

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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- Progress report for ManorCon
- Booking form for **MidCon**

Forthcoming Conventions

Castlecon 2018 Flanesford Priory, Goodrich, Ross on Wye, HR9 6HZ. 12-19 May 2018 gmiller.spruce(at)btinternet.com https://boardgamegeek.com/guild/2397	UK Games Expo NEC Hilton Metropole, Birmingham 1-3 June 2018 www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk	Raiders of the Game Cupboard XLIII Waterside Community Centre Heath Road Burton-upon-Trent DE15 9LF 23 June 2018 www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk
ManorCon XXXVI Stamford Court, University of Leicester 20-23 July 2018 info(at)manorcon.org.uk www.manorcon.org.uk	The Great Indoors Parkside Suite Market Street Bromsgrove B61 8DA 28-29 July 2018 www.greatindoors.co.uk	Handycon 4 Holiday Inn Manor Lane Maidenhead SL6 2RA 10-12 August 2018 Handycon.co.uk
Boardgames Holiday Le Pas Opton, France 10-17 September 2018 Springharvestholidays.com/board-game-week	Raiders of the Game Cupboard XLIV Waterside Community Centre Heath Road Burton-upon-Trent DE15 9LF 22 September 2018 www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk	Castlecon 2018 Flanesford Priory, Goodrich, Ross on Wye, HR9 6HZ. 22 September – 6 October 2018 gmiller.spruce(at)btinternet.com https://boardgamegeek.com/guild/2397
TringCon Marsworth Village Hall Marsworth, Nr. Tring, Bucks Saturday 29 September 2018 tringcon(at)fwtwr.com www.fwtwr.com/tringcon	Swan Con 2 The Swan Knutsford Cheshire 11-14 October 2018 geggus(at)sky.com	MidCon The Hallmark Hotel Derby DE1 2SQ 2-4 November 2018 MidCon.org.uk
SoRCon 12 Holiday Inn Cranes Farm Road, Waterfront Walk Festival Leisure Park Basildon SS14 3DG 22-24 February 2019 Doors open 10am Friday www.sorcon.co.uk	MidCon The Hallmark Hotel Derby DE1 2SQ 8-10 November 2019 MidCon.org.uk	MidCon The Hallmark Hotel Derby DE1 2SQ 13-15 November 2020 MidCon.org.uk

Editorial (Jeremy Tullett)

Those of you employed by large corporations have doubtless had training in Equality and Diversity, largely because the law in these matters is quite strict and frequently applied – it is illegal to discriminate against the ‘protected characteristics’ of: (1) age, (2) being or becoming a transsexual person, (3) being married or in a civil partnership, (4) being pregnant or on maternity leave, (5) disability, (6) race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, (7) religion, belief or lack of religion/belief, (8) sex or (9) sexual orientation.

Well presented, these training sessions can be quite interesting, particularly when discussing indirect discrimination, and the session that I attended was helped along with the aid of various anecdotes, including the circumstances under which congratulating a busty lady on her large melons may *not* be construed as harassment or discriminatory behaviour.

New on the scene, we now have the concept of ‘unconscious bias’, which is being promoted by some pressure groups as a reason why various ‘minorities’ don’t get the jobs that they deserve – and, hot on their heels, come various training consultants offering to provide education to staff about how to recognise it, and avoid it.

Now, let me be clear, the phenomenon clearly exists. Most people know of ‘confirmation bias’ – the mechanism by which one tends to select data from data sets that supports one’s world view, and it is objectively proven that (for example) interviewers tend to select candidates like themselves, all other things being more or less equal, usually quite unconsciously.

In an interesting study (I cite this one¹, but others are available), researchers have shown that training in this area appears largely ineffective, and, indeed may make matters worse. Few people have ever set out, in a measurable manner, what the training is intended to achieve, and therefore have never measured its effectiveness, either by reference to the trainees or to those with whom they interact.

As one of a scientific leaning, it is fun to poke holes in the so-called social sciences, and the willingness of HR departments to espouse doubtful causes and subject staff to doubtful education in them.

Lest you think this kind of loose thinking is not relevant to you, let me ask if you have ever been asked to complete a personality test as part of a job interview or promotion panel. The Myers-Briggs (MBTI) is a popular one, but others exist.

It is evident to anyone who has met these that it is likely that one’s answers will vary over time, according to one’s mood, so no rational person would ever take the results as a fixed and accurate measure of anyone’s personality, however fond of the tests your local “talent management” team might be for assessing interview candidates. (It is, however, generally accepted that they give a reasonable view of an individual’s behavioural *tendencies*.)

It may therefore come as a surprise to you that the validity of the results, and indeed their general utility, is strongly contested², not least because most of the supportive evidence comes from the Myers-Briggs foundation itself.

So the next time someone inflicts a personality test on you, or makes attendance at a politically-correct training course mandatory, you could try asking what objective evidence there is that there is any value to the activity. You won’t win any friends in HR, but you might have an entertaining conversation.

Jeremy. ISTJ. Maybe.

¹ *Unconscious bias training: An assessment of the evidence for effectiveness*. Atewologun, Cornish and Tresh.

² The Wikipedia page on the Myers Briggs Type Indicator is a useful starter-for-ten on why psychologists treat it with grave suspicion.

TringCon is dead; long live TringCon! (John Harrington)

Once upon a time, there was a one-day gaming event held in Tring founded by postal gaming colossus Alan Parr.

After running the con for a few years, he passed the baton on to another postal gaming leviathan, Keith Thomasson, who moved it to Marsworth, which is near Tring – so the con really should have been called NearTringCon.

Like his predecessor, Keith continued the fine tradition of wandering around the con, not actually playing a game [Like the chair of **MidCon**, then? Ed.], which made many of us think his main interest was in the logistics, the provision of coffee, tea and biscuits (all covered by the convention fee) and the splendid afternoon buffet (worth the price of admission alone).

Well, it turns out that even Keith's patience can wear out and he decided to stop running (Near)TringCon but happily the baton has been passed on again.

In just about all other respects, the set-up is the same. It is a one-day event, held twice a year in the Marsworth Millennium Hall. The cost is £15 and, as alluded to above, this includes free biccies, hot beverages and an afternoon buffet spread of cold meats, cheeses, pates, quiches, sausage rolls, cakes, crisps, grapes and more cakes.

The April 7 event, unfortunately, clashed with BayCon so attendance was way down on the 70 or so people who normally attend but there were at least 20 people there by my estimate, which was enough for everyone to find someone to play games with.

The 18xx gamers were noticeable by their absence but I imagine they will be back for the autumn TringCon, which is scheduled for September 29.

Should anyone care, I played Lewis & Clark (trailed in a distant fourth); Century: Spice Road (third in a group that included two people who had never played the game before); Great Western Trail (sneaked a win thanks to having a bigger top-hat than Adam Huby).

Unusually, we did not go for the traditional swift pint in the pub down the road afterwards, despite the fact that Keith Thomasson works behind the bar. Bizarrely, Keith did not show his face at the con so I imagine he had other commitments – maybe he was at BayCon?

Any road up, you've all now been reminded that TringCon still exists so if you want to attend the next one, please go to tringcon.org to register; you can pay on the door on the day.

SoRCon 11 Report (A Novice Committee Member's View) – Mark Jones

Friday 23rd February, 7.00am; a time I'd forgotten existed after I retired. Even the cats don't disturb me for food until gone eight. I grabbed a coffee before clambering into my car, which seemed to be crammed full of crates, games and notice boards.

Why was I up at such an unheard-of time? It was the first day of SoRCon 11; and for the first time, I was helping to run it. The original 'Three Musketeers' of Chris, Jonty and Lee had decided to spread the 'fun' around and added Steve and I to the committee. This turned out to be serendipitous when the flu caused one of the Old Guard to miss a day and a half of the event.

Arriving at the hotel at 8.00am, we were a little disappointed to find half our promised tables not in position. A quick discussion with the hotel operations team (who were great the whole weekend) saw tables arriving from all corners of the hotel. We quickly set up the main room: Games Library in one corner, Bring and Buy in the next, Games Corral in another. By nine, we were ready. The hotel made up for the lack of tables by giving us free breakfasts. The breakfasts here are pretty good. When free, they are delicious.

The committee was not the only thing to get bigger this year. The decision to open at 10.00am on Friday was the reason for our early start. Those extra four hours were worth having as we were very busy come 2.00pm when we used to open. In fact, we were 29 people up on last year's Friday attendance.

Altogether our numbers were up by about 30% compared to last year. Luckily, we had access to a second room next door to the main hall. It even had a game of 18xx going on in there. Truly, we have become a legitimate con!

Saturday saw me hosting my traditional game of Robo-Rally. Starting with nine players, a couple dropped out as the sheer horror of what they had let themselves in for became apparent. Much wailing and gnashing of teeth later; a winner emerged. I will now do him the disservice of not remembering his name. My excuse is that I had had to get up at seven o'clock on two consecutive days. That, and the fact that my brain was addled by over three hours of programming a robot around a death maze.

The other feature of Saturday is the (in)famous Quiz-a-Hunt. Part quiz, part puzzle, part physical, part creative, all fun. This year's highlight was getting the teams to do a Dragons' Den style pitch for a boardgame themed amusement park. Creative use of flip-charts, crayons, modelling clay and, in one case, a video; saw some interesting ideas. Chris's quiz elicited the usual moans and threats to his life as he read out the answers.

I usually relax on Sunday. Manning the desk at a con doesn't allow one that luxury. The rush of walk-ins waned but was replaced by the number of people giving us money for the Bring and Buy. The way we operate the B'n'B is that it is set up and available all weekend. If someone wants to buy something off it, they find the seller and pay them; if they can't find the seller we act as intermediary.

I still managed to get in a few games despite sitting at the desk. I made a lot of new friends too.

Overall, SoRCon 11 was a success. We tried out a few new ideas. The introduction of "Player Wanted" signs was welcomed. I have to confess that we borrowed that idea from Handycon. A marked 'Games Corral' where people could leave their crates of games seemed to prevent a clutter of games around tables.

Next year we are hoping to be bigger. We will have use of the second room all weekend, and not just Saturday and Sunday. We've already confirmed SoRCon 12 with the hotel for the 22nd to 24th of February next year (see the front page for details). I'm actually looking forward to three early mornings, honest.

MANORCON XXXVI

Stamford Court, University of Leicester. 2pm Friday 20th July – 2pm Monday 23rd July 2018

The organization for ManorCon XXXVI 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 (and the form is also in the previous QLA, or can be requested by phone/post/email – see below for contact details). Please remember that advance registration is only available until 16th 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.

The venue is the same as last year, with the main convention rooms in Stamford Court. Please note that entry will not be permitted before 12 noon on Friday.

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. 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 variety of tournaments and events.

- Midnight Party – three rounds, at midnight each evening.
- 18XX (ad-hoc – i.e. play where and when you wish); there will be trophies for 1st to 3rd.
- Pop Quiz – on Saturday evening, Dan Lester will run what he describes as the “easiest music quiz ever”.
- Treasure Hunt – This year's Treasure Hunt will be Great British Bake Off themed. Come and solve some puzzles in our tent (i.e. the bar) on Sunday afternoon. There will be cake.
- Paul Grogan from Gaming Rules! is planning to run a knockout tournament of something completely different: the 2-player 5-minute dexterity game Klask, which is vaguely similar to air hockey, but uses magnets. There will also be a variety of prototypes and recently released games to try out, including CGE's Adrenaline Team Play Expansion, Pulsar 2849, and Crime Lab.
- Games Stall – selling new games and accessories, with a show discount.
- Second Hand Games Sale – as usual, this will be open for two one-hour sessions on Friday and Saturday. Potential helpers are very much welcome – contact Steve Bailey (steve21356@ntlworld.com) for more information.

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).

As of 8th April, the following 74 people have registered:

Paul Allwood	Robert Cook	Paul Heppell	Darrell Perrins
Nina Alphey	Larry Devis	Martin Holden	Richard Ramsden
Matt Atkinson	Robert Dillon	John Hopkins	David Robson
Gary Bailey	Gary Duke	Inuka Jayasekera	Lisa Sanders
Penny Bailey	David Durant	Mark Jones	Graham Sargeant
Steve Bailey	Mark Eddy	Steve Jones	Ursula Searle
Christopher Barnett	Lee Edwards	Kevin Lee	Dave Simpson
Karl Bibby	Jerry Elsmore	Paul Luxton	Colin Smith
Alistair Bird	Mark Fearnley	Gary Lyon	Mark Stretch
Malcolm Booker	Mark Fox	Oliver MacFarlane	Ted Swalwell
Oliver Burnett-Hall	Alan Gates	Pete Mason	Dave Thorby
Peter Card	Joy Gates	Richard Minson	Daniel Tull
Adam Carter	James Goodman	Peter Mulhern	Daniel Victor
Graham Charlton	Lyndon Gurr	David Norman	Phil Ward
Helen Cheale	Hamish Hamilton	Michelle Palmer	Stephen Webb
Warren Cloake	Philip Hannay	Andy Parsons	Mark Wright
Paul Cockburn	Geoff Hardingham	Andrew Pearce	Daniel Tull
Rachel Coe	John Harrington	Nigel Pepper	
Chantal Cointot	Nick Harrison	Annie Percik	

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 8th April.

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 Gary Duke.

As usual, those who have booked rooms (and correctly paid for them in full!) will be sent Room Chits shortly before Manorcon (note that this could easily be less than a week before); if you are able to bring your Room Chit when you arrive, then you will be able to avoid queueing at the Manorcon Registration Desk. However, don't worry if you don't get or misplace yours; we can easily replace missing Room Chits!

You can 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>

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=5594179334&v=wall>

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

MidCon 2018 Registration Form

Tell us who you are:

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

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

Fri/Sat/Sun	Fri/Sat/Sun	Friday only	Saturday only	Sunday only
Book before 19 th Oct: £25	Book after 19 th Oct: £30	£15	£15	£10

Payment for the Registration Fee (tick box)

PayPal (visit www.midcon.org.uk for details)	
Transfer to "MidCon Convention", Lloyds TSB Colmore Row 30-00-03 03033129	
Sterling cheque (made out to "MidCon Convention") / Cash (delete as appropriate), posted to: Jeremy Tullett, MidCon , 7 Midland Place, derby DE1 2RR	

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

Bed and breakfast prices per room per night

	Thu / Sun	Fri / Sat	Twins / doubles are available for single occupancy, at the full room rate.
Hallmark Hotel Single	£68.00	£68.00	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 Hotel Twin / Double	£81.00	£81.00	
Hallmark Inn Single	£55.00	£55.00	
Hallmark Inn Twin / Double	£68.00	£68.00	

Please note that there will be an £4 / day parking fee, payable at the Derby Inn or Derby Midland reception.

Our bedroom allocation is held until mid-October: YOU ARE ADVISED TO BOOK AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

******* Bedrooms are now to be booked directly with the hotel *******

which avoids the possibility of your chairman making errors in requesting your room, and also enables him to reclaim his Sunday mornings in the run-up to the event.

How to book your bedroom:

1. Visit the Hallmark Hotels website.
2. Locate either the "Derby Inn" or "Derby Midland".
3. Select the nights that you require.
4. Enter the booking code MidCON.
5. The rates listed above should be applied.
6. It should also be possible to book by telephone.

Please tick as appropriate.

- I wish you *immediately* to remove my address details from the **MidCon** records. (**Note:** this will prevent us from updating you on **MidCon** progress, and sending you copies of QLA.)
- I wish you to keep my name and address records, solely for the purpose of informing me about **MidCon**, and providing me with postal copies of QLA.

MidCon and the General Data Protection Regulations May 2018 (Jeremy Tullett)

If a club collects and stores personal data on members (which means information that can identify them) it will need to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulations (commonly known as GDPR) which come into force on May 25th as part of a new Data Protection Bill, replacing the 1998 Data Protection Act.

I have carried out a review of what *MidCon* (specifically) holds, and can publish this statement.

1. The information that you provide when registering for *MidCon* will be used by the convention for purposes only in connection with the running of the *MidCon* convention. That is:
 - communicating with you by post, telephone or email about the convention
 - passing postal and email addresses to the holder of the QLA address database.
 - *MidCon* will never disclose your personal information for any other purpose without your explicit permission
2. Emailed data are stored on a personal laptop, and data in paper format in a folder, and may be provided to *MidCon* committee members by email or telephone when it is needed to facilitate the running of the convention and to provide the benefits of the convention to you.
3. All paper records (which is where most of the address and contact data held by *the convention* are stored) are destroyed in a cross-cut shredder 12 months after the conclusion of the particular *MidCon* to which they refer.
4. Your details can be removed from our stored records within 28 days of a written request to the chair of the *MidCon* committee.
5. You have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if you believe there is a problem with the convention's handling of your data.

An opt-in box will be provided on future versions of the *MidCon* registration form (the law does not come into force until 25th May). Note that persons who do not tick the box will *no longer receive copies of QLA*, as permission for me to pass their address details to the keeper of the QLA database will be assumed to have been withdrawn.

The Final Word

This issue of The Queen's Lane Advertiser was brought to you by:

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