

# 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:

## Forthcoming Conventions

<b>MidCon</b> The Hallmark Hotel Derby DE1 2SQ 11-13 November 2016 MidCon.org.uk	<b>Boardgames at the Manor</b> Otford Manor TN15 6XF 9-11 December 2016 www.oakhall.co.uk/manor office(at)oakhall.co.uk	<b>Winter StabCon</b> Britannia Hotel, Stockport 6-8 January 2017 bookings (at) stabcon.org.uk
<b>Raiders of the Game Cupboard XXXVII</b> Waterside Community Centre Heath Road Burton-upon-Trent DE15 9LF 7 January 2017 10am-8pm www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk	<b>The Great Derby Boardgame Bash</b> 4 February 2017 10:00	<b>SoRCon 10</b> Friday 24th to Sunday 26th February 2017 Holiday Inn, Basildon, Essex, SS14 3DG http://www.sorcon.co.uk
<b>Raiders of the Game Cupboard XXXVIII</b> Waterside Community Centre Heath Road Burton-upon-Trent DE15 9LF 25 March 2017 10am-8pm www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk	<b>Swan Con 2017</b> The Swan Hotel, Bucklow Hill, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 6RD 30 March - 2 April 2017. Chris Geggus – geggus (at) sky.com	<b>TringCon XXXIV</b> Marsworth Village Hall Marsworth, Nr. Tring, Bucks Saturday 1 April 2017 tringcon(at)fwtwr.com www.fwtwr.com/tringcon
<b>BayCon 2016</b> Exeter Court Hotel Kennford Devon 19-23 April 2017 https://www.facebook.com/groups/baycon/	<b>UK Games Expo</b> NEC Hilton Metropole Birmingham 2 - 4 June 2017 richard(at)ukgamesexpo.co.uk www.UKGamesExpo.co.uk	<b>Raiders of the Game Cupboard XXXIX</b> Waterside Community Centre Heath Road Burton-upon-Trent DE15 9LF 24 June 2017 10am-8pm www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk
<b>ManorCon XXXIV</b> Stamford Court, University of Leicester 21-24 July 2017 info(at)manorcon.org.uk www.manorcon.org.uk	<b>Raiders of the Game Cupboard XL</b> Waterside Community Centre Heath Road Burton-upon-Trent DE15 9LF 23 September 2017 10am-8pm www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk	<b>TringCon XXXV</b> Marsworth Village Hall Marsworth, Nr. Tring, Bucks Saturday 30 September 2017 tringcon(at)fwtwr.com www.fwtwr.com/tringcon

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## Editorial (Jeremy Tullett)

It isn't often that an editorial in QLA excites much (if any) response, but after the last issue, I ended up discussing it with several people at Manorcon, and received the following extensive email from Catherine Swan, who is aware that I intend to publish this. My comments are at the end.

*A flatmate who is on your circulation list for the Queen's Lane Advertiser shared your July editorial with me as you invited responses and he thought I might be like to offer you some feedback on your situation as a potential employer. Although I am currently a jobseeker I have been in your position myself in the past and whilst I understand your frustration, I think you might benefit from examining your company's position before criticising the applicants.*

*1) Have you considered the real cost of living when advertising? Many execs have household incomes well in excess of the poverty line and have no idea where it lies any more - do you know the actual baseline cost of survival in Bristol? I mean NOW - not a faded memory of what it was like when you left Uni? And the cost of a 'decent' life i.e. a studio or one bed flat, the means to travel to work other than by foot or bicycle, have a modest annual holiday, pay for new glasses/contact lenses, eat a healthy diet and socialise normally? Many job ads offer a wage so far below either of these lines that I wonder if the employers care about their employees well-being or are blindly following a perceived 'market rate', set by looking at ads for similar roles, which are in turn set by other folk doing the same, without anyone ever actually subtracting tax and NI from the wage offered and comparing take home pay to the real cost of living in their area. Either employers don't realise how stressful life on or below the poverty line is and how that stress will detract from performance on the job or increasingly there seems to be an expectation that the candidates' parents / spouses / the taxpayer will supplement any business plan.*

*2) Above the absolute poverty line there are often unrealistic and sometimes contradictory expectations of the candidates, such as bringing a tertiary level education / specific relevant experience / tools or material assets, but accepting an unskilled wage? Locally, I have seen a job ad which required fluency in FOUR named languages as well as significant experience in a specific field AND that the candidate run a car to access a headquarters building set in parkland, not served by public transport, but which offered £25k p/a. In reality, take home pay from £25k p/a will barely cover the cost of a rented room in a shared house in this area - car payments, insurance and running costs are out of the question. The only way it could be done is if the candidate was being housed/supported by someone else and presumably this would be an under-25, is it then likely they'll speak 4 languages fluently to business level AND have significant experience in a particular field? You possibly allude to this type scenario when you refer to those HR discarded for "having absurdly high salary aspirations for the job".*

*3) You ask "Is this a new trend for Gen X/ Gen Y/ Millennials?" thereby illustrating an assumption that all job seekers are young - I can tell you: we're not. As a woman in my 50s I'm fed up with being either discarded at the HR stage (so that the interviewers never know of my existence) by someone half my age in favour of those more like them or their friends -*

*Or, being invited to interview as a 'Diversity Candidate', because certain organisations need to be able to prove they've seen a variety of types of people - even if they already know they're going to give the job to an existing internal applicant or the 'fantasy favourite applicant' - a white male second jobber in his late 20s.*

*4) Various campaigns against the unemployed to reduce the cost of Welfare have resulted in a crazy unproductive system whereby those who need to claim benefits in order to survive are now required to spend most of their waking hours chained to a computer and logged on to the Government's hopeless Jobmatch website. If you've never experienced this, I suggest you set the kitchen timer for one hour and use Jobmatch to rate the experience personally. Keep the whisky*

*bottle out of reach until the timer goes off - you'll certainly need it afterwards. I could take up a lot of space elucidating its' many faults but you won't believe it until you've really dug into it by searching for jobs in your field and applying for as many as you can manage in the time. Alternatively, find an unemployed friend who is willing to let you be a witness to an hour of their misery and frustration. Those who are unfortunate enough to be required to use it daily are also required to post a set number of applications per day, every day. Many of the applicants you ostensibly have don't actually want your job (probably because of reasons outlined at 1 and 2 above), but they have to apply to a random number to keep the Jobcentre happy, because Iain Duncan Smith said so.*

*So many employers don't bother contacting unsuccessful applicants that Jobmatch users can write off any unwanted jobs as 'no response', whether they are or they aren't. This wastes your time as well as theirs but is necessary to survive in their world and is an unintended consequence of societal approval for "cracking down on benefit claimants" a.k.a perfectly normal, often well-educated people who have been summarily ejected from the mainstream, often through no fault of their own, and who are capable of doing the maths to know they're better off putting their efforts into finding something more rewarding, or young graduates who rightly aspire to leave the parental home and stand on their own financial feet. It also skews your perception of how many people might be willing and able (can afford) to take your job - leading to a perpetuation of low wages.*

*Which is why your successful applicant is a Polish national, as well as being qualified, personable and charming, of course. Your Pole will put up with sub-standard living conditions for about a year in the hope that they'll get promoted or be able to survive long enough to improve their lot and make something of themselves in this country. Most likely you haven't asked how they're going to have to live in order to survive on the pay they'll receive but the truth is that they'll probably rent a bed (not a room), quite possibly one of as many as 6 bunk berths inserted into a shared 'double' bedroom in a grotty house in a bad neighbourhood, thus increasing overcrowding in Bristol and playing into the hands of unscrupulous exploitative landlords - which the taxpayer will then have to fund the local council to inspect, prosecute and generally sort out, although your company might complain about the high Business Rates this necessitates.*

*I know of a group of young British professionals, all graduates, all white and from 'respectable', even well-to-do families, who have banded together to compete with the Eastern Europeans, leave their parental homes and 'get a job'. There are 'only' 8 of them, sharing a 2 bedroom flat. Two couples are sharing a bedroom each and the four singles sleep two in the living room on the sofas (which is an open plan communal space with the kitchen) and two in the hall. It's cold on the hall floor and so the four singles rotate between the living room and the hall floor, week and week about. All 8 share the one small bathroom, kitchen and the living room (when it's not an ersatz bedroom).*

*I do also know a Document Controller, she's in her late 40s, works for a large American law firm in central London. She works 5 nights a week, approx. 6pm to 2am, has a second job 3 mornings a week and still has to share her little flat with a lodger to supplement her pay in order to live a 'normal' life. She doesn't run a car.*

*From your piece, I got the impression that you are carrying quite a heavy and disparate workload yourself - maybe you would like a better work /life balance too. How do you think we can all stop being forced to collude against our will in this race to the bottom?*

*I'm not surprised that some Gen X / Gen Y / Millennials maybe don't want to play this game and Just Say No! (so long as Mum and Dad are willing to house them), nor that they feel no compunction about messing with the employers, whom they probably see as exploitative (and not without reason).*

*I think if you advertise any job at a liveable rate of pay, you'll be inundated with excellent*

*applicants who won't mess you about, because they'll really want the job and they'll know that such opportunities are vanishingly rare.*

I replied as follows:

To address some of your comments very briefly:

1. The successful candidate is, I infer, in her late 20s (one is not supposed to ask these questions at interview, particularly of women, but CVs contain clues).
2. When interviewed, she was sharing a house in Birmingham with one other person. Not desirable, possibly, but a bit better than some of the examples you quote. I believe that she now has a similar arrangement in Bristol
3. Our document controller posts have a salary range that runs into the low £30k, but what we offer a particular candidate depends largely on what they seek, provided it is the offered range, and we do account, therefore, to a degree for geography, as applicants will naturally pitch their requests at the local market rate. "Absurdly high" in this context meant salary aspirations around £40k from applicants who had no DC experience at all, who were trading down from an unrelated discipline. I'm happy to (and have) interviewed staff with interesting, but not necessarily relevant, CVs but there is no point in interviewing someone seeking 50% more than the target salary who does not appear to bring something to the party.
4. My team of DCs is nine strong, spread in a Bristol-York-London triangle. I manage seven women and two men, aged between 20-something and 60. So far as I am aware, three of them are living alone, the remainder in relationships.
5. So far as I am aware, none of the applicants was unemployed, although some were under threat of redundancy, or working their notice.

So, in this particular case, the missing applicant was already employed, and was no obligation to apply for the job. She had accepted the interview invitation, but failed to show up, and blocked our calls to find out if she was running late. That is just plain inconsiderate.

Finally, thanks for your concern about my own work/life balance. Certainly I would love more hours in a day, but my average working week is about 40h (37h contracted, so about 3h unpaid overtime), which is not unreasonable compared to what some employers might expect. The issue, if there is one, is that days out of the Derby office can be quite long. On the other days, though, it is pretty much 9-5, and I am prepared to tolerate that as a reasonable position. I was also out of work for two years from 2011-2013, so I do know how the job-seeking system works, and how depressing it is.

Catherine did me the courtesy of rounding-off the exchange:

*Thank you for taking the time to respond personally to me. Given the further information you have provided I can certainly see why you were so frustrated with both the drop-out rate and the lack of good manners. My words were based on my own experience and the direct observation of struggle and suffering around me; I am certainly heartened to hear that there are still good and fair employers out there despite the Sports Direct model of exploitation appearing to epidemic.*

*After further thought it occurred to me that I grew up in an age where jobs were advertised in newspapers and applicants wrote in to apply. It was a much smaller world then and employers generally took the trouble to write back, even if it was a Roneo'd standard rejection letter.*

*Here in the Information Age with advertising done online and applications likewise, the volume has increased and it's commonplace for employers not to let applicants know if they're unsuccessful. In one case that sticks in my mind I even attended not one but two interviews only to hear nothing further and an email enquiry a week later received no response - obviously that won't be the case with you and your company, but younger applicants will have experienced more of this than older*



*ones have and are perhaps just responding in kind? It doesn't make it right, though. I look forward to reading your editorial in due course.*

So, thank you to Catherine for that. She certainly made some interesting points, notably, I think, that older folk like me generally find the world is getting less considerate (so, don't talk to me about people who cycle on pavements, and the wrong way down one-way streets!)

For what it is worth, my recruit has turned out to be something of a star, and she is working very hard to clear the backlog left by her predecessor, whilst simultaneously doing the day job. (I have obtained agreement to provide her with some part-time temporary assistance.)

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## **MidCon and the Hallmark Inn Dining Room (Jeremy Tullett)**

Last year, we effectively ran out of gaming space at the Hallmark Hotel. There was in fact one unused table, which people seemed to overlook, but we pretty much occupied the lounge and the bar, in addition to the pre-booked meeting rooms.

We have now taken the two small syndicate rooms in the Milldale Suite, but they are not large, and will probably only hold a dozen or so people (and numbers look as they are likely to be more than 30 up on 2015).

Therefore, in order to try to alleviate some of the pressure on space in the Hallmark Hotel this year, we have taken the Hallmark Inn dining room as an additional gaming area from 10:00 on each of Saturday and Sunday.

We recognize that people may not want to be over there, but we are offering the following inducements to use the space:

- Playing space will be pre-bookable at the Hallmark Inn. This may be of particular interest to groups who wish to set up long, multi-player games in a quiet space.
- Anyone who plays some games over there for a reasonable period of time will receive a £5 voucher, which can be used at the bar of the Inn, the Hotel, or at the Spirit Games stand (maximum of one voucher per person).
- Of course, anyone playing over there will be very conveniently placed for the "bring and buy" games sale.
- A number of people who attend MidCon do actually stay at the Inn, and may find this convenient.
- The Inn bar (which is fairly limited) will be available "all day", as it is serviced from the reception desk, directly behind it. We will try to get a polypin of real ale across there.
- There are some pictures on the back page.

We also hope to create a 'controlled area' in the Garden Room for people with little, or no, experience of games conventions, which will be under the management of Dave Clasby, who joins the organizing committee for the first time this year. He will effectively block out a table for this, which will also provide an incentive for people to move across the road.

This is an experiment, but we do ask that people co-operate, as the alternatives are limited, basically being either take the conference room at the Aston Court hotel, or shift the entire convention to much larger premises, which would probably mean one of the large hotels out at East Midlands airport.

## MidCon 2016 Booking Form (Jeremy Tullett)

Name(s)			
Address			
		Tel:	
Post code			
E-mail			

**Registration Fee:** tick the appropriate box(es). Registration fees are not refundable.

	Fri/Sat/Sun (Book after 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov) £30	Fri only £15	Sat only £15	Sun only £10

### Payment for the Registration Fee (tick box)

PayPal (visit <a href="http://www.midcon.org.uk">www.midcon.org.uk</a> for details)	
Sterling cheque (made out to "MidCon Convention")	
Cash	
Transfer to "MidCon Convention", Lloyds TSB Colmore Row 30-00-03 03033129	

Please provide your name and postcode as a reference with direct transfers. We *cannot* collect convention fees from credit cards.

### Bed and breakfast prices per room per night

	Thu	Fri / Sat	Twins / doubles are available for single occupancy, at the full room rate. The convention closes 6pm Sunday, but anyone wishing to stay on Sunday night will get the Friday / Saturday room rate.  <i>Charges to your room are your responsibility, and are to be paid on departure.</i>
Hallmark Inn Single	£53.00	£53.00	
Hallmark Inn Twin / Double	£66.00	£66.00	

**Our allocation is held until mid-October: You are advised to book AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.**

After 1<sup>st</sup> November 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.

Inn Rooms Only	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	The cancellation policy of the hotel is complicated; please seek advice from a member of the <b>MidCon</b> committee if you have to cancel to minimise your financial exposure.
N <sup>o</sup> . of single rooms					
N <sup>o</sup> . of twin rooms					
N <sup>o</sup> . of double rooms					
Sharing with ...					

### Accommodation deposit (tick box)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Credit card	16 digit number:	Expiry:	You give permission for <b>MidCon</b> to pass the credit card details to the hotel to reserve your room.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheque	50% of room costs	Payable to "Hallmark Hotel"	

When complete, return this form, together with your registration fee (payable to "**MidCon** Convention") to: Jeremy Tullett, **MidCon**, 7 Midland Place, Derby, DE1 2RR.

# ManorCon XXXIV - Results

This year saw a move across the road, from John Foster Hall where we've been for the last three years, to Stamford Court. As with all changes of venues, some things were better, some were worse, but the overall impression of the committee is that attendees thought it was an improvement. We will be back in Stamford Court for 2017, and then have to make a decision as to whether to remain there, or move back to John Foster Hall. We will cover this in more detail in the 2017 Questionnaire.

ManorCon XXXIV saw only one game and seven players in the Diplomacy Tournament, and only four players in the Croquet. With both of these tournaments looking unlikely to continue in 2017, 18XX survives as the only remaining traditional ManorCon tournament.

## Diplomacy

2016 saw the Diplomacy drop to just 7 players playing one game. Unless there are signs of a resurgence at MidCon, this will therefore be the last ManorCon Diplomacy Tournament. Maybe it's apt that the tournament will end on 34...

Country	Player	Centres
Austria	Dave Simpson	7
England	Graeme Murphy	11
France	Chris Martin	1
Germany	Mick Haytack	2
Italy	Andrew Havery	5
Russia	David Norman	4
Turkey	Tony Sait	4

## Nippon

The Nippon tournament was run by Paul Grogan from Gaming Rules! and sponsored by What's Your Game. Eight players played in a two-round knockout tournament. Congratulations to Andrew Pearce for winning the tournament.

## Prodigals Club

The Prodigals Club tournament was run by Paul Grogan from Gaming Rules! and sponsored by Czech Games Edition. Eight players played in a two-round knockout tournament. Congratulations to Andrew Pearce for winning the tournament.

## Treasure Hunt

Five teams tried to Escape from Leicester, in a treasure hunt spanning 2 hours and 3 rooms. The winners were Dan Lester, Dave Percik, Chris Martin, Mark Rigby-Jones and Robin Walters. Robin has agreed to run next year's treasure hunt.

# Midnight Party

3 games - at Midnight on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Rank	Name	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Overall
1	Mike Townsend	9	6		5.00
2	Dave Holmes	6	8	5	4.75
3	Ian Wilson	7	8	3	4.50
3	John Mitchell	4	10	4	4.50
5	Steve Guest	3	6	7	4.00
6	Gail Baker	5			2.50
7	Gemma Haigh		4		2.00
8	Allan Bellamy		3		1.50
9	Chris Burnham		2		1.00
9	Dave Cowie	2		1	1.00
9	Timothy Luffingham			2	1.00
12	Oliver Riley		1		0.50
12	Stuart Malaure	1			0.50

# Pop Quiz

The Pop Quiz took a different format for 2016, with no overall winners, just a winner for every round. Congratulations to all the winning teams, whose prizes included everything from 4 halves from the bar, to a packet of Beef Jerky! Special mention to Martin Burroughs, Dave Gittins, John Gates and Ruth Clinton for winning several rounds.

# Croquet

There was a very disappointing number of entries to this year's Challenge Cup: only three people entered. Many thanks to Stuart Stafford, Andy Bate and Martin Burroughs for trying. With such a low number of entrants, the format was changed to a round robin, where each player played the other two, yielding three qualifying games. The best two players would then go forward to the Final.

The first two games involved Martin Burroughs in both, and unfortunately, he lost both matches. The results were:

Stuart Stafford beat Martin Burroughs 14-5

Andy Bate beat Martin Burroughs 14-8

This rendered the third game superfluous, and Stuart and Andy played off in the Challenge Cup Final. The result was:

Stuart Stafford beat Andy Bate 14-6

Congratulations to Stuart on winning the ManorCon Challenge trophy.

Stuart went on to play current ManorCon Champion Mick Haytack in the ManorCon Champions Final. The result was:

Mick Haytack beat Stuart Stafford 14-3

Congratulations to Mick on winning the ManorCon Champions trophy.

# 18XX

The 18XX tournament had 24 players playing 21 games, a big increase from last year. The games included three 1822, two each of 18Africa, 1824, 18MainLine and 1861, and one each of 1817, 18Dixie, 1858, 1846, 1761, 1837, 18Ard, 18BF, 1867 and 18GB. Although Danny Victor had four wins from five games, he was let down by a poor result in the fifth game. However, Lyndon Gurr had three outstanding wins and a solid result in a fourth game. Congratulations to Lyndon on winning the tournament for the second year running.

Rank	Name	Games	Wins	Score
1	Lyndon Gurr	4	3	114.92
2	Danny Victor	5	4	99.54
3	Ian D. Wilson	5	3	97.89
4	Jon Draper	6	2	89.58
5	Steve Thomas	6	2	88.94
6	Dave Berry	3	1	84.79
7	Colin Smith	2	1	77.52
8	Richard Clyne	2	0	70.77
9	Marcus Barbor	2	1	60.52
10	Jon Hopkins	4	1	59.60
11	Stephen Webb	5	0	59.03
12	Peter Eldridge	5	1	57.23
13	Ian Hayward	2	1	54.05
14	John Boocock	5	1	53.33
15	Geoff Hardingham	4	0	51.97
16	Chris Dawe	1	0	48.97
17	Hamish Hamilton	1	0	48.94
18	Paul Richards	1	0	46.64
19	Francis Tresham	2	0	37.47
20	Dave Thorby	5	0	35.15
21	Geoff Thomas	3	0	15.40
22	Helen Cheal	2	0	13.01
23	Ken Simpson	4	0	-4.38
24	Don Smith	4	0	-9.65

## Lost Property

A number of items of lost property were found at the end of the convention. The first is easy – a copy of the game “Coup”, with an address label inside the lid! Which leaves a number of smaller items:

- A brown cube. Probably either coal from PowerGrid, or an original cow from Agricola from back in the old days before cows were cow-shaped!
- A black train from Ticket to Ride

- A gold-coloured coin with “1000” in white writing on it, about 15mm in diameter.
- A transparent blue plastic counter, about 15mm in diameter.
- Four Acquire (AH edition) tiles – 2-I, 3-I, 5-A and 9-H. These were found in a ManorCon storage box, so may have been lost at an earlier ManorCon.

If any of these are yours, please contact David Norman. Contact details at the end of this article.

## Your Feedback

Thank you to everybody who filled in a feedback form. With the change of venue, your feedback was especially important so we can improve things for next year.

As always seems to be the case at ManorCon, the biggest issue was the food. Stamford Court is not designed for cafeteria-style food service, and no other convention in Stamford Court has this service. Hence it was missing a number of the basic requirements to make it work. Some of these (e.g. trays) were to some extent resolved over the weekend, while others (e.g. lack of a return location for crockery and cutlery) remained ad-hoc throughout the weekend. We have already ensured that the University are well aware of the issues, and will be raising them once again in advance of next year to ensure they are resolved.

There were also issues with differences between the meal times in the Programme Booklet, and those the University Catering Team had. Once again, this was related to the move to the new venue, with both the Convention Organisers and the University having missed chances to detect the problem before it occurred. Given how it happened, there is no reason to expect it to happen again.

Given that the bar was also an ad-hoc setup, it was relatively successful. Once again, we drank the bar dry of a number of items, so that the bar staff had to make a trip to Asda on Sunday morning to restock. And the Real Ale sold out by 4pm on Sunday – the earliest we've ever run out, so we will look to get an eleventh barrel next year.

The University did say that if there's anything they have in another bar that people want, they can get it given a couple of hours notice, including wine, other spirits, etc. Unfortunately the one thing they were asked for was the one thing that couldn't easily be brought in from another bar – draught lager. But next year, we will look to have both lager and cider on draught as well as the Real Ale.

We did also have problems with space in the bar for the Pop Quiz and Treasure Hunt. We will look at these for next year – either we hold them in another room, or move the bar. We also had issues with the size of some of the other rooms, so we will look to shuffle things about a bit to try and make everything work.

As ever, we had complaints about the temperature of the bedrooms. Unfortunately it's not something we can do anything about. The heating is turned off; the heat is purely due to the building being very effective at absorbing solar heat. We can't install air conditioning, we can't stop the sun, and we're stuck with what we have.

We also had complaints about noise coming from the John Foster bar, late at night. Next year, we will ask for rooms that are further from John Foster (but still close to the road).

But overall, the feedback was that the new venue was a definite improvement. The rooms were more spacious, easier to move between, and nicer to play games in. So we will look to confirm that in next year's questionnaire, and if confirmed, we'll look to remain there for a number of years.

## Thanks

ManorCon is run completely by volunteers. Some of those volunteers are daft enough to call themselves the committee, and spend 12 months a year organising ManorCon. But they could not do it by themselves. Therefore we'd like to thank everybody else who helped with the running of ManorCon XXXIV:

For their help on the Registration Desk: Andy Bate, David Buckley, Kath Collman, Chris Dawe, Jerry Elsmore, Mick Haytack, Karianne Fog Heen, Graham Miller, Eric Norton, Helen Payne, Richard Payne, David Robson.

For organising tournaments: Martin Burroughs, Paul Grogan, Steve Guest, Phil Hannay and Dan Lester.

For hosting the convention, and being as helpful and friendly as always, the University of Leicester.

## Rounding Things Up

Numbers were down on last year at 235. This is primarily due to EuroDipCon last year, but they were also down slightly on 2014. There were 204 on Friday, 232 on Saturday, 219 on Sunday, and 141 on Monday. The number of rooms used was 178, slightly down on 2014 and 2015. Internet bookings remained fairly consistent at 77% with 23% of advanced bookings being made postally.

We look forward to seeing you at ManorCon XXXV, one week later than 2016 – 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

To contact the committee, write to: David Norman, MANORCON, 38 Conigre Square, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8LJ, UK. Or e-mail [info@manorcon.org.uk](mailto:info@manorcon.org.uk). More information on the ManorCon website, [www.manorcon.org.uk](http://www.manorcon.org.uk).

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### **Board Games Holiday 2016 (Matt Young)**

The 4th annual Board Games Holiday at Le Pas Opton in France was enjoyed by over 30 gamers in September this year, with hundreds of games played across the week, from intense games of Blood Rage and Scythe to lighter options like Rhino Hero and Ice Cool. Competitions included scheduled tournaments of Catan and 7 Wonders, and for the first time there were ad hoc tournaments running throughout the event: Star Realms, and Code Names (in teams).

All of these were well contested, and won by newcomers to the holiday – but the Hexathlon, the ultimate test of board gaming prowess looking at each player's best six results from the latter half of the week, was dominated once again by last year's winner Harry Naylor.



Those who went to the morning bible studies and evening celebrations heard great talks from the speaker Chris Sinkinson, himself an avid gamer, who weaved in his first-hand knowledge of the latest archaeological findings from Israel into each talk.

Many this year took the opportunity to visit the nearby Puy du Fou, regularly rated as the best theme park in the world – with no roller coasters, entertainment is in the form of elaborate shows featuring hundreds of actors, stunts, special effects, and more action than you can keep track of!

The last day included a board games themed fancy dress competition, featuring a pair of Takenoko pandas, a ‘villager’ looking worryingly like he might be turning into a werewolf, and many other fine efforts – the worthy winner however was Cluedo’s ‘Miss Scarlett’, complete with all six murder weapons concealed in her hand bag. The final afternoon saw many gather for a big game of Werewolf on the bar terrace (pictured), but the games carried on into the evening and through the ferry journey home the next day. Another new relationship began this year as well, the third in four years, which is very exciting to see! It seems everyone’s looking forward to next year (11-18 September) and hoping to bring more friends.

All are welcome, as always! Please go to [springharvestholidays.com/board-game-week](http://springharvestholidays.com/board-game-week), call 01825 748318, or email [matt.young\(at\)springharvestholidays.com](mailto:matt.young@springharvestholidays.com) for more details.

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## Hallmark Inn Dining Room (Jeremy Tullett)

Here are some pictures of the space available. The banquettes will seat six persons, and the small square tables can obviously be configured into rectangular or square shapes. There is seating for about 80 people.



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## The Final Word

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who put it all together, and David Norman, who arranged for the printing and distribution.