

From dolls to drinking chocolate: three early advertising race games

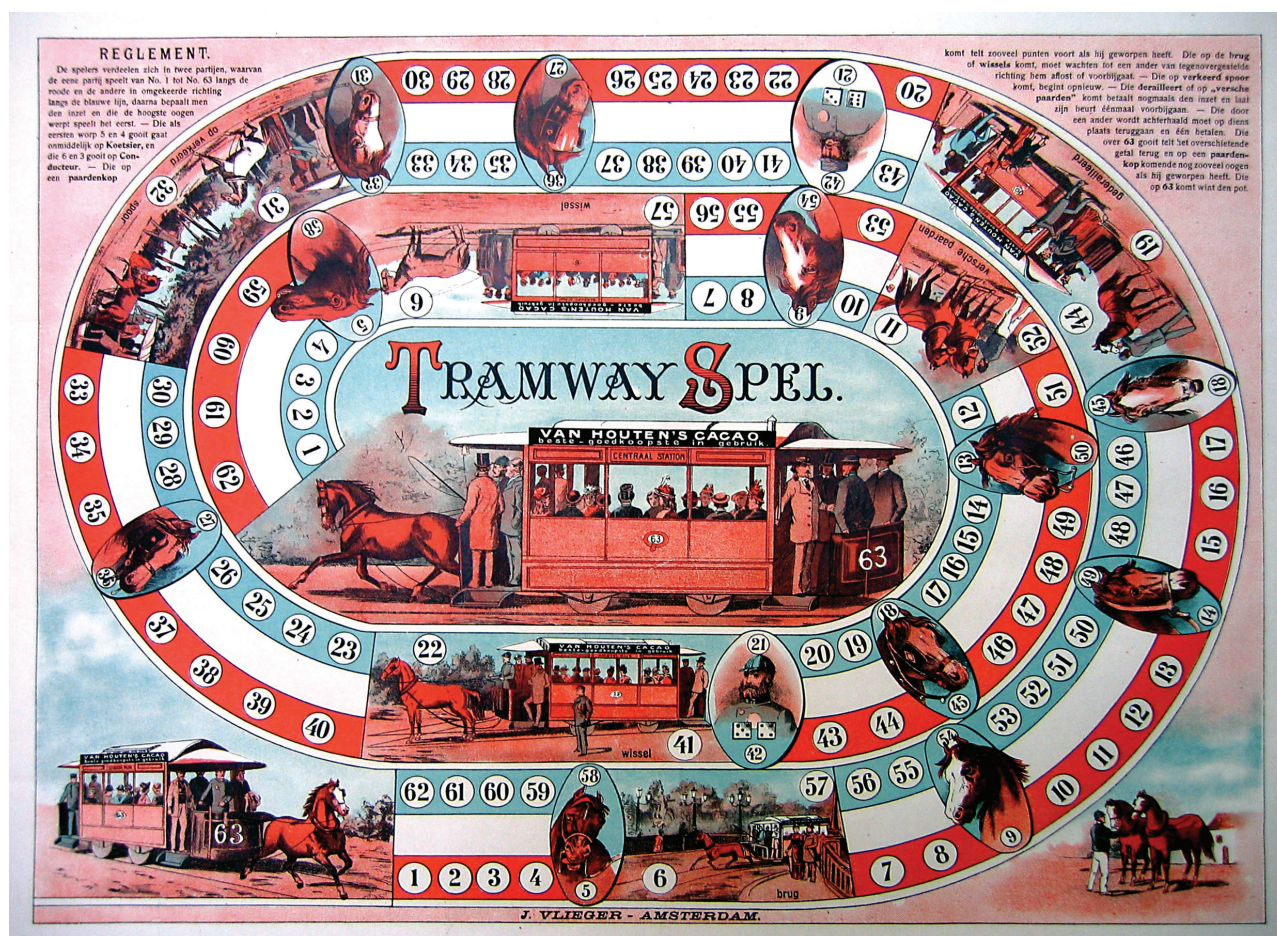
The printed board game is well suited to advertising, provided that the production process is capable of achieving bright, attractive colours and that it is cheap, so that the game can be offered free, or for a nominal price. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, the techniques of chromolithography had developed sufficiently for these provisos to be met, so that the 1880s saw the introduction in France, Italy and the Low Countries of games designed specifically to promote commercial products. The Game of Goose (*jeu de l'oie*) had a particularly significant influence on the design of these games.¹ This simple race game was well known and well trusted in the family environment through its association with educational games, and its protean structure was easily adaptable to product-specific variations that largely retained the excellent playing qualities of the original.² The present article looks at three early examples from continental Europe, of various degrees

of sophistication. All are closely derived from the Game of Goose – and all are connected with the promotion of Dutch brands of drinking chocolate, though upmarket French dolls have a place too!

The Tramway Spel

H.R. D'Allemagne notes the first occurrence of a French *Jeu du Tramway* at about 1855.³ Thereafter, several editions are found in France, Germany, Italy and the Low Countries: these continue into the twentieth century, with updating to electric propulsion instead of the original horses.

The edition of the Tramway Game shown in figure 1 was published by the Amsterdam firm of J. Vlieger in about 1885 for the Dutch firm of van Houten, manufacturers of drinking chocolate.⁴ Like all other editions, it is a two-track variant of the Game of Goose, played with the usual double dice. Here, the red track is followed



1. Tramway Game published by J. Vlieger of Amsterdam in about 1885 for the Dutch firm of van Houten, to advertise their drinking chocolate (author's collection).

anticlockwise towards the centre (as in normal *Goose*) while the blue track runs clockwise away from the centre. The favourable goose-type spaces, where the throw is doubled, are indicated by horses' heads, in two interwoven sequences. One sequence follows the traditional regular spacing by nines, on 9, 18, 27 etc, while the other sequence is somewhat irregular and differs slightly as between the two tracks. The **dice** spaces, which come into effect to prevent an immediate win on an initial throw of 6, 3 or 5, 4 are here represented by the **conducteur** (conductor) and **koetsier** (coachman) respectively. The traditional hazards of *Goose* have been adapted quite cleverly to the problems likely to occur on the tramway. Thus, whereas in traditional *Goose* the **death** space ('start again') is at 58, here the equivalent rule applies to the **verkeerd spoor** (wrong track) space at 32 red and 31 blue, which shows two trams meeting head on. The *Goose* **prison** and **well** hazards have their counterparts in the **brug** (bridge) and **wissel** (crossing) spaces, the rule 'wait until released by another' being given added piquancy by requiring that the release must be made by a player from the team of the opposite colour, who then has to wait in turn. This waiting for the oncoming tram at a single-track bridge or a crossing point must have been all too familiar in real life. Finally, the delays of the *Goose* **inn** and **labyrinth** spaces have their counterparts in the **derailleert** (derailed) and the **versche paarden** (fresh horses) – pay the initial stake again and miss one turn. With these ingenious substitutions, the Tramway game is both realistic and playable and indeed must have been popular, judging by the number of new editions over the years.

The only way in which the *Vlieger* game distinguishes itself from other, non-promotional, editions is that the tramcar bears an advertising slogan (above the normal direction indicator): *Van Houten's Cacao – beste goedkoopste in gebruik* (Van Houten's drinking chocolate – best and cheapest in use). This, then, is an example of the simplest way of adapting a game for advertising purposes: add a distinctive slogan but leave the game unaltered.

The target of this advertising was probably the family, rather than children specifically. A contemporary *Nieuw Vermakelijk Gansenspel* (New entertaining Game of the Goose) also published by J. Vlieger shows in its central oval the game being played by a family, the mother (presumably) assisting the youngest child, with the grandmother and three other children. By the late nineteenth century, the Game of *Goose* had shed its association with gambling but not until the early twentieth century was it recognised as a game specifically for children.

Le Jeu du Cacao de Van Houten

In 1889, the firm of van Houten brought out the game shown in figure 2, again based on the traditional Game of *Goose*; a version in French was also produced.⁵ Like its original, it was a simple 63-space race game played with two dice, in which the favourable spaces on numbers 5, 14, 23 ... and 9. 18. 27... denoted by a goose in the original game were instead denoted by characteristic images of the van Houten Cacao tin. As a further promotional device, the ordinary spaces (those without special playing significance) spelled out the same advertising slogan as in the Tramway game, while in the French version this became *Cacao Van Houten meilleur que tous les chocolates* (Van Houten Cacao – better than all other drinking chocolate). The game thus became an effective way of advertising, associating the product with the favourable spaces, but leaving the structure of the traditional *Goose* game unchanged. The promotional message was reinforced by customising the traditional hazard spaces: the **bridge** at space 6 was that of Weesp, the site of the van Houten factory to the present day, and views of the town 'before and after van Houten' were shown in the lower corners of the sheet; the **inn** at 19 became a cafe; the **well** at 31 became one of van Houten's advertising trams; the **prison** at 52 was specified as 'for counterfeiters'; while the **death** space at 58 showed a coffee pot, where you must begin the game again 'for your recklessness' in choosing this competing beverage!

The van Houten Company is today a major international brand, now selling its wares on the internet. It was founded by Coenraad Johannes van Houten (1801–87) who invented the process of treatment of cocoa mass with alkaline salts to remove the bitter taste and improve the solubility in water. The name of the Company will also be familiar to collectors of British advertising ephemera from the wide variety of promotional material, including frequent advertisements in the *Illustrated London News*, *The Sphere*, and other journals, as exemplified in figure 3. Those advertisements were designed for a sophisticated adult audience (including men, drinking chocolate not being regarded as a beverage mainly for women and children as it is today).

(Le) Grand Jeu du Bébé Jumeau

The third game considered here also dates from 1889 but is altogether more complex than the van Houten examples [fig. 5]. It is associated with the Paris *Exposition Universelle Française* held from 6 May to 31 October 1889, of which the most striking feature was the newly-built Eiffel Tower. The unicursal track of 63

Reglement.

Men bepaalt vooraf den prijs voor den inzet en die de hoogste oogen werpt speelt het eerst.

Die bij den eersten worp 6 en 3 werpt gaat tot de **Kisten met Cacao** op No. 26, die 5 en 4 werpt gaat eveneens tot de **Kisten met Cacao** maar op No. 53.

Die op een **Busje Cacao** komt, moet nog eens zooveel voorttellen als hij gewonnen heeft.

Die op de **Brug te Weesp** op No. 6 komt, moet 1 betalen, die echter dubbel betaalt gaat voort tot No. 12.

Die op No. 19 in het **Volks-Proeflokaal** komt, moet 2 betalen en dan zijne beurt eens voorbij laten gaan.

VAN HOUTEN'S CACAO SPEL

Die in de **Tram** op No. 31 komt, moet 3 betalen en wachten tot hij door een ander verlost wordt.

Die in het **Doolhof** op No. 42 komt, moet 1 betalen en teruggaan op No. 39.

Die in de **Gevangenis voor Na-makers** op No. 52 komt, moet 2 betalen en wachten tot hij door een ander verlost wordt.

Die op de **Koffiekan** (vergf) op No. 58 komt, moet als straf voor zijn roekeloosheid, 1 betalen en weder van No. 1 af beginnen.

Die door een ander wordt achterhaald moet in diens plaats teruggaan en 1 betalen.

Die over No. 63 werpt telt het overgeschoten getal terug en moet dan, op een **Busje Cacao** komende, nog zooveel terugtellen als hij gewonnen heeft.

Die op No. 63 komt, heeft het spel en den pot gewonnen en begint in het volgende spel het eerst.



Weesp 1889 DOOR Van Houten.

(GEDEPONEERD)

Weesp 1828 VOOR Van Houten.

Amand Lith. Amsterd.

2. Another van Houten game, dating from 1889, in which the favourable spaces show the firm's characteristic cocoa tins (Number 7749, Atlas van Stolk, Rotterdam).



3. A van Houten advertisement from the *Illustrated London News*, 19 November 1904. The slogan 'best and goes farthest' is the English version of that used in the company's promotional games in Holland.

spaces is set out on a large image of the Tower, starting at first gallery level and proceeding in a complex way up to the winning space at the top. The game sheet also shows the main buildings of the exhibition (compare the photograph from a balloon shown in figure 4). The exhibition took place at a time of strong pro-American feeling in Paris, as indicated by the two flags at the top of the sheet. This explains why the New York Statue of Liberty appears in the background: its interior framework was also engineered by Eiffel; and a bronze replica of the statue was installed in Paris on 4 July 1889 near the Grenelle Bridge on the Île des Cygnes.

The game sheet, lithographed in colour by the Amsterdam and Paris firm of Amand, is of large format (654 × 442 mm) and bears the statement in French: 'We hope that you will put this game onto cardboard and that you will keep it as a souvenir of the *grande Exposition Universelle Française*.' The sheet also gives details of the firm of Jumeau, manufacturers of up-market dolls:

The large and beautiful factory at Montreuil, where the Jumeau Dolls come from, was small at first but had to keep pace with the upward movement of *Bébé Jumeau* in the industry. It has grown from year to year ... and now covers 6000 square metres and employs 1000 staff.



4. Photograph, taken from a balloon, of the 1889 *Exposition*, showing the newly-built Eiffel Tower and the exhibition complex.

GRAND JEU DU BÉBÉ JUMENTAU

1889

1889

DÉDIÉ AUX JEUNES

FRANÇAISES

ASCENSION DE

LA TOUR EIFFEL

RÈGLE

DU JEU

Visiter à l'exposition
notre superbe Vitrine renfermant

(Classe 40, Jouets)
plus de 100 bébés différents.

Le nombre des Joueurs n'est pas limité.
On fixe par le sort le tour de chacun.
On joue avec deux dés et on se place au moyen d'une marque sur le numéro indiqué par les points réunis des deux dés; on continue à jouer tour à tour en avançant sa marque d'autant de numéros que de points amenés. (On ne s'arrête pas sur les BÉBÉS JUMENTAU battant crânement du tambour.)

Quand le nombre amené conduit sur un BÉBÉ JUMENTAU, on va d'autant plus loin (et cela jusqu'à ce que l'on ne rencontre plus de BÉBÉ JUMENTAU).

LE PREMIER ARRIVÉ AU N° 63 GAGNE LA PARTIE

Si, étant placé près du N° 63 on amène un nombre supérieur à celui voulu pour y arriver, on retourne en arrière du surplus.

Quand du 1^{er} coup de dés on amène neuf par 3 et 6, on se place au N° 20 (où se trouve BÉBÉ JUMENTAU donnant la main à la jeune Américaine); si c'est par 4 et 5, on va au N° 53 (Union Française-Américaine); car les BÉBÉS JUMENTAU étant disposés par multiples de 9; en redoublant successivement on arriverait du coup au 63 (où est le Bébé Jumentau muni du drapeau français et triomphant de ses rivaux) et on gagnerait la partie. — Qui du premier coup amène 6 (où il y a le BÉBÉ ALLEMAND sur un pont); paiera 1 et se placera au N° 12, ou ce même Bébé tombé à l'eau se défigure.

Qui ira au N° 19 où est la fabrique des BÉBÉS JUMENTAU, paiera 2 et y demeurera jusqu'à ce que ses partenaires aient joué chacun 2 fois.

Qui tombera dans le puits au N° 31 où est le BÉBÉ ALLEMAND, paiera 3 et attendra qu'un autre l'en vienne tirer pour aller prendre la place que celui-ci occupait. — Celui que le hasard conduira au N° 42 (où le BÉBÉ JUMENTAU a perdu sa route), paiera 2 et reculera au N° 30 (où le BÉBÉ JUMENTAU retrouve le chemin de France. — Celui que le sort conduira au N° 52 (où le BÉBÉ ALLEMAND est en prison), paiera 3 et y restera jusqu'à ce que la mauvaise chance y amène un autre; il en sortira alors pour prendre la place de ce dernier. — Qui tombera au N° 58 (où le BÉBÉ ALLEMAND se trouve brisé), paiera 3 et retournera au N° 1. Enfin, celui qui sera rencontré par un autre joueur, paiera 1 et retournera au numéro qu'occupait celui qui l'aura déplacé.

La belle et grande fabrique de Montreuil d'où sortent les BÉBÉS JUMENTAU fut petite au début, mais elle dut suivre le mouvement ascensionnel du BÉBÉ JUMENTAU dans l'industrie. Elle s'agrandit d'année en année, couvrant toujours de plus en plus de terrain. Aujourd'hui, elle en occupe 6000 mètres et son personnel est de 1000 personnes. Tous les BÉBÉS JUMENTAU sont marqués du nom de son fabricant et se distinguent surtout par ce cachet inimitable de grâce et de goût,apanage de la production française.

LITH. AMAND. AMSTERDAM & PARIS. 27 RUE QUÉNÉDUPÉ

MODÈLE DÉPOSÉ

La règle de ce jeu est exactement celle connue sous la dénomination de règle du jeu de l'oie il n'y a que les physionomies qui changent.

Nous espérons que vous ferez cartonner ce jeu et que vous le garderez en souvenir de la grande Exposition Universelle Française de 1889.

5. Le Grand Jeu du Bébé Jumeau, promoting Jumeau's dolls at the Paris Exposition Universelle Française of 1889. A broken German doll occupies the 'death' space, number 58, while another languishes

weeping in the 'prison' space 52; elsewhere, the French Jumeau dolls are in excellent spirits and beautifully dressed (author's collection).

The Jumeau dolls were of bisque, wonderfully dressed in the elaborate fashions of the period but were very expensive and sales of them were suffering in competition with cheap imported German dolls [fig. 6]. Of the history of Jumeau, Denise van Patten writes:

The dolls that put French doll making on the map were the French Fashion dolls, which were the most popular type of doll manufactured from the late 1850s through the 1870s. These dolls, also known as *poupées*, were lady dolls with womanly bodies and realistic clothing, shoes, hats and accessories that reflected the fashion of their time. Jumeau was one of the best-known makers of these dolls, which were usurped in the late 1870s by the *bébé* (child) dolls. Although the French Fashion dolls made by Jumeau are beautiful, it is the *bébés* by this firm that are more widely known. Made from the late 1870s, when *bébé* dolls became the preferred doll of children everywhere, the dolls were made by Jumeau until they became part of SFBJ [Société Française de Fabrication de Bébé & Jouets] in 1899. The *bébé* dolls have bisque heads, paperweight glass eyes, exaggerated eyebrows and beautiful bisque ... The French *bébé*, and Jumeau, met their demise due to cheaper German production.⁶

This struggle against German competition is reflected quite unashamedly in the game: the favourable spaces, on the traditional *Goose* numbers, are denoted by images of the Jumeau dolls. Furthermore, the favourable **dice** spaces at 26 and 53, which are reached on throwing 9 initially, both represent Franco-American unity. The unfavourable (*hazard*) spaces are also treated thematically. Most dramatic of these is the **death** space, on 58, where there is a broken German doll; the **prison** space, at 52, incarcerates another one, weeping piteously; and it is again a German doll who finds herself in the **well**, at 31, waiting to be rescued, while yet another is found on the **bridge** space at number 6, where she must pay for passage. However, at the **labyrinth**, space 42, it is a Jumeau doll who loses her path and must return to space 30, where she rejoins the 'French way'. Curiously, given the negative imagery of the other hazard spaces, the space at 19 (normally the **inn**) is represented by the Jumeau factory. Overall, though, this game is conspicuous for its unconcealed attempt to influence the player towards the French product, while damning the German rival with 'knocking copy'.

It is difficult to say to what extent the advertising in this game was targeted at children: the choice of the *Bébé* variety rather than the Fashion dolls suggests that children were the ultimate destination for the product.

However, the high price of the dolls meant that they were not pocket-money purchases, so targeting the family (in a game-playing context) may well have been deliberate policy. Though the firm is no more, the Jumeau dolls are much prized today by collectors and prices in five figures of US dollars are realised for the rarer kinds.

A variant of the Jumeau game was issued by the Amsterdam firm of J. Vlieger in the same year, to promote Blooker's Cacao. The only changes to the graphics are that a French flag flying from the Tower itself bears an inscription extolling Blooker's Cacao [fig. 7], as does the flag on the left. However, the Dutch instructions are innocent of all reference to the Jumeau firm. Instead of the description of the Jumeau factory, there are details of the Eiffel Tower, including the information that the game board reproduces the Tower at 1/536 scale. Perhaps this version of the game is unique in the field of promotional advertising in having images of an advertised product totally different from that being promoted! The firm of Blooker was the oldest Dutch manufacturer of cacao, founded in 1814. Like van Houten, it still exists today and has a web site giving details of its history. Collectors should note that this version of the game was reissued in facsimile by Vlieger in 1974. Mention may also be made of another (non-advertising) Eiffel Tower game, also dated to 1889, that is not evidently based on the *Game of Goose*, except in its having a unicursal track; there must have been a rule sheet with special instructions.



6. Advertisement for Jumeau dolls, appearing on the final page of the cover of a catalogue for the Galerie de Chartres.

Discussion

The games discussed come from the earliest period of the use of spiral race games in advertising. It would be a bold claim to say that any of them in fact represent the first such use. Most board games are not dated and, advertising games being particularly ephemeral productions, many examples have no doubt been lost. There are indeed earlier examples of games being offered free by the proprietors of journals and newspapers, but they do not represent the usual class of advertisements, paid for by the vendor of a product. These examples include a number of variant goose-based games published in connection with the Paris *Exposition* of 1867, which were distributed with *Paris-Magazine*, *Le Figaro*, and *La Vie Parisienne*, so that the principle of associating the big exhibitions with promotional games was well established by the time the Eiffel Tower games were produced.⁷ Indeed, the earlier Great Exhibition in London had itself given rise to a number of spiral race games, including John Betts's *The Royal Game of the Gathering of Nations* and William Spooner's *Illustrative Game of the Great Exhibition*, both published in London in 1851. There are also many earlier examples of such games being adapted to topical events and occasions.

Bruce Whitehill dates the emergence of American advertising games as from the 1890s.⁸ British advertising games are well known from the early twentieth century, though there may well be earlier examples.

Not all advertising race games used the Game of Goose and its 63-space numerology as faithfully as the specimens discussed here. A contrary example may be found even within the narrow field of games of the period advertising Dutch drinking chocolate: the de Jong's *Cacaospel* is a spiral race game of only 47 spaces, with no obvious resonances to the traditional layout. However, looking ahead, the Game of Goose was to spawn innumerable advertising variants in many countries of Europe, especially in the Low Countries and France, though not (so far as is known) in Britain. These games have been comparatively little studied. The present author has suggested an approach to a taxonomy based on classification through the elements of board game design.⁹ He would be interested to have details and (preferably) digital images of early (pre-1900) advertising race games, from whatever country, including Britain, America and Canada in particular.



7. With the addition of a slogan, and deletion of reference to Jumeau, the Eiffel Tower game was also used to promote Blooker's drinking chocolate (Number 7748, Atlas van Stolk, Rotterdam – detail).

1. See Adrian Seville and John Spear: 'The Game of Goose in England – a tradition lost', *The Ephemerist* 151 (Winter 2010) pp. 8–14.
2. Alain R. Girard and Claude Quétel: *Le Histoire de France racontée par le Jeu de l'Oie* (Paris: Balland Massin, 1982,) p. 154 et seq.
3. H.R. D'Allemagne, *Le Noble Jeu de l'Oie* (Paris: Librairie Gründ, 1950) p. 226.
4. P.J. Buijnsters and Leontine Buijnsters-Smets, *Papertoys*, (Waanders: Zwolle, 2005) p. 266 (in Dutch).
5. Buijnsters *op. cit.* p. 252.
6. collectdolls.about.com/od/dollprofiles/p/jumeaudolls.htm
7. D'Allemagne, *Le Noble Jeu de l'Oie*, p. 225.
8. Bruce Whitehill, *American boxed games and their makers 1822–1992* (Radnor, Pennsylvania: Wallace-Homestead, 1992).
9. Available on the giochidelloca website at http://www.giochidelloca.it/dettaglio_storia.php?id=34. This research formed the basis of a presentation to the Convention of the American Games and Puzzles Collectors in London in 2005. The archive of games at <http://www.giochidelloca.it/ricerca> includes numerous advertising games, under the Pubblicità category. ■