

# The Queen's Lane Advertiser

(Incorporating Convention News)

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Edited by Jeremy Tullett

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

Inside this issue:

- ◆ Final details for ManorCon, including directions to the venue.
- ◆ More details for MidCon, including a change of opening time.
- ◆ A review of the UK Games Expo.

## Forthcoming Conventions

<b>ManorCon XXVI</b> Stamford Hall, University of Leicester 25-28 July 2008 <a href="http://www.manorcon.org.uk">www.manorcon.org.uk</a>	<b>MindSports Olympiad</b> Royal Horticultural Halls, 80 Vincent Square, Victoria, London SW1P 2PE 15-25 August 2008 <a href="http://www.msoworld.com">www.msoworld.com</a>	<b>PsychoCon</b> The Golden Lion Hotel Lower Briggate Leeds LS1 4AE 21-22 September 2008 <a href="http://www.psychocon.co.uk">www.psychocon.co.uk</a>
<b>TringCon XVII</b> Marsworth Village Hall Marsworth Nr. Tring Buckinghamshire 4 October 2008 <a href="http://www.fwtwr.com/tringcon">www.fwtwr.com/tringcon</a>	<b>MidCon XXX</b> Thistle Birmingham City Hotel 14-16 November 2008 <a href="http://www.midcon.org.uk">www.midcon.org.uk</a>	<b>Winter StabCon</b> Britannia Hotel, Stockport <a href="mailto:Bookings(at)stabcon.org.uk">Bookings(at)stabcon.org.uk</a> 2-4 January 2009
<b>SorCon</b> Ramada Hotel Colchester 27 Feb - 1 March 2009 <a href="http://www.sorcon.co.uk">www.sorcon.co.uk</a>	<b>TringCon XVIII</b> Marsworth Village Hall Marsworth Nr. Tring Buckinghamshire 4 April 2009 <a href="http://www.fwtwr.com/tringcon">www.fwtwr.com/tringcon</a>	<b>Beer and Pretzels</b> The Town Hall Burton upon Trent Staffordshire 16-17 May 2009 <a href="http://www.spiritgames.co.uk/bnp/details.php">www.spiritgames.co.uk/bnp details.php</a>
	<b>UK Games Expo</b> The Clarendon Suites 2 Stirling Road Edgbaston, Birmingham 6-7 June 2009. <a href="http://www.UKGamesExpo.co.uk">www.UKGamesExpo.co.uk</a>	

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## MidCon XXX (Jeremy Tullett)

**14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2008**  
**Thistle Birmingham City Hotel**

### About the Con

**MidCon XXX** 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 board games with like-minded people
- the **MidCon** music and general knowledge quiz on Saturday evening
- the chance to buy even more board games
- the chance to sell your surplus games on the Bring & Buy stall on the Saturday afternoon

**MidCon** is primarily about playing games and meeting people. You can play any of the number of games people bring along with them, including the hot new games from the Spiel games fair in Essen, which takes place just a few weeks before **MidCon**. Popular games include 18XX, Puerto Rico and Power Grid, but you are welcome to bring along your own favourite games – you will almost certainly find some people willing to play at least one of them.

### Costs

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 is an adjacent car park.

### Registration

If you would like to join us at **MidCon**, please complete the form on the back page of this magazine and return it with the convention fee of £15 (£18 after 1 November) a head to:

Jeremy Tullett, **MidCon**, 7 Midland Place, Derby, DE1 2RR,

or register electronically at [www.midcon.org.uk](http://www.midcon.org.uk)

### Changes from Previous Years

The hotel, we are told, is changing its name again, and may revert to being known as 'The Angus', which will amuse those of us who remember it being called that many years ago. However, we are dealing with the same staff as last year, so we hope that the change of ownership won't cause any problems.

A separate room is being hired for the second-hand games sale, so we won't disrupt the gaming in the Wroxton Suite.

A disabled toilet should be available, adjacent to the restaurant.

### Who Has Booked So Far?

At 20 June, the following registrations have been received:

**Mike Oakes**

**Gordon Sweeney**

**Hazel Hawker**

**Jeff Edmunds / Angela Crick**

**Jeremy Tullett**

**Bill O'Neill**

I have not yet booked rooms for you (busy, busy, busy,,,), but you are at the top of the list!

### IMPORTANT: CHANGE OF CONVENTION START TIME

The **Wroxton Suite** (the big room) will be available from **12:00** on the Friday, but the **Ariel Suite** (the small room) will not be available until **18:00** Friday. The Ariel Suite will be in use all afternoon by someone else, so please do not try to interrupt them!

# MidCon '08 Booking Form

The registration fee for **MidCon** is £15 per person for the whole weekend. Day rates are £10 for the Saturday and £8 (each) for the Friday and the Sunday. Please note: convention fees are *not* refundable. After November 1<sup>st</sup> we will not be able to accept postal bookings and accommodation will have to be booked directly with the hotel, whilst the convention fee will have to be paid at the convention. **Please note that the registration fee goes up to £18 after November 1<sup>st</sup>.**

<b>Name</b>			
<b>Address</b>			
<b>Post code</b>		<b>Tel:</b>	
<b>E-mail</b>			
<b>I enclose a cheque / PO (payable to "MidCon") for</b>		<b>£</b>	(See above for registration rates)
<b>Other names covered by this registration</b>			

## Accommodation

Please reserve the following rooms at the rate of £49.00 per person per night for a single room and £40.00 per person per night sharing a twin/double room – a full English breakfast is included. Hotel charges will be settled directly with the hotel on your departure.

Please select one of the following options by ticking the appropriate box.

- I hereby give permission for **MidCon** to pass my credit card details to the Hotel to reserve my room. My credit card details are given below
- I enclose a cheque for 50% of the total cost of my room booking, payable to "Thistle Birmingham City Hotel", as a deposit.

**My credit card details** (You do not need to provide these if you have enclosed a cheque to cover the deposit on your room)

<b>The name on my credit card is:</b>			
<b>The credit card number is:</b>		<b>The expiry date is:</b>	

The cancellation policy of the hotel is complicated, but full refunds should be available up to 10 weeks before **MidCon**, with an escalating cancellation fee as 16<sup>th</sup> November approaches.

	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
<b>N<sup>o</sup> of single rooms</b>			
<b>N<sup>o</sup> of twin rooms</b>			
<b>N<sup>o</sup> of double rooms</b>			
<b>Sharing with ...</b>			

When complete, return this form, together with your registration fee (payable to "**MidCon**") to: Jeremy Tullett, **MidCon**, 7 Midland Place, Derby, DE1 2RR. Alternatively, credit card bookings may be submitted online at [www.midcon.org.uk](http://www.midcon.org.uk) by clicking on the Booking Form link in the left hand menu bar.

## Advertisement



### Confucius by Alan Paull

Confucius is set in imperial China during the Ming dynasty, which lasted from the mid 14th to the mid 17th century. It was a period of restoration and reconstruction after the peasant rebellions that had overthrown the previous Mongol rulers of China. The government was re-established by the Emperor Hongwu under a new legal code stressing family relations and based on Confucian ideas. Using a vast standing army, areas of China under Mongol control and many adjoining territories were brought into the Empire through military conquest. The Empire also expanded its knowledge of the world through Zheng He's great oceanic voyages that may have reached as far as the Americas.

In Confucius each player represents a Chinese family trying to extend its power in the government, the army and the navy through the subtle application of political and social influence, rather than through direct conflict. Money, the manipulation of government officials and the strategic giving of gifts so that rivals are obliged to help your family; these will be your weapons.



### Ice Flow by Dean Conrad

In Ice Flow, each player controls three explorers who are trying to cross the Bearing Straits from Alaska to Siberia. Each player can move both his explorers, and the ice flows as they drift from the Arctic into the warmer waters of the Pacific.

Moving from ice flow to ice flow can be treacherous. Firstly there are the crevices between flows, which only be crossed using ropes. And then there are the polar bears, which would like an explorer for their lunch – although they can be distracted by throwing them a fish. Of course, each explorer has a limited supply of ropes and fish – although if they are lucky, they will find more supplies on the ice flows in their path.

Ice Flow won the Best New Boardgame award at the UK Games Expo 2008.



### Huang Di by Bryan Johnson

In **Huang Di**, you play one of 2-6 master builders chosen by the Emperor (Qin Shi Huang) to help construct one of the greatest man-made structures in the world – The Great Wall of China. Your goal is to become the most distinguished master builder in China with the help of your taskmasters, workers and Qin Shi Huang himself!

In the game, all players use identical sets of role cards to select their actions such as purchasing workers, building, collecting money from the treasury, etc. In addition to scoring points for having built the majority of blocks on each section and each level of the wall, players can also boost their income by completing favours for the Emperor.

This game won the first ever ProtoSlam competition held by Cambridge Games Factory and is the first published game by designer, Bryan Johnson.



<http://www.jklmdirect.co.uk>



## Tulipmania 1637 by Scott Nicholson

The tulip, a flower native to east Africa, created quite a ruckus upon reaching the shores of Europe in the mid-1500s. When a virus attacks a tulip, the resulting colour patterns can be stunning, but the same virus weakens the tulip and makes reproduction a challenge. Many associate Tulipmania with these rare, high-priced tulips, but scholars report that this first bubble market, where buyers pay far more than something is physically worth because of the resale value, actually stemmed from the common tulip market over December 1636 and January 1637.

During this time, the bubonic plague was killing off 1 out of every 7 people per year, so the common man saw little reason not to invest foolishly with a chance of making a substantial profit. These conditions created a situation where the prices of tulips skyrocketed by the day, until the prices hit a point that could not be sustained. The wily investors knew when to sell off, so those that profited most are those who sold just as the market started to turn sour.

You are playing one of those wily investors. You have a network of buyers and colleagues, all of whom are also trying to become wealthy. Your goal is to make smart investments, artificially raise prices, fleece your network at the best time, and then make your escape from Tulipmania with the most money.



## Ascendancy by Nigel Buckle

Starting as a loose federation of planets, the Empire has developed and grown to control nearly the entire galaxy. In recent times the Empire suffered revolts from the Veleks (a servitor race of cyborgs, used for labour through out the Empire now banished or hunted in every sector). During this troubled period other conquered races sought to throw off the domination of the

Empire. These rebellions were crushed mercilessly, but the Oligarchy was shaken, and has started to reinforce each sector.

Out on the galactic rim, the Veleks have created new home worlds, and are ready to strike back at their oppressors. Three other races that have suffered the most under Empire rule have formed a loose coalition to confront the Empire and end their domination forever. However the coalition is tenuous, the races have little in common apart from a mutual oppressor.

A new era is dawning – will the Empire hold off the rebellion, or will the coalition disrupt the Empire and liberate the conquered sectors? Can the coalition cooperate or will one galactic power seek to replace the Empire, reaching ascendancy?

Each player is in control of an alien race and aims to win by having their race achieve ascendancy. Each round they can construct new ship yards, ships, defences and monuments, move their fleet, research new technology, or follow a political path.

Ascendancy is a game for 2-4 players. Two versions of the game are included, the Short Game plays in an hour, the Long Game takes about twice as long. The long game adds achievement cards, which are targets the player sets for end of game victory points along with Improved Technology and special racial powers.



<http://www.jklmgames.co.uk>

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## **ManorCon XXVI (Mark Stretch)**

www.manorcon.org.uk

25th to 28th July 2008

Stamford Hall, University of Leicester

Progress Report Number 2 - July 2008.

Welcome to Progress Report Number 2. ManorCon is fast approaching, so here are the final details you will need before you get there.

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### **Don't forget your chit!**

As in previous years, we are issuing chits to everyone who booked accommodation in advance and paid in full. If you've done both of these, you should find a chit enclosed with this Progress Report. **You must take this chit with you to ManorCon and hand it in at the ManorCon reception desk to receive your room key.** If you forget to take your chit with you, then you will have to queue for a new one. Please note: your receipt CANNOT be exchanged for a key, only your chit can.

**If there is no chit included with this mailing,** this is probably for one of the following reasons: a) we think you owe us money; b) you are non-resident; or c) we may have made a mistake... In any case, don't worry about it - just come to the ManorCon Registration Desk when you arrive. We will not be sending out any further chits before the convention.

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## **NEWS.**

### **Gaming rooms**

There are a number of gaming rooms. The main gaming hall is where the ad-hoc gaming will mostly take place. It's also where all the food will be served. There are also rooms for the Diplomacy, the Pop Quiz and Treasure Hunt, the Second Hand Games Stall, a quiet gaming room, and a couple of other general gaming rooms.

The main gaming room is open from Breakfast until 2am. The minor rooms are open 24 hours a day. The night porter will check noise levels.

### **Food and Drink**

Tea and Coffee is available continuously from breakfast until 30 minutes after the evening meal stops serving. The bar will be open 2pm to 2am Friday, noon – 2am Saturday, noon to 2am Sunday and noon to 2pm Monday, but may close early if not doing much business. Note that due to the licensing laws you are not allowed to bring your own alcohol onto the site.

### **Other facilities**

The convention is 10 minutes walk from Oadby centre. Oadby is a suburban centre on the outskirts of Leicester, which has a collection of shops, restaurants, etc. There is also a large Asda between the convention and Oadby. If Oadby does not provide all the facilities you are looking for, then it is about 3 miles from the convention to Leicester City Centre.

### **Games Stall**

Bishop Games have the sole right to sell first-hand games at ManorCon, and anybody else wanting to do so must speak to the committee first.

## **Second Hand Games Sale**

This is being run by Richard Frost and will run on a similar format to 2007. So selling sessions should be Friday 7.30pm to 9pm and Saturday 2pm to 3pm with pack up by sellers by 4pm Saturday. Booking items by seller should be 5pm through to 7pm Friday and 11am to 1pm Saturday.

As per the past sellers can reduce the price of their games during the morning. The Sellers selling sheet is on the website, [www.manorcon.org.uk](http://www.manorcon.org.uk) which prospective sellers should download to list their games.

Please note that this facility is not for commercial sales.

## **Treasure Hunt**

This is being run by the 2007 winners, "Three Phils and 3 Fillers" on Sunday afternoon.

## **Spiel Champs**

For more details you can contact the organisers at [spielchamps@manorcon.org.uk](mailto:spielchamps@manorcon.org.uk)

## **Closing time....**

The convention finishes at 2pm on Monday.

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**Full directions and a map appear at the end of this progress report, but meanwhile...**

## **Address and Phone Number.**

The full address is Stamford Hall, Stoughton Drive South, Oadby, Leicester LE2 2ND Telephone (0116) 271 5875 (Warden). If you need to contact one of the committee, the ManorCon mobile number is 0797 713 6609 (or +44 797 713 6609 from outside the UK). This can also be used if you want to contact someone who isn't on the committee, but only in an emergency, and only if we can find them... PLEASE do not use this number before the Thursday morning of ManorCon! If you need to contact us beforehand, please phone Steve Jones (01234-405878), or drop us a letter, or email [info@manorcon.org.uk](mailto:info@manorcon.org.uk)

## **Parking**

For people in the standard accommodation, park in the car park south of the location. For the people in en-suites, park in the car park adjacent to the en-suite accommodation.

For people in the twin accommodation there is a small car park available at the Knoll, access via Gleve Rod. Go down Stoughton Drive South past Stamford Hall, at the cross roads turn left into Knighton Grange Road, then left into Gleve Road. The Knoll is on the left hand side.

The area in front of the hall will be available for loading and unloading, but should not be used for parking, including disabled parking. Note that the white lines are a guideline and you can park outside of them if required.

## **When you arrive....**

The ManorCon Registration Desk will be located just inside the entrance to the main hall. If you are not staying in the University and do not owe us any money, simply collect your badge and programme booklet from the table near the ManorCon Registration Desk. If you have booked accommodation in advance, do not need to make any changes to your booking, and have your chit with you, simply report to the ManorCon check in desk in to pick up your

room key, and then collect your badge and programme booklet. ALL keys are to be collected from the ManorCon check in desk.

**If you want to make changes to your booked accommodation**, or if you still owe us money, or if you have forgotten your chit, you will need to report to the ManorCon Registration Desk first.

**Please note: we will NOT be able to make changes to the type of room you have booked.** Anyone who has not pre-booked will also need to go to the ManorCon Registration Desk. We hope to have both En-suite and Single rooms available on the door, although it may be that one of these is not available. Once you have registered with us, we will issue you with a chit to be exchanged for your room key. We will also sort out your name badge, any money owing, etc.

**Please try to arrange your transport so as not to arrive before ManorCon opens at 2pm on Friday.** If you are on public transport and you will be arriving early because that is what the timetable says, or the drive is quicker than you think and you do end up arriving early, you will be able to drop your bags off, but you will not be able to get into the gaming hall. You are welcome to arrive at any time after 2pm on Friday, although if it is after 11pm, the ManorCon Registration Desk may be closed.

#### **Late Arrivals and Changes of Plan**

If you plan to arrive on the Friday evening after 11pm, or have transport difficulties and end up arriving late, please let us know. Ring the ManorCon mobile on 0797 713 6609. If you haven't pre-booked accommodation but subsequently decide that you do want to stay over, please let us know (either via the ManorCon Registration Desk if open, otherwise track down the committee member on duty) before 11pm on the night in question, as we will have difficulties finding extra rooms after this point.

#### **And when you leave.....**

**PLEASE NOTE:** you **must** vacate your room and return your key by 9:30am on the day of your departure. Also, we will put out a box for you to return your badge.

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#### **Tournaments.**

Most of the tournaments at ManorCon are Ad-hoc. Just play a game when you want, and put the results in the envelope. The exceptions are as follows:

**Diplomacy**, for which you need to sign up by 5.30pm on Friday to play in round 1. For the Saturday tournament, please sign up by 8.30am on the Saturday. The Saturday round starts at 9am on Saturday. For full details, please see the programme booklet. Prize giving should be completed by 7pm on Sunday. Up to date information will be posted on the Diplomacy notice board.

**Croquet** is a four round knockout tournament, so only the first 16 entries can be accepted. The draw will appear around midnight on the Friday, after we know who has entered. Advance entries are welcomed; contact Steve Jones via the ManorCon email address, [info@manorcon.org.uk](mailto:info@manorcon.org.uk). The draw will be posted on the general notice board.

**Midnight Party** will as usual be run at midnight each night.

**Spielchamps:** ManorCon is the new home of the UK SpielChamps, which will take place on the Saturday between 0930 and 1800 (ish). Formerly known as Intergame, this is a tournament for teams of four players. The tournament consists of four rounds, each round

playing a different game, and each player competes against three different opponents in each round. The highest scoring team across the four rounds wins the tournament, and the top three or four teams are invited to represent the UK at the European Spielchamps in Essen, Germany in October. The games have now been chosen, and will be:

Augsburg 1520 (published by Alea)

Caylus Magna Carta (Ystari)

Leonardo da Vinci (daVinci Games)

Brass (Warfrog)

There is no entry fee (other than being registered at Manorcon for the Saturday), but each team must bring one copy of each of the games. Players who wish to take part should try and form teams of four in advance - the organisers will help people find team-mates, and if necessary, scratch teams may be formed on the day (the Bishop Games stall will have some stock of each of the games). Players or teams wishing to take part or who would like more information can contact the organisers at [spielchamps@manorcon.org.uk](mailto:spielchamps@manorcon.org.uk) or on the forum at:

<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/SpielchampsUK/>.

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### **Programme Booklet**

When you arrive at ManorCon, don't forget to pick up your programme booklet and look through it. It will contain all sorts of useful information such as maps of the building and surrounding area plus directions to the nearest shops, ATMs and restaurants, instructions for finding a committee member, what to do if you have a problem, opening hours of the bar and the canteen, details of the tournaments, and lots more. Be warned that committee members sometimes get exasperated with people who ask them questions for which the answers are in the programme booklet! This year, we hope to have the Programme Booklet on the website in advance. – [www.manorcon.org.uk](http://www.manorcon.org.uk)

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### **Directions.... or how to make sure you find us**

Public transport directions first:

#### **By air:**

The nearest airport is Nottingham East Midlands, which has flights to various European destinations and other parts of the UK (see [www.eastmidlandsairport.com](http://www.eastmidlandsairport.com) for details).

Other relatively convenient airports served by low-cost airlines are London Stansted ([www.stansted-airport-guide.co.uk/](http://www.stansted-airport-guide.co.uk/)) and Luton (<http://www.luton-airport-guide.co.uk/>).

Intercontinental travellers are likely to have to use Birmingham International, London Gatwick or London Heathrow.

The following sections describe how to get to Leicester (either to the main railway station or to the bus station). Once there follow the instructions below for getting from the city centre to Stamford Hall.

#### **By air, from Birmingham International Airport**

Take the free Air-Rail Link to the Birmingham International station - it only takes a couple of minutes. Buy a ticket to Leicester. Take any train to Birmingham New Street (frequent). Change there and take a CrossCountry train to Leicester (approximately every 30 minutes). The total journey time is about 1h 20m. Alternatively take the scheduled bus service to Coleshill Parkway and change there onto the CrossCountry train to Leicester. The total journey time is about 1h 10m.

### **By air, from Nottingham East Midlands Airport**

Take the Leicester Skylink bus from the airport to Leicester City Centre (hourly during the day, every other hour in the evening; for timetable see [www.skylink.co.uk](http://www.skylink.co.uk)). The journey time is under an hour.

Alternatively take the Loughborough Skylink bus from the airport to Loughborough station (half-hourly during the day, hourly in the evening; for timetable see [www.skylink.co.uk](http://www.skylink.co.uk)) and then any train from there to Leicester (at least two per hour). The bus journey time from the airport to Loughborough station is about 30 minutes, the train journey time from there to Leicester about 15 minutes.

### **By air, from London Gatwick**

Follow the signs in the airport to the station (if you have arrived at the North Terminal, this will involve using the transit to the South Terminal).

Buy a ticket to Leicester, specifying that you will NOT be travelling on the Gatwick Express service. Take a First Capital Connect train to London St Pancras (every 30 minutes). From there take an East Midlands Trains train to Leicester (every 30 minutes). The total journey time is about 2h 20m. Alternatively continue on the First Capital Connect train to Luton or Luton Airport Parkway and change onto the East Midlands Trains train there. This avoids the short walk between the subsurface and overground parts of London St Pancras station, but there is only one train to Leicester per hour from each of Luton and Luton Airport Parkway, so you must find out which station it is correct to change at.

### **By air, from London Heathrow**

Follow the signs in the airport to the station. There are three stations - one for Terminal 4, one for Terminal 5 and one for Terminals 1, 2 and 3. The following instructions are valid for all the stations.

Buy an Underground ticket to Zone 1, take the Piccadilly Line from Heathrow to Kings Cross St Pancras (frequent), and then buy a rail ticket to Leicester and take an East Midlands Trains train from London St Pancras to Leicester (approximately every 30 minutes). The total journey time is about 2h 30m.

Alternatively - this is a more expensive option - buy a ticket to Leicester valid for use on Heathrow Express services (this will cover both parts of the train journey and also the cross-London transfer on the Circle Line). Take the Heathrow Express train to London Paddington (every 15 minutes). Then take the Circle Line to Kings Cross St Pancras (frequent), and then an East Midlands Trains train from London St Pancras to Leicester (approximately every 30 minutes). The total journey time is about 2h 20m.

### **By air, via London Stansted Airport**

Buy a ticket to Leicester. Take a direct Central Trains train to Leicester (hourly). The journey time is about 2h 30m.

### **By air, via Luton Airport**

Take the free shuttle bus to Luton Airport Parkway station - it's only just over a mile. Buy a ticket to Leicester. Take a direct East Midlands Trains train to Leicester (hourly). The journey time is about an hour.

### **By coach**

Though not always as fast as trains, coaches provide direct and cheap links between Leicester (St Margaret's Bus Station) and many other cities. Find out more information on bus routes

operated by National Express. [www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com) Booking line on: 08717 818181. Disabled Persons Travel Helpline: 08717 818179. Textphone: 0121 455 0086.

## **By train**

Details of train times can be found on [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk).

The following paragraphs describe how to get to Leicester from various parts of the UK. Once there follow the instructions below for getting from the city centre to Stamford Hall.

There are direct East Midlands Trains services from Derby, London St Pancras (Eurostar services from Paris and Brussels arrive here), Nottingham and Sheffield.

There are direct CrossCountry services from Birmingham New Street, Cambridge, Nuneaton and Peterborough.

From much of the South and South East it will be quickest to travel via London, using the Underground to cross London from the relevant rail terminus to St Pancras (though walking between Euston and St Pancras is also an option if you are lightly loaded). If, however, you have a direct service to Cambridge or Peterborough, it might be quicker to go that route.

From stations such as Brighton and East Croydon that are served by First Capital Direct services, the cross-London journey on the Underground can be avoided by taking one of their trains to St Pancras. Alternatively continue on the First Capital Connect service to Luton or Luton Airport Parkway and change onto the East Midlands Trains service there. This avoids the short walk between the subsurface and overground parts of London St Pancras station, but there is only one service to Leicester per hour from each of Luton and Luton Airport Parkway, so you must find out which station it is correct to change at.

From the South West a CrossCountry service to Birmingham New Street and then a CrossCountry service from there to Leicester is likely to be the best route. Travelling via Birmingham New Street will probably also be the best route from South and mid Wales.

From North Wales, the North West and parts of Scotland travelling via Birmingham New Street might be the best option, but if you have a direct service to Nuneaton, it's likely to be quicker to change there.

From the North East and parts of Scotland the best options are likely to be either a CrossCountry service to Sheffield and then an East Midlands Trains service from there to Leicester, or an NXEC service to Peterborough and then a CrossCountry service from there to Leicester.

## **From the city centre**

The easiest way to get to Stamford Hall is by taxi or by bus.

The 31/31A bus service stops immediately in front of the railway station and runs at frequent intervals. The correct stop for the university campus is just past the Asda at Oadby, soon after the junction with the A563 (Ring Road). From here it's a 5-10 minute walk up Stoughton Drive South to Stamford Hall.

There are taxi ranks at both the bus station and the railway station.

## Useful information.

Up to date travel information can be found in a number of places. As most of you will know, road information is available on teletext (BBC2, Page 430). Useful websites for public transport information are [www.arriva.co.uk](http://www.arriva.co.uk) , <http://www.kinchbus.co.uk/> , and <http://www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/eastmidlands/leicester/home/index.php>

Finally there is a link from our website to a maps webpage showing the exact location of Stamford Hall. Click the link at the top of <http://www.manorcon.org.uk/direct.htm>.

## By car

From almost anywhere in the country, the best driving route to the convention is via the M1 Junction 21 - the junction with the M69.

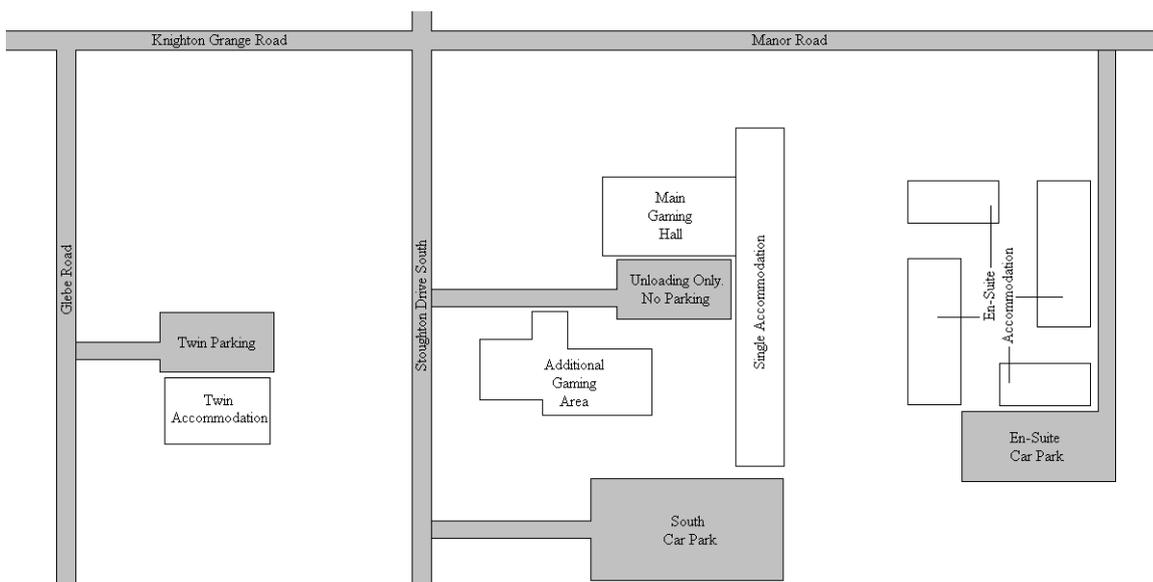
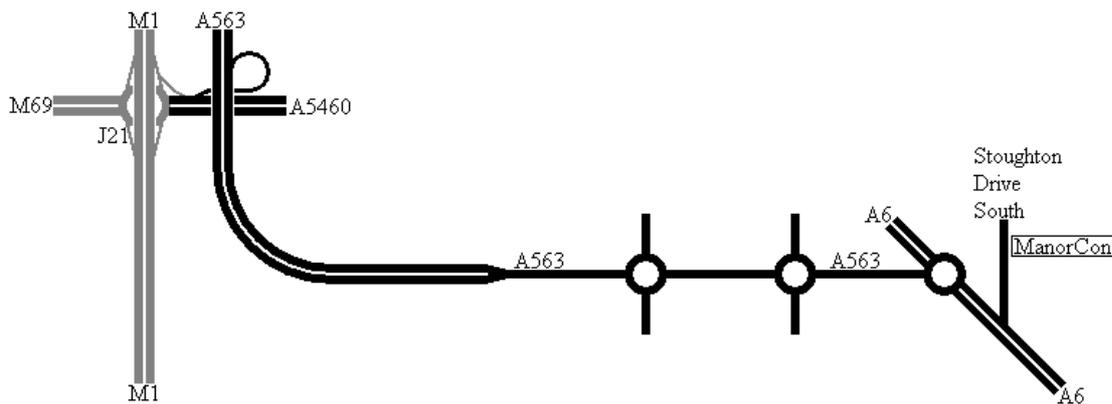
From the M1 J21, take the A5460 towards Leicester for about 1/4 of a mile.

As you go under the A563, immediately turn off to the left, looping back on yourself, and going over the bridge you have just gone under, on the A563 (Leicester ring road) heading around the South of the city.

Follow the A563 for about 4 miles, until you get to the roundabout with the A6.

Take the second exit off the roundabout, turning right. Then immediately turn into the first road on the left - Stoughton Drive South.

Stamford Hall is along this road on your right. If you come to the junction with Manor Road, you've gone too far.



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## **UK Games Expo 2008 Post Event Review (Richard Denning)**

Last year when I wrote this article I commented on how much work it takes to organise and run Expo. Well I can honestly say it was about double that this year. In many ways it was easier of course as we had a lot of systems in place BUT the fact that we added about 9 extra rooms to the plan for the various tournaments along with building a Dungeon in the basement did not help and it felt that we had far too few staff. All that said it ran pretty well thanks in no small part to a huge amount of work done by our core committee and the extended group of volunteers. For that effort they deserve thanks.

Again although we had some exhibitors grouped by genre we tried to mix Boardgames, Wargames, Card games, RPGs and computer games alongside each other and deliberately avoided fully themed halls. The intention behind this, as last year, was to enable attendees to sample different types of game from their usual fare and encourage crossover sales – and this did seem to be successful up to a point.

### **Basic facts and figures**

Door attendance was certainly up on last year.

In 2007 we now believe we had about 1000 on the Saturday with Sunday attendance around 500.

In 2008 we made efforts to be more accurate by having enough tickets to issue 1 to everyone. So we can be fairly confident we had about 1400 on Saturday and 700 Sunday.

It is interesting that again this year there was about twice as many there on Saturday as Sunday. It seems that most of the extra attendees on Saturday are families and children or gamers coming for one day only. Maybe we need to look at the addition of attractions to draw them back on the second day.

### **Exhibitors**

We had around 82 exhibitors and demo teams at Expo. These were split pretty evenly over the main genres of Board Games, RPG and Wargames with the final quarter a mix of retailers, costumed groups, computers and cards. We felt and the feedback was, that this mix was interesting and often served to open eyes to new games and games types that they had not seen before. The great bulk of the British Board Game industry was present including Warfrog, JKLM, Surprised Stare, Ragnar Brothers, Ludorum, Games for the World along with smaller and less well-known companies.

### **New Releases**

A nice rash of new games proved interesting to many and also the source of a hotly contested awards category (see below).

From Warfrog under the new flag of Treefrog we had a limited edition Tinner's trail with attractive wooden pieces. This game had the theme of copper and tin mining in Cornwall.

Surprised Stare's new game Confucius looked at political manoeuvring in China.

Ludorum Games brought a cuddly polar bear to celebrate the release of Ice Flow in which your polar explorers crossed the Baring Straits.

Ragnar Brother's Monastery involved the building of an Abbey and its surrounding structures and contained the most fun meeples – monks that could tip forward to pray.

US company Wattsalpoag's Fruit Fair allowed gamers to compete in the market garden business and I enjoyed the clever use of fruit to sell for prizes or hold on to in order to control certain special powers in the games.

JKLM's new releases Athene and Huang Di were delayed due to production issues but demos were still to be seen.

Lost Games Foundation are a new company who produced an interesting and attractive product full of Norse mythological references, unusual dice and an eye-catching box and board - but as they admitted themselves this was not yet a complete game and needed work on the mechanics.

Other games genres attracted new releases including quiz games Identity Crisis (Ibble Dibble), Not tonight Josephine (Toss Ink), Memory Match (Boden boo) and About Time (Circa Circa). Abstract games on show included Serendipity and Tuffluk.

The wave the flag RPG release was of course the much-heralded 4<sup>th</sup> edition of D+D backed up by a sneak peak at Dr Who and games from small press RPG publishers.

For QLA readers it's the board games which are of most interest and I hope that we have become a focal point for these releases in the UK next year as well.

### **Free Play Areas**

We did offer some free play in the Clarendon but this seemed under-used with gamers mainly playing the companies demo games. However there was great interest in the Free play at the Strathallan hotel and about 100 gamers went there to play games Friday night and over 150 on Saturday night. We appear to need MORE space there and so will look to add additional rooms on the Saturday.

### **Feedback**

There are always areas for improvement but all of this went down pretty well with most gamers and the public. The great majority of emails and forums postings are generally positive albeit with constructive comments.

### **Awards**

Last year at the last minute, we arranged to give out some awards to the best games as we judged it in various genres. That system was, to be honest, pretty crude and we were determined to improve on it.

This year we chose to combine assessments from three groups for each game genre. We invited an Expert panel, we approached keen enthusiasts and finally we decided to have a public vote on the day.

The experts for board games were Stuart Dagger from Counter Magazine, Eric Martin of Board Game News, Jack Pope from Reiver Games and Mike Siggins who has written and published for various gaming magazines over the years. The amateurs were basically my gaming group. I kept neutral as a kind of Tournament referee on the whole process.

The expert and amateur assessments used a method involving marking on a scale of 1 to 5 five aspects of each game. These were production quality, theme/originality, playability, balance and fun. Within each panel the scores were averaged and the games ranked and given points

based on rank. Finally the public voted with a simple “vote for a game you think is best” approach and again the games ranked and awarded points. Finally points from all three arms of the assessment were combined to choose our winner.

It might not be perfect and no doubt great debate could be had about categories but it worked quite well on the weekend and it was fun for our amateur panel to take part. Possibly the experts found it a chore but we do appreciate their work.

Here are the results of our awards:

Best Board Game: Iceflow

Best Abstract Game: Serendipity

Best Quiz: Identity Crisis

Best Miniatures Rules: Field of Glory

Best Card Game: World of Warcraft Dark Portal

Best RPG: Dungeons and Dragons 4e

Special Award: Take it Easy/To the Limit

I should say that the votes for boardgames were close. The Experts favoured Tinner’s Trail with second place going to Ice Flow but with the amateurs favouring Iceflow along with the public that award was decided. All the games considered in that category are good (this included Confucius, Monastery and Fruit Fair) and would be worth a look although Odin’s table was incomplete and still in development. It perhaps should have been in the family game category.

## **Plans for 2009**

We will endeavour to keep the charges for door entry and any tournaments played similar to this year. Our aim is to keep door entry low so this encourages the general visitor. To do that we must levy a charge on tournament players who use extra rooms, tables and whose tournament fees help fund the prizes but we feel that the charges this year of £5 for a days entry and £2 per half day tournament was appropriate and not expensive.

We hope to encourage the games companies to release new games at Expo and also bring prototypes and may add a new prototype award category to the awards. I hope we might entice over one or two more foreign companies as we did with Wattsalpoag and Tusbas and 4 others this year.

We will look to expand the free play area on the Saturday night and also have a word with the Strathallan about some confusion over room charges and also the bizarre attempts to make us all go to bed early on the Friday!

## **Volunteers**

Expo is run on the basis of covering costs not as a profit making operation. As such it relies on volunteers to help run it, do stewarding duties etc. We hope to be able to offer some volunteers incentive package next year. If you can give 2 or 3 hours or more of your time on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June or over the weekend in exchange for free entry, refreshments and perhaps a few extras then get in touch with us as we approach the time.

Next Year's Expo date has been changed to that mentioned in the programme.

Get the date in your diary now: 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> June 2009!

More details will appear on [www.UKgamesExpo.co.uk](http://www.UKgamesExpo.co.uk) in the autumn and in future issues of QLA.

## Tournaments

### Grand Board Games Tournament Results

There were 8 half day tournaments with a choice of two events per half day additionally there were two full day tournaments on offer. The scores from each event affected the overall champion who won a voucher for £100 to spend with JKLM games. The Two one-day champions received £50 vouchers and the 7 tournament winners (Acquire not being played) £25 vouchers. Some players also won games signed by Reiner Knizia and JKLM gave a pre-order for Ascendancy, Huang Di and Tulipmania.

The Carcassonne tournament was the UK Carcassonne Championship and its winner will represent the UK at the World Carcassonne Championship in Essen in October.

Tournament	Players	Winner		Second		Third	
Overall	58	Doug Massie	1253.1	Mark Stretch	1222	Lyndon Gurr	1193
Imperial	4	Doug Massie	248	Al Bell	161.6	John Matheld	155.1
Phoenicia	6	Lyndon Gurr	359.0	Jim Cloakey	296.2	Sam Hobday	296.0
Container	4	Teik Chooi Oh	347.2	Mark Stretch	248.9	Kath Collman	210.4
On the Underground	8	Mark Stretch	318.3	Kath Collman	286.1	Chris Welbourne	281.8
Settlers of Catan	24	Declan Waters	375.8	Alan Farrell	317.0	Dane Manuel	316.8
Powergrid	4	Matt Broomhall	205.6	Dave Manuel	190.0	Michael Baines	155.5
Carcassonne	16	Michael Frys	371.1	Kath Collman	320.2	Mark Stretch	314.1
St Petersburg	12	Steve Jones	339.1	Doug Massie	312.9	Peter Woodward	292.5
Puerto Rico	23	Lyndon Gurr	346.4	Mark Stretch	340.6	Kevin Lee	329.7
Acquire	0	Not Played					

Player 1-15		Player 16-30		Player 31-45		Player 46-58	
Doug Massie	1253.1	Steve Jones	621.1	Vick Hall	335.8	David van Cauter	228.6
Mark Stretch	1222.0	Mike Oakes	609.1	Jim Clokey	296.3	Damian H-Dowsett	227.8
Lyndon Gurr	1193.5	Peter Woodward	582.5	Peter Piggott	290.9	Su Lane	227.8
Kath Collman	1119.8	Teik Chooi Oh	556.8	Jonathan Everett	289.1	Philip Bolton	221.9
Declan Waters	954.5	James Clokey	538.3	Niko Aslanidis	286.3	Jeremy Galilee	219.4
Michael Frys	874.8	Dave Smith	535.3	Andy Hopwood	283.6	Alison Evans	216.0
Alan Farrell	823.7	Ivan Woodward	531.2	Chris Welbourne	281.8	Lucy Garrett	209.4
Philippa Dell	817.3	Matt Broomhall	518.2	Tony Hughes	281.5	Fiona Campbell	205.2
Dave Manuel	795.7	Kevin Lee	517.6	Mike Collins	277.5	Jez Higgins	205.2
Sam Hobday	769.8	Joe Woodward	514.8	Danai Voulvoulzi	256.4	Peter Bethall	191.1
John Wilson	703.1	Jeff Quantrill	495.6	Lisa Collins	255.4	Ben Allen	154.7
Bill Mayling	684.4	Nadine Manuel	459.1	Tony Hetherington	254.7	Jane Teixeira	124.5
Al Bell	672.3	Jan Reid	437.1	Eis Dellaert	244.9	Steve Teixeira	116.9
Michael Baines	664.3	John Matheld	390.9	Steve Avis	239.6		
Louise Williams	650.9	Bamber Loizou	384.2	Steve	232.8		

Congratulations to Doug Massie for winning the Grand Tournament and also to Michael Frys for winning the Carcassonne Championship. Good luck at Essen!

The format of the tournament was discussed and it was felt that the Saturday am tournament was not popular due to an early start. The full day tournament will be dropped as well as it was felt half days events worked better. David and I will discuss perhaps having three half-day tournaments but allowing for the Saturday one to maybe start at noon and provide for a longer session and thereby perhaps including longer games. This would also allow entrants to go round the rest of Expo for a couple of hours before playing.

### **Flames of War UK Open Championship Tournament Results**

28 Players played this on Sunday 1st June. The winner received a full army worth up to £200 and runners up got platoon packs or terrain.

I am giving the top 3 scores here. For a full listing go to:

<http://warhammer.org.uk/> and look under historical gaming.

<b>Place</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Score</b>
1st	Steve Charlton	German	Gepanzert	PanzerGrenadierKompanie	119
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Richard Hamilton	German	Grenadiers	FeldKompanie	111
3 <sup>rd</sup>	John Skelton	Canadian	Infantry	Rifle Company	110

### **Memoir 44 Tournament Results**

11 Players competed on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May. The winner received £30 voucher for Sprit Games stand.

Winner: - Ian (Bill) Roberts

Runner-up: - David Andrews

3rd: - Sean (RegBob) Kirby

### **Command and Colours Ancients Tournament Results**

10 Players competed on Sunday 1st June. The winner received £30 voucher for Sprit Games stand.

Winner: - Sean (RegBob) Kirby

Runner-up: - Andy Hill

3rd: - Don (Yangtze) Clarke

### **Children's Board Game Tournament**

This was held on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May. 5 schools entered teams of 4 so 20 children took part. The games used were Hey That's My Fish, Tsuro, Zeus on the loose and in the Afternoon Take it Easy.

The winning team was St Peter's C of E School, Harbourne.

### **Other Tournaments**

There were tournaments in Warhammer 40K, Warhammer and Hordes, UFS, Yu-gi-oh and World of Warcraft but the tournament umpires did not submit results to me before the deadline for QLA.

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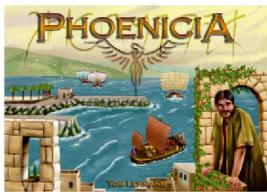
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Phoenicia is a strategy game of bidding and development for 2-5 players, ages 12 and up. Each player rules a settlement located on the shores of the Fertile Crescent, in the Middle East, more than 3,000 years ago. During play, you spend wealth to expand your settlement, adding tiles and tokens to it. The first player to successfully found a city-state wins!

Phoenicia was designed by Tom Lehmann, and released at the UK Games Expo in Birmingham in June 2007. The game is often compared to Outpost and The Sceptre of Zavendor, both of which have similar mechanics to Phoenicia. However, Phoenicia is much more streamlined, allowing the game to be as challenging, while playing in half the time.



On the Underground starts with a board that shows a plan of the yet-to-be-built London Underground. Each player is in charge of building two lines onto this plan during the course of the game. As they build their lines, a nominal passenger moves around the map, trying to get to various destinations. Players score points for connecting their lines to important stations around the board, and also whenever the passenger uses their line to reach his desired destination.

On the Underground was designed by Sebastian Bleasdale, and released at Essen in 2006.



Tulipmania sees players competing to buy and sell in the world's first bubble market. During December 1636 and January 1637, the prices of Tulips in Amsterdam rocketed, as investors saw tulips as a commodity worth investing in, as the price was increasing rapidly, even though their value wasn't, which meant there was a very large profit to be made very quickly. But bubbles burst, and when they do, the price crashes, leaving some people with a healthy profit, while others are left holding the tulips.

Tulipmania was designed by Scott Nicholson, and is scheduled to be released at the Essen Game Fair in 2008.

To get started on JKLM Interactive, go to the website, [www.jklminteractive.co.uk](http://www.jklminteractive.co.uk), and download the software. Install and run it and you're ready to play.

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