easy. But maybe that's just me.

Matt Elliott: the only *Exit* game I've played is [The Abandoned Cabin](https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/203420/exit-the-game-the-abandoned-cabin) (https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/203420/exit-the-game-the-abandoned-cabin) from 2016, which I believe was one of their first tranche (certainly before they started making it deliberately difficult to play without destroying the pieces). A local friend who does rather more game trading than I do has got very good at keeping them pristine, as the things come in, get played, and go out again. At the time it would have cost £13 new, and while people like to talk about the price of board games versus films or other entertainment, that was not particularly competitive since I got through it in under an hour.

As far as I remember I put one puzzle on the scanner and then "cut it up" electronically. But I got more intellectual stimulation out of working out how to do that than from the actual puzzles, which were also entirely non-thematic: oh look, here's another random locked item and an abstract puzzle to give you a three-digit code.

I think the city-builder I've enjoyed most is [Between Two Cities](https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/168435/between-two-cities) (https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/168435/between-two-cities), but that has the virtue of being competitive—and in a way I'm surprised not to have seen done elsewhere (all right, *Between Two Castles of Mad King Ludwig*) in that each play field is shared between two players, and at the end you score the lower of the two to which you've contributed—something that many "multiplayer solo" games could copy. But you have managed to touch on another bugbear of

mine, which is vague rules about permitted table talk, usually along the lines of “you can hint at what cards you have but you can’t be specific”. For [Shamans](https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/313262/shamans) (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/313262/shamans>) I was glad to find (on BGG) that someone had pinned down the designer and got them to give a specific set of allowable statement templates.

I was going to argue for the tin-suitability of [Tinderblox](https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/295192/tinderblox) (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/295192/tinderblox>), but on balance I suspect a reasonably tough box would be just as good. Certainly it’s been known to pop open and dribble components into the depths of my game crates.

I was looking down BGG’s “video game theme” listings to see if I’d even played any video game conversions, but the first one I came across was [Project L](https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/260180/project-l) (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/260180/project-l>) which I think everyone I know would call a themeless abstract even if some of the pieces resemble *Tetris* blocks. Hey ho. Oh, apparently [Plague Inc.](https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/195162/plague-inc-the-board-game) (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/195162/plague-inc-the-board-game>) was a video game adaptation? Fair enough, I quite enjoyed my one play of that.

Marcus Boyce: I feel faintly embarrassed now, I’ve gone proposing a colour representation system and did not in fact check beforehand with any member of the intended audience. Sorry!

I do see reliance on colour vision as philosophically linked to putting buxom babes all over a game’s publicity material. Both cases seem to require a mental state, conscious or otherwise, that while not everyone will enjoy the game as presented, “normal people” will, and that’s all that matters. I suspect that video games tackling this earlier than board games may be an artefact of video games having become Big Business sooner...

(This has affected me personally: I don’t now design board game pieces for 3d printing that are distinguished only by colour. Sometimes that’s quite hard. But quite apart from anything else I’m not under financial pressure to get a thing made available Right Now, I’m just a hobbyist, and I enjoy the challenge.)

An example of a game that has been improved in reprinting: *Splendor*. Each colour was already associated with a particular gem graphic, so all that was needed was to put those graphics on the cards next to the numbers of that colour. Done! (And if it had been done originally, it might have taken five minutes more in layout and no extra cost after that. It was already going to be a full-colour card or tile, now it’s the same thing with a slightly different image.)

The chance that the board game production company has also set up a colour calibrated display for proofing the rulebook seems... well, rather less than a certainty.

Joshua Bowden: Over the years I have got better at working out how a game will work for me, based only on reviews or publicity. But I also try really hard to play a game before I buy it, at least a few turns at a convention stand, and nothing is really a substitute for that.

And I think there are some games that rely on enthusiastic participation to work. *Once Upon a Time* may well be one of them. *Arkham Horror* (second edition) is another: at least as far as I’m concerned, you *could* play it purely mechanically, but that would be very dull indeed. The fun for me comes from the incidental role-playing, “Begorrah, Oi’m Michael McGlen, and anyone who calls me an et’nic stereotype will be after gettin’ shot.”

