

# The Queen's Lane Advertiser

(Incorporating Convention News)

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Issue Number 16

Printed in DERBY

May 2006

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Edited by Jeremy Tullett



A magazine containing news about various games conventions taking place in the UK.

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## **MidCon 2006: (Jeremy Tullett): 10th – 12th November 2006, Thistle Birmingham City Hotel**

**MidCon** takes place in a comfortable hotel in the centre of Birmingham from Friday afternoon (4pm) to Sunday evening (6pm). It features:

- the opportunity to play boardgames with like-minded adults, including a Diplomacy tournament
- the **MidCon** music quiz on Friday evening
- the **MidCon** quiz for teams of 4 on Saturday evening
- the chance to buy even more board games

**MidCon** is primarily about playing games and meeting people. You can play any of the number of games people have brought along with them, which may include spending the weekend playing 18xx or Diplomacy. People have even been known to stay up late, drink too much and lose the shirt off their backs– but we don't recommend it.

Attendance at **MidCon** costs £15-£18 for the whole weekend (day rates of £8/£10/£8 for Friday, Saturday and Sunday) and accommodation is available in the Thistle Hotel at reasonable rates. The hotel is reachable by public transport and there's an adjacent car park.

The booking form for **MidCon** 2006 is not quite ready yet, If you would like to join us at **MidCon**, you may send a cheque for the convention fee of £15 a head (goes up to £18 on 1<sup>st</sup> November) to: Jeremy Tullett, **MidCon**, 7 Midland Place, Derby, DE1 2RR, or electronically at [www.MidCon.org](http://www.MidCon.org)

We will collect your room deposit from you later, when we have arrangements for credit card payments completed.

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## **Frome GamesCon 2006 (NOT)**

Wassail Games sadly announce that the Frome GamesCon will not be happening in July 2006. Wassail Games are moving to bigger and better premises around this time and will be totally tied up with the move. We thank everyone that has made the journey to Frome in the past and all those of you who have made the Frome GamesCon such a success over the last couple of years..... but wait! This is not the end of the story!! Wassail Games will be starting a new GamesCon when the dust has settled on the new move and we hope to be back in business with a GamesCon in 2008 or even 2007 if we throw a six! Watch this space for further details in the future. In the meantime you will be able to follow our progress on the web site which is [www.wassailgames.com](http://www.wassailgames.com) See you all soon and have a happy gaming year!!

Wassail Games

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## **OxCon 2006 Convention Report (James Rogers)**

As usual OxCon this year was very successful. Although the Diplomacy tournament seems to be waning in popularity we had plenty of people playing casual games across the weekend and the Settlers tournament was as well attended as ever. Once again the Mitre public house in central Oxford provided us with an excellent venue for the weekend's gaming and most of the peripheral events also went smoothly.

The convention kicked off in the traditional manner with a visit to Laserquest on Friday evening, followed by a visit to Bagichas, one of Oxford's many fine curry houses. As usual Phil Hannay slaughtered everyone in the Laserquest game, recording the highest score of the day in the process. Despite Bagichas being located suspiciously close to Richard Huzzey's home in North Oxford, his protestations of innocence when harangued concerning its distance from Laserquest were completely justified - the decision to go there was entirely mine. After the curry, which was enjoyed by all, several people retired to Richard's house for a gaming session so in the end the location wasn't so bad.

Saturday is Diplomacy day as far as OxCon is concerned. However, as far as our attendees were concerned, Saturday seemed to be casual gaming day. From having had four tables worth of competitors in the Dip tournament only a couple of years ago, this year we were down to a disappointing two. This has prompted us to review the inclusion of a Diplomacy tournament in the convention, particularly since our current TD, Phil Gardner, who has done an excellent job for the last few years, is unable to take charge next year. Nevertheless, the tournament went ahead, with Declan Waters emerging victorious once the dust had settled. Saturday also saw the return of Dave Percik's very popular 15 to 1 style quiz tournament, which was great fun as usual. After the quiz a large group of us headed down to the Kashmir Halal Tandoori, another of Oxford's curry houses, which is located on Cowley Road. Unfortunately the group was somewhat larger than we had anticipated which meant that the Kashmir were unable to accommodate the whole party, meaning that approximately half of us were forced to find an alternative source for our evening's curry. Those of us who stayed at the Kashmir were also a little unimpressed with the speed of service and the general ambiance was not helped by the fact that the rest of the restaurant was occupied by an extremely rowdy group of rowers. In the end, though, the food was good, so the evening wasn't a complete disaster.

The Settlers tournament on Sunday, in contrast to the Diplomacy, was hugely popular - so popular in fact that we were left in the embarrassing position of not having enough Settlers of Catan sets to accommodate everyone who wished to play! Fortunately the overspill was slight and was resolved by a couple of people who were willing to drop out and play casual games instead. Next year we will be buying one or two more copies of the game to ensure that this unfortunate situation is not repeated. Once this problem had been sorted out the rest of the tournament passed with out a hitch, run expertly as usual by James Pinnion. The top three places were occupied by Markus Welbourne, David van Cauter and Douglas Massie respectively - congratulations to Markus on a successful defence of the title he gained last year. Also on Sunday the Lost Cities tournament took place and our congratulations go to David Buckley for finishing first. Full results from this year's convention, along with information about past OxCons and the OU Diplomacy Society, can be found on our website <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~diplo/>.

Looking forward to next year's event the fate of the Diplomacy tournament will be decided in the very near future and if it is decided not to hold it next year we will be discussing what, if anything, should replace it. It has also been suggested in some quarters that we should consider an alternative venue and we will be looking into this. Nevertheless, we are confident that OxCon 2007 will be as successful as ever and we are very much looking forward to it. We will also be posting information about it on our website (see above) as it is finalised.

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# MasterCon XIII / EuroDipCon XIV Cheshunt, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2006 (Toby Harris)

## The Venue

The surroundings were unusual but comfortable for most; some players were not overly happy with the low tables around the edge of the room, but these were designed so that the likes of Ronald Lokers wouldn't bump his head on the lower part of the ceiling. Needless to say, Vic & Demis had no such misfortune. In general, the dorms and playing area were described as comfortable and the refreshments reasonably priced.

## Our Sponsors

Mindscape / Paradox very kindly paid the balance on the room hire and donated three Diplomacy games for the winners, which was very much appreciated. I hope that the material around the room (place cards and posters) were noted and that some or all of you will now go and buy the game and tell your friends what you think of it. It does play well in so much that you can diplomate with your neighbours etc (this hasn't been achieved before in a computer game) and if you play it for this reason you'll enjoy it. The AI is not as strong as an experienced player (I think this is a tough nut to crack) but I have certainly enjoyed playing a few rounds and would say it's worth trying out.

## Next Year's EDC

The bid for EDC 2007 in Marseilles (hosted by Gwen Maggi & Cyrille Sevin) beat off all rivals and so we'll be playing on the beach, surrounded by bronzed Mediterranean sunbathers. It almost makes missing the final round sound like a good idea. Hopefully Gwen will lead the way and we'll all jump into the sea for a little splash.

WDC 2006 will be in Berlin during the first weekend of August, and this is a real must for all Diplomacy players with a lust for increasing their silverware collection.

## The "Team" Round

The whole purpose of what we did this year was to make 100% certain that three of the awards went home to three different countries, and so we had a nationality tournament with all players secretly representing their home country. Needless to say the last thing I wanted was a repeat of WDC 2004 so the event was announced after it had taken place, with all players scores summed (and divided by "n+1") for the country they represented. This gave us three 'National Heroes' for the players representing the top three countries ...

For Germany we have Bogislaw "Joe 90" Schoenf. For France Guillaume Marliot, and for the UK Simon Bouton.

Needless to say, our Scottish visitor John Jamieson was a most welcome addition to the Dutch team ;-)

## The Scoring System

Ah yes, that element of a DipCon which always gets moaned about! I wanted a system which did two things:

1. Simple to add up
2. A system which HURTS players who come second

So how do we achieve this?

- a. Use simple numbers (1's and 10's)
- b. REWARD players for EVERYTHING (survival, topping the board etc) EXCEPT those who come second!

Subtle, huh? Indeed, players could see the value of survival; as TD I kept a few players in the game in my first round – so please don't think that a 13-centre Turkey is where it would have ended had I played “normally” ;-). The real irony of all this is that it took a while for the penny to drop ... elimination in 1908 wasn't worth so much less than a one-centre survival! And of course the table-toppers get a bonus. Not a “silly” bonus – it's crazy to lose 24 C-Diplo points just because of a final turn disorder or unpleasant “gift” to another player. But hey, every system is different and this one was designed to give a little something for every style of play ... except perhaps my own style of preferring a “centres squared” system which rewards the players who really push for the 18 every time they play. Whatever – the tournament was not let down by the scoring system and most who commented on it liked its raw subtleties.

### **The Top Table**

This was an interesting one, generating lots of feedback and comments, so I'd like to set the record straight on a few things. The first point of note is that there were four French and three English players, and the alliances did tend towards “French vs. English”. However this is little more than coincidence because the alliances tended to swing according to personal opportunity and individual desire to do well in the game, rather than any international conflict. And that's how it should be. I watched the game unfold and adjudicated every turn – and all seven players did their best to win. All in all I'd say it was a good and fair top table with the best guy on the day winning. Well done Benjamin – a very worthy winner.

### **The Results**

Ironic that when unpacking the little 7th place trophy I thought of Demis. He missed out on the top table by one point thanks to a centre he felt he didn't need in the third round – serves you right Demis; I hope you'll never do this again! But a Best Country glass plaque and a ‘trophette’ for 7th will have sugared the pill.

Robin Walters just missed out on the top board too, but a solid fourth round result won him a couple of prizes to take home. Great stuff.

The top five slots went to players on the final table, supporting the new scoring system further in that top-table players shouldn't necessarily sacrifice their chance of a trophy by playing on the tougher, final board. Similarly, virtually every player in the top half of the scoreboard entering the final round would have made the top three with an outright win in the final round.

As for my not playing in the final round, my role was to GM the final. But, for the record, had I played and been eliminated in 1907 ... that makes a total of 94. He he, just how ‘worthy’ can you get ;-)

But this aside, when you play Diplomacy with the opening line “don't worry about me – my scores won't count” it did lead to an unfair advantage – so the exclusion of my scores was the right thing to do. What perhaps wasn't right were those lovely allies who believed it, and won't ally with me again at WDC!!! Bah, what a wasted opportunity – maybe I should have sought council from Xavier on what to do as TD :-

Ok, official results from Dave follow and final thanks to both Dave and Shaun in making all this happen.

## Overall Results

	Name		1 <sup>st</sup> Round	2 <sup>nd</sup> Round	3 <sup>rd</sup> Round	4 <sup>th</sup> Round	Total
1	Benjamin	Pouilles	30	14	19	30	93
2	Guillaume	Marliot	27	30	18	15	90
3	Vick	Hall	30	30	17	12	89
T D	Toby	Harris	33	18	36		87
4	Cyrille	Sevin	15	19	27	19	80
5	Chetan	Radia	32	17	14	16	79
6	Robin	Walters	15	17	23	23	78
7	Demis	Hassabis	17	11	32	18	78
8	Gwen	Maggi	15	20	31	12	78
9	Andre	Ilievics	24	12	12	23	71
10	Druk	Dzongkha	20	14	23	14	71
11	Simon	Bouton	16	31	16	8	71
12	Frank	Oschmiansky	19	13	6	30	68
13	Yann	Clouet	17	15	15	21	68
14	Simen	Fure Jorgensen	17	18	16	17	68
15	Bogislav	Von Schoenf	7	30	14	15	66
16	Julian	Ziesing	14	20	16	15	65
17	Luca	Pazzaglia	13	20	11	19	63
18	James	Arney	24	8	14	17	63
19	Frederic	Coste	17	14	8	21	60
20	Simon	Magnusson	18	14	13	14	59
21	Leonardo	Quirini	11	13	17	16	57
22	Niclas	Perez	8	7	13	28	56
23	Rene	Van Rooijen	12	18	15	11	56
24	Emmanue l	Du Ponatvic	16	13	5	21	55
25	Dennis	Andersson	2	6	30	17	55
26	Doug	Massie	11	31	12		54
27	Tage	Bengtsson	12	14	12	15	53
28	Alexandre	Fondu	18	7	15	12	52
29	Mike	Ward	12	15	14	11	52
30	Ronald	Lokers	15	14	15	8	52
31	Millis	Miller	16	15	17		48
32	Gihan	Bandaranaike	15	19	14		48
33	Joao	Carvalho	11	19	11	5	46
34	Carlo	Selvetti	8	13	16	6	43
35	Arne	Senftleben	16	4	5	16	41
36	John	Jamieson	5	12	12	8	37
37	Dan	Lester	11	6	20		37
38	Andrew	Greco	11	11	12		34
39	Timm	Urschinger		12	5	11	28
40	Rui	Rodrigues		12	12	3	27
41	Shaun	Derrick	4	15	7		26
42	David	Norman	14				14
43	Markus	Welbourne	4				4

## Best Country Results

	Name		Round	Board	Centres	Score
Austria	Doug	Massie	2	1	11	31
England	James	Arney	1	1	9	24
France	Demis	Hassabis	3	3	12	32
Germany	Guillaume	Marliot	2	6	10	30
Italy	Simon	Bouton	2	4	11	31
Russia	(Toby	Harris	3	1	16	36)
	Vick	Hall	1	2	10	30
Turkey	(Toby	Harris	1	3	13	33)
	Gwen	Maggi	3	6	11	31

## 18XX at MasterCon

There were nine games of 18xx played at Mastercon 2006 - ten if you include a game of 1861 [18RU] that finished too late to be included in the tournament. Ten players played in these games, which included 1824, 18US, 1850, 1826, 18EA, 1861, 18MEX and 18EU, The players were Peter Eldridge, Jeremy Vipperman, Mike Hutton, John Mitchell, John Draper, David Hecht, [resplendent in hat], Lyndon Gurr, Markus Welbourne, John Davidson and Danny Victor [T.O.], The winner was Peter Eldridge with a score of 4.88, followed by Lyndon Gurr with 4.0. John Draper finished 3rd with 3.89. For the record, if that game of 1861 had counted, John Draper would have won with a score of 4.98, and Peter Eldridge would have finished second with 4.93.

The scoring system was experimental and a bit weird! You basically got 1 point for finishing ahead of 1 more player than finished ahead of you,  $1 + [0.7 \times 1]$  for beating 2 more than beat you,  $1 + [0.7 \times 1] + [0.7 \times 0.7 \times 1]$  for beating 3 more than beat you, and so on and so forth. Only your best two results would count. Once an initial top 5 had been calculated using this method, you got a bonus of 0.3 for finishing ahead of the player in 5th in a game, 0.4 for beating the 4th, 0.5 for the 3rd and 0.6 for finishing ahead of either of the top two. Only your best three bonuses would count, and you could only get 1 bonus from any one game.

Finally, the tournament organiser was disqualified - you could still score bonuses off him, though!

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## Halesowen Boardgamers

### The Midlands largest weekly boardgame club

If you are local or just passing by, we welcome all visitors to drop in any Wednesday evening for three hours of friendly gaming.



[www.halesowenboardgamers.org.uk](http://www.halesowenboardgamers.org.uk)

## Forthcoming Conventions

MayCon Ramada Hotel, Heathrow. www.maycon.org 26-29 May 2006	DiceCon West, Quality Hotel, Glasgow, www.dicecon.com 4th June 2006	StabCon, Manchester, 30 June to 2 July
ManorCon XXIV Shackleton Hall, University of Birmingham. www.diplom.org/manorcon 21 - 24 July 2006	MidCon 2006 The Thistle Hotel, Birmingham. www.midcon.org.uk 10-12 November 2006	

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The Queen's Lane Advertiser (incorporating Convention News)

Editor : Jeremy Tullett  
Coordinator : David Norman  
Distribution: Nick Kinzett

Please contact the coordinator if:

- You run a convention and would like to be a part of the 'zine.
- You run a convention and would like to be included in the upcoming conventions list.
- You would like to offer to help out in some way.
- You are not on the mailing list for this 'zine, but would like to be.

The coordinator can be contacted at [david@ellought.demon.co.uk](mailto:david@ellought.demon.co.uk)

ISSUE 16 of The Queen's Lane Advertiser, brought to you by:

Jeremy Tullett,  
7 Midland Place,  
Derby  
DE1 2RR

Telephone: 0870 190 1977 (Office) 01332-385322 (Home)  
Email: [jeremy.d.tullett@btinternet.com](mailto:jeremy.d.tullett@btinternet.com)