

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

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Forthcoming Conventions

Raiders of the Game Cupboard XXXVIII Waterside Community Centre Heath Road Burton-upon-Trent DE15 9LF 25 March 2017 10am-8pm www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk	Swan Con 2017 The Swan Hotel, Bucklow Hill, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 6RD 30 March - 2 April 2017. Chris Geggus – geggus (at) sky.com	TringCon XXXIV Marsworth Village Hall Marsworth, Nr. Tring, Bucks Saturday 1 April 2017 tringcon(at)fwtwr.com www.fwtwr.com/tringcon
Pasteboard and Plastic Saltdean Scout Hut, Brighton Saturday 8 April 2017 Details: http://tinyurl.com/3ex38k Map: http://tinyurl.com/ybq7ng	BayCon 2017 Exeter Court Hotel Kennford Devon 19-23 April 2017 https://www.facebook.com/groups/baycon/	UK Games Expo NEC Hilton Metropole Birmingham 2 - 4 June 2017 richard(at)ukgamesexpo.co.uk www.UKGamesExpo.co.uk
WorldDipCon St John's College, Oxford 7-9 July 2017 wdc2017.com	Raiders of the Game Cupboard XXXIX Waterside Community Centre Heath Road Burton-upon-Trent DE15 9LF 24 June 2017 10am-8pm www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk	Summer StabCon Britannia Hotel Stockport 7-9 July 2017 bookings (at) stabcon.org.uk http://stabcon.org.uk https://www.facebook.com/events/247185529036551/
ManorCon XXXIV Stamford Court, University of Leicester 21-24 July 2017 info(at)manorcon.org.uk www.manorcon.org.uk	The Great Indoors Event Arrow Valley Visitor Centre Redditch B98 0LJ www.greatindoorsevent.uk 29 July 2017	Pasteboard and Plastic Saltdean Scout Hut, Brighton Saturday 29 July 2017 Details: http://tinyurl.com/3ex38k Map: http://tinyurl.com/ybq7ng
Boardgames Holiday Le Pas Opton, France 11-18 September 2017 Springharvestholidays.com/boardgame-week	Raiders of the Game Cupboard XL Waterside Community Centre Heath Road Burton-upon-Trent DE15 9LF 23 September 2017 10am-8pm www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk	TringCon XXXV Marsworth Village Hall Marsworth, Nr. Tring, Bucks Saturday 30 September 2017 tringcon(at)fwtwr.com www.fwtwr.com/tringcon
Pasteboard and Plastic Saltdean Scout Hut, Brighton Saturday 25 November 2017 Details: http://tinyurl.com/3ex38k Map: http://tinyurl.com/ybq7ng	Boardgames at the Manor Otford Manor TN15 6XF 1-3 December 2017 www.oakhall.co.uk/manor office(at)oakhall.co.uk	Handycon Holiday Inn High Wycombe M40 Jcn 4 19-21 January 2018 handycon.co.uk

Editorial (Jeremy Tullett)

I cannot remember now how, but I recently became aware of the London Diplomacy Club (details in the section following this one), and, having a quiet weekend in prospect, signed up for their event on 29th January, despite engineering work on the railway, which meant that East Midlands trains were taking the scenic route to London, through Rutland (and scenic it is too – the line passes over a long viaduct with expansive view on either side over the Rutland countryside), which turned a 100 min trip, into one not much under 2 ½ hours.

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One of the bad things about playing regularly with people you know is that you understand pretty well how they are going to behave, and you can get on with the tactical elements of Diplomacy without having to worry too much about whether or not to trust your neighbour.

Hence, it was refreshing for me to turn up to a room full of people about whom I knew nothing, and have to get back to basics. Marvin was explaining the rules to some novices when I arrived, and he asked me to assist as an ‘expert player’ – so that was my cover blown. No point in trying to pretend I knew nothing about the game. (No heckling from the back, please.)

The numbers fell awkwardly, and I think Marvin reached a satisfactory solution in trying to pair off the less experienced players with people who had some understanding of the game - but I got to play on my own.

Myself, I think I would have rigged the draw slightly so that Marvin and I were not neighbours, as the fact that we both knew that we knew the game well might have distracted us from being more supportive of the other players.

However, it was most entertaining having him repeatedly avoid giving any sort of commitment to any kind of tactical or strategic agreement with me, even if having a non-committal Austria, a possibly over-ambitious Russia and an Italy going for an early western push all added to the complexity of my Turkish corner.

Having secured an early agreement with Russia not to open to BLA (and I was surprised that it worked), Austria’s equivocation left me thinking that the way to go was to try to break out into the WMS and kick down Italy’s back door. However, Austria’s studied neutrality towards that plan, followed by a Russian stab, put paid to that rather quickly.

Fortunately, Marvin had to leave his protégé for a domestic problem, and, Russia having put a fleet into BLA, plus a fleet build of Sev rather saved my position. As my forces dwindled to one army in Smy, I was able to sit quietly there, as Russian fleets in Arm and Ank, and an Austrian fleet in Con could not actually force an elimination.

For a spell of three, and maybe more, seasons, Austria could have forced Rum and Bul from the rapidly growing Russian empire with no comeback at all, which would have relieved Germany no end, as the Bear expanded on two fronts. However, when Austria did finally attack, the Russian collapse was spectacular, the attack happily coinciding with a push from an expanding French empire. (Germany was by now effectively, and soon actually, out of the game.) It is very difficult for Russia successfully to run a campaign on two fronts, as there is not quite enough materiel to plug the gaps in both places. When the collapse starts, it just accelerates.

However, in the ensuing melee, I was able to regain one of my centres and finish in fifth with Ank and Smy in my possession, thus avoiding the ignominy of the most experienced player in the room being sent for an early bath, which did briefly look rather likely.

Thanks to Marvin for running this, in a most suitable location. I'll be back, provided my rather frantic social and work diaries permit. In the meantime, I believe that at least three of us have signed up for WorldDipCon in Oxford, so we can renew our acquaintance then.

The London Diplomacy Club (Marvin Fried)

We [Marvin Fried, Conrad Woodring] have been very concerned about the decline of FtF Diplomacy, and despite the power of the internet to reach the world, we weren't able to get a handful of people together to play even a shorthanded game of Diplomacy. This is why Conrad and I created the London Diplomacy Club, which hosts training and gaming sessions at the London Business School and the London School of Economics (two institutions with which we are affiliated and can therefore obtain space in).

The aim of the group is to drive up internet interest in FtF Diplomacy, encourage participation, teach the game, and host competitive gaming events. We started this effort just over a year ago, and have since grown to 65 members hosted on a public Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1170655716320608/>

If you care about the future of FtF Diplomacy, I encourage you all to join. Most of the members are new players. Experienced players such as myself, Conrad, and a few others train and mentor players as they take their first steps in Diplomacy. Some decide that it's not for them and leave the group, but all 65 members are there because they want to be. It also brings access to Diplomacy to the people who might find the UK Diplomacy and other similar Facebook sites somewhat cliquish or intimidating.

If we do not encourage, train, and bring new people in to participate, FtF Diplomacy has indeed had its day. With Yorkshire DipCon not taking place at all and Mindsports and Manorcon down to one board (from around 7 last year at Manorcon!), I'd say we are facing a real crisis. Sure, the French, Italians, Dutch, and certainly the Americans will keep playing, but in the UK we are going to struggle.

The London Diplomacy Club was built as a vehicle whereby new talent can be brought in, trained up, and able to feel confident enough (and like the game enough) to participate in tournaments or face-to-face games we, or others, host.

So far, we have had a training & gaming session once every 1.5 months or so, for a year now. This [2016] autumn we have had one every month. There is clearly interest, but it takes a lot of work to talk about it, encourage people to sign up, encourage people to come, and then encourage them to play more than once. Most love it, some don't. That's ok, but it's up to us as established Diplomacy players to teach others and encourage them.

I offer a centralized space and take care of the logistics to make it happen on a regular basis, in the UK's highest population concentration and with the best possible transit links. One of our most regular attendees is a formerly only online player who now comes up every time from well outside Brighton (changing trains three times) in order to attend.

We offer 1 hour training followed by usually a 2-3 hour game, cut-off date depending on whether people want to play to 1905 or 1906/7. Longest games we play are till 1908, which last for around 4 hours (5 if you include the training bit).

So please help Conrad and me. Sign up, spread the word, encourage people to sign up on the LDC page on Facebook, and participate yourselves if you are able! Our medium term goal here is to encourage all players in our club to join the World Diplomacy Championship in 2017 because of the amazing opportunity it presents, but beyond that to have a sufficient 'critical mass' of people who play and love the game enough to come together at a week or two notice to play competitively but for fun!

Board Games Holiday 11-18 September 2017 (Matt Young)

Since its inception in 2013 with about 10 gamers, the Board Games Holiday in France has been steadily growing - about 15, then 20 and most recently 30 gamers in 2016.

For 2017, unprecedented early bookings are making it look like 40 or more people will be coming to play games for the 11-18th September, at the Spring Harvest Holidays site Le Pas Oton in the beautiful Vendée region of western France. They include returning guests, as well as a large number of members of clubs in Sheffield and Yorkshire. As always, there are also people coming who don't yet know anyone on the holiday - all are instantly made to feel welcome, and there are many options for travelling together with others, and/or sharing accommodation very economically. Please search 'board games holiday', email [matt.young\(at\)springharvestholidays.com](mailto:matt.young(at)springharvestholidays.com) or call 01825 748318 to find out more.



Fundraising in Armenia (Eleanor Parnell)

You may recall that at MidCon 2015, Eleanor Parnell was raising funds, through the agency of a competition to 'name the game', to enable her travel to Armenia with the Girl Guides and carry out some voluntary work.

I am very pleased to say that Eleanor has provided a report on the activities that many of you kindly supported, and here it is:

Last year I was raising money for a Girl Guiding North West England trip to Armenia over the summer. I am proud to say that I successfully raised the £1180 to go to Armenia and had a great time. We went to Armenia for two weeks from the 23rd July to 6th August, the first few days comprised of many 'tourist style' tour days to places such as seeing the 'Lady of Armenia' statue, visiting 'Lake Sevan' - Armenia's only lake, learning about the Armenian Genocide and travelling to various cathedrals all over the country. We also got to see Karahunj, which is Armenia's very own stone circle.

On the 28th July we travelled to Kurtan, which is a small village in Armenia where we had a week-long camp with some Armenian and French scouts. This was an unforgettable experience for me especially as it was the first time that I met international members of WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts). Over the week at camp we enjoyed different Armenian and Russian delicacies, comprising of three meals a day all featuring two 4" square, 1" thick slices of bread. We also enjoyed singing and dancing in the pouring rain on the few nights there were thunderstorms in this hot country, while the French and Armenian scouts looked at us as if we were mad.

Over the week on camp we visited one of Armenia's national parks, abseiled down a three-storey building out of a window and took part in a community action project. This project involved splitting the guides and scouts into groups of three and rotating the groups around the three activities. The group I was in began with clearing the garden of the village primary school of weeds and spiky plants and repainting the fence around the garden. We then took our turn to look after the pre-schoolers that attended the school; we played many games like duck, duck goose etc. We finished up by going to the small village play area and removed all the weeds from the ground.

While we were on the camp we tested out guiding and scouting knowledge with various activities. We tied many different knots, learnt how to start fires with tin foil and went on walks using our knowledge of what various signs and symbols meant. We also had a quiz testing our knowledge of guiding history including Lord Baden-Powell himself. After the camp we travelled back to the capital, Yerevan, where we ran into some of the Armenian scouts we had met at camp and then back to the hostel where we slept ready for a busy next two days.

The next day, the 5th of August, we went on another tour visiting Garni (a village with a classical temple), Geghard (a medieval monastery) and a lavish bread-baking pit. This baking style included a woman stretching out dough on a pillow and hitting the pillow against the inside of a hot metal pit. This was then left for 20 seconds or so and removed. We then came back to Yerevan on the tour bus and went to our favourite restaurant we had found there 'square 1'. We finished our last night by going and viewing the colourful fountains in the political square with some of the scouts from camp and returned to our hostel to pack and get ready for our flight home at 4am.



Lilit, the Armenian international communicator and the main leader of the international camp, came to the airport to see us before she left to ensure that we all got to the airport happily with our belongings ready for our flights. She also said goodbye and gave us each a badge for coming to Armenia and a hug to say goodbye. It's safe to say we were all an emotional mess after that farewell. Then we got our planes (both delayed of course) back to London, the Heathrow express, the tube and then the train back to Manchester where we met our families and went our separate ways, all with two weeks worth of luggage.

Our Community Service Project

While we were in the small village of Kurtan on camp we did a lot of work to improve the condition of the primary school and the local park as part of our community service project. We began by clearing the pre-schoolers playground of all the sharp plants that could hurt them and fixing up the fence so it looked like new. Next we spent time with the pre-schoolers getting to know them and playing some games while other groups continued working on the preschool. After we said goodbye to the kids we went to the village playground and tidied it up, removing all the rubbish and weeds, we also trimmed back the out of control hedges.



Once we had finished working on the school it was nearly the end of our camp and time to leave for Yerevan. This meant that it was time to organise the support for the NUGGS (Armenia's National Union of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts). We had decided to bring an extra two suitcases from England with us, full of craft items such as beads and loom bands, as well as three 6-man tents and a 3-man tent, which we then donated. We also gave away some of our clothing as the people in the villages of Armenia are very poor compared to the rich people from the capital.



Because of this difference in what people can afford it tends to only be people who live in the capital or other major cities that can afford to go on camping trips. For this reason we donated all of the extra money we had raised as a group to NUGGS after we had returned home. This was around £600, which will go a long way to helping guiding and scouting develop across Armenia in the years to come.

MidCon 2016 Report (Jeremy Tullett)

The total number of registrations for MidCon 2016 was around 240, about the same number as we recorded in 2015.

Two innovations were trialled: we took the dining room in the Hallmark Inn to provide extra space for gamers, and Dave Clasby ran a table for first-timers to get them used to the idea of how MidCon works, and boardgames conventions in general.

Despite offering a small incentive for people to use the Hallmark Inn dining room, we found that a number of delegates elected to go over without inducement, and appreciated that relative quiet and space that was available to them. I don't think that there were ever more than 20 or so people over there, but that was sufficient to avoid the hunt for table space in the hotel that happened at points in 2015. It was noticeable that the lounge / bar area in the main hotel was also less obviously packed with games. I count that trial as a success.

Dave Clasby's table was not as well used as I think that we might have anticipated, but appeared to be appreciated by those that partook of the offering, so it is probably worth retaining that for 2017.

The committee is not aware of any major problems that arose, and everyone seemed to be well disposed to the event, judging by such feedback as we received. The Bring 'n' Buy and Quiz were as popular as ever – looking at the queues for the former, there are evidently many people who anticipate bagging a bargain, and I myself sold a number of items that I didn't think would sell at all, which just goes to show ... well, something, I am sure.

MidCon 2017 is in the diary for 10-12 November 2017 (another weekend with two two-minute silences for Armistice Day), but no contract is in place yet. In 2016, the *total* number of bedrooms sold between the two sites was more than are available in the Hallmark Hotel, so booking the entire building for MidCon (which would enable us to use the dining room for games, for example), starts to look feasible, provided that the finances work out. I'll be opening negotiations with the Events Team shortly.

MidCon 2016 Lost and Found

Somebody purchased a game from Spirit Games for £18.99, and left it behind, still shrink-wrapped. It is a card-based game with haulage as its theme. If it is yours, I can arrange to have it sent to you.

Somebody purchased a game (B_____ B_____) from Spirit games, which cost £10. They handed over £20, but walked off without their change. Spirit will arrange to get your change to you, if you can identify yourself and the game.

I also still have some items left behind at previous years' events. I don't hold them forever – they generally end up being sold at the Bring 'n' Buy, the proceeds going into the MidCon bank account.

Undoubtedly, some of these items have been 'dumped' as failed sales at the Bring 'n' Buy, but if you feel you are missing something, do let me know. We have reunited a number of items with their owners over the years.

Manorcon XXXV (Mark Stretch)

MANORCON XXXV

Stamford Court, University of Leicester. 2pm Friday 21st July – 2pm Monday 24th July 2017

Following on from last year's successful convention, ManorCon will once again be held at the University of Leicester. The gaming halls will remain at Stamford Court with accommodation over the road.

Please note, ManorCon does not start until 2pm on Friday. In recent years, people have been arriving earlier and earlier, to the extent that it has started to interfere with the convention preparation on Friday morning. The University need to adapt the venue to our set up and thus it is unlikely that there will be space available for anyone arriving before 2pm.

As ever, single accommodation is available at the convention. All John Foster Hall rooms are en-suite rooms. These will cost £38 per night, and £8 per night extra if you don't book in advance. As always, you are therefore recommended to book early to guarantee a room.

For those people who want twin accommodation, we recommend The Regency Hotel, which is just under a mile from the convention. The contact details are: The Regency Hotel, 360 London Road, Stonygate, LE2 2PL; 0116 270 9634. If you want to take this option, we recommend booking early, as it has been known to fill up on ManorCon weekend. Their website is www.the-regency-hotel.com.

ManorCon will be pretty much the same as the successful formula we've had in previous years. Running from Friday lunchtime to Monday lunchtime, it will have all the regular tournaments, plus one or two possible new ones, depending on the success (or otherwise) of the latest new game releases. It will 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.

Tournaments will include 18XX and Midnight Party. If there is a tournament that you would like us to run, please contact a member of the committee and we'll try to fit it in. There will also be plenty of non-tournament games on offer far too numerous to mention!

There is, of course, a bar, and we are working to make sure that the Real Ale is up to standard.

Included with this issue of QLA, 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 - 17th June 2017. If you need any further information, please feel free to contact us:

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

The Final Word

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