

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: Manorcon XXXVIII and **MidCon** 2022 are on¹!

Forthcoming Conventions

UK Games Expo NEC Hilton Metropole, Birmingham 3-5 June 2022 www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk	Raiders of the Games Cupboard LIII Waterside Community Centre, Burton-upon-Trent 25 June 2022 www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk	ManorCon XXXVIII Stamford House, University of Leicester 15-18 July 2022 www.manorcon.org.uk
HandyCon Venue TBC 5-7 August 2022 (tbc) www.handycon.co.uk	Boardgames Holiday Le Pas Opton, France 12-19 September 2022 springharvestholidays.com/feature-weeks/board-games-holiday	Raiders of the Games Cupboard LIV Waterside Community Centre, Burton-upon-Trent 24 September 2022 www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk
MidCon 2022 Derby Mickleover Hotel 4-6 November 2022 MidCon.org.uk	Raiders of the Games Cupboard LV Waterside Community Centre, Burton-upon-Trent 7 January 2023 www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk	Boardgames at the Manor Otford Manor, Kent 20-22 January 2023 https://www.oakhall.co.uk/browse/manor
SoRCon Holiday Inn, Festival Leisure Park, Basildon, Essex 24-26 February 2023 www.sorcon.co.uk	Raiders of the Games Cupboard LVI Waterside Community Centre, Burton-upon-Trent 25 March 2023 www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk	BayCon 2023 Exeter Court Hotel, Kennford, Devon 12-16 April 2023 www.facebook.com/groups/baycon/

¹ Covid permitting ☺

Report on MidCon 2021 (Jeremy Tullett)

MidCon 2021 happened. We were fortunate that Covid restrictions were relatively light at that point, and did not result in any significant practical impediment to the conduct of the convention.

The potential show stopper that we had not foreseen was a last-minute change of venue from the Hallmark Midland to the Derby Mickleover Hotel. Although our 2020 event was eventually cancelled by Covid regulations, the Hallmark chain had entered into a government contract to block-book a number of its premises², an arrangement apparently made with little reference to the managers of the affected hotels. That would probably have got in the way of **MidCon 2020** anyway. The Hallmark Inn was similarly affected.

We did have a contract with the Hallmark Midland for 2021, but quite close to the event, the manager rang to say that the government contract had been extended and that he could no longer host us. However, he had arranged for the Derby Mickleover Hotel to take us on at comparable rates - an indication of how keen they are to have our business.

The Mickleover Court is about 5 miles from Derby railway station, which took us well out of easy access to the Midland Road eateries, although there are some places to eat in Mickleover itself, which is just a short walk from the hotel, and buses and taxis to the city are also available.

The great advantage of this hotel, from a logistical view, is that there is conference suite that can accommodate up to 270 people. It has a bar, and **MidCon** meals can also be served in the area, which means that we had, effectively, our own self-contained unit. Everyone who offered an opinion much preferred the facilities over those at the Hallmark Midland.

Unfortunately, because of the late change of venue, we were only able to obtain around 50 bedrooms, although a number of people were able to locate reasonably priced hotel rooms within a short drive of the venue. However, with numbers being down anyway, this was not as much of a problem as it might otherwise have been.

Numbers were, unsurprisingly, significantly down. Footfall was about 130, nearly 100 below a normal **MidCon** weekend. A few declared that the change of venue had put them off, but mostly people just didn't register, which is what we had anticipated. The Covid-nervous stayed away. We expected that those who were confident about the prevailing conditions would come, and come they did, many reporting huge excitement about being able to attend their first board games convention in a long time.

We set aside a gaming room for people who wished to play their games with face-coverings on; it remained empty throughout. Sanitiser was widely available, and tables were placed at a density that enabled something like 2m social distancing between groups.

So far as the committee is aware, nobody reported catching Covid at the event, and nobody complained about the arrangements from this perspective³.

The **MidCon** quiz was easily accommodated within the conference suite, Spirit Games once again provided a stand, and Real Ale was again on offer, providing John with the usual headache of how much to order up front, and whether any more should be ordered during the course of the event.

² It appears that the April 2022 HandyCon has been cancelled for the same reason.

³ Well, nobody who registered. One person complained that the anti-Covid arrangements were not to his satisfaction, so he would not be registering.

The Bring and Buy sale was the only part of the convention that we could not readily place in the main convention area. It did reduced business, commensurate with the reduced headcount, but nevertheless made for a frantic afternoon for John, Giles and Pete. Buyers and sellers are generally well behaved, but we would remind people that:

- The desk for recording sales and purchases works best when an orderly queue is maintained
- The start and finish times for the various sessions are to be respected
- Sellers, please do make sure that what you are selling is complete. We do occasionally get buyers reporting parts of games missing, and it is not always easy to identify the seller.
- Buyers – don't haggle with the convention committee over prices. You need to find the seller, and haggle with them.

Giles's database application makes tracking sales and purchases much easier, and I recommend it to any other convention organiser who runs a BnB stall.

The difficulty that the app does not overcome is that, while we can accept payments for games through a card reader, we can only make payments to sellers in cash or by cheque (or potentially making dozens of payments online, by Paypal).

This requires us to have a large cash float, which is an accounting nightmare, and a security risk.

We have traditionally shunted the BnB to a smaller room on the grounds of cost (every room we hire costs money, and the commission we charge on games sales is intended to offset some of that cost). Our 2021 room was just about big enough, but in 2022 we have booked 'the entire hotel', so we may have options for using a bigger space.

All credit to the hotel for agreeing to accept the transferred contract from its sister establishment, and making the event go really well. It undoubtedly helped that the manager had previously overseen us at The Midland, but it was a fresh experience for most of the staff, and they rose to the occasion.

Image of the hotel may be found at:

<https://www.bestwestern.co.uk/hotels/derby-mickleover-hotel-bw-signature-collection-84307>

MANORCON XXXVIII

Stamford House, University of Leicester. 2pm Friday 15th July – 2pm Monday 18th July 2022

After a two-year hiatus, barring any new lockdowns, ManorCon will be back in at Leicester University in 2022! For those of you who booked for 2020, your bookings have been carried forward to 2022. We will be in touch with those concerned individually to confirm the details. For everyone else, there is a booking form over the page. Online booking is also available on our website at <http://manorcon.org.uk/book.htm>

For 2022, we are at Stamford House. Long time attendees will remember this as a previous venue of ManorCon, back when we first moved from Birmingham to Leicester. Accommodation will be in the nearby halls of residence.

As ever, single accommodation is available at the convention. This year, there is a choice of en-suite or standard rooms. Standard rooms are in Lasdun. A limited number of the en-suite rooms will be in Bowder Court. Others will be further away in John Foster. **You are therefore recommended to book early to guarantee a room, and ensure that you have a shorter walk back to your room.**

The rooms will cost £50 per night for en-suite rooms and £38 for standard rooms. The cost is £4 per night extra if you don't book in advance, and there may be a limited choice between en-suite and standard rooms.

For those people who want twin accommodation, we recommend The Regency Hotel, which is just under a mile from the convention. Their website is www.the-regency-hotel.com.

ManorCon will be as close to normal as we can make it. Running from Friday lunchtime to Monday lunchtime. It will hopefully once again feature the Second Hand Game Sale on Friday and Saturday, the Pop Quiz on Saturday evening, and the Treasure Hunt on Sunday afternoon, as well as more games than you can shake a stick at. We are looking for a volunteer to run this year's Treasure Hunt. If you are interested in taking this on, please contact us using one of the options below.

On the next page, you should find a booking form. You can also download the booking form (and find lots of other ManorCon information) on the ManorCon website, www.manorcon.org.uk. Please note the booking deadline - 12th June 2022. If you need any further information, please contact us:

- Steve Jones, 59 Sudeley Walk, Putnoe, Bedford, MK41 8JH, UK (+44 (0)1234 405878)
- email us at info@manorcon.org.uk

If you've never been to ManorCon before and are wondering what it's all about, ManorCon is the largest board games convention in the UK. It's held annually in July in one of the halls of residence of Leicester University. Gamers come along for a weekend of intensive board gaming, some entering tournaments, many simply playing socially. If you've never been before, why not try it?

The aim of ManorCon is to play games and have fun, and our aim is to help you to succeed in doing both! Whether you're looking to spend a whole day playing one game of Civilization, or to play a wide range of shorter games such as Agricola, Brass: Birmingham, Dominion, Power Grid, Stone Age, Ticket to Ride, Underwater Cities, Villagers, and many more, ManorCon is the place to be. Time to try out those new games purchased during lockdown, perhaps Tapestry, Azul or Splendor. If you've never heard of any of these games, but are interested in playing games which reward good play without turning into the brain-ache of chess, with a large group of similarly interested people, then why not come along and find out what its all about?

To book, please either visit <http://www.manorcon.org.uk/book.htm> or complete the form below and return by 12th June to: Gary Duke, MANORCON, 2 Sturmeay Drive, Fleet, Hants, GU51 1GP, UK. Please make cheques payable to: **ManorCon**. If you wish to pay electronically, this can only be done using the online booking system and not via post or on the door.

This form should be returned to Gary before 12th June 2022. PRE-BOOKINGS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE. However, there will **probably** be some rooms available if you arrive and pay on the door. Please note that room prices are higher if not booked in advance.

PLEASE DO NOT USE RECORDED DELIVERY. Bookings sent by recorded delivery may be significantly delayed until Gary can get to the sorting office to collect them. If you send your booking by recorded delivery, and this causes your booking to not be received until after the deadline, then your booking will not be accepted.

The prices are subject to variation in the event of VAT changes. Cancellations may be made up to June 12th 2022 for a full refund.

It is the responsibility of delegates to look after their valuables. ManorCon cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to items.

GDPR: Details of your booking are stored on computers. We will use it for the purpose of running ManorCon, and will send them details of future conventions via QLA. We do not sell our mailing lists to any other individuals or organisations.

Please tick here if you would like information about other UK Conventions to be sent to you via email

Please sign here.....

Name:	Male/Female		
Address			
Email:			
Telephone no:			
If this will be your first time at ManorCon, please tick here: <input type="checkbox"/>			
If you are willing to help out on the registration desk, please tick here: <input type="checkbox"/>			
If you are a qualified first aider, please tick here: <input type="checkbox"/>			
<i>If non-resident, please tick to indicate which days you will be attending:</i>			
Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday <input type="checkbox"/> Monday <input type="checkbox"/>			
Registration fee: £6 for one day, £10 for the weekend. <i>(NB. If paying on the door, prices rise to £8 and £12)</i>			£
Accommodation: <input type="checkbox"/> £50 per night for an en-suite single <input type="checkbox"/> £38 for a standard room <i>(NB. If paying on the door, prices will be £4 extra per person per night)</i>	Friday	Enter £50/£38	£
	Saturday	Enter £50/£38	£
	Sunday	Enter £50/£38	£
Total enclosed:			£

MidCon 2022 (Jeremy Tullett)

When?

MidCon 2022 will take place 4-6 November 2022. The convention opens at 0900 on Friday 4th and closes at 1800 on Sunday 6th November.

We respectfully ask that you do not arrive at the registration desk before 0900 (we need to set up uninterrupted).

The 1800 finish time is nominal. A few people linger on into mid-evening, and generally the hotel does not mind this, but we can advise on any specifics at the time.

Where?

MidCon 2022 will take place at the Derby Mickleover Hotel, which is about 5 miles from Derby railway station, and on the edge of Mickleover. It is readily accessible by car from the A38 and A50. There are buses from Derby *bus* station and a taxi from the railway station costs about £10.

(We did look into having a shuttle bus service available to/from the city centre for certain periods at the weekend, but it is not an economic proposition.)

The village has a number of pubs, and an Indian restaurant (which was reported to be largely empty last year), and a Greek Grill restaurant.

Facilities

We have booked the entire hotel for 2022, which gives us 99 bedrooms, comprising:

- 52 Classic Double Rooms
- 15 Classic Twin Rooms
- 2 Executive Double Rooms
- 15 Executive Twin Room
- 4 Executive Family (two adults, one child)
- 6 Executive Family (two adults, two children)
- 5 Suite Double

All rooms are available for single occupancy. The rate table may be found below.

Alternative accommodation in the area includes The Littleover Lodge, Premier Inn Derby West, Marston's Inn Lodge and the Great Northern.

There is a full restaurant service available, and **MidCon** meals will be available.

There is also a 'spa'

Gaming Space

The conference wing contains seven rooms, which can (according to the hotel) accommodate 270 people. There is also a 1st floor balcony area laid to small tables and chairs for quieter, smaller games. Additionally, there is a small public bar area with a few tables, but may be best to avoid it as the restaurant will still be available to the public (as was the case at the Hallmark Midland), and they may wish to use that space.

In other words, there is plenty of space to accommodate a larger **MidCon** than we have ever actually achieved.

Parking

Parking is free to people attending the convention, but you must register the car at reception, or you'll be presented with a hefty parking penalty.

What are the Registration Fees for MidCon 2022?

Weekend pass (purchase before 24 October): £25

Weekend pass (purchase after 24 October, or on-the-door): £30

Friday only: £15

Saturday only: £15

Sunday only: £10

How do I Register for MidCon 2022?

- PayPal via **midcon.org.uk** and the link to the convention booking system
- BACS transfer to "MidCon Convention", Lloyds TSB Colmore Row 30-00-03 03033129
- Sterling cheque (made out to "MidCon Convention") or cash, posted to: Jeremy Tullett, **MidCon**, 7 Midland Place, Derby DE1 2RR

What Does a Bedroom Cost?

Convention rates, which apply Friday night and Saturday night only, are:

Room Type	Single Occupancy per night	Double Occupancy per night
Classic Double Room	£75.00	£87.00
Classic Twin Room	£75.00	£87.00
Executive Double Room	£85.00	£97.00
Executive Twin Room	£85.00	£97.00
Executive Family 3	£95.00	£107.00
Executive Family 4	£95.00	£107.00
Suite Double	£105.00	£117.00

(Presumably family rooms attract a further £12 per night per child, to cover breakfast.)

Booking Conditions

- Bookings must be for two (or more) nights.
- Rooms are also available on the Thursday night and the Sunday night, but **NOT** at the discounted rates shown.

How do I Book a Bedroom?

The Derby Mickleover Hotel is a part of the Best Western confederation, so rooms can be booked through Best Western central reservations, but this caused some difficulties last year (central seemed to be largely unaware of the event), so we recommend the following:

Book directly at the hotel. This can be done by emailing info@derbymickleoverhotel.co.uk and making clear that the booking is for **MidCon**, and providing them with your name, room requirements and contact details.

You can also call to make the booking on 01332 521234, and making the employee aware that they are booking into **MidCon**.

A New Relationship: Living with a Cat

Shortly before *MidCon* 2021 I inherited a cat.

My mother had previously considered me an unsuitable person to own a cat⁴, which proposition immediately had me determined to prove otherwise, at least to my satisfaction. In any case, my brother already has three, and didn't want any more.

Before he went from a cat shelter to my mother, Gizmo had been company for a person confined to a wheelchair, possibly for many years. He was only with my mother for about six months before he came to me. His records claim that he is 17 years old, which apparently makes him geriatric in cat terms, although he seems pretty sprightly. He is a black cat, but is undoubtedly going grey (and balding too), and appears to have a touch of arthritis in one hip. One might say he has now retired from being an official companion cat to a co-occupant of my house.

On arrival here, he sussed out where all of the interesting corners are, where food is to be provided, and where the warm spots are. This took an afternoon (we didn't let him out side for a fortnight).

The new accommodation apparently being to the required standard, Gizzo then decided that things were going to be done his way. This included jumping on to the bed at 5am, and demanding breakfast.

Now, if you know me at all well, you will understand that this sort of domineering behaviour was not going to be tolerated, and I have gradually been able to re-establish control of my own house, to the point that he and I appear to have agreed that neither of us is really in charge. We share the property. He can wake me as early as he likes, but I'll go back to sleep, until I decide it is time to be getting up⁵. I have also learned how to discourage him from sitting on my computer while I am working, and how to discourage him from trying to share my dinner, when there's a perfectly good meal for him in the kitchen (even if mine is more interesting, both to me, and, I guess, to him).

He is now busy trying to establish his territory outdoors, which is quite a challenge, as this is a high cat-density area. He is not, in fact, a very dominant cat (he is modestly sized, and he has no teeth!), and his strategy appears to be to bluff by glaring at the opposition, rather than using physical violence or making that yowling that competitive cats make. So far as I can tell, he seems to be pretty much undisputed top cat of the area backing the rears of the four terraced houses of which mine is one, and he's doing a pretty good job of at least establishing that the fronts are an 'area of interest' for him.

He is undoubtedly a sweetie. The cat-sitters and the cattery staff all think he's lovely, and he seems to be developing a fan club.

But don't tell him. It would go to his head.

The Final Word

This issue of *The Queen's Lane Advertiser* was brought to you by: Jeremy Tullett, 7 Midland Place, Derby DE1 2RR (Tel: 01332-385322 Email: jeremy.tullett(at)talktalk.net, who put it all together, and David Norman, who arranged for the printing and distribution.

⁴ Largely because my work and personal arrangements can mean that I am not always at home either during the day, or over night.

⁵ This can be quite a challenge when he rubs noses, and purrs in your face.