

The Queen's Lane Advertiser

(Incorporating Convention News)

Issue Number 28

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Edited by Jeremy Tullett

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

Inside this issue:

- ◆ OxCon 2009 Report
- ◆ Final details for UK Games Expo 2009
- ◆ ManorCon XXVII is on the horizon. Details within.
- ◆ MidCon 2009 arranged and ready to go

Forthcoming Conventions

TringCon XVIII Marsworth Village Hall Marsworth Nr. Tring Buckinghamshire 4 April 2009 www.fwtwr.com/tringcon	BayCon 2009 Exeter Court Hotel Kennford Devon 16-19 April 2009 www.baycon.co.uk	Beer and Pretzels The Town Hall Burton upon Trent Staffordshire 16-17 May 2009 www.spiritgames.co.uk/bnpdetails.php
UK Games Expo The Clarendon Suites 2 Stirling Road Edgbaston, Birmingham 6-7t June 2009. www.UKGamesExpo.co.uk	Summer StabCon Britannia Hotel Stockport 4-6 July 2009 Bookings(at)stabcon	Pasteboard and Plastic 9 The Scout Hut, Saltdean, Brighton. 11 July 2009 http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/pasteboardandplastic/
Manorcon XXVII Stamford Hall University of Leicester 17-20 July 2009 www.manorcon.org.uk	TringCon XIX Marsworth Village Hall Marsworth Nr. Tring Buckinghamshire 3 October 2009 www.ftwr.com/tringcon	GamesFest 4 The Watford Colosseum, Watford 24th October 2009. www.gamesfest.co.uk
MidCon XXXI Thistle Birmingham City Hotel Birmingham 13-15 November 2009 www.midcon.co.uk	Pasteboard and Plastic 10 The Scout Hut, Saltdean, Brighton. 21 November 2009 http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/pasteboardandplastic/	

Editorial (Jeremy Tullett)

It has been said that there is not enough of “me” in this publication (apart from the invisible sweat and tear stains, presumably).

Having just had an annual review in which it was suggested that my to-the-point style rather got in the way of the messages that I was trying to convey (my directors apparently being incapable of receiving a message *despite* the style), you may come to think this a blessing, for I now have a page to fill, and it will be filled with some of my deathless prose.

I pick as my topic for the day Britannia Hotels - more specifically, the instance of that ineluctable chain located in Coventry.

Readers with long memories will recall that the Liverpool Britannia was featured in a fly-on-the-wall series, which gained it a so-bad-it’s-good notoriety, for the general levels of poor service on offer.

Readers with less long (but not so much so) memories will recall that MidCon used the Birmingham Britannia. Once. That event featured un-made-up rooms, peeling wallpaper, blatant race discrimination from the front-desk staff, and a near punch-up between security staff and late-night gamers.

It was therefore with some trepidation that I found myself at the Britannia Coventry on (but not specifically for) Mothering Sunday, following a visit to the Dr Who exhibition at the Transport Museum¹.

We were directed to the 1st floor for our lunch, which was entertaining. The 1st floor was actually a conference room in which a Pentecostalist service was in progress. Back to the lift, where an inscribed plaque informed us that the restaurant was in fact on the ground floor.

Given that it was Mother’s Day, the place was surprisingly quiet (not a good sign, one might imagine), and we went straight to our table, despite being 30mins early, where the Mother’s Day 3-course special carvery² menu was presented to us.

After about ten minutes, someone offered us drinks from the bar, and I asked what bottled beers they had. This proved to be a difficult question, and the waitress had to wander off to find the barman. In the meantime, a second waitress, takes our orders for the starters.

Finally, the barman arrives, takes the drinks orders and vanishes. At this point, the starters turn up.

Around the time that we finish the starters, the drinks arrive. Getting the feel of how this place is operating, I practically rugby tackle the barman to obtain a wine list, which arrives quite promptly. I order a bottle of Orvieto, and after another 10 minutes or so, a rather harassed waitress arrives to tell us that they have no Orvieto in the wine cabinet, and that they are now checking the ”cellar”³. It didn’t take too long for her to decide that there was none in the cellar, and would I like something else.

“Yes please”, I say, “I’ll have a bottle of Pinot Grigio.” This completely throws the waitress, who according to my dining companion, is next seen desperately thumbing through the wine list, stage left, trying to identify what I’ve just ordered from memory.

¹ Don’t ask.

² “Special carvery” being an oxymoron, if ever I heard one.

³ This hotel being a fine example of Coventry concrete, this probably meant a crate behind the bar.

Whilst this drama is playing out, we raid the carvery, a distinctly average example of its genre.

The bottle of wine appears, and I am asked: “Would you like to try the wine, or shall I just open it?⁴”

Getting close to hysteria by now, I just let her pour it (it’s OK). Moments later, she re-appears. “Would you like to pay the bar bill now?” Well, no, I’d rather have on the final bill please. “OK”, she says, “its just that it’s more convenie ...”, and then breaks off, doubtless reading the look on my face, and correctly deducing that, right now, the hotel’s convenience is not of great interest to me.

We chomp our way through our main course, and decide to take a breather. The third waitress of the meal asks if we’d like some coffee. “Certainly”, we say, “but may we have our desserts first?” (What is going on here is that they are now trying to close the till, it now being well after 2pm.)

The desserts are mundane, and we note that persons taking two desserts or excessive amounts of cream are “liable to be charged extra, *per jug*”. Are the good people of Coventry so very hard-up that they drink cream by the pint on a fixed price menu???

So to coffee.

“May we have our coffee in the bar, please?”

“Certainly sir. That’s where you order it anyway.”

I just blink.

The bar, then, is one of those charming places filled by middle-aged men (who might have been taxi or bus drivers) all not talking to each other, but nursing pints of beer⁵ and gawping at Sky sports, and who give us “not one of us” looks as we cross the room⁶.

Moments later, the waitress hot foots into the bar, and explains to me that she had forgotten to ask me to pay for lunch, and would I be so kind as to return to the till. Dreadfully sorry.

Fine no problem, and I wave a credit card at her. “Ah”, she says, “you want to pay by credit card. In that case, you’ll have to take this bill and pay at reception. We don’t have a credit card machine in the restaurant.”

I decide to pay when we leave. However, forty minutes down the line, the waitress is back, asking me if I wouldn’t mind paying now, as they need to cash up before she goes home.

And the toilets were not well-maintained either.

I see that StabCon has used the Stockport Britannia for some time now, so presumably they are not all dreadful, or those who go to Stabcon just don’t notice, or care. Perhaps one of them can tell me.

⁴ Think about that

⁵ Or cream?

⁶ I can only speculate as to the nature of the bar’s clients in the late evenings ...

17th to 20th July 2009
Stamford Hall, University of Leicester

The organization for ManorCon XXVII is proceeding well. If you haven't booked yet, remember that you can do so in two ways. You can book online via PayPal or a credit or debit card – visit <http://www.manorcon.org.uk/book.htm> and follow the links. Or you can still post a form and cheque – the form can be found at the same place if you need one. Please remember that **advance registration is only available until 14th June**. After this, you will have to register at the door and pay higher registration fees and accommodation charges (and you may not get any accommodation at all – our supply of rooms is fairly limited).

If you have booked, but need to cancel all or some of your booked accommodation, you should inform us as soon as possible. If you cancel by the booking deadline, then you will definitely avoid cancellation charges. Thereafter, the later you leave it to inform us, the more likely you are to suffer accommodation cancellation charges.

ManorCon is run by volunteers, and does not aim to make a profit. In order for us to keep this tradition, we ask for volunteers for a number of tasks. One of these is help with the registration desk, usually by manning the desk for an hour on the Friday afternoon. Now that we hand out keys in addition to handling on-the-door bookings, we need lots of volunteers! If anybody asks anything you don't know, just point them at the nearest committee member – it's not difficult. If you would like to help us out and failed to mention it when booking, please e-mail us at regdesk@manorcon.org.uk.

This year, as usual, we will have a mix of scheduled and ad-hoc tournaments, plus some other competitions and events.

Scheduled tournaments:

- **Croquet** – knock-out tournament limited to a maximum of 16 players.
- **Diplomacy** – individual rounds at 1800 on Friday, 1000 on Saturday, and 1000 on Sunday. In addition to the main tournament, there is also the **Diplomacy Challenge**, an individual one round tournament based solely on scores in the Saturday round. This replaces the team round from previous years.
- **Midnight Party** – three rounds, at midnight each evening.

Ad-hoc tournaments (play games as and when you wish):

- 18XX
- Acquire
- Imperial
- Puerto Rico
- Race for the Galaxy
- Settlers of Catan
- St Petersburg

SpielChamps:

The UK SpielChamps will be taking place at Manorcon 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 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:

- In the Year of the Dragon
- Puerto Rico
- St Petersburg
- Sceptre of Zavandor

Special Tournament Rules:

- In the Year of the Dragon: the events will be drawn randomly at the start of the game, and be the same for all boards (so that it is equal for all teams).
- St. Petersburg: the Judge will have 4 income and 2 VPs. The Mistress of Ceremonies will have 4 income and 3 VPs. (This rebalances these cards which can otherwise be too powerful if they come out early.)
- Sceptre of Zavandor: the 4 roles for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th players will be decided randomly at the start, and be the same for all teams.

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 if notified in advance.

Players or teams wishing to take part or who would like more information can contact the organisers at spielchamps@manorcon.org.uk or on the forum at: <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/SpielchampsUK/>.

There is also a box on the Manorcon booking form to indicate interest in the UK Spielchamps, and anyone who ticks it will be contacted by the organisers.

Please note that we would like advanced notice of teams wishing to enter, so please let us know.

Other events:

- **Games Stall.**
- **Pop Quiz** – on Saturday evening.
- **Second Hand Games Sale** – two sessions, on Friday and Saturday.
- **Treasure Hunt** – on Sunday afternoon.

Please note that, for several reasons, including the need to ensure there is sufficient space, the selling of games other than via the Games Stall or the Second Hand Games Sale should not be done without permission from the ManorCon Committee (contact details below).

There will be trophies for:

- 1st to 3rd in the Diplomacy and 18XX.
- The winners of the Acquire, Croquet, Diplomacy Challenge, Puerto Rico, Race for the Galaxy, and St Petersburg.

As of 17th March the following 26 people have registered:

Dave Berry	Jerry Elsmore	Richard Oxlade
Malcolm Booker	Geoff Hardingham	Richard Ramsden
Sean Byrne	David Holmes	Dave Simpson
Jeff Clarke	Steve Jones	Mark Stretch
Leigh Collins	Kevin Lee	Steve Thomas
Paul Cook	Pete Mason	Daniel Victor
Jeff Crane	David Norman	Markus Welbourne
Els Dellaert	Mike Oakes	Tony Wheatley
Gary Duke	Francesca Oxlade	

If you think you are missing from this list, please let us know as soon as possible, but remember that the list only shows those who had booked by 17th March. If you booked after that date, your name will not be on the above list, but you should have received confirmation of your booking from Neil Duncan. You can also contact us:

By post: Steve Jones, 59 Sudeley Walk, Putnoe, Bedford, MK41 8JH, UK.

By phone: +44 (0)1234 405878.

By email: info@manorcon.org.uk

On BoardGameGeek: <http://www.boardgamegeek.com/guild/441>

And our website is <http://www.manorcon.org.uk>

UK Games Expo 2009 (Richard Denning)

“Everything about games”

5th-7th June 2009

The Clarendon Suites

2 Stirling Road, Edgbaston,

Birmingham B16 9SB

www.UKGamesExpo.co.uk

Expo is back at the Clarendon on 6th and 7th June 2009 with two days of demo games, tournaments and role-playing game sessions alongside the UK's most exciting and diverse exhibition of games companies from across the spectrum, as well as costume groups and the Living Dungeon.

To add to that we will build on the already successful evening games rooms at the Strathallan Hotel by offering board gamers and role-players taking the weekend ticket longer to play free play drop in games and organised play sessions there from noon on Friday 5th June till late and on Saturday 6th June after the trade halls at the Clarendon close.

Dates and Times

UK Games Expo dates are as follows:

Friday 5th June

NEW for 2009 we have extended the times and space at the Strathallan Hotel, Edgbaston next door to the Clarendon Suites. This will be available from noon. Friday arrivals can collect their tickets during the afternoon, which will save queuing on Saturday. The ticket desk at the Strathallan will be manned from noon until 8pm.

Saturday 6th June

Grand board game tournament registration is from 8.30 to 11.50am with tournaments beginning at Noon prompt. In previous years entrants have said that getting to the venue to start a tournament at 9.30 is a struggle so we have a later start time now. Please note that start times for events other than the grand board game tournament will be different. Check the website.

Trade Hall Hours: 10am till 5pm.

Games rooms at the Strathallan Hotel, Edgbaston next door from 6pm.

Sunday 1st June

Tournament entrant registration is from 8.30am to 9.20am with tournaments beginning at 9.30am prompt.

Trade Hall Hours: 10am till 4pm.

Charges

UK Games Expo Entry Ticket:

Ticket	Adult	Child	Family Ticket
One Day Ticket	£7	£4	£14
Sat + Sun Ticket	£10	£5	£20
Fri+Sat+Sun Ticket	£12	£6	£24
Friday night ONLY*	£3	£2	£6

Family Tickets admit up to 2 adults and 3 children. Children are ages 6 to 11. (5 and under are free).

*Friday night only tickets are provided for the (we expect) very few people who **only** want to attend the Friday gaming and not the rest of Expo.

The Sat+Sun Ticket allows you free access to the Expo and also the Strathallan gaming rooms on Saturday night. The Fri+Sat+Sun Ticket allows you access to Expo and also the Strathallan gaming rooms on Friday from noon and on Saturday night.

Board Game Tournament Fee

If you decide to enter any of our tournaments you buy a UK Games Expo Entry Ticket and also pay a Tournament Fee. The Tournament fee is as follows:

Per Short Tournament (Half day on Sunday)	£2
Per Long Tournament (6 Hour long tournament Saturday pm)	£4

So if you came for all three days and played the long tournament Saturday Pm and two short tournaments on Sunday am and pm costs would be Entry Ticket (£12) + 1 x Long Tournament (£4) + 2x Short Tournament (£4) for a total of £20 for the weekend including all the tournaments. You can elect to play just some of the tournaments off course and look round the trade halls as well.

Board Game Tournaments

There are a number of different board game tournaments available:

A) Grand board game Championship

We are grateful to David Norman for again organising a mixed board game tournament. There will be a long tournament on Saturday running circa noon to 6pm and a choice of 2 am and 2 pm half day tournaments on Sunday. There will be individual winners for each different board game tournament and a Grand Tournament winner with prizes of games and vouchers to spend on more games! The overall Championship will be based on your results in the individual tournaments you play in.

Timetable is as follows:

Day	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	Noon - 6.00 Choice of two Long Tournaments: Mayfair Settlers of Catan Championship Agricola	9.30-12.00 Choice of two am tournaments UK Carcassonne Championship St Petersburg
Afternoon		1.00-6.00 Choice of two pm tournaments Puerto Rico On the Underground

UK Carcassonne Championship. Win the UK Place at Essen Spiel!

In agreement with Spielzentrum, the UK Games Expo Grand Boardgames Carcassonne Tournament on Sunday morning will be a qualifying event for the World Carcassonne Championship to be held at Essen Spiel in October 2009. The winning player will also have £100 of their travel costs to and from Essen paid for.

Congratulations to Michael Frys who represented the UK this year and came in 4th place.

B) Memoir 44/ Battle-Lore Tournament

Barry Ingram will run a Richard Bourg Tournament to feature Memoir 44 on Saturday 6th June and as well as Command and Colours on Sunday 7th June.

C) Children's Board Game Tournament

We encourage Primary schools to enter teams of 4 players ages 8-11 (Approximately years 5 and 6) in two fun but challenging events on the same day at UK Games Expo on 6th June 2009. Exact timetables on the website.

D) Combat Commander

John McIntock is running a Combat commander tournament Friday and Saturday evening at the Strathallan.

UK Games Expo Awards

The UK Games Expo awards were introduced in 2007 at the first UK Games Expo and expanded in 2008. These will run again in 2009 and you will again get a chance to vote on them.

Exhibiting Companies

We have 80+ traders including the majority of the British Board Games designers and hopefully a sprinkling of overseas companies. UK Games Expo is not just about board games but also features many other games genres such as Miniatures, Role-playing, card games and computer gaming and will have dozens of other exhibitors with a full range of the latest games in these genres.

As of mid March the board game companies confirmed are: Warfrog who are releasing Automobile and will have prototypes of God's Playground and Last Train to Wendsleydale; Reiver Games with the new Sumeria; JKLM with prototypes or possible releases from Ascendancy, Huang Di and Tulipmania; Surprised Stare bring out Fzzt; Make a Game, Ludorum and Ragnar Brothers are expected and there are new appearances from Dice Maestro with Wild Life Survival and other debut games companies with Cubiko and Monkey Dash.

Finally my own 'Great Fire: London 1666' will be shown as a prototype with games of it demoed by some of the play testers.

Accommodation

The Clarendon Suites are a conference venue and not a hotel so you will not stay in the hall itself. However do not let that put you off because within 50 to 200 yards there are many hotels.

The **Strathallan Hotel Edgbaston** is recommended as it is closest and is also where the Friday and Saturday Evening gaming room is available for you to play in. Contact: **Strathallan Birmingham Edgbaston** 225 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, West Midlands B16 9RY Phone: 0121 455 9777, Email: strathallan@menzieshotels.co.uk

For accommodation: Ring Reservations department and ask for Arite or Agnetha 0121 224 1760/1761 and mention you are a **UK Game Expo** delegate when booking. Single room B&B £ 50; Twin/ Double on B&B for sole use: £60 For double occupancy B&B £ 70; Executive rooms on sole use will be at £80 and double occupancy will be £90 B&B

For alternative accommodation please see our website a number of other hotels very close by will have special deals. Look under Attendee/ Hotel Guide.

More Information

More Information is now be available on our website www.UKGamesExpo.co.uk which is now updated for this years Expo and also has the online booking system.

MidCon XXXI 13-15 November 2009 (Jeremy Tullett)

About the con

MidCon XXXI takes place in a comfortable hotel in the centre of Birmingham from Friday afternoon (1pm) to Sunday evening (6pm). It features:

- the opportunity to play board games with like-minded adults
- the **MidCon** music quiz on Friday evening
- the **MidCon** general knowledge quiz for teams of 4 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 'zine and return it with the convention fee of £15⁷ a head to:

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

or register electronically at www.midcon.org.uk.

OxCon 2009 (Robert Clough)

President's Report 2009

With Oxcon 2009 over we can chalk up another successful convention. The event started with a trip to Pizza Express which seemed to go down well, after the meal a group headed to the regular meeting place of the society for an evening of games.

The Saturday saw a return to our regular venue for the convention, the Mitre pub on Oxford High Street. Saturday's tournament, the Puerto Rico Tournament, run by myself, saw 4 rounds played by 20 people. The eventual victor, Markus Welbourne won with a respectable 125 point, second was Declan Waters with 121 and third Richard Gough with 120.

Saturday also saw a new treasure hunt event, replacing the lost cities tournament and the 15 to 1 quiz. Here attendees were asked to locate the Puerto Rico gold through a series of puzzles handed out between tournament rounds. At the end of the first day it was found the gold was in Catan leading into another set of puzzles on the second day. Big thanks to Phil Hannay for organizing this, as it went down really well, even if I struggled to solve a single one of the puzzles.

⁷ Goes up to £18 on November 1st

Saturday evening saw a trip to Mirch Masala, a curry house down the Cowley Road, a group of 13 made it to the restaurant, with many returning to the Mitre afterwards to continue gaming.

With Sunday we saw our Settlers of Catan Tournament, and the second half of the treasure hunt. Big thanks to John Kallaugher for organising the Settlers Tournament, the winner was Markus Welbourne with 273, second was Roger Boden with 195.5, narrowly beating James Pinnion also on 195.5 on a tie breaker.

Before we leave you for another year, a few last minute thank you's. Firstly to Mou-Lan Wong for helping out with a lot of the organisation, particularly on the Friday night, and with respects to organising printing for the treasure hunt. Again thanks to John Kallaugher for organising the Settlers tournament, and sorting out the money. To Ian Lynagh for sorting out list for who had signed up for meals, and sorting out Pizza express, as well as sorting out things on the day, and to Caroline Berry for collecting entrance fees, and other organisation on the day.

Thanks to Markus Welbourne for the games stall and supplying us with prizes, and David Norman and the QLA team for advertising. To anyone else that helped out who I have forgotten, and finally to everyone who attended, it wouldn't be a convention without you.

The full results for the tournaments can be found at
<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~board/oxcon/old/oxcon2k9/index.shtml>

The Queen's Lane Advertiser (incorporating Convention News)

Editor : Jeremy Tullett
Coordinator : David Norman
Printing and Distribution: Markus Welbourne

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.
- You would like to advertise in QLA.

The coordinator can be contacted at david@ellought.demon.co.uk

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MidCon '08 Booking Form

The registration fee for **MidCon** is £15 per person for the whole week-end. 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 1st 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 1st.**

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

Accommodation

Please reserve the following rooms at the rate of £49.00 per person per night for a single room and £39.50 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)

The name on my credit card is:			
The credit card number is:		The expiry date is:	

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 13th November approaches.

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
N° of single rooms			
N° of twin rooms			
N° of double rooms			
Sharing with ...			

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 by clicking on the Booking Form link in the left hand menu bar.