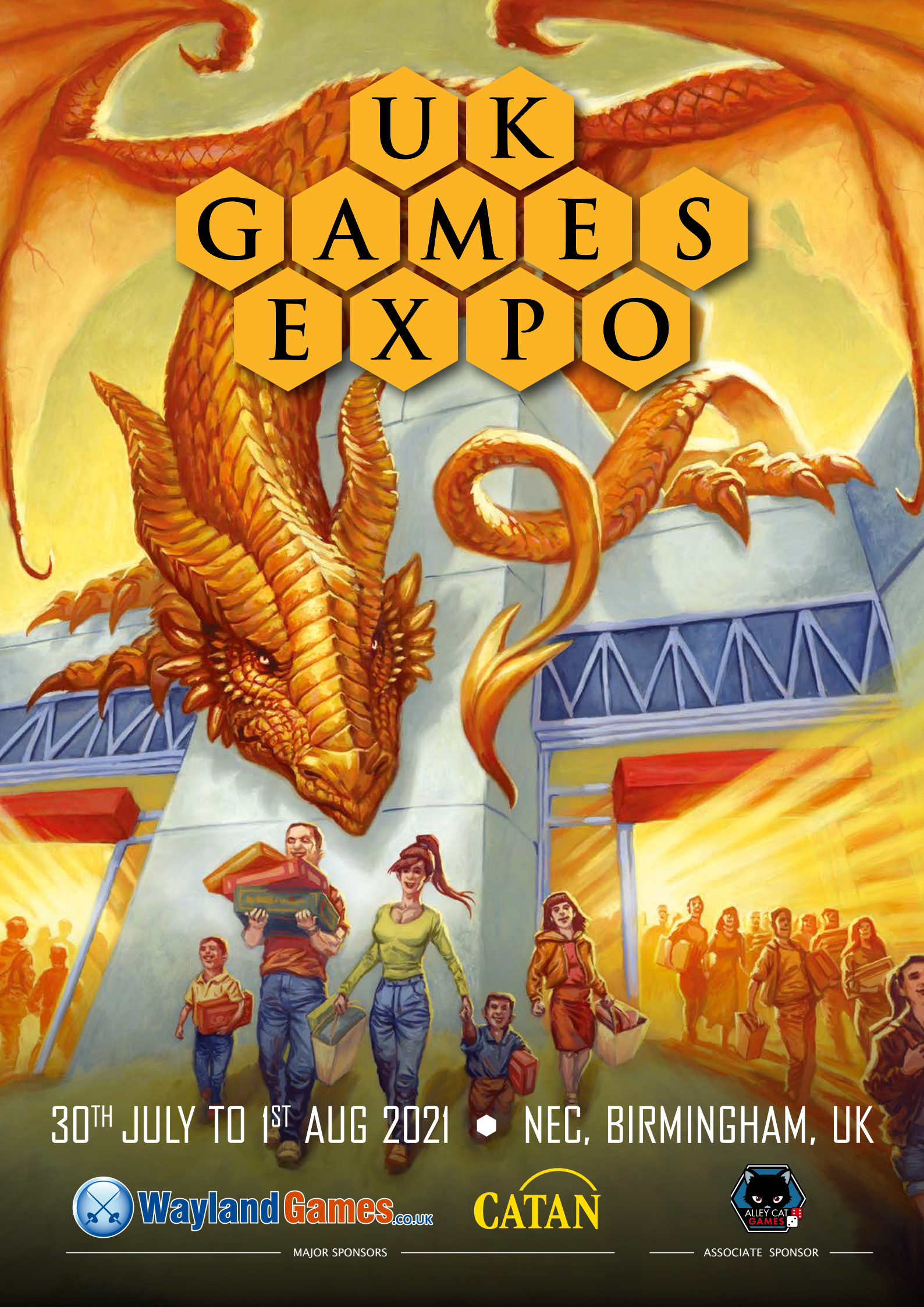


UK GAMES EXPO



30TH JULY TO 1ST AUG 2021 • NEC, BIRMINGHAM, UK



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ASSOCIATE SPONSOR



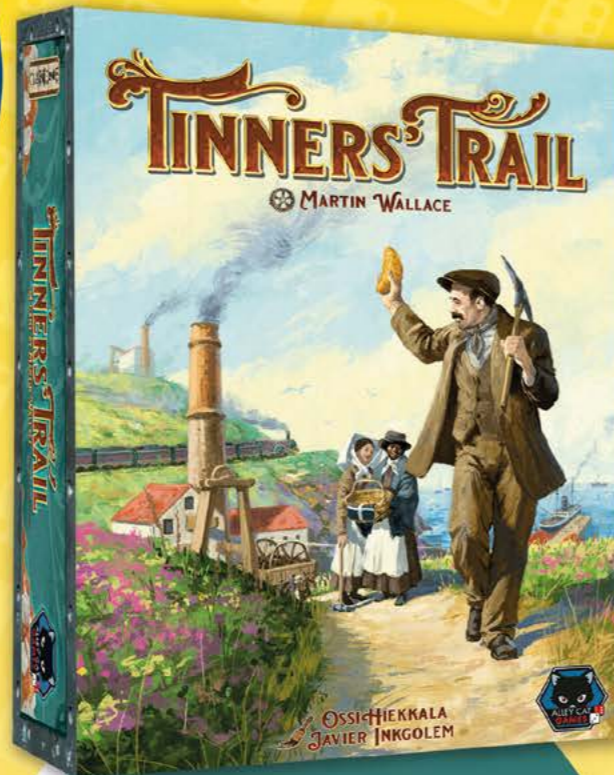
**FEATURED
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ON SALE
AT UKGE
2021**



A true medium weight,
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A different game every time.

Battle minions, level up your
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AT STAND
2 - 502

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OPENING TIMES

TRADE HALLS

Friday: 9.00am - 6pm
Saturday: 9.00am - 6pm
Sunday: 9.00am - 4pm

OPEN GAMING AND TOURNAMENT SPACE IN NEC HALL 3

Thursday: 7pm - 11pm
Friday: 9am - Midnight
Saturday: 9am - Midnight
Sunday: 9am - 6pm

ROLEPLAYING ROOMS

Friday: 9am - Midnight
Saturday: 9am - Midnight
Sunday: 9am - 7pm


SEMINARS

Open during scheduled sessions -
see page 19.

LIVE SHOWS

Open during scheduled sessions -
see page 14.

If you want to attend any events,
go to the event desk at the NEC
Hall 3 to buy your tickets.

 **HOW TO GET HELP
OR RAISE CONCERNS**
see page 6



#UKGAMESEXPO

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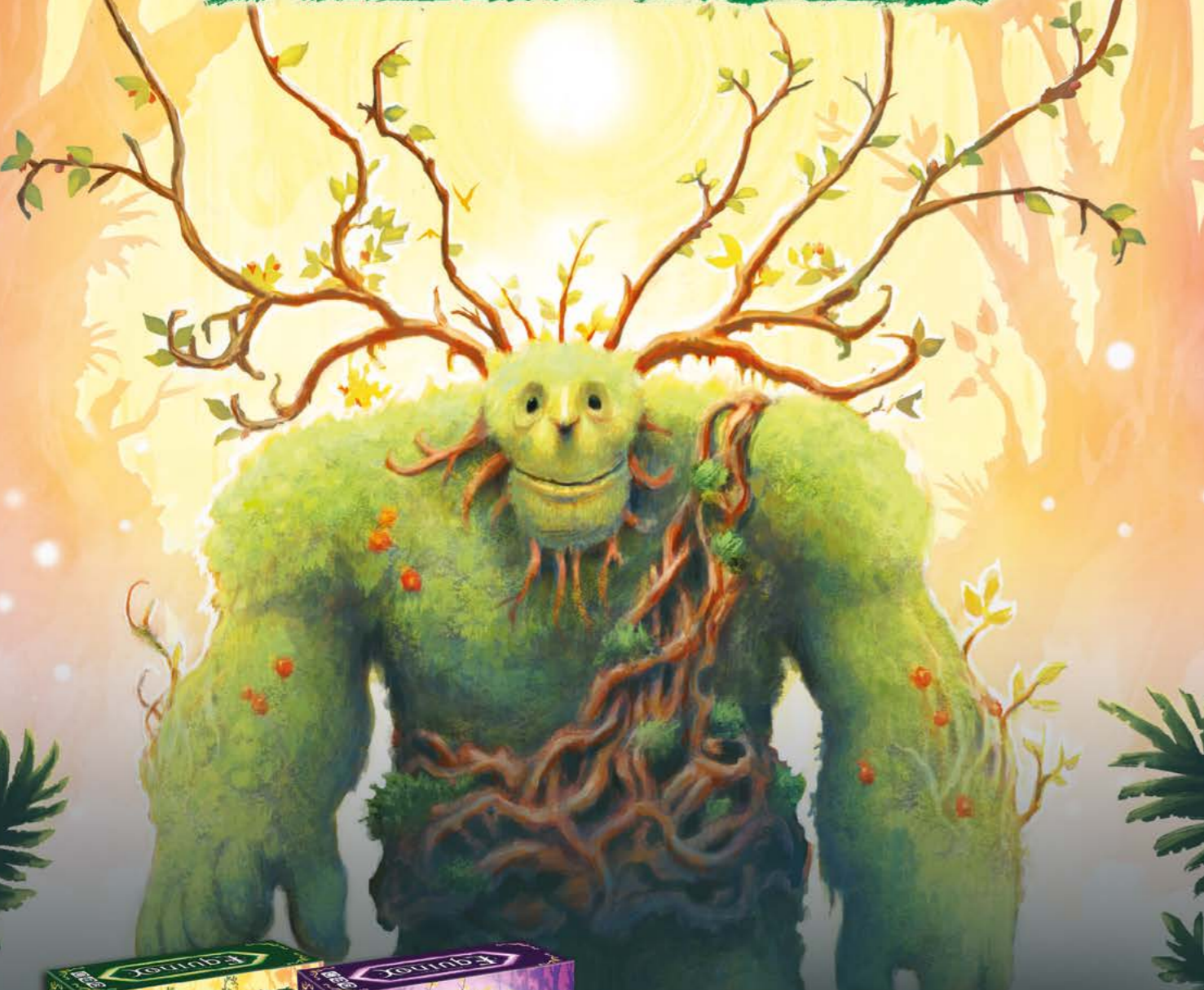
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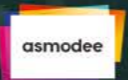
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REINER KNIZIA Equinox



Mysterious creatures gather in the forest in an effort to write themselves into the legendary storybook for tales to be shared for countless generations. However, there is room for only four more stories – not every story will be recorded, so the creatures have to be cunning and clever to outwit their opponents and make the cut! Discover a clever and charming game of betting and bluffing.

Visit Booth #2-678



UK GAMES EXPO

GUIDE

Tony Hyams, Richard Denning and the whole UKGE team welcomes you to the 2021 UK Games Expo. This is the UK's annual celebration of tabletop gaming but follows the dark period of pandemic that still affects much of the world including the UK. This last 15 months or so have been so hard on everyone, whether you are a gamer, a trader, a volunteer or one of our sponsors. We have worked hard all year, but particularly these last few months, with our sponsors and partners to bring you the very best games, experiences, live entertainment, tournaments and opportunities for a great day or weekend out. We invite you to leave the world behind you and just come and have fun. Let the games begin!

A word about safety. All safety guidance, rules and regulations can be found up to date and in detail on the UKGE website: www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk/plan-before-the-expo/playwithconfidence/

UK Games Expo occupies around 25,000 sqm of space. There are some 200 exhibitors, over a hundred roleplaying events, along with a range of tournaments and live entertainment events, a schedule of seminars and workshops, cosplayers and a Viking village. So, a lot to explore and enjoy.

If it seems a bit bewildering, we have got you covered. Before you head into the halls, grab a drink, put your feet up and take a moment to read through the Guide section of the programme in order to help you get

the most out of your visit. In these pages we detail the exhibitors, events, seminars and more, all of which you can enjoy during your time with us. There is a detailed map of the Trade Hall on pages 22-23.

Follow us, if you would, around the UK Games Expo as we describe where you can find all the fun and games.

NEC Hall 2 is our trade hall where you will find represented every type of tabletop game. On the right of the entrance there is a help desk and the official UKGE merchandise stand. Over on the left side is the Publisher Designer development area which includes Playtest UK and university department design areas. In the centre of the hall is the Coiledspring Family zone and the Children's Roleplaying area. Towards the rear you will find our Main Stage and the Cosplay zone.

Hall 3 is home to a large Open Gaming space near the entrance. In the centre is our Boardgame Library and an event desk, where you can buy tickets for the various fun activities we have going on this weekend. There is also a Food Court in this Hall. Further away from the entrance is the tournament zone where some of the more competitive gamers in the hobby will be battling it out – and where you can even enter yourself just for the fun of it!

The Tote Suite outside NEC Hall 1 is home to our Live Entertainment shows. The Piazza Suite across the way from the Hall 2 entrance is where

the seminars and the Publisher & Designer track activities take place. The Piazza suite is also home to the roleplaying games this year. Pick up tickets at the event desk or buy online.

The lakeside area between the NEC, Resort World and the Hilton Metropole Hotel is where you will find the Viking Village. Here you can have a close encounter with a Viking, watch them do battle or even challenge them to a game!

UKGE is a great place to walk around and see everything to do with tabletop gaming, whether that means board games, role playing games, family games, miniatures gaming, party games or card games. The choice is yours!

If you are new to UKGE and haven't played many games before, don't worry! There are many tables in the exhibitor stands where you can sit down and try out games, and you don't need to know all the rules. Alternatively, head for the open gaming area and borrow some games from the board game library and get gaming.

And if you're still feeling a bit lost, head to the help desk in Hall 2 or the help desk or Event desk in Hall 3 and ask for advice or just flag down one of our 'Blue Shirt' Ambassadors, who will be happy to help you out.

So, what are you waiting for? Dive in and have fun.



NEW TO UK GAMES EXPO? THEN PICK UP OUR FIRST TIMER GUIDE

OR HOP ON OVER TO PAGE 20



FEELING A BIT LOST?



Don't worry - if you need any help and advice head to the help desks or flag down an Ambassador. Help desks are located in Hall 2 and Hall 3. These are manned by our friendly Ambassadors, who will be happy to help you. You can also spot Ambassadors - easily recognisable in their pale blue shirts - roaming the Expo, ready to step in quickly if you need a hand. This year we have volunteers on hand to make sure everyone is having a good time and get the help and assistance they need. UKGE attracts a wide range of attendees of all ages, and we aim to provide a safe

environment in which all visitors, traders, volunteers and venue staff can have a great time. If you spot anything that you feel needs to be reported to Expo staff, look out for any of our yellow shirted Volunteers, green shirted Team Leaders, or an Ambassador. Over in the roleplaying area, each room has a Room Captain on hand. Their role is to keep an eye on things to make sure everything is running smoothly and intervene in the event of any problems. They can be approached by any player or GM who wishes to raise an issue. To find out more, visit our website at www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk and click on Keeping You Safe, under Contact Us.

LOST CHILD POINTS

FRONT ENTRANCE HELP DESK

Hall 2
Help Desk
Stand 2-T73

Hall 3
Help Desk
(by Event Desk)

OR ALERT ONE OF OUR COLLEAGUES



You know what it's like. You buy some games and then have your arms full. What do you do? Haul them around, trying to balance an ever-more precarious stack? Or take them back to the hotel or car and miss some of the show? We have an answer: The Shop & Drop. This year we have a secure, walled off area in Hall 3 for you to leave your purchases. Just £3 gets you one of our storage boxes for the whole day, and you can add additional boxes if needed. Your goodies will be kept safe and sound, out of sight, while you enjoy the rest of the day, unencumbered! When you're ready, simply return to the Shop & Drop, hand in your ticket and collect your stuff.

Please do remember to pick up your goodies at the end of the day, as we will not store your stuff overnight. Anything not collected by close of the Trade Hall each day will be auctioned. You can find the Shop & Drop close to the edge of Hall 3 nearest to Hall 2. Note: to reduce contact with your games the volunteers will bring the box to the desk. Your games must all be contained in plastic bags. You will place your bags into the box and the volunteer will move the box into storage without touching the bags.



There is always a need for space to just sit down, get out a game and start playing. If you've made a shiny new purchase and can't wait to play it, brought an old favourite with you or want to check out the Board Games Library to borrow games, then head to NEC Hall 3 and grab a table. There is more space for open gaming at the UK Games Expo than at any other UK convention and with over 2000 gaming seats, more than most shows worldwide.

Plan B Games, and Equinox, from the Board Game Library, and stick it on the table. Open Gaming is free to anyone with a UKGE pass, please note that tables cannot be reserved. #PlaywithConfidence: As the Gamer Needed flags and games are being shared between gamers we ask that all users use hand sanitizers before and after using them.

Game Toppers are Open Gaming sponsors and have provided high quality, neoprene table topper game mats to enhance your Open Gaming experience. These brightly coloured Expo and Game Toppers co-branded mats make it easy to see where the Open Gaming is situated and are a great surface for any tabletop game.

We anticipate that the peak demands for this will be Friday and Saturday night but have a lot of provision for Open Gaming all weekend.

The Open Gaming space in Hall 3 will be open from 7pm - 11pm on Thursday night, so early arrivals can get a pre-show gaming fix. There won't be a Board Games Library at that time, but you can play any games you've brought with you.

NEC HALL 3	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	7pm - 11pm	9am - midnight
NEC HALL 3	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
	9am - midnight	9am - 6pm

If you need more players then use one of our 'More Gamers Needed' flags sponsored by



TELL US WHAT YOU ARE PLAYING AT

#UKGAMESEXPO



Want to settle down for some gaming in our Open Gaming Space, but don't have anything with you that you fancy playing? Or want to try out a game before you buy? Check out the UK Games Expo Board Game Library. The Board Game Library is in development and currently has around 500 games on offer. It is a collection of games donated by publishers or entered into the awards, supplemented by games from Asmodee UK. All you need to do is get a library card, borrow the games you want, and check them back in once you're done. You'll need to pay a £10 deposit, which you'll get back once you return your last game. You can find the UK Games Expo Board Game Library in: NEC Hall 3.

NEC HALL 3	FRIDAY
	9am - 11pm
	SATURDAY
9am - 11pm	
SUNDAY	
9am - 4pm	



If you're interested in hearing more about what's going on in gaming make sure to head over to the Main Stage. The Main Stage will play host to live interviews from the OnTableTop crew, throughout the weekend as well as Cosplay photo opportunities at 1:30pm each day. This is a chance for you to get your photo taken with the cosplayers and show off your costume. It will also be the location of the annual UK Games Expo Awards Ceremony at 3pm on Sunday, giving you your chance to hear about the latest games that have got both judges and the community raving. The Main Stage can be found at stand 2-995. The Main Stage was built by Nautilus who own the Battlefield Hobbies store.

NEC HALL 2	DAILY COSPLAY PARADE
	1:30pm
	AWARDS
Sunday - 3pm	

BATTLEFIELD HOBBIES

IMMERSE YOURSELF



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UK GAMES EXPO

EXHIBITION SERVICES




Are you a potential exhibitor? Planning to run a Kickstarter campaign? A convention organiser? In the games industry? Then visit Exhibition Services on stand 2-982 to find out how we can help you.

Our Exhibition Services staff can talk to you about how you could be part of UKGE 2022. This can include an idea of potential stand costs based on this year's fees (costs will be finalised by October 2021) as well as an outline of optional add ons. Expressions of interest can be taken, but no firm bookings will be accepted until October 2021.

UKGE can also offer social media and email marketing opportunities.

We offer promotional opportunities that suit a range of budgets to give you increased visibility and reach an audience of thousands of gamers.

Find out more > 

[Email](#) us for details as well as stats and figures on previous campaigns.

UKGE is offering support to other tabletop game shows by making resources available from our [warehouse](#). Printing services for banners and cafe barriers are also available.

UK GAMES EXPO

CATERING

PROVIDED BY



I'M OPENING A GAMES SHOP

UK GAMES EXPO

I'M ANNOUNCING A NEW GAME RELEASE

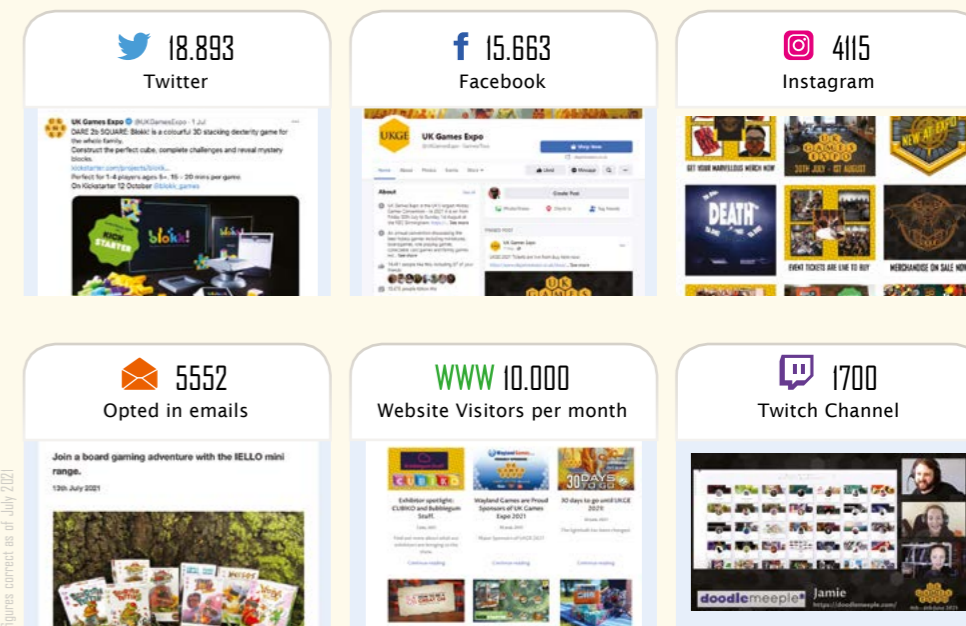
I'M PROMOTING A KICKSTARTER

I'M LAUNCHING A NEW BRAND

I'M OPENING A GAMING CAFÉ

UK GAMES EXPO CAN HELP

Over the years UK Games Expo has built up a substantial audience of enthusiastic, engaged and active followers including both gamers, families and the tabletop games media.



SOCIAL MEDIA

UK Games Expo has a large social media following. These represent an ideal target audience for exhibitors. Let them know about your brand and your products via our [marketing packages](#).

CONVENTION SUPPORT

UKGE is offering support to other tabletop game shows by making resources available from our warehouse. Printing services for banners and cafe barriers are also available.

All that gaming can definitely work up an appetite. We've got you covered. During the UK Games Expo, there are a number of options for grabbing a meal, a [snack or a drink](#). Inside Hall 2, the Hall 2 catering is supplemented by a coffee cart near the Family Zone all of which are open until 18.00. In Hall 3 the cafés and restaurants at the rear of the hall will serve food and drink as well as a food court with other choices near the Board Game Library. These will be open until around 22.30. Outside in the Piazza there is a Starbucks and a Cornish Bakery open until 18.00, a Wetherspoons open until 19.00 and a Subway open until 22.00. More restaurants

are available in [Resort world](#) as well as at the Airport accessible from the Railway station. It is worth noting that a lot of NEC facilities have become cashless over the last year.





There's loads of fun and games on offer at the Family Zone. This is where families can learn and play together, with help from the dedicated team of demonstrators from Imagination Gaming.

Entry to the Family Zone, which can be found in NEC Hall 2, Stands 2-554 and 2-654, is completely free to UKGE ticket holders from 9.00am to 6pm on Friday and Saturday and from 9.00am to 4pm on Sunday.

This year, the Family Zone has plenty on offer on its Games Menu, with its range of starter, main course and dessert games, and the Imagination Gaming team will be on hand to let you know how long they take to play, how many players you need, teach you everything you need to know, and make sure you have the most fun possible!

As well as an impressive collection of tabletop games, there will be giant games of Pandemic and Ticket to Ride to enjoy.

This year any child attending UK Games Expo will have the opportunity to represent their school in a series of games challenges. There is no cost and it will simply involve sitting down and playing a few games and puzzles. Each child's scores and progress will be recorded and the school that has the most points from their eager pupils at the end of the event will be contacted and prizes be given.

The Family Zone will also feature a Creative Zone. This area is a little more chilled out and enables young Expo visitors to really get their creative juices flowing. From story writing to designing and construction activities, there's sure to be something for everyone. There will also be a display board, where everyone's hard work will be shown.



READY FOR AN ADVENTURE?



Our Children's Roleplaying Games give younger visitors to UK Games Expo the chance to step into another world! Recommended for children aged five to 12, each game lasts around an hour. No equipment or knowledge of rules is needed, just plenty of imagination and a willingness to learn! Games run on the hour, starting from 10am, and can be found at NEC Hall 2, Stand 2-568. Games are free, but we advise signing up early, as spaces fill up fast! This year, we have five different games available.



DEAD MAN'S PARTY

Atop a spooky hill, deep in the middle of a scary forest lies a strange, abandoned Castle.

When the wind blows in the right direction, you can almost hear music coming from the ruins.

And sometimes on a moonlit night, it is said you can see translucent figures dancing to the unworldly sounds.

You must unlock the secrets and drive back the ghostly revelers before its too late!



HOT BLOODED

Captain's Log, Year 2021. We survived the battle, but our ship is badly damaged. We have no choice but to land immediately. Sensors show the planet below has a breathable atmosphere, but the surface temperature is dangerously high. We are picking up life signs, despite the high temperature it seems something is alive down there.

It will take some time for engineering to repair the engines, until then I'm sending out a landing party to defend us from the local wildlife.

Our fate is in their hands now.



IT'S A SMALL WORLD, AFTER ALL

When a wizard has a child, they give them everything. Flying broomsticks, Easy spell Magic wands, and even an enchanted Toy box that brings any toy put into it to life.

But Deep inside the Toy box an endless war rages, Terror teddy and his play army battle endlessly against the living boardgame miniatures for control of playtime.

It's time for you to Join the fight and bring an end to the playtime wars once and for all.

Take part in our Treasure Hunt for the chance to win a stack of games! Every child who takes part in our challenge will win a small prize, and be entered into a grand draw to win games from Coiledspring Games and Blue Donut Studios. All they need to do is find the hidden letter at each location across NEC Hall 2 then put them together to reveal a secret word! You can pick up a Treasure Hunt form from the Expo entrance, or from one of our Help Desks. Completed forms must be returned to the Hall 2 Help Desk by 4pm on Friday, 4pm on Saturday, or 2pm on Sunday. Please make sure an adult includes their mobile phone number, so we can contact winners.

NEW BATTLEFLEETS ARRIVE

AVAILABLE FROM  **Wayland Games**.co.uk
waylandgames.co.uk/dystopianwars



An epic tabletop wargame of naval battles, using highly detailed miniatures to represent huge engines of destruction on, above and below the high-seas. Set in an alternate late-Nineteenth Century called the Dystopian Age, super-science fuelled nations clash over resources and power.



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 DYSTOPIAN WARS IS A TRADEMARK OF WAYLAND GAMES LIMITED.
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UK
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COSPLAY



Throughout your visit to UK Games Expo, you're certain to see plenty of characters from movies, TV, anime, comics, and games brought to life by our wandering cosplayers. These are provided by the Galactic Knights Star Wars and sci-fi costuming group who will bring along lots of cool replica items from the movies and more cosplayers from Wyntercon and Son of Skaro. They will be based in NEC Hall 2, at Stand 2-784. Don't be afraid to ask for a photo with any of them. One of the best opportunities for photos will be at 1:30pm each day on the Main Stage in Hall 2. You can get your picture taken with the cosplayers or dress up in costume and join them.



If you want to join in and come along in costume this is most welcome. However, for the safety of all of us there are some rules and guidance to follow, particularly around the carrying and display of weapons.

UK GAMES EXPO
 MAIN STAGE
 COSPLAY PHOTO OPPORTUNITY
 1:30 - MAIN STAGE

Rules www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk/terms-policies/cosplay-and-reenactors-policy

UK
GAMES
EXPO

VIKINGS



Find out more about how the Vikings lived, worked, ate, and gamed a thousand years ago, at our Living History Encampment. Ardenweard, the Warwickshire-based group of The Vikings, will be camping on the grass between Pendigo Lake and the NEC. Throughout the day, you'll have the chance to rub shoulders with the Vikings and try out some Dark Ages boardgames such as Hnefatafl and Nine Men's Morris. There will also be some amazing combat displays, weapons demonstrations, and battles - plus the chance for children aged under 11 to have a go at combat training and battle Vikings!*

The Encampment opens at 10am each day, and all events are completely free

DAILY SCHEDULE

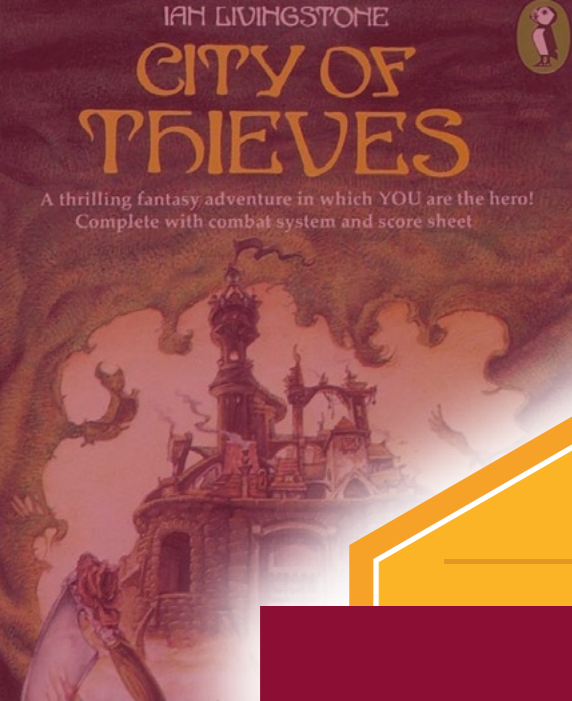
- 10.30am Weapons Display and Skirmish in the Arena
- 11.30am Talk: The Realities of Adventuring
- 12.30pm Hrothgar's Saga and Kiddie Vike in the Arena*
- 3.30pm Main Battle in the Arena

SATURDAY ONLY

- 2pm Hnefatafl Competition

*Activities involving children may be limited due to Public Health England regulations in effect at the time of the event. Check at the camp during the show for an update.





UK GAMES EXPO

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

SPONSORED BY



GAME FOR A LAUGH?

With a range of live shows designed to appeal to our UK Games Expo audience, you can see comedy, really clever things and some pretty daft ones as well as sing-a-longs, daring dos and daring don'ts, all with audience participation as well as a gang of comedians and performers to entertain. These are held in the Tote Suite (Werewolf Live is in the Cartamundi theatre, Piazza). UKGE's Live Entertainment is sponsored by Aconyte Books whose goal is to become the go-to partners for tie-in fiction for all the best pop-culture IPs. Aconyte books produce paperback and ebooks for a number of Asmodee properties and third party IPs.

QUESTINY



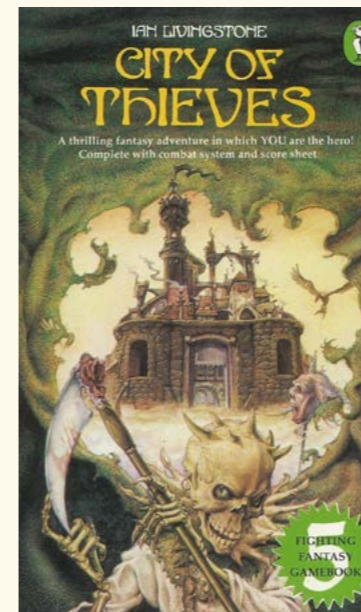
QUESTINY

From Knightmare Live creator Paul Flannery comes Questiny (formally called the M.M.O.R.P.G show.) The show that combines improvised comedy with tabletop gaming is back with even more adventures, campaigns and absurdities.



THE PERFORMING NERD

With a great show for families, Tom Crosbie is back demonstrating his superpowers with setting Rubik's cube records, lightning-fast mathematics and memory skills.



LIVE READING OF CITY OF THIEVES

Ian Livingstone, legendary writer of the Fighting Fantasy choose your own adventure series and John Robertson of The Dark Room partner up for the second time in UKGE history in a live reading from City of Thieves.



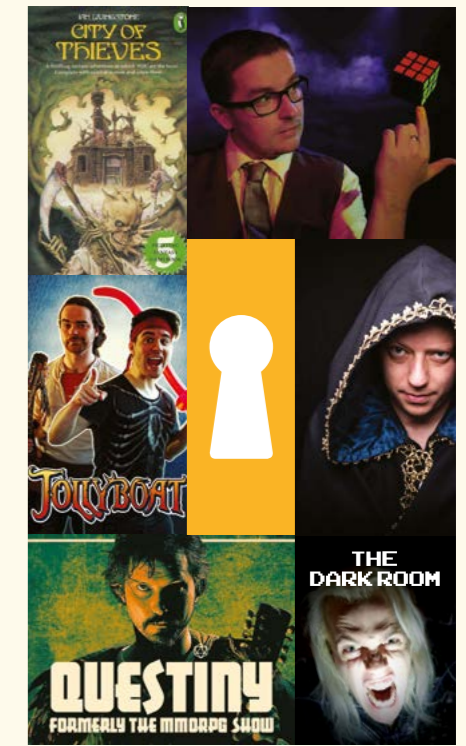
WEREWOLF: LIVE

Come onstage and fight for your life, hunt down the werewolves or laugh from the audience in this immersive comedy game show! A theatrical reimagining of the classic game of deception, Werewolf: Live has been performed all over the world, allowing hundreds to hurl accusations and unjustly murder their friends. Jon Gracey of The Beta Males presents an interactive hour of mob rule and delicious paranoia. Will you save your village... or tear it apart?



THE DARK ROOM

The Dark Room is the world's only live-action text adventure game! From a sell-out series of shows at the Edinburgh Fringe there will be 2 performances of The Dark Room plus a Dark Room till you die!



THE TRUTH ABOUT DARREN

All the live acts hang out together and it doesn't become a podcast!. What is their story? What is the meaning of the universe? What have they been up to the last 2 years? What is the weirdest thing that they did during lockdown? These questions may not be answered, but others might.



JOLLYBOAT

Jollyboat Come and see the UK's best comedy-pirate-geek-rock duo as they put on two performances of their comedy songs and see how many geek references you can spot!

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

SPONSORED BY

FRIDAY

Tom Crosbie: The Performing Nerd	13:00 - 14:00	£7.00
Questiny	16:00 - 17:00	£7.00
Jollyboat	20:00 - 21:00	£7.00
Werewolf Live	21:00 - 23:00	£5.00
The Dark Room	21:30 - 22:30	£7.00

SATURDAY

Tom Crosbie: The Performing Nerd	12:00 - 13:00	£7.00
The Dark Room	15:00 - 16:00	£7.00
Questiny	16:30 - 17:30	£12.00
City of Thieves (Ian Livingstone/John Robertson Live reading)	18:00 - 19:30	£7.00
Jollyboat	20:00 - 21:00	£7.00
Werewolf Live	21:00 - 23:00	£5.00
The Dark Room TILL YA DIE!	21:30 - 23.30	£12.00

SUNDAY

The Truth About Darren	12:00 - 13:00	£6.00
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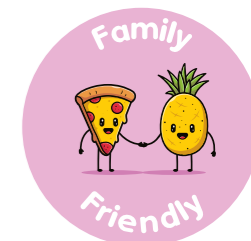
SHOWS SELL OUT QUICKLY SO BOOK EARLY TO AVOID MISSING OUT!

TICKETS ARE ON SALE AT THE EVENT DESK IN NEC HALL 3



RADICAL PAINTS
INCLUSIVE MINIATURES
FANTASTIC SKIRMISH GAMES

THE OFFICIAL **TURBO DORK** PARTNER FOR THE UK AND EUROPE





The playtest zone in Hall 2 is where designers can get feedback on their designs and gamers can test games and help influence their development. Find Playtest on stand 2-101.

UK GAMES EXPO

PLAYTEST ZONE

PROVIDED BY

PLAYTEST

UK GAMES EXPO

PUBLISHER-DESIGNER TRACK

UK GAMES EXPO

SEMINARS

Almost all events this year take place in The Cartamundi Theatre on Friday.

The Cartamundi Theatre Room is located in the Piazza Suites which are all located off the same corridor, near NEC Hall 2. Don't forget our Ambassadors are on hand to help you if you get lost - look for the pale blue UKGE shirts.

One event will take place in the Tote Suite. This is next to the ticket booth, just outside NEC Hall 1. This area is also the focal point of our live entertainment events.

Everything on this schedule is free, and all events have a seating limit so arrive early to avoid disappointment. Write Like a Pro will require pre-event reservation, see event listing for more details.

The Publisher Designer track is an important part of the Expo. Fledgling designers can get advice, constructive criticism, talk to industry gurus and potential publishers in order to inspire, encourage or progress their game into being a reality.

PLAYTEST
The Playtest Zone in Hall 2 is where designers can get feedback on their designs and gamers can test games and help influence their development.

SEMINARS
Hear our UKGE guests speaking about their experiences in tabletop gaming, podcasters and vloggers record live shows, and companies reveal news of new products. Our seminars are a celebration of board gaming, and a chance to get a look behind the scenes of the industry.

EVENTS
We also bring you a dedicated Publisher & Designer Track of events, offering playtest tables, game design and marketing seminars, panels, games jams, networking events and opportunities for budding designers to pitch their ideas to publishers.

These events include something for everyone at every stage of the process. There are events to help you get your creative brain bubbling or just fun to listen to.

GET INVOLVED FOR 2022
The Publisher-Designer Speed-Dating, Publisher-Designer Networking, and New Designer Bootcamp have an application process and are invitational events only. Keep an eye on our website to find out how you can sign up for next year's events. Everything else is free and you can just attend, although some events have a seating limit so arrive early to avoid disappointment.



JOIN THE COMPETITION!

TICKETS START AT £5

Tournaments are all part of UK Games Expo and recent years have seen a whole hall dedicated to them. We will return to this in 2022 but in 2021 whilst the range and scope and size of the events is reduced, we still wanted to be able to offer you some choices, so if you fancy showing how good you are, or just enjoy a competitive atmosphere why not sign up to one of the tournaments? The tournaments will be taking place in NEC Hall 3 and the full schedule is available to view on the UKGE website under events. If you want advice or just want to buy tickets at the venue, visit the Events Desk in NEC Hall 3 Tickets start at circa £5.

UK GAMES EXPO

TOURNAMENT ADMINISTRATION

UK Games Expo isn't just a board games convention. Take a brief look in the Piazza Suites near Hall 2 where another type of game is being run, one that needs smaller rooms and comfortable chairs and a lot less noise... Roleplaying games. In a normal year UK Games Expo has one of the largest roleplaying games schedules outside of America. This year the schedule is reduced as a result of limited space as well as limited time to organise, but we still aim to bring you a range of games from Fantasy, to Sci-Fi to Horror and games from bigger publishers and Indie Writers. The full schedule is on the

website but you can also head to the Event Desk in Hall 3 and the team there will be able to find a game for you. Tickets are required for every game and cost £5. You can buy online or at the Event desk. Games start at 9am on Friday and run until 7pm on Sunday, typically for around 3 to 4 hours each. Please arrive five minutes before your game is due to start.

UK GAMES EXPO

ROLEPLAYING GAMES



FRIDAY

11.00-11.50 Draw Like a Pro
Artists Gill Pearce and James Hayball explore how to bring out the best or worst in your artwork, how best to gain commissions and eventually how to get to work in the Industry. The workshop will consist of a talk given by the artists and the opportunity to get feedback on your own art. You will need to bring your own art supplies. This event is free but please email Gill at hellionheartist@gmail.com to reserve your seat.

12:00 - 12:50 Write Like A Pro - Reservations required
Join Darren W. Pearce, an industry veteran and talk about adventure design, ideas and experiment within an informal workshop and Q&A designed to get you up to speed about the aspects of worlds and characters you might not have met yet. Please email Darren at d.wolfyone@gmail.com to reserve your seat in this workshop.

13:00 - 13:50 Jobs in the Games Industry
Frank Bao, Director of Meeple Mayhem and industry veteran shares his insider knowledge for getting started in the games industry. Join this 50 minute session to learn what games companies are really looking for!

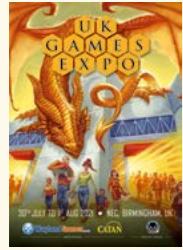
14:00 - 14:50 Serious Game Design
Devon Allcoat teaches Serious Game Design at University of Warwick. But what is serious about gaming and how does this course help other disciplines within the university?

15:00 - 15:50 Create Awesome D&D Adventures (and other TTRPGs too)
Guy, from the YouTube Channel - How to be a Great GM, wants to take the stress, strain and panic away from your next adventure planning session. In this 45 min seminar he'll show you techniques for creating truly awesome adventures for your roleplaying games.

16:00 - 16:50 Kickstarter and Fulfilment
The team from Games Quest will help you understand the complexities of getting your Kickstarter to your backers.

17:30 - 19:30 Life is a Game **Tote Suite**
Join Sir Ian Livingstone for his countdown of the top 10 board games from his collection of over 1000 games! There is time included towards the end of this session for a Q&A and book signing with Sir Ian.

FIRST TIME VISITOR TO UK GAMES EXPO?
HERE ARE A FEW HANDY HINTS TO HELP YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR VISIT.



PICK UP THE PROGRAMME

The programme is filled with all the information you'll need to get the most out of UK Games Expo. It's totally free, so make sure you grab one.

GRAB A MAP

The UK Games Expo is huge, so pick up a free Map Sheet or visit our mobile first website and view the interactive map. UKGE 2021 is in NEC Halls 2 and 3, Toute suite, and Piazza rooms.



CHECK OUT THE FAMILY ZONE

We've got an entire zone dedicated to games for children and families. Located at the centre of Hall 2, you can learn and play games with the whole family.



BOOK EVENTS

There's so much going on at UKGE, with live entertainment, tournaments and seminars. Book early so you don't miss out. Seminars are usually free to attend and don't require booking but you should turn up early to guarantee a space. Tournaments and live events can be booked online at the UKGE website, or at one of our event desks.



COSPLAY

The friendly cosplayers will be in a variety of costumes over the weekend. Visit stand 2-784 to see props from movies and visit the Main Stage to get your photo with them at 1:30pm every day. Feel free to dress up and join in.



GO ON A TREASURE HUNT

Children can hunt for hidden clues at Expo, and win some great prizes! Every child who takes part can get their hands on a small prize, but they will also be in the running to win a daily grand prize. See later on in this guide



VISIT THE VIKINGS

Outside the main entrance to the NEC is our Viking Village. You can meet Vikings, hear stories, and watch demonstrations and maybe a battle. Full details and schedule in the programme.



GLORIOUS FOOD

There are plenty of options for grub around UK Games Expo. These can be found in NEC Halls 2 & 3, as well as on the NEC main concourse and at the next door Resort World.



TAKE IN A SHOW

Our live entertainment shows blend comedy, audience participation, and gaming. You can find full details of all these events on our website at www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk Buy your tickets online or at the Event Desk in NEC Hall 3.

EXPLORE THE TRADE HALLS

Over 200 exhibitors are keen to show you their latest game, paraphernalia or demo. There is lots to see and try and maybe buy in Hall 2.



HERE TO HELP

If you need help, our Ambassadors are here for you. There are help desks in NEC Hall 2 and 3. You can also find Ambassadors around the Expo; just look for the people in light blue UKGE tops.



ADVENTURES FOR CHILDREN

Our Children's Roleplaying Game Zone has its own dedicated area in Hall 2 (Stand 2-568). Play a variety of adventures for children aged five to 12. No knowledge of rules is needed - just imagination and a willingness to learn. Sign up early, on the stand as places fill up very quickly.



ON TABLETOP STAGE

Want to hear more about what's going on in gaming or which titles you need to check out, make sure to head over to the Main Stage in Hall 2, stand 2-995. Built by Periscope who own Battlefield Hobbies, the Main Stage hosts the daily cosplay photo op at 1:30pm as well as interviews by the OnTableTop crew throughout the weekend discussing what's going on at the show and chatting with professionals and attendees alike. Don't miss the annual UK Games Expo Awards Ceremony at 3pm on Sunday, giving you your chance to hear about the latest games that have got both judges and the community raving.



HAVE AN IDEA FOR A GAME?

Join in our Publisher / Designer Track with playtest tables, game design, seminars and opportunities for budding designers to pitch their ideas to publishers. See the programme for full details.

PLAY SOME GAMES

Make sure you play lots and lots of games! Many of the exhibitors and traders will be offering free demos of their games for you to try. Can't wait to play a new game you've bought? Then use the Open Gaming spaces in NEC Hall 2. You can also use our free Board Game Library service to borrow games. Or for something a bit different, why not visit the Play Test Zone in NEC Hall 2 to play a game that's still in development, and you could help shape a brand new game!



CONTINUE EXPLORING ONLINE

WWW.GAMETEE.CO.UK

Beautiful Goods for Gamers, Expertly Designed in England. Find our full range online.



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BESTSELLING AND UNIQUE KICKSTARTER SMASH HIT ACCESSORIES AND MORE
WE WOULD BE HONOURED TO WELCOME YOU TO OUR EXPO STAND AND WEBSTORE



MISSED OUR
KICKSTARTER?

TO MAKE A LATE PLEDGE
VISIT OUR BOOTH #2-426



Senet Magazine
Board games
are beautiful



Discover the new, award-winning magazine about the craft, creativity and community of board gaming
Visit us at Stand 2-1047 or senetmagazine.com to subscribe and buy all our issues



NEC HALL 2

SEE MAP OPPOSITE

- HELP DESK PAGE 6
- FOOD AND DRINK PAGE 9
- TOILETS
- MERCHANDISE

- COSPLAY PAGE 13
- CHILDREN'S RPG PAGE 11
- MAIN STAGE PAGE 7
- FAMILY ZONE PAGE 10
- PLAYTEST ZONE PAGE 18

NEC HALL 2 OPENING TIMES

TRADE STANDS
 Friday: 9am - 6.00pm
 Saturday: 9am - 6.00pm
 Sunday: 9am - 4.00pm

NEC HALL 3 OPENING TIMES

OPEN GAMING AND TOURNAMENT SPACE
 Thursday: 7.00pm - 11.00pm
 Friday: 9.00am - midnight
 Saturday: 9.00am - midnight
 Sunday: 9.00am - 6.00pm

MAP CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINT AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

HOW STAND NUMBERS WORK (EG. 2-399)

2 = HALL NUMBER

3 = AISLE NUMBER

99 = APPROX. DISTANCE FROM START OF AISLE IN METRES

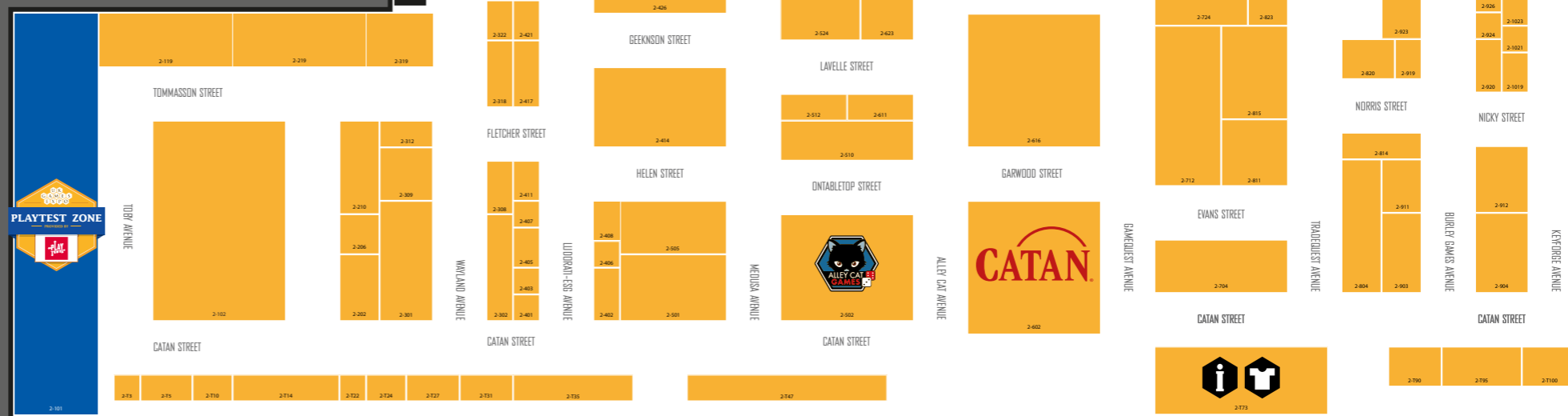
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 EVEN NUMBERS ON THE RIGHT

NEC HALL 3

NOT MAPPED

- HELP DESK PAGE 6
- FOOD AND DRINK PAGE 9
- TOILETS
- TOURNAMENT ADMIN

- EVENT DESK PAGE 18
- SHOP & DROP PAGE 6
- BOARD GAME LIBRARY PAGE 6
- OPEN GAMING PAGE 7



ENTRANCE

HALL 3

EXHIBITORS

#	20 Dreams	20 Dreams - A card game of epic adventures & crazy cliffhangers.	2-330
	3dc ltd	Shop3D is the world's first and yet unique 3D printing manufacturing plugin.	2-468
	404 Escape	The Most Immersive Escape Room in Birmingham with NPCs.	2-524
A	A1 Toys and Static Games	Scotland's best comic, toys and gaming stores, a1toys.com.	2-302
	ABC Brushes	High Quality Artists brushes for miniature and model painting. Large choice - Great Value!	2-403
	Aconyte Books	A friendly fantasy publisher bringing you new adventures and world-expanding fiction!	2-456
	Adversity Games	Publisher of the forthcoming Nightlancer cyberpunk game.	2-378
	All Rolled Up	Award-winning tabletop accessories, hand-crafted game/dice rolls and folding dice trays.	2-510
	Alley Cat Games	Showcasing the popular game Dice Hospital as well as the upcoming Tinners' Trail and more.	2-502
	Arlukkachase	Arlukka means power. There are many types of Arlukka. Survival lies in the Arlukkachase.	2-470
	ASK Games	This husband/wife duo are debuting their first game Warren Wars. A game of Bunny Warfare!	2-471
	Asmodee	When you have a game with a great story to tell, the sky is the limit.	2-678
	Atlantis Miniatures Ltd	Creators of High Quality Fantasy Resin Miniatures	2-T100
	Atomic Mass Games	Miniature game demos for Marvel Crisis Protocol, Star Wars X-Wing, Legion and Armada	2-438
B	Battle Foam	Battle Foam is the leader in storage solutions for the table top wargaming community.	2-319
	Battle Systems	Offers realistic 28mm sci-fi & fantasy terrain for table top gamers and collectors.	2-628
	Bedsit Games	Publishers of Pauper's Ladder adventure game.	2-344
	Black Chantry Productions	Licensed producers of the collectible card game Vampire: the eternal struggle.	2-353
	Blackwell Games	Solo RPGs including Tabletop Gaming Magazine's Best of 2020 DELVE.	2-828
	Blood on the Clocktower	A captivating supernatural murder mystery social bluffing game where death is not the end.	2-318
	Blue Donut Games	We are the publisher of Line The Skateboard Card Game, Devices and more!	2-672
	Board Game Extras	Providing that something extra for your board gaming experience.	2-878
	Board Game Hub	Come and demo Tranquility, Tranquility: The Ascent and playtest our latest prototype.	2-941
	Brambledown Designs	Artist available to provide bespoke illustration for games and many other projects.	2-437
	Britannia Game Designs	Publishers of the Chivalry and Sorcery RPG.	2-949
	Bubblegum Stuff Ltd	A wide range of novelty gifts, card games and puzzles for kids, families and adults.	2-832
	Burley Games Ltd	An independent designer, manufacturer, distributor and wholesaler of board games.	2-912
	Bydand Design	Beautiful, unique and quirky jewellery and accessories all lovingly created by Helen.	2-439
C	Canterbury Christ Church University Students	Designs from students taking this computer and tabletop game design course.	2-219
	Capel Strategy	Scottish board game publisher.	2-445
	Carrooka	The brand new, compulsively fun and dexterous, spinning snooker game!	2-354
	Catan Studio	Whether you prefer light and easy games or a deep, strategic experience, CATAN delivers!	2-602
	Cerberus Studios	Design studio of highly detailed miniatures for fantasy tabletop games.	2-309
	Chaos Publishing	Dedicated to bringing entertaining and captivating board and card games to your tabletop.	2-206
	Christopher Morris Books	Providing books by enthusiasts for enthusiasts.	2-1041
	Clockwork Arcana	Devices and Curiosities for the Discerning Tabletop Gamer	2-1019
	CMA Creative Solutions Limited	Specialise in the mould-making and casting of resin and metal scale models and miniatures.	2-210
	CobblePath Games Ltd	CobblePath Games is the 2-person ttrpg studio responsible for the Horror game Locus.	2-407
	Coiledspring Games	Exclusive UK distributors of some of the best board games and puzzles on the planet.	2-538
	Colostle	Solo RPG adventure.	2-382
	Counter Attack	Take on a friend at the kitchen table in this game of football tactics and strategy.	2-390
	Crab Studios	Board game developer focussing on party and casual games.	2-447
	Critical Kit	A large selection of dice and accessories for RPGs and original published adventures.	2-379
	CRITIT.CO.UK	Dice, Dice Boxes, everything for the tabletop gaming and Dungeon & Dragons enthusiast.	2-338
	Cubiko	Unique, handcrafted wooden boardgames. JamSumo, Q.E. Carreau, Paras and Chopsticks.	2-455
D	D.Taylor Woodworking	Dice trays, chests and other handcrafted gaming accessories, built from quality hardwoods.	2-374
	Dark Frontier Games Ltd	Previewing both 'AMASS' & 'Outbreak' board games.	2-369
	Darren Pearce	RPG designer, game reviewer and fantasy author.	2-406
	Days of Wonder	Top-quality, family-oriented board games that are easy to learn and fun to play.	2-578
	Devilfly	Croydon based design company.	2-311
	Dice & Destiny	Canterbury based games retailer.	2-948
	Dice Sports	Sheffield-based games publisher.	2-957

	Dissent Games	Designers of the co-operative boardgame Library Labyrinth.	2-346
	District Games	American publisher of the election-themed board game District.	2-1051
	DMB Games	DMB Games Makes 3D Resin Gaming Tiles & Accessories for Tabletop Games.	2-T35
	DnDice	Premium exciting and unique metal dice plated for RPGs and tabletop wargames.	2-838
	Don't Turn Off The Lights	Competitive, fast-paced card game of 2-6 players. Fight monsters and keep your lights on!	2-372
	Double L Games	Indie family board game company based in Matlock.	2-952
	Drags 2 Riches	Come and be the first to playtest Drags 2 Riches, the fiercest game around.	2-348
	Dranda Games	Dranda Games is an indie publisher that will be showing off its newest game, Solar Sphere.	2-417
	Dream Big Games	Come demo Wreck and Ruin, or try our new cooperative monster hunting boss battler!	2-938
	Dungeon Bones Ltd	RPG accessories.	2-924
	East Street Games	An exciting tabletop and board game Design and Publishing company based in South London.	2-210
	Eldritch Rach	Nottingham creator of LGBT+ Dungeons and Dragons merchandise and Cryptid Artwork!	2-960
	Ergo Sum Games	Independent British game designer of thoughtful and fun gaming experiences.	2-414
	Escape Plan Board Games	Stop the Train! Buy/play the hit social deduction game and play the upcoming Hit the Silk!	2-947
	Esdevium Discovery Zone	Come and play easy to learn games presented by the UK's largest games' distributor.	2-480
	Exit 23 Games	The UK Home of Turbo Dork paints and Relicblade	2-846
	Family Zone A	Learn and play family and children's games.	2-554
	Family Zone B	Learn and play family and children's games.	2-654
	Fantasy Flight Games	FFG has a reputation for their innovative gameplay and immersive gaming experiences.	2-438
	Fire Ruby Designs	Independent publisher of sci-fi and fantasy RPGs.	2-980
	Firestorm Cards	Basingstoke and Online retailer of specialist Games.	2-T47
	Football Fortunes	The football management tabletop and computer game you play with friends and family	2-392
	Fowers Games	Fowers Games specialize in unique games like Paperback, Burgle Bros and Fugitive.	2-923
	Fox and Bear Games	Showing our first game, How Many Stars?	2-T24
	Free League Publishing	Swedish Publisher of award-winning tabletop role-playing games.	2-904
	Full Colour Fantasy	Full colour wargaming figures and terrain.	2-531
	GamesQuest	A leading supplier of many popular, traditional and educational games.	2-738
	Gameteer Ltd	Gaming T-Shirts, Gaming Goods, Luxury Roleplaying Accessories and Journals.	2-823
	Geeknson Ltd	Producing high quality Gaming & Geek Furniture	2-426
	Geekstable	Guides on how to be a great GM.	2-373
	Genki Gear Ltd	Genki Gear produces original t-shirts that stand out amongst a crowd!	2-804
	Giant Games	Play giant versions of games.	2-696
	Gibsons	Proudly Entertaining Generations for 100 years.	2-737
	GMD Online	GMD Online are designers and producers of RPG's, War, board & Card Games.	2-453
	Good Looking Richard	"Outrun" a push your luck, dexterity, pattern recognition card game.	2-356
	Hachette Boardgames UK Ltd	The UK boardgame distribution company of Hachette.	2-642
	Hackett Games	This is a game to test your luck. When you can fall into the board, no player is safe.	2-367
	Hand Over Fist Games	Southend based games publisher	2-1049
	Handiwork	RPG publisher of titles including Beowulf Age of Heroes.	2-955
	Harps Corporation Ltd	Hardwood tabletop gaming accessories, hardwood gaming tables and dice.	2-1029
	Hatchlings Games	Tabletop Roleplaying Games promoting Deaf awareness & Sign Language.	2-485
	Hellion's Art	Artist of book cover and interior game artwork, illustration and cartography.	2-402
	Honeybadger Games	Edible games and gifts.	2-360
	Hopwood Games	Independent award winning designer. Mijnlief, Daring Dustbunnies, Flipside and more.	2-421
	Ian Livingstone	Fighting fantasy author and co-founder of Games Workshop.	2-T95
	Imagination Gaming	Fun and entertaining games days for educational and social organisations.	2-668
	Insync Games	Insync Games provide Escape Room related products that you can play at home.	2-528
	James Hayball Art	A concept art illustrator and artist.	2-408
	Jonathan Green	Author of sci-fi and fantasy works as well as choose your own adventure gamebooks.	2-T95
	Just Crunch Games	Creator of award-winning tabletop roleplaying games "Cthulhu Hack and The Dee Sanction.	2-510
	Kasagai	Jewelry with a gaming theme.	2-360

Kingdom Gaming	Northampton-based gaming-centre and retailer.	2-971
Kosmos Games	We bring you entertaining, high-quality boardgames from the German-engineered Kosmos line.	2-727
Kuma Cards	UK based vendor of card games and Japanese related products.	2-872
LD3D	Designers of 'The Travellers Guide to Prymordia' modular living setting guide.	2-T22
Level Bedded	Tabletop gaming accessories: Dungeons and Dragons	2-944
Loke BattleMats	The Home of Loke BattleMats Book of Battle Mats range!	2-332
Lonely Red Planet	Fun screen-printed t-shirts and merchandise based on movies, tv shows and games.	2-308
Ludorati UK	Ludrati boardgame cafes with retail and digital membership.	2-414
LunaLynes Illustration	Artist selling accessories, stickers, cards and more!	2-942
LVC Games	The Pyramid of Khufu - a 2 player head to head card game in aid of Velindre Cancer Centre	2-956
Magic Madhouse	Tabletop and TCG e-store with a massive range at highly competitive prices.	2-616
ManagerBall	ManagerBall. The worlds premier football board game.	2-388
Manic Productions	Manic Productions will be selling Shadow of Mogg - A Post Brexit Tabletop RPG.	2-339
Mantic Games	Outstanding wargames miniatures and tabletop games, inc Hellboy & The Walking Dead	2-368
Maths Trade	A great way to swap your old games in a real world exchange of games	2-119
Matthew And Michael Limited	Make: On The Square The 1st 3 Degrees, Mysteries & Secrets + Launching Reluctant Hero	2-337
Medusa Games	Publisher of Nine Worlds, Tinker Tailor, Flying Machines and Great Fire of London Games.	2-501
Meeple Mayhem	Games Cafe in Edgbaston, Birmingham.	2-524
Mercia Books	Historical and fantasy novels for young people and adults.	2-505
Mind Sports Olympiad	Organisers of Mind Sports Olympiad international board game competitions.	2-815
Mleeg Boardgames	Publishers of dice game D6 Dungeon.	2-405
Moaideas Game Design	Check out the latest addition to Mini Express! Free PnP printout of the UK map available.	2-411
Montidots Ltd	RPGs written illustrated and published by Simon Todd	2-972
Natural Twenty Gaming Tables	Nat20 board gaming tables - the ultimate addition to your gaming addiction!	2-530
Naylor Games Ltd	Publisher of Magnate: The First City. We're ambitious about games.	2-T31
Newbie Games	Evil Corp is designed as both a game and social commentary, it's incredibly fun to play.	2-386
Nightfall Games	Home of the Scottish RPG SLA Industries.	2-856
Nuts! Publishing	French publisher of games including Mini Rogue & 300: Earth & Water	2-937
Paper Boat Games	Design and publish original board games.	2-487
Patrick's Art Room	Artist providing illustrations for games.	2-347
Patriot Games	Bespoke play mat and gaming accessories for artist, designer and gamer. Trade and retail.	2-611
Pelgrane Press Ltd	The award-winning RPG publisher of 13th Age, Trail of Cthulhu and Nights Black Agents.	2-903
Phalanx	PHALANX is an international publisher that has been publishing board games since 2009.	2-432
Philip S. Davies	Author of fantasy adventure novels	2-505
PlayScape Games	Online retailer specialising in the Pokemon trading card game.	2-1059
PlayStrategy.org	Training and regulating 2 player online strategy games.	2-815
Playtest UK	Try out a prototype and give feedback on tomorrow's games.	2-101
Primal Atom Games	Creators of the Quest RPG and the upcoming Flatpack Vampires game.	2-911
Prometheus Concept	Strategy game celebrating Greek civilisation.	2-820
Puzzle Card	Birthday cards for board game lovers. Solve the puzzles to beat the card!	2-976
Queen Games	German publisher of a huge range of board games including Kingdom Builder and Escape.	2-T14
Radical 8 Games	Come help souls celebrate Dia de Muertos in the beautiful and colourful Die of the Dead!	2-449
Ralph Horsley	Renowned fantasy artist and the man behind the UKGE Dragon.	2-T90
Raptor Island	Raptor Island is a fast paced, 2-5 player, dinosaur themed action card game	2-954
Red Knight Toy Group Ltd	Ireland's Core Trade Distributor of Toys, Games & Puzzles for All Ages.	2-638
Red Scar Publishing	Publishers of Kings of War and Devil Run RPGs.	2-951
Redwell Games	We design, develop and publish family friendly games	2-941
Retroble	Pokemon cardgames and collectibles.	2-842
River Horse	The creators of My Little Pony, Tails of Equestria and Jim Henson's Dark Crystal	2-1037
Rogue & Bard	Dungeons & Dragons accessories and a new prototype board game to try.	2-473
Rogues Gaming	Find a wide range of TCGs, RPGs and Wargaming Miniatures/Supplies.	2-343
S C Games	We will be demonstrating and retailing our first card game Knights Of NorthRend.	2-978
Sandwich Masters	Avoid the Health Inspector in this card game of strategy, sabotage and sandwiches!	2-919
SC Skillman	Writer of psychological, paranormal and mystery fiction and non-fiction.	2-505
Senet Publishing	Publisher of the new gaming magazine Senet.	2-1047
Sidekick Games	Birmingham-based games retailer.	2-920
Silver Birch Games	Competitive and co-operative board and card games for families and hobbyists.	2-425
SiOCAST	The very first system of thermoplastic resin injection in silicon rubber moulds.	2-623
Sky Guardian Creations	Handmade nerdy crafts including custom dice sets, bath bombs and jewelry.	2-T3

Smart Toys & Games UK	For more than 25 years now Smart has been committed to create inspirational & educational toys.	2-638
Sopio	Publisher of the card game Sopio.	2-970
Spiral Galaxy	Games publisher and distributor.	2-811
Squarehex	Purveyors of: The Black Hack RPG, Mapping Papers & Notebooks and Gaming Curiosities	2-512
Stone Sword Games LTD	Publisher of Hogs of War the Card Game and more.	2-477
Strata Miniatures	Miniature Sculpting and Casting Services.	2-1055
Studio H	French based publisher of H-Amazing board games.	2-741
Stuff by Bez	Party games. Wee Whimsical Creatures. The best-curated game system. Cat gallery. :p	2-451
Surprised Stare Games	We design and publish board and card games that are surprisingly original!	2-202
Sythopian Wars	Sythopian Wars, a new tabletop wargame coming soon to Kickstarter.	2-1021
Tabletop Crafter	Handmade tabletop RPG accessories and 3D printed miniatures with customisation options.	2-443
Team Custard Kraken	Brighton based board game publisher of Penguin Ball and Find the Pickle.	2-958
TeddyTech Ltd	Card and board games including Brexit the Real Deal.	2-930
Teleporthole Games	Publisher of the Attack of the Intergalactic Gherkins comedy sci-fi card game.	2-926
The Cognitive Merchant	Makers of bespoke RPG and LARP items including dice bags, GM kits and more.	2-T5
The Detective Society	Solve puzzles, investigate clues and use your detective skills to crack the case.	2-814
The Party RPG	Combination of a tabletop roleplaying and a party game.	2-401
The Role Play Haven	We're a chain of role-playing clubs who raise money for charity.	2-459
The Secret Cat Shop	We make tabletop gaming inspired enamel pins, dice, clothes, and other accessories!	2-950
The Sleeping Dragon Hobby Shop	We provide scenic modelling materials and hobby supplies to the gaming community!	2-349
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Thornless Rose	Home of the D20 Dice Bag Kit. Live Action to Tabletop, leather work to suit your style.	2-767
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VIEW FROM THE TOP: DON'T ROLL A 7

By Richard Denning UKGE Director

I began writing this piece about 18 months ago in preparation for the 2020 UK Games Expo that should have taken place in June that year. At that time, just before the pandemic became real to us all, I was visiting the Nuremberg Toy Fair. The hobby games industry was continuing to expand and all the signs were that our show was going to be bigger than ever before. It was in a mood of frivolous optimism that I wrote the title 'don't roll a 7'.

Why that title? Well, last year we would have been celebrating a significant moment in the world of games. It was in 1995 that a certain game called originally *Die Siedler von Catan* or Settlers of Catan was published and so the game celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2020.

When I discovered what is now called Catan and introduced it to my family, we were soon playing it frequently including expansions that came along. We were not the only ones to be excited by the game. To all intents and purposes Catan created the modern board game genre we all enjoy and that you are enjoying at UK Games Expo today. In 1995, when Catan was released, there were around 800 new games a year being published. In the next few years as the Industry recovers around 3500 new games will be published each year. If you analyse the release patterns of games, the start of that growth can be traced back to 1995 and Catan was a catalyst that drove all that. Other staples of the board game world like Carcassonne followed in 2000, Ticket to

Ride in 2004, Dominion in 2008, Small World in 2009 and Seven Wonders in 2015. Each ground-breaking in their own way of course, but Catan's success made all that possible.

So, Catan is now 25 (and a bit) years old. In another universe we would have had lots of activities linked to that celebration going on around the convention including treasure hunts and a badge collection. Hopefully future shows will see Catan bring some of those elements along, but the point here is the pandemic's impact was felt across the world.

Many of us have had a very tough year, indeed many people have lost loved ones and others have been ill themselves or are still suffering from long lasting consequences. The pandemic also had an impact beyond health and wellbeing. Many businesses were devastated by it. Many plans never came to fruition. Those companies that did get through it are often set back at least a year.

In the light of all that it may be frivolous indeed that we are concerned about games, or that we all made an effort to make sure this show happened and to get to it. After all, do these cardboard boxes and all they contain really matter? The answer is both no and of course yes. People matter more than these trivial items but we who find fun and joy in this hobby also recognise that the fun and joy is not only about the games but the people you share those games with. Getting together to play games, sitting down with old friends and making new ones. That is what matters. That is what we have all missed for more than

a year. Tony and I are therefore grateful to everyone, exhibitor, visitor and volunteer for making this weekend possible.

So then: 'don't roll a 7'? You don't know what that means? Well get over to the Catan Studio stand 2-602 in Hall 2 and ask for a demo. But not to keep you in suspense: in Catan you roll 2 dice to see which spaces on the board generate resources. Players who have settlements and cities bordering those districts collect these. But when a 7 is rolled no one draws resources. A piece called the robber is moved around the board and steals resources from a player. It also means that space cannot make resources whilst the pesky robber is there. Possibly even worse than that players who have more than 7 resources in their hand will lose half! This can be catastrophic. Thus 'don't roll a 7' might mean - I wish you luck.

Whatever the game you are playing may luck be with you this UK Games Expo. But even if you have the worst luck possible, let it not spoil your mood. Even if your warrior mage dies in the first combat, your perfectly constructed deck fails to deliver the cards you need, if you can't quite connect New York to Chicago or you cannot persuade the other gamers that you are not a werewolf, we wish you something far more important than luck and success. We wish that you have fun once more gathering together. Simply that. Have fun and enjoy these few days. Make new friends and renew old friendships.

But yeh, still - don't roll a 7.



Jiangnan: Life of Gentry

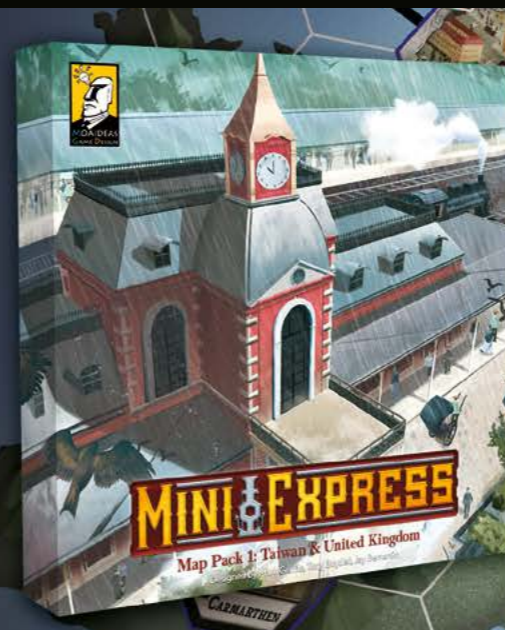
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HEREFORDSHIRE BOARDGAMERS: EVOLUTION OF A BOARD GAMING CLUB

By Adam Best

DO A BIT MORE

15 months ago, [Herefordshire Board Gamers](#) was purely analogue, meeting twice a month to play board games, with the occasional roleplaying game. We have never been just a game night. Community and fundraising are key parts of our identity. We've raised over £11,000 in five years for Herefordshire Mind and try hard to provide safe, inclusive, social spaces and events. We've made giant versions of Tsuru, Hey! That's my Fish and Terror in Meeple City as a way of advertising our charity events, to bring people to sleepy Hereford and to attract the eye of 'non-gamers'. You may have seen us at a number of conventions around the UK over the last three years. Seeing the smile on a gamer's face when they work out it's a [giant version of the game](#) and they get to be the playing piece is priceless!



REINVENT

When the first lock down hit, we had a charity event scheduled for two weeks' time. We had a decision to make; close up or reinvent ourselves. We chose the latter. Online board gaming sites were crashing from a deluge of gamers stuck at home, so we borrowed some web cameras (as they had become as scarce as toilet paper) to play copies of physical games online.

Since then, we've kept evolving, trying different platforms, online quizzes and video games. We launched an RPG wing and have played 35 different systems so far. What's been great to see is people who had never even played an RPG before then going on to run their own games. We've gone from two meetings a month to only a handful of days during the winter months where some kind of event hasn't been held.



GROW THE OFFERING

We launched a free, community lending library, which has grown from 30 titles to over 200. This started with games from our own collection, plus a small grant and has expanded mostly due to personal donations, bolstered by a number of publishers providing games as well. We lent armfuls of games to people during lockdown. It ended up being a far larger project than I imagined and a basic Facebook gallery didn't cut it, so I ended up making a website. Around 20% of loanees have ended up purchasing their own copy of games borrowed so it serves as a great 'try before you buy' scheme.

MORE THAN JUST A GAMES CLUB

With the second and third lockdowns we continued to re-invent. This led to our virtual exercise challenge, where any intentional exercise that could be converted to Km could be logged towards a group target and we could motivate each other. We have a charity donation page but it's not the focus. We plotted a route and travelled to our favourite conventions which were not able to run. We actually arrived before the start date of each event including arriving at the UK Games Expo two weeks before its normal date! We travelled 1,500 Km in just over 4 months. The next phase of our challenge is to

travel to the wonderful companies who have donated to the library or charity events. At around 4,000 Km it's a hell of a trek; including Ireland, France, Germany and The Czech Republic. For phase three we have four amazing USA based sponsors, on both coasts.

COMMUNITY MINDED

Why have we done this? As a community leader I feel it is my duty to provide a safe, social space; somewhere for people to belong, relax, make friends and forget about the world. If we hadn't gone online, I'm sure small friend groups would have continued to play online, but what about those at the edge of groups, or new people or those with changing circumstances? Communities provide a sense of belonging, a way to learn and to give back, all vital for mental wellbeing. We have lots more on this topic on our website including a mental health first aid guide.

Personally as an introvert I need the controlled interactions from gaming for socialising and I love sharing the hobby. It's one of the reasons I started Herefordshire Board Gamers so we could socialise in a 'quieter' or nerdier way.

CHARITY

Our charity fundraising has continued. We have raised £4,590 for Herefordshire Mind during the pandemic, through a mix of events, quizzes and raffles. We've had amazing support from sponsors and we were very careful to target our requests to those companies who we thought had fared ok during the pandemic.

Mental health awareness week falls in mid-May and this is when we have chosen to run our main charity event. We held both 2020 and 2021 events online. Despite some restrictions on social distancing being relaxed and patience for online events waning we had good attendance.

SET EXPECTATIONS

There is a lot of fear and apprehension about new hobbies and new technologies. Lots of people find learning board games hard or scary, couple that with learning Discord or Board Game Arena. Be patient with people. Write a few [simple instructional guides](#) or welcome threads to help people and be patient. You only get one chance at a first impression. Board Game Area and the various apps do make teaching and running games simpler, but you should always help with guides / FAQs and patient teaching. We worked hard on making sure our events are clear and expectations are set. We've doubled the number of guides on our website over this year.

ONLINE SAFETY

Online Communities where people also meet in person tend to be nicer, particularly if you have a good leadership, code of conduct and culture. Do update and review your rules and code of conduct for online play as there are different risks. I am proud to say our online spaces have stayed positive and productive, whereas

many have decayed over the course of the pandemic. Discord has grown into a full and active community, which has been a learning journey for us and our members.

EMPOWER PEOPLE

If there are people you trust who are keen to help, let them. Members I've never met in real life (as they joined us during the pandemic) have run events for us. If you promote people, give them the support and the framework to do a good job. Ensure you have clear rules and expectations to make sure the nights are friendly, inclusive and have the right atmosphere.



Communities like HB have been really essential for a lot of people because it's real, no social media nonsense. Like when I come on here I know there are real humans with no persona or fakeness...unless we are playing an RPG, but that's different.

- a member of the Herefordshire Boardgamers

KEEP INVENTING

Try new things on different days of the week. We have a core group but also very different attendees for our quizzes, video games and social events. Our Among Us sessions had a great mix of regulars and their children playing together. We've run themed nights, focusing on a type of game, for example lighter social games with clear advertising to reassure people and target the audience. As restrictions have lifted, we've branched into non-gaming activities such as roller skating and paddle boarding.

KEEP PUSHING

Some things will fail. Try again. Push your boundaries and try to learn from it. Take support and feedback. Get second opinions. Specifically, for us I've appeared on the radio five times and have been interviewed live on Twitch. As an introvert that is outside my comfort zone, but it was worth it to help advertise the community and our causes.

GIVE BACK

The other aspect of charity and community work is that people like giving back. The act of being part of the process can bring a lot of pleasure to people. The charity tag can also be the final catalyst which gets new / nervous people to try something for the first time.

This extraordinary time has changed our club for the better. We are more varied, resilient and better at listening. We are planning to continue running some online events. We've been able to play with people across the UK and internationally and with those who can't attend regular in person events due to childcare etc.

As I close this and look back on this most interesting of times, I want to thank all the community leaders who've kept their communities going in any guise. That social outlet may have made a huge difference to someone. It may be the highlight of someone's week and the only decent socialisation they get. To those that haven't, please don't feel guilty, you and your family's wellbeing is just as important.

Keep being kind to each other and remember it's not just a board game night and every community member plays a part in that.

CODENAMES OF CONDUCT



Herefordshire



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HEREFORDSHIRE BOARD GAMERS

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WINNING & LOSING? IS IT IMPORTANT? HOW CAN WE HELP DEAL WITH BOTH?

by Nigel Scarfe

HOW DO WE PERCEIVE IT?

Winning and losing are strange bedfellows. As players of games we all know how good it feels to win and how, on occasion, losing can be disheartening but when we ask the question of "Is it really important?", at Imagination Gaming, we think not.

It may seem important, and some seem to want to win at all costs but what message does that send out to others? Is it a sign of strength, a weakness or do they play games for a different reason to you?

Now we aren't going to get too deep on this, we are the UKGE after all, I'm not sure this is the right place for a dissertation of the psychology of winning (or losing!) but we are going to make a couple of points and ask a few questions of you all.

No one truly enjoys losing...although I have a few friends that are really good at it, but why are some more able to accept the situation and move on than others?

How does our society judge winners and losers?

How does that impact on our reactions to it? When we raise children how do we interact

with them in terms of winning and losing when it comes to games?

WHERE TO BEGIN?

As gamers, winning and losing is something we experience often. Over time it's something most of us get used to, whichever side that may fall on.

"WINNING A GAME IS GOOD; BUT WINNING A GAME TOGETHER WITH WINNING YOUR RIVAL'S HEART TOO IS BRILLIANT AND THIS IS A REAL WINNING!"

Mehmet Murat ildan

Playing games, we learn that we only have so much control over our situations, results often coming down to luck or things beyond our control...such as a move or action by another player.

When we look to play games with people who are inexperienced, or simply haven't played at all, we would always encourage them to start off playing cooperative games. Let's win or lose together to begin. Being



unfamiliar with losing only makes it more difficult to come to terms with failure but if we understand early on that when we play a game it will result in most of the players losing then this will become an accepted truth and easier to handle when we ourselves end up in the losing team or place.

If as parents, we let children win games then how strange will it seem to them that when they play games with their friends they lose?



"I WOULD RATHER LOSE AND FEEL LIKE A WINNER THAN CHEAT AND FEEL LIKE A LOSER."

Looney Toons

"At home I win against adults so how come I'm losing now when playing with my friends??" This is something we see often around schools either in class or during after school activities with parents.

PLAY TO LEARN

When teaching games start by teaching the basic rules of how to play the game, not how to win. So often we see people teach others how to play games with a focus on

"FAILURE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AGAIN"

Bangambiki Habyarimana

winning first, rather than how to master the basic rules. Now while this might be well and good for an experienced gamer, for a newcomer or child this can be daunting. Winning and losing can come once everyone around the table understands how the game works and on a level playing field.

For example, if we work with four children in a class the chances are I'll have a fast learner, a couple who are pretty evenly matched and then someone who just takes that little bit longer to grasp things. If we play to win on the first game that quick learner tends to smash the other players and victory is theirs. When we ask the players what they think of the game and would they like to play again the responses are: The winner "it's great, I can't wait to play again", the two average players "it's kind of ok, we can play again some time, but can we play something else for now?" and the one that lost, who still didn't get it clearly at the end thinks it's the worst game ever written and never wants to play it again!! Now while this is slightly exaggerated it is a situation we see often that can easily be avoided.

Now imagine a scenario in which for the first game, we play until everyone is comfortable with the basics, restarting if necessary. By the time we introduce the winning and losing conditions, everyone understands a little better the implications of the moves by themselves and the other players. Suddenly they feel like they have more control over the situation, they aren't worried about how things work and are more concerned as to how they deal with things and reading the game state. The winner may well remain the same but those that lost are at least more able to



understand why and have the understanding and ability to do something about it next time.

Also remember, you don't have to teach all of the rules at once! This is a fatal mistake many make when teaching. Expecting someone unfamiliar to remember everything you've just said is a big ask so start simple!



"WINNING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE AT SOMEONE'S EXPENSE."

Frank Sonnenberg

STICK WITH IT

The other thing we like to do when playing games or teaching for the first time is ensuring that everyone plays the game more than once! This improves understanding. The better they understand the more easily they will see the intricacies of the game and the subtle plays and moves that are available. It also improves their resilience. Following the previous method if we play the game a few times the chances of the same person winning and losing each time is reduced, giving all players the ability to see that their time will come.

Also, when teaching someone, remember to play not to thrash someone or to simply let them win. Neither is helpful. Yes, play the game, but to encourage people to learn something, or just bring them into the hobby, then on the first game ensure that throughout the game you have explained why you have made certain moves, why you put this piece here, why you are looking at your opponent's pieces and cards etc. ▶

If you do that, then even if your opponent loses the first game, by playing a little easier on the next game they will have learned what is important to improve their chances and so if they still lose they will have got closer to the winner or maybe almost won themselves. This approach allows them to understand that in losing they can see progress in their own skill levels and ability. They will feel like they have won a minor victory, even in defeat!

"TYPICALLY, HOWEVER, THE WINNER IS JUST THE PLAYER WHO MADE THE NEXT-TO-LAST MISTAKE."

Garry Kasparov

without complaining are one of the first issues to conquer, sometimes with people who are old enough to know better!

Most of us started playing games because we wanted to be around other like minded people and sometimes we forget that. We are so fixated on winning, or frustrated at our loss, that we forget how lucky we are to just be sitting around a table, with people we like, doing something we love. That alone is a circumstance and situation where we should all feel like winners! COVID and the lockdown have impressed that upon us, and although we are able to play online, I don't know any of my friends and colleagues that haven't really missed the experience of sitting down with their friends and enjoying each other's company over a game.

Have fun and remember...it's just a game.

"YOUR STRENGTH DOESN'T COME FROM WINNING. IT COMES FROM STRUGGLES AND HARDSHIP. EVERYTHING THAT YOU GO THROUGH PREPARES YOU FOR THE NEXT LEVEL."

Germany Kent



Imagination Gaming

Imagination Gaming have been running educational games days in schools across the UK as well as the UKGE Family zone for many years. We are always happy to hear from anyone as to opinions or examples of how games have affected their lives. Drop us an email to nigel@imaginationgaming.co.uk

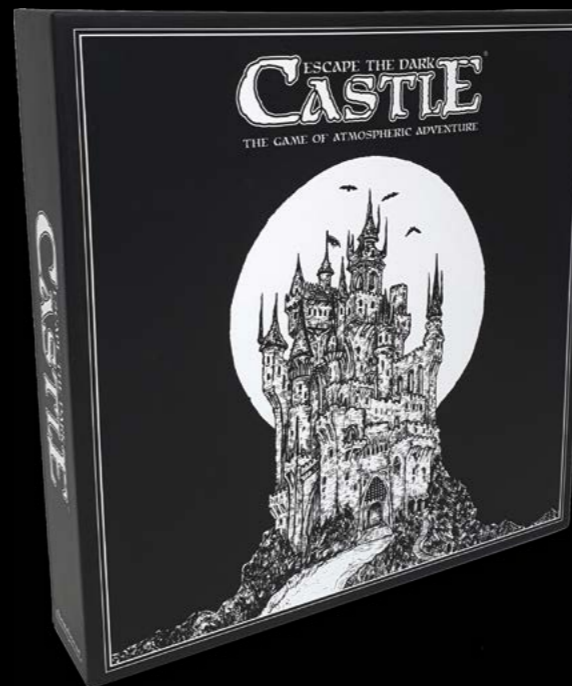
DON'T FORGET WHY WE ARE PLAYING

When working as we do in schools, educational venues and with families, winning and losing is one of the first hurdles to conquer in finding that happy place where games are played to be both enjoyable and a socially inclusive pastime.

Winning without bragging and losing

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CAHOOTS	Gamewright	Top end of primary upwards
THE MIND	Coiledspring games	Top end of primary upwards
CASTLE PANIC	Fireside Games	Young adults
PANDEMIC	Z-Man games	Young adults



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FIVE QUESTIONS TO ATTUNE TO AN RPG SETTING

By Cat Evans & Elaine Lithgow

The tabletop RPG industry is larger than ever. Every day new people are joining the hobby, and not a month goes by without a wonderful new game breaking out into the scene. Not to mention all the brilliant old games getting new editions or just surfacing from memory.

However, getting your head around a new RPG setting can take a lot of time. As a new player, with a wealth of games to choose from, how do you quickly decide if a setting is for you? Even for the most experienced players it can be tough to convince your group to try something new and different.

While spending days diving deep into the lore of a new setting is part of the fun, it doesn't quite help when you're standing at a stall eyeing the cover of a new game, or deciding which one-shot game you want to sign up to!

So, as people who play in lots of different settings, we thought we would put together five simple questions to help you quickly attune to a TTRPG setting.

1. Who are we, the protagonists?
2. What's our place in the world?
3. What's our goal?
4. What challenges do we face?
5. What tools do we use to solve them?

Let's apply these questions to some of the games we make at Cubicle 7.



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WARHAMMER AGE OF SIGMAR: SOULBOUND

In Soulbound, the first ever tabletop roleplaying game set in the Warhammer Age of Sigmar universe, you are god-chosen heroes of legendary skill from across the Mortal Realms, bound by divine magic that links the souls of your allies together; granting you immortality and incredible power.

As paragons of the gods, you hold a position of great esteem, and are heralded as heroes of the common people. Your goal is to do everything in your power to save the innocent and reclaim your stolen homelands. But while you are undeniably powerful, capable of standing against waves of lesser enemies, you still face innumerable challenges from sinister champions, nightmarish monsters, and political machinations. You tackle these problems using martial might, powerful arcane sorceries, outlandish technology, and skilful diplomacy.

The Mortal Realms need heroes, and you have answered the call.

If Warhammer Age of Sigmar: Soulbound piques your interest, the awesome Starter Set is the perfect place to dive in. The Starter Set is jam-packed with everything you need to begin roleplaying epic adventures in the perilous lands of the Mortal Realms. Looking for more? Check out the Core Rulebook, the GM Screen, or Shadows in the Mist, the first ever campaign for Warhammer Age of Sigmar: Soulbound. All these titles are available from our website and your local games store!

www.cubicle7games.com



WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY

The award-winning fourth edition of the original dark fantasy roleplaying game, Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay (WFRP) takes you back to the world where Chaos never sleeps. Drawing inspiration from the legendary early publications of the grimdark RPG, WFRP brings innovative twists to build on the beloved classic. Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay, is a fantasy game (the clue's in the name), that uses some of the same concepts as Soulbound but combines and flavours them in a very different way, allowing players to create completely different stories.

WFRP characters still fight Chaos and other dark forces, but that's about all they have in common with Soulbound's heroes. Rather than being agents of the gods, these characters come from more ordinary backgrounds. Most start off as tradespeople, ratcatchers, and other common folk and, at least at the start of play, they have very local, personal problems. Brigands, bad harvests, war's impact on commoners, and noble politicking are as common of enemies as Orcs. Antiheroes are as plentiful as heroes, maybe more so. Some characters want to make the world a better place, some want to survive, and some just want to die richer and more powerful than they started.

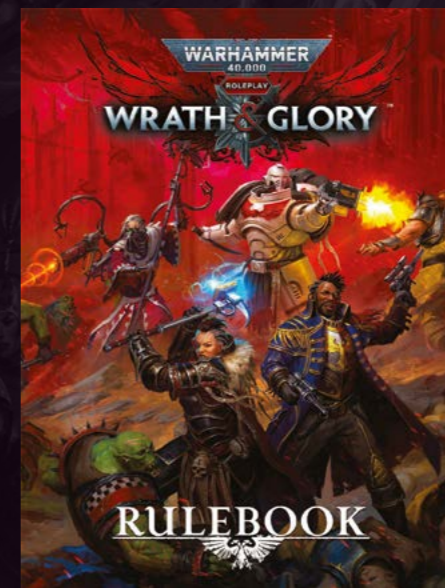
Often the challenges these characters face involve monsters — Goblins, the undead, chattering hordes of Skaven, malevolent sorcery, or Chaos cultists — but those aren't the root of the problem. The source of all the rot (and there's a lot of rot; the Old World is a grim, dark, nasty place) is the petty, selfish, ugly nature of people. All people, not only the green ones, dead ones, and the ones shaped like rats.

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay's setting features Renaissance-level technology. Along with swords and bows, characters also have access to blackpowder weapons, explosives, and artillery, as well as an array of other

ingenious devices. Magic is rare and feared in the Old World; a terrifying force born of Chaos best avoided. Severe wounds and nagging injuries stick with the characters as reminders of previous injuries. In WFRP, you get one life, and you'd better make someone pay dearly for it.

The world is cold, cruel, and unforgiving. You're going to have to get your hands dirty.

If you want to dive in, there are lots of titles to choose from! From the Starter Set, Core Rulebook, and GM Screen to the epic, revised, and updated Director's Cut of the Enemy Within campaign and lots of handy PDF releases. If you prefer virtual tabletops, WFRP is officially available on Foundry VTT and Roll20!



WARHAMMER 40,000 ROLEPLAY: WRATH & GLORY

In Warhammer 40,000 Roleplay: Wrath & Glory, the answers to the questions posed earlier are a little different. The protagonists are usually (but not always) the forces of the Imperium of Man, fighting Chaos and alien threats from within the framework of the highly religious, militaristic Imperium. The Warhammer 40,000 universe is a complicated place, with characters of many different levels of power, from humble Astra Militarum troopers to Sisters of Battle, Tech-Priests, Inquisitors, and Primaris Space Marines. Wrath & Glory gives players options to play any of these iconic roles (though not necessarily in the same group). The way games unfold depends on how powerful the characters are.

At any tier of play, the characters' goal isn't to make their situation better, just to stop it getting even worse. Every defeat at the hands of the Ruinous Powers of Chaos threatens the survival of Humanity — though Humanity's eventual victory is inevitable, with the divine Emperor on their side. Tier 1 characters, like Inquisitorial Acolytes, Astra Militarum soldiers, and Hive Scum have more control

over their destinies than the average Imperial citizen, who lives a life focused on work and piety, but they're still only in a position to control immediate problems — like the insidious cultists corrupting those around them, or the xenos raiders who prey on them.

The more they affect the Gilead System on a grand scale. Space Marines and their associates can, and should, shape the fate of planets. They're often the most powerful people in a world and it falls to them to be its saviours.

The players' Agents face threats from daemons, cults, and xenos species who attack the Imperium from without and undermine it from within. They meet these dangers with grit and determination, faith in the Emperor, heavy firepower and — very occasionally — the assistance of Psykers wielding dangerous Warp energies. However, as the Gilead System is cut off from the rest of the galaxy by the Great Rift, a deadly tear in reality, they do so without hope of reinforcements. The Gilead System is rife with scarcity — of trust and mercy as much as bullets.

Sacrifice is glorious and defeat is not an option.

JOIN US!

If you're interested in Warhammer 40,000 Roleplay: Wrath & Glory, check out the revised Core Rulebook, or get started with some of the excellent free content available to download on www.cubicle7games.com such as Rain of Mercy. For those already familiar with the game, Litanies of the Lost offers four exciting scenarios suitable for Wrath & Glory characters of Tiers 1 and 2.

And there you have it. In just a few words, or a couple of minutes of conversation, that's three settings you're ready to dive right into. Why not ask the sellers or GMs around the UKGE these questions? It might just help you to choose your next adventure.

Cat Evans & Elaine Lithgow, Cubicle 7.

To find out more about the lines mentioned in this article or shop any of the exciting titles check out www.cubicle7games.com or reach out to Cubicle 7 on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.



GAMING THE CLASSICS

By Jonathan Green

During lockdown, I was interviewed by Richard Denning of the UK Games Expo, about my latest RPG based on an ACE Gamebooks property, HEOROT, which was inspired by the interactive novel *Beowulf Beastslayer*. We touched on the challenges and rewards facing a writer who wants to turn an existing work of literature into a gamebook but decided it was a topic worthy of further discussion, hence this article.

Gamebooks, in case you need reminding, are the original works of interactive fiction; books that you play, or, if you prefer, games you read. Presented in book form, the reader becomes the hero of the story, making choices by turning to different pages. For a novel to be a gamebook, rather than just a work of branching fiction, some sort of game element must exist, from puzzles to be solved right up to a simple set of RPG rules that require dice-rolling, and the like. The ones that everyone remembers from the 1980s are Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone's *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks and Joe Dever's *Lone Wolf* series, both of which are still in print today, with new titles continuing to be published.

GAMEBOOKS MAY BE A NICHE INTEREST, BUT THEY ARE STILL ALIVE

Gamebooks may be a niche interest, but they are still alive and well, thanks in particular to self-published indie writers here in the UK and elsewhere, as well as traditional publishers overseas, such as Mantikore-Verlag in Germany, Vincent Books in Italy, and Jambo Editora in Brazil. And within that niche, there is a growing number of creators who are turning existing, classic works of literature into gamebooks.

This is nothing new, of course. J H Brennan, creator of *Grailquest*, published the gamebook *Dracula's Castle* in 1986, and although you can play as Jonathan Harker or Count Dracula, the adventure bears little resemblance to Bram

Stoker's gothic horror original. It could be argued that, since the heyday of gamebooks in the 1980s, works of interactive fiction have become more sophisticated; some of the children who read those trail-blazing gamebooks are now adults, who still enjoy the genre but are interested in exploring its potential, especially when writing for a more mature readership.

Consequently, two gamebook authors have recently revisited *Dracula*, reimagining the classic as two very different works of interactive fiction. Dane Barrett's *The Mystery of Dracula*, incorporates puzzles, riddles and more than a little clue-seeking, while my own *Dracula - Curse of the Vampire* (out October 2021) features a full combat system and an ever-rising Terror score. Both take their inspiration from *Dracula*, but both put their own spin on the story, to provide that vital interactive element.

"For me, *Dracula* was an important piece of literature in my High School years, as it eventually influenced everything from my writing style to my love for all things gothic," explains Dane Barrett. "While adapting a work from the public domain, you can literally do

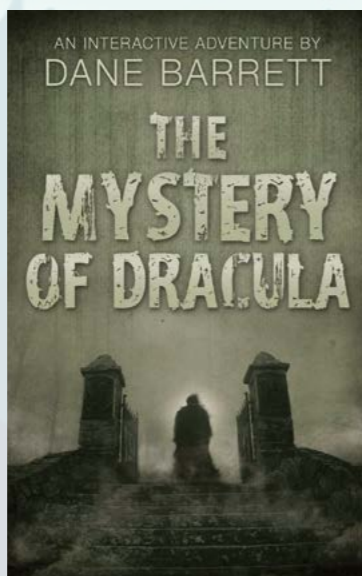


almost anything with it. Because *Dracula* means a lot to me, I chose to remain loyal to its 19th Century roots."

Whilst gamebooks have a niche audience, *Dracula* is known all over the world, and so the name alone could lead to more readers discovering our adventures, even if they would not normally consider themselves gamebook readers.

"Classic works come with built-in 'brand recognition', of course," explains veteran gamebook author Dave Morris, "but my reason for adapting *Frankenstein* for Profile Books is that we wanted to reach beyond the usual genre-inflected market for interactive stories."

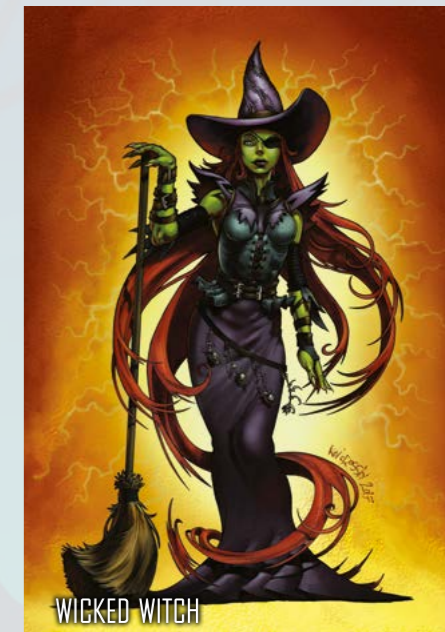
While the characters and overall plot have already been worked out for you, the challenge - both creatively and intellectually - comes in taking a linear story and making it non-linear, which requires the gamebook writer to exercise their imagination and powers of invention, whilst writing in a similar style to the original author, so as to create the illusion that it was all one seamless whole from the get-go.



PETER PAN



ALICE



WICKED WITCH

KJ Shadmand has recently published an interactive version of H G Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. According to him, part of the appeal of adapting an existing work for the interactive market is that "classic works of literature tend to be beautifully written, full of compelling themes, extraordinary scenes, and characters that have withstood the test of time. Reimagining these timeless stories as gamebooks can give them fresh life and open them up to a new generation of readers."

"When adapting a linear piece of fiction and making it interactive, it is often necessary to design additional parts of the story to create more branches than those present in the original tale," points out Dane Barrett. "When writing interactively, you are designing a game as much as a piece of fiction, so it's important to make sure the pacing doesn't slow down too much, due to unwieldy dialogue or unnecessarily over-descriptive text. Yet you must not dumb things down too much, or you'll lose the essence of the original. It's a balancing act!"

If you are going to turn a well-known classic into a work of interactive fiction, your audience is going to expect you to hit certain beats in your retelling. My first ACE Gamebook, *Alice's Nightmare in Wonderland*, is a perfect example of this. During the course of the adventure, you meet all the characters you would expect to meet - such as the White Rabbit, the Cheshire Cat, the Hatter, and the Queen of Hearts - but not necessarily as you would expect to meet them. Equally, Alice still falls down the well into Wonderland, and encounters the Playing Cards painting a white rosebush red, before heading through the Looking-Glass to visit the island of the Jabberwock.

"I didn't want to fundamentally change the key events of the story," Morris says of

his adaptation of Shelley's classic. "Then it wouldn't be *Frankenstein*, it would just be a theme park ride based on *Frankenstein*. The player couldn't prevent things like William Frankenstein's murder, but they could change how the creature felt about it, and their own degree of complicity. One reviewer got very steamed up about that. 'I couldn't stop the creature from killing a blameless little boy!' she griped. Welcome to literature."

"Somebody who reads something with the word 'Dracula' in its title will expect a vampire by that name to make an appearance," says Barrett, "but not necessarily all of the same characters and events surrounding that vampire. For example, while my book includes the famous 'children of the night, what music they make' quote, it is actually an optional piece of dialogue that you will only come across if you choose a certain option of how to spend time with the Count while in his castle. I felt it was important to include it but not necessarily make it a mandatory piece of the tale."

"It is difficult to imagine writing gamebook adaptations of classic works without including certain seminal scenes," says Shadmand. "Such scenes are famous for good reason, and the author in charge of the adaptation is well advised to make full use of them! Hitting these marks also gives a recognisable structure to a gamebook, while allowing the author the freedom to invent fresh storylines, encounters, and adventures."

Dare I say it, but when you reimagine a classic you can also fix problematic parts of the narrative or give it a more satisfying ending. In *NEVERLAND - Here Be Monsters!* - my take on *Peter Pan*, which merges J M Barrie's much-loved children's classic with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* - I switched out Barrie's, quite frankly, racist Picaninny tribe

for Doyle's Accala people, making Tiger Lily a sabretooth-riding, dinosaur-battling warrior, and possibly the most badass playable character in the book!

Dave Morris again: "A novelist can leave gaps that become more glaringly obvious as soon as the reader has agency. For example, Shelley has Frankenstein chase the creature from Turkey to the Arctic Circle with almost no detail whatsoever. I needed it to feel like a chase, so there I had to add a lot of extra detail not in the original book.

"I also had to fix some of Shelley's plotting. She had a bit where the creature goes from Orkney to the mainland, kills Frankenstein's best friend, then somehow follows Frankenstein from Scotland to Ireland in a small boat - in a storm - and predicts which village he's going to put in at, leaving the friend's body conveniently nearby so as to frame Frankenstein for the murder. Sloppy work. I had to find a way that it would be more feasible than a million-to-one coincidence."

One of the joys of both writing and reading a gamebook based on a stone-cold classic, is that you get to explore or experience what it would be like to be one of the characters in the story, and how you might choose to do things differently from how events pan out in the original tale.

Everyone knows that the epic Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, ends with the titular hero dying from the wounds he sustains whilst battling a dragon. Well in *Beowulf Beastslayer*, you become the hero, and can make it to the end of the story without dying - assuming you make the correct choices. ►



DOROTHY



TIN WOODSMAN

KJ Shadmand: "My debut gamebook, *The Island of Doctor Moreau: An Interactive Adventure*, has a fiendish twist in the tale that gives greater purpose to your exploration of the tropical island on which you find yourself stranded. This twist definitely does not appear in H G Wells' original work!"

Actors always say that they love to play the Bad Guy, well in gamebooks like these you don't necessarily have to be the hero, in the black and white, cookie-cutter sense of many an epic fantasy adventure. In *The Wicked Wizard of Oz*, as well as choosing to play as Dorothy Gale or one of her friends, you can also tackle the adventure as the Wicked Witch of the West, who is not the misunderstood heroine she is in the musical *Wicked*.

So, what else should you consider if you are planning to adapt a classic work of literature as a gamebook yourself?

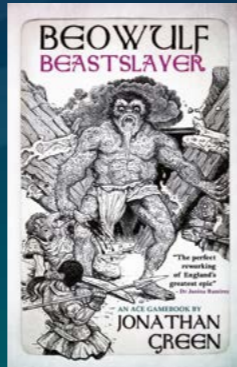
Dane Barrett: "Try to honour the original as much as possible. While public domain literature tends to be fair game these days for television, movies and video games, I think it's still important to do the original some measure of justice. Saying that, do try to put some things into the story that may not have been in the source material, if only to give those people who have already read the original book something new to devour!"

Just as it can be satisfying for readers to encounter familiar characters and story beats, it can be equally satisfying to be surprised, when expectations are subverted.

KJ Shadmand: "Gamebooks include multiple pathways through the story and give the reader some level of decision-making power. Adapting a conventional reading experience into a branching narrative experience is a considerable challenge, both creatively and practically. Interactive fiction is always difficult to get right. Adapting much-loved classics into the interactive format is arguably even trickier."

Dave Morris: "Interactivity as problem-solving is pretty boring and has nothing much to add to literature. But interactivity that draws you into a relationship, or gives you a new perspective on a character, or evokes feelings of pity or guilt or pride - that's worth doing."

"Anyone undertaking this task should also feel comfortable inventing 'the book that never was' that will become the majority of the gamebook," adds Shadmand. "This entails a considerable responsibility to write in a way that fans of the original will find pleasing and authentic, while having the confidence to deviate from the original work in ways that serve the creation of an exciting gamebook."



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"GAMEBOOKS INCLUDE MULTIPLE PATHWAYS THROUGH THE STORY AND GIVE THE READER SOME LEVEL OF DECISION-MAKING POWER."

KJ Shadmand

BRAND DESIGNS

BILLY LANGSWORTHY — FOUNDER OF MOJO NATION AND BRANDS UNTAPPED — LOOKS AT THE WORLD OF LICENSED BOARD GAMES AND WHY IT'S AN EXCITING TIME IN THIS SPACE FOR DESIGNERS, PUBLISHERS AND CONSUMERS ALIKE.



Brands and board games have a bit of a chequered history. Brand-slaps, where the gameplay and mechanisms have no real relationship to the IP, have long led consumers and critics to be wary, but there are signs we've left these behind and are instead in something of a purple patch for licensed games.

One title that typifies how brands are thriving across the entire board game sector is Marvel United. It comes from two designers of tabletop pedigree – Eric Lang and Andrea Chiarvesio – and is a collaboration between a titan of the hobby space in CMON, and a huge mass-market player in Spin Master.

The dual appeal of the game was elaborated on in a recent blog entry from Andrea, who described the aim for Marvel United to be 'An easily approachable, cooperative game that could be enjoyed by the whole family, but we also wanted it to have enough meat and depth to be exciting for gamers.'

Brands have increasingly been a great means for publishers to appeal to both a mass audience - thanks to the pull of a popular IP - as well as having gameplay sophisticated enough to appeal to tabletop fans. Look at Ravensburger's Jaws, Spin Master's Titanic: The Game or Funko Games' Fast & Furious: Highway Heist... None are just a case of applying branded artwork to an established game. They all come from designers interested in translating brands into great tabletop experiences.

These three examples also demonstrate the variety of brands getting the board game treatment these days. In recent years Ravensburger has launched games based on the likes of The Princess Bride, Hocus Pocus and the Universal Monsters, Funko Games has titles out around Pan Am, Disneyland's It's A Small World attraction and Kellogg's Pop Tarts, while Gibsons has enjoyed success with its TFL range of games.



BRANDS HAVE INCREASINGLY BEEN A GREAT MEANS FOR PUBLISHERS TO APPEAL TO A MASS AUDIENCE

Even A24 – the studio behind films like Hereditary, Uncut Gems and Minari – has embraced our industry, creating a role-playing game based on its upcoming fantasy epic, The Green Knight, that's directly available from their online shop.

There's even variety to be found in games based on mega-brands. Ravensburger's Disney Villainous range has given properties that aren't key consumer products drivers for Disney – like The Emperor's New Groove, Steamboat Willie and Basil: The Great Mouse Detective – a chance to thrive in board games in a creative, smart way.

And that's the key to all of this; creativity and strong design. These games understand their brands, their audiences and are designed to provide a great gameplay experience that's authentic to the IP in question.

A key recent example of this – and they don't come more left-field – can be found in Tactic Games' brand-new line of MasterChef games, designed by Richard Heaves.



MasterChef® is a registered trademark of Shine TV Limited

The range gives consumers an evening in a box. Each game comes with real recipe cards that allow consumers to prepare actual meals. The game is then a 'dessert experience' using cards and simple props. Players win food-related mini games, collect ingredients based on their success and then present a dish based on hidden brief that is revealed near the end.

It has been designed with a clear appreciation for what the brand is, and what MasterChef fans might look for in a gaming experience; with this in mind, a mash-up between a game and an evening cooking experience makes sense.

On designing licensed games, Richard said: "A great licence is like a springboard; get in sync with its pulse and it can send your creativity higher than you might normally go. Entertainment licences today have richer stories, characters and environments than ever before. This can

give rise to rich bespoke experiences that designers can unlock in the mind of consumers far easier than it would have been starting with a blank canvas concept."

Before launching his own invention studio, Richard was Global Design Director for family games at Hasbro, looking after brands like Monopoly, itself a huge player in the licensing space.

While there remains a huge audience for licensed Monopoly games that match brand artwork with the usual rules, Hasbro has also created a line that plays around with Monopoly in ways that feel faithful to different brands.

Monopoly: Gamer Edition features Nintendo characters and includes boss battles when you pass Go, a power-up die and replaces Monopoly money with coins. Monopoly Arcade: Pac-Man introduces power pellets and ghosts that move around the board. Elsewhere, Monopoly: Fortnite provides fans of the smash-hit video game



a battle-royale twist on the classic board game that does away with cash to instead focus on health points.

Another corner of the mass-market space that is innovating when it comes to brands is trivia games. While Trivial Pursuit has popular editions that quiz fans on everything from James Bond to Rick & Morty, Funko Games has recently launched trivia games for ESPN and Seinfeld that don't rely on quiz questions alone.

ESPN Trivia Night boasts mini dexterity games inspired by different sports, while Seinfeld: The Party Game About Nothing comes with a fishing rod and a plastic marble rye, for a challenge recreating an iconic moment from the sitcom.



Brands are fuelling creativity in designers, IP owners from every industry are actively engaging with both tabletop and mass-market publishers and consumers are being treated to experiences that feel genuinely authentic to the IP they love. It's an exciting time for licensing and board games.



BRANDS ARE FUELLING CREATIVITY IN DESIGNERS, IP OWNERS FROM EVERY INDUSTRY ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGING WITH BOTH TABLETOP AND MASS-MARKET PUBLISHERS AND CONSUMERS ARE BEING TREATED TO EXPERIENCES THAT FEEL GENUINELY AUTHENTIC TO THE IP THEY LOVE. IT'S AN EXCITING TIME FOR LICENSING AND BOARD GAMES.

MENTAL GAMES

I think most of us play games for fun, whether we play with friends and family or take part in competitions. Playing games is a way to escape from our day-to-day stresses and worries, just like reading a book, watching a film, going to the theatre, solving a crossword puzzle or many other leisure activities. We can use games to spend an hour or two to immerse ourselves in another world, focus our thoughts on solving puzzles or spending time with friends or loved ones. However, playing games can be more than just an enjoyable activity. It can be good for our mental health.

In recent years, the topic of mental health has started to lose its stigma. More and more people openly talk about their experiences and their day-to-day struggles - and that is a good thing. Amazingly, this trend has also found its way into our community. I think it is no surprise that people in the board game world feel comfortable talking about quite private topics, including their mental health. Many people in our hobby proudly describe themselves as nerds or geeks, so there is already a strong sense of belonging and familiarity. Board gamers feel comfortable among their peers, which is great and certainly creates the feeling of being part of a close-knit group of likeminded people who you can share your worries with.

When you listen to gamers talking about their mental health, you will hear how games have played a powerfully positive role in their journey. Just look at [GammaRay TV's](#) series [Starting Roll](#), where host [James Hudson](#) speaks to prominent people about their encounter with board games, and you will find many examples where playing games has helped the guest to escape from reality and feel empowered, at least for a little while. Games have helped these people deal with or even overcome the problems they faced in their lives.

Of course, nobody claims that board games alone are the answer to dealing with mental health. You should definitely see a professional and follow their advice if you have any concerns.

However, board games can play a part in the process of dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness and other issues affecting our mental state.

One way in which games can help is by creating a focal point. In therapy groups, for example, they allow people to come together without feeling pressured into discussing their problems. You are there to play a game, and if you feel like talking, then you can - but if you don't, then that is fine too. A board game can also facilitate discussion among the group as some actions during play might relate to events in a person's life or remind people of things that happened and that they want to talk about.

In her interview on the [Tabletop Inquisition](#) podcast, [Ann Jones](#) of [Cards or Die](#), who works with a number of different groups, talks about this way of using games. She brings games from her library to therapy sessions, teaches them to the participants and helps create a comfortable and enjoyable experience, while qualified professionals deal with the relevant needs of the group. She has seen first hand how games can create a focal point for the groups that allows participants to choose if and when they want to share their thoughts.

The focal point that games create can also help if you suffer from social anxiety. If you really love board games, then you may feel more comfortable going to a place where games are played, because you know you have something in common with the people there, who also love board games. The shared interest gives you a starting point for conversation, if you feel confident enough, but also the excuse to just talk about your turn or the game in general. You don't even need to talk much at all, but instead let your actions in the game speak for themselves. In fact, in many games you take on another persona, you are someone other than yourself.



So the words that you say are spoken by that other character who you have become, and that can give you the confidence to overcome the social anxiety that your actual self might feel - even if it is just for as long as the game lasts.

If you don't suffer from social anxiety and are able to arrange a regular games night, you can create a routine and something to look forward to, which can help you deal with some elements of anxiety and depression. If you can look ahead and focus on something that happens regularly, you can pull through low points, as you remind yourself that it won't be long before you have another enjoyable experience as you play games with the group. A routine can also give you a feeling of safety, because it defines what happens when and removes some uncertainty, and it is often uncertainty that is scary.

However, some people find it difficult or are unable to leave their homes. These people can quickly become isolated and feel lonely. According to the UK charity [Mind](#), loneliness is strongly linked to mental health. So for some, just being able to spend time with others in a shared activity can reduce feelings of loneliness, which in turn can boost their mental well-being. ▶

Playing games can give them a feeling of belonging in a meaningful way, because we are not just in the same place as others, but we actually partake in a shared activity.

[Ann Jones](#) of [Cards or Die](#) is planning to create a service that will allow her to bring games to people who find it difficult or are unable to leave their homes. These one-to-one sessions will give them an opportunity to socialize, as well as feel the other benefits that playing board games have to offer, which is an amazing prospect.

Games can also teach you how to deal with frustration, disappointment and other negative emotions. I think we all have felt frustrated and annoyed when we just didn't seem to make any meaningful progress in a game, despite doing all we could. It felt like we were missing something obvious and maybe we even felt stupid. Losing a game can be disappointing and make you feel bad as well, but all of these emotions need to be managed and dealt with in a constructive way. The good thing is that the emotions we feel when we play board games are only temporary. The outcomes of the decisions we make in a game do not affect our lives or livelihoods. The outcome of games isn't permanent, which means our emotions will not be permanent, which is a useful lesson that can benefit our mental health.



Of course, games can also reinforce positive emotions. We probably all know the satisfaction of pulling off an amazing card combo, beating our own high score or finally finishing a solo or co-operative game at the highest difficulty setting. In fact, many games provide lots of little victories throughout play, be it in the form of end of round goals, quests that you need to fulfil, bonus cards or other small achievements. So even if you don't win a game overall, you can still have lots of moments of feeling good about the way you played.

Board games can also be beneficial in other ways. Playing games helps to keep your mind active. In many games, you have to plan ahead, solve puzzles, remember things, do some mental arithmetic or simply remember the rules of the game. Some games even require you to be creative. Just like solving crossword puzzles, completing a Sudoku, reading a book or writing a letter, when you play a game you engage your brain in a number of different ways.



BOARD GAME PLAYERS
HAVE A 15% LOWER RISK OF
DEVELOPING DEMENTIA THAN
NON-PLAYERS

Playing board games even seems to go as far as increasing our brain's resilience to diseases like dementia. [A 20-year study](#) run in the Bordeaux area in South Western France published by the [BMJ](#) shows that "board game players have a 15% lower risk of developing dementia than non-players" and that "a possible beneficial effect of board game playing on the risk of dementia could be mediated by less cognitive decline and less depression in elderly board game players".

An [article from November 2019](#) on the [Science Daily](#) website talks about how "people who play games - such as cards and board games - are more likely to stay mentally sharp in later life." The results were drawn from a study run by the [University of Edinburgh](#) and found that "people who increased game playing in later years were found to have experienced less decline in thinking skills in their seventies - particularly in memory function and thinking speed."

These studies are very promising, but of course, it is still early days and there is no clear indication as to how much of a lasting effect playing board games really has on brain activity. However, it does sound like it won't do any harm if you take up the hobby and play games regularly. At the very least, you will be doing an enjoyable activity which could benefit your mental health in a number of ways.

Most board games also require some sort of physical interaction, such as placing workers on an action space, drawing cards, rolling dice or similar activities, and there are also a number of great dexterity games. [The Stroke Association](#) in the UK says on its [website](#) that "it can sometimes be difficult to return to an old hobby because of the effects of your stroke," but that "it might be possible to adapt an activity so that you can take part." On the same web page it then lists playing board games as a way to spend leisure time, among others of course. So there might be challenges to overcome, but playing board games can help with the rehabilitation of stroke patients,

allowing them to improve their physical health, which in turn can help with their mental health.

I think it is great to see the positive impact board games can have on our mental health, whether directly or indirectly. So it is important that we do all we can to make playing board games a positive experience for everyone. Respect and consideration are things we can all bring to the table, so that people can always feel safe and welcome to join in our hobby. Once we have chosen what game we want to play together, all that should matter is that we are there to enjoy playing the game. Gender, as well as gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, ability and everything else that defines who we are should make no difference, as long as we show respect and consideration for each other.

Our hobby can offer so much to so many people, with regards to mental health and in other ways. So let us realize the potential it has to offer and make our community inviting, welcoming and a safe place to be.

by Oliver Kinne, [Tabletop Games Blog](#)



SOURCES

- [Mind - loneliness' link to mental health](#)
- [Ann Jones of Cards or Die](#)
- [Tabletop Inquisition interview with Ann Jones](#)
- [Mind - the importance of routine](#)
- [20-year study published by BMJ](#)
- [Science Daily website article November 2016](#)
- [The Stroke Association's recommended activities for stroke patients in rehabilitation](#)

LINKS

- [GammaRay TV](#)
- [Starting Roll](#)
- [James Hudson](#)
- [Mind](#)
- [Tabletop Inquisition podcast](#)
- [Ann Jones](#)
- [Cards or Die](#)
- [BMJ](#)
- [Science Daily](#)
- [University of Edinburgh](#)
- [The Stroke Association](#)

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MSO 2021 - ONLINE
AUG 13 - SEP 5
OPEN TO ALL || ENTRY - FREE

MSO 2021 will be online from Aug 13 to Sep 5 and is open to everyone--and all entries are FREE. From familiar games such as chess, draughts and scrabble to fan favourites like Settlers of Catan, 7 Wonders, Ticket to Ride and Carcassonne, competitors will be able to choose from over 90 different tournaments. Card games are a major part of the ultimate online game festival, too, with the Amateur Poker World Championship up for grabs, along with bridge and newer card games such as Lost Cities.

Unique events include Sudoku, Puzzle Solving and Speed Reading in addition to over a dozen world championships such as Mental Calculations and Creative Thinking. The most prestigious title is the Pentamind World Championship, which is awarded to the competitor who has the best results from five different competitions.

The official schedule is on the MSO website:
www.msoworld.com

Games this year include:

Chess	Carcassonne
Scrabble	Puerto Rico
Draughts	Marco Polo
Sudoku	Agricola
Backgammon	Gaia Project
Catan	Stone Age
Ticket to Ride	Splendor
Bridge	Kingdomino
Oware	Jaipur
Go	Othello
7 Wonders	Countdown
Terra Mystica	
Dominion	and more...

Visit our website for the latest info: www.msoworld.com

MSO: PLAY MORE GAMES COMPETITIVELY

By Etan Ilfield

I've been the organiser of the Mind Sports Olympiad (MSO) for the last 11 years, and over all those years the enthusiasm of our competitors, our ability to teach people new games and how the MSO inspires people to connect with each other is what has kept bringing me back. Last year was our most challenging as we moved the games from in person to online, requiring us to develop new relationships, new schedules and new formats to make sure we could keep things competitive and fun.



World Championships, there really is something for everyone at MSO. Anyone can participate in one or more tournaments, but to win the Pentamind World Championship you have to have the five best scores from five different games.

THE ANNUAL MIND SPORTS OLYMPIAD'S MISSION IS TO INSPIRE PEOPLE TO LEARN TO PLAY MORE GAMES COMPETITIVELY

ANYONE CAN PARTICIPATE

The annual Mind Sports Olympiad's mission is to inspire people to learn to play more games competitively. We also run unique Mind Sports tournaments that simply aren't available anywhere else. From speed reading and Sudoku to our annual Mental Calculations and Creative Thinking

The Mind Sports Olympiad was launched in 1997 and has competitive tournaments for games ranging from Scrabble and Chess to Catan and Carcassonne—including over a dozen world championships. After twenty-four continuous years, the pandemic pushed us to do something we'd never done before—to go online for the first



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SANDY PETERSEN INTERVIEWED - MORK BORG
NEW SERIES: THE GAME DESIGNERS: STEFAN FELD
SO YOU WANNA START A YOUTUBE CHANNEL?



MSO 2021 - ONLINE

AUG 13 - SEP 5

OPEN TO ALL || ENTRY - FREE

time. It worked: The 2020 MSO had record entries as no travel was necessary and ran smoothly, all things considered. However, there were a few cases of online cheating where someone used an AI powered engine to play their moves. For example, in our Othello championship, a former Othello World Champion was beaten by an unknown player which raised suspicions. We analysed the new players' games and discovered that they had been playing perfect moves in all rounds, which is something that a human player isn't capable of doing on their own. Further investigation led to the player being banned from MSO. This made us realize how important it is to catch cheating and also have strong deterrents against online cheating.

WE DEVELOPED AN AI POWERED WEBSITE TO CATCH CHEATING

That inspired us to develop a site for two player strategy games that will be powered by AI to catch cheating and to train players to learn from their mistakes and improve their games. The new site is called playstrategy.org and we'll be running several of MSO's events this August on it.

Overall, the 2020 Mind Sports Olympiad was a phenomenal success. Moving online made it more global than ever: 106 countries took part, and 56 countries won medals. We were delighted to welcome several countries that participated for the first time including Kyrgyzstan, Bolivia, Guatemala, Malawi, Moldova, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uzbekistan, and Zimbabwe.



2020 MIND SPORTS OLYMPIAD WAS A PHENOMENAL SUCCESS!

The total number of unique competitors was 5,884 which was also a new record for the MSO. We had 100 tournaments and 8 meta-events—where the scores of individual events were combined. Although most people competed in one or two events, it's worth noting that 228 people played five events or more, and 102 played ten or more. In terms of eligible Pentamind scores where five different games needed to be used and a max of three Eurogames, there were 130 people who qualified.

So, if you've developed a taste for gaming or stretching your mind, you can test out your new skills against players from across the world—and maybe even win a medal! Show us what you've got and take on the world this August at MSO.

MSO 2020

-  100 TOURNAMENTS
-  5884 COMPETITORS FROM 106 COUNTRIES
-  228 PLAYERS 5+ GAMES
102 PLAYER 10+ GAMES
-  130 PLAYERS QUALIFIED WITH PENTAMIND SCORES

Games Gazette Online

<http://www.gamesgazette.co.uk>



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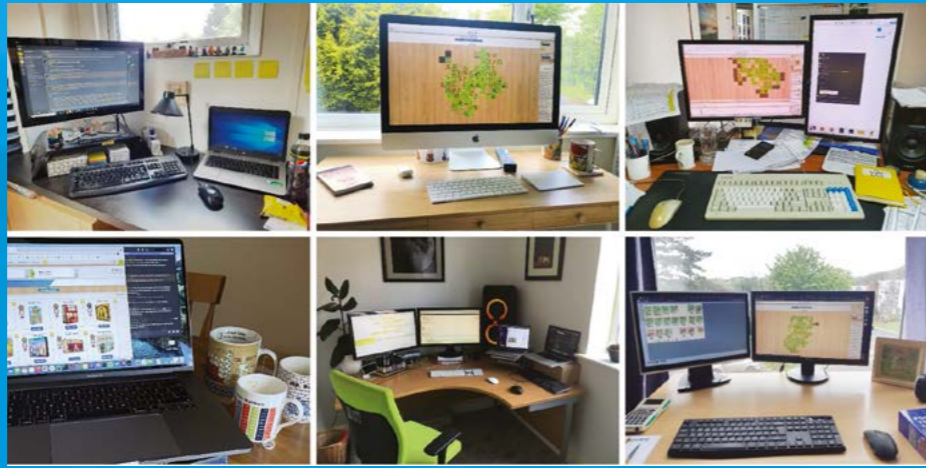


Check us out at Stand 2-401
Rated 8/10 by Zatu and recommended by Tabletop Gaming Magazine
www.thepartyrpg.com

ARCASSONE vs COVID

By Dan Chard

Most board gamers are familiar with Carcassonne. It's the first game I look for in other people's shelves, and I almost always find it despite the fact that it's now been exactly two decades since it won the Spiel des Jahres award. The fact that it's quick and easy to learn and play makes it an ideal gateway game that many of us can rightly blame for our impressively crowded shelves and disturbingly empty bank accounts. But while many have played Carcassonne and "moved on" to other games, many others - like me - remain fascinated by its elegant simplicity, incredible depth and unlimited replayability. Yes, I'm something of a Carcassonne geek. It's a game I fell in love with nine years ago, and after around ten thousand plays I finally feel like I'm starting to get the hang of it.



Our desk setups at home

Something most board gamers are less familiar with is just how fiercely competitive Carcassonne can be when played between two people who really understand its dynamics. Whilst still relevant, the concepts of building and sharing make way for strategies based on trapping and stealing where every point matters and every tile placement is critical. The first Carcassonne world championships were held in 2006 and were attended by players from 16 different countries. By 2019 the number of participants had grown to 36!

THE FIRST CARCASSONNE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS WERE HELD IN 2006

While each participant had their own route to the world championships, most had claimed their seat by winning their national

championship or some other qualifying event. After 14 consecutive world championships, the 2020 event was understandably cancelled due to the Covid pandemic, along with most national championships globally. Suddenly there was nothing to play for, and nobody to play against. But as I was soon to discover, when the going gets tough, the tough go online...

One of the most popular websites for online boardgaming is [Board Game Arena](#) or BGA for short. BGA currently offers an impressive selection of around 330 popular boardgames, and they certainly felt it when the pandemic struck and board gamers moved online. Their user base more than doubled from 3 million to over 6 million accounts in a matter of months and required some serious server upgrades when demand for their service grew to the point that over 100,000 users were all playing concurrently at peak times! Carcassonne has always been one of BGA's most popular offerings so I'd begun playing there several

years earlier when a friend recommended it to me, and had enjoyed getting to know most of the other regular players even when in-person gaming was still an option.

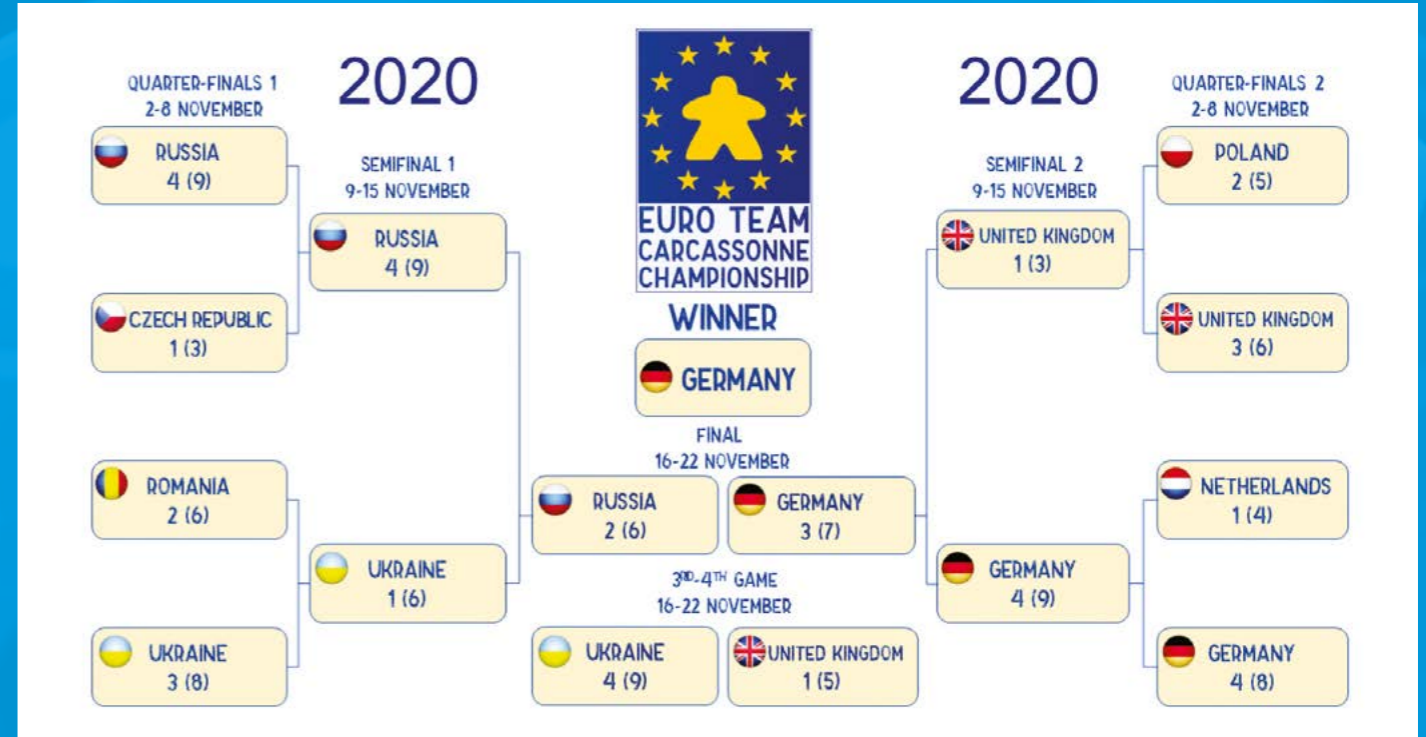
On the 28th April 2020 I had an unexpected message from another Carcassonne player through BGA. His message was about the "World Team Carcassonne Online Championships", which was a tournament that he and his colleagues from [Carcassonne.cat](#) were hoping to run. As one of the best-known UK Carcassonne players on BGA at the time, he asked if I was interested in entering a team to represent the UK. It didn't take much effort on my part as I was already in regular contact with three former national champions, and knew plenty of other UK-based players who would be only too happy to join the team. I pulled everyone together via a group chat and submitted our application; the UK Carcassonne team had been born!

THE UK CARCASSONNE TEAM HAD BEEN BORN!

Initially I was slightly dubious about the format of an online team competition, but [Carcassonne.cat](#) had explained their vision in meticulous detail. Initially the 21 teams were split into four round-robin groups with all teams playing one match per week. A schedule of fixtures for each group dictated who should play who each week / round and it was up to the captains of the opposing teams to liaise between themselves and their respective teams to agree on a mutually convenient match date and time. Captains then selected five players from their teams, ordered them from 1 to 5 and submitted their line-ups to ▶



Ven Gee (middle) was the first person I invited to the team. This is us with tournament organiser Mike Dixon of MSO (right) shortly after our 2019 UK Carcassonne championship final.



Carcassonne.cat no later than 24 hours before the match. Every match consisted of five "duels" with each duel being the best of three games of basic Carcassonne (i.e. no expansions) played between one player from each team matched according to their position in their team's line-up. The team that wins three or more duels wins the match. Groups were ranked according to number of matches won, followed by total duels won and then by total games won minus total games lost. The top two teams from each group went through to a knock-out stage.

GROUPS WERE RANKED ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF MATCHES WON

As a team, we did terribly! Despite winning at least two duels per match, we came bottom of our group with just one match point behind us. The Japanese team were the eventual winners, but we'd all enjoyed the experience and had bonded as a team to the point that we didn't immediately abandon each other as soon as the competition was over. Instead, we kept our group chat going in order to share tips and advice, celebrate each other's BGA successes or simply just chat about life, the universe and everything.

With summer came news of a European Team Championships to take place in September, so we started scouring the ranks of BGA's finest UK Carcassonne players again and recruited "statmatt" who had unexpectedly been the highest-placed UK player at Mind Sports Olympiad's 2020 UK Carcassonne championship. The Euros ran in the same way as the World Team Championships, but this

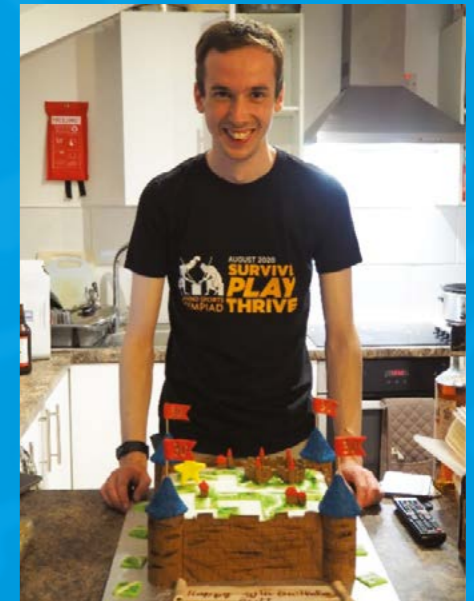
time there were just two groups of seven teams each. We came fourth in our group behind Russia, the Netherlands, and Ukraine but ahead of Italy, France and Spain. This was good enough to go through to the knock-out stage of the competition where we beat Poland in a tough quarter-final before losing to a strong German team in the semis to take fourth place overall. Result!

As 2021 arrived, online Carcassonne was continuing to thrive all around the world. Some countries had taken their national tournaments online and were holding them as invitation-only events at BGA, or were already holding team-qualifiers for the next World Team Championships.

Devir held their "Interdevirian" championship between players from countries where they own the rights to publish Carcassonne. A joint effort between fan-organisations Carcassonne Brazil and Carcassonne Mexico saw the "Copa America" team event taking place between seven American nations. The UK team meanwhile had recruited two new players and embarked on a series of friendly team matches.

AS 2021 ARRIVED, ONLINE CARCASSONNE WAS CONTINUING TO THRIVE

We held mini tournaments between ourselves, moved our team chat to Discord and starting a regular strategy video call where we analysed recent games and discussed how their outcomes might have been changed. Over the course of a year, we'd transitioned from a group of individuals into a solid team and



Matt showing off the cake for his 30th birthday that took place during the 2021 World Team Championships. I sent everyone a tile to sign and had them framed as a birthday present for him.

every one of us was keen to discover where our journey might take us.

In the build-up to the 2021 World Team Championships I was invited to join Carcassonne.cat and their partner groups Carcassonne Brazil and Carcassonne Mexico for the broadcast of the drawing of the groups. Part of this involved reading out the names of the 281 competitors between us, and welcoming all 30 teams in their own language. With several hundred live viewers, I was on tenterhooks as I sat in constant terror that a child-led office invasion was imminent, but thankfully things went well and my most terrifying ordeal was the moment I had to say "Welcome" in Hungarian...

WITH SEVERAL HUNDRED LIVE VIEWERS, I WAS ON TENTERHOOKS

For the eight weeks that followed, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were flooded with news of upcoming matches, lineups and results from all corners of the globe. As well as being able to watch any game through BGA there were a selection of 15 different channels streaming live action via Twitch and YouTube with commentary in 8 different languages. Plus there were cartoons and news that came in the way of Carcassonne.cat's "Spotlight on..." series where they drew attention to specific individuals or teams, and the regular "Curiosities of the week" which summarised the previous week's events from a statistical point of view. It felt like I'd died and gone to Carcassonne heaven, and for the first time in my life I could vaguely understand why there was always so much fuss about football whenever the World Cup was on.

So far, the UK team has enjoyed considerably more success in the 2021 World Team Championships than we did last year. We finished second in our group and went

	TEAMS	GP	W	DW	DL	GW	GL
1	JAPAN	6	5	23	7	49	24
2	UNITED KINGDOM	6	4	21	9	44	25
3	CATALONIA	6	4	18	12	43	32
4	ARGENTINA	6	4	13	17	32	37
5	GREECE	6	2	13	17	35	42
6	BELARUS	6	2	9	21	29	46
7	PERU	6	0	8	22	24	50

We were thrilled to have finished 2nd in our group at the end of the 2021 World Team Championships!

© Jessica Pereda || @jessie.perpat1



SO FAR, THE UK TEAM HAS ENJOYED CONSIDERABLY MORE SUCCESS IN THE 2021

on to win our first knock-out match earning ourselves a place in the quarter-finals as a result. At the time of writing we're among the final eight teams but have some tough matches ahead of us if we want to lift the trophy at the end of it. Even if we don't win though, I'll be immensely proud just to have been caught up and dragged along with everything that the Carcassonne world has been doing to keep itself sane since last year. It's been a joy and

a privilege for mere mortals like me to have rubbed shoulders with Carcassonne legends such as Pantelis Litsardopoulos and Takafumi Mochiduki, and I'm incredibly grateful to the many wonderful people who have worked tirelessly to make it all possible.

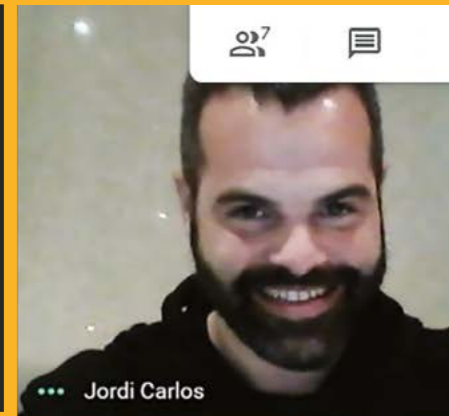
I LOVE THE FACT THAT A BUNCH OF GUYS FROM ALL OVER THE UK, WITH LITTLE ELSE IN COMMON, CAN BE UNITED

Closer to home, I love the fact that a bunch of guys from all over the UK, with little else in common, can be united by their shared passion for a specific boardgame. The friendships that my fellow Carcassonne players and I have built between each other through our online adventures over the last year have benefited us all at a time when the world can feel like a pretty lonely place if you let it. The banter, the silliness, the unwavering support; they didn't know it, but their companionship got me through many difficult times. Hopefully we'll be at the end of the tunnel soon and can explore what our new normal might look like, but until then I'm reassured to know that online boardgames, and the people who play them, will always be there for everyone who needs them. ▶



JOIN THE TEAM!

If you are interested in joining the UK Carcassonne Team then get in touch with Dan Chard (danisthirty) via [BGA](#) or [carcassonnecentral](#)

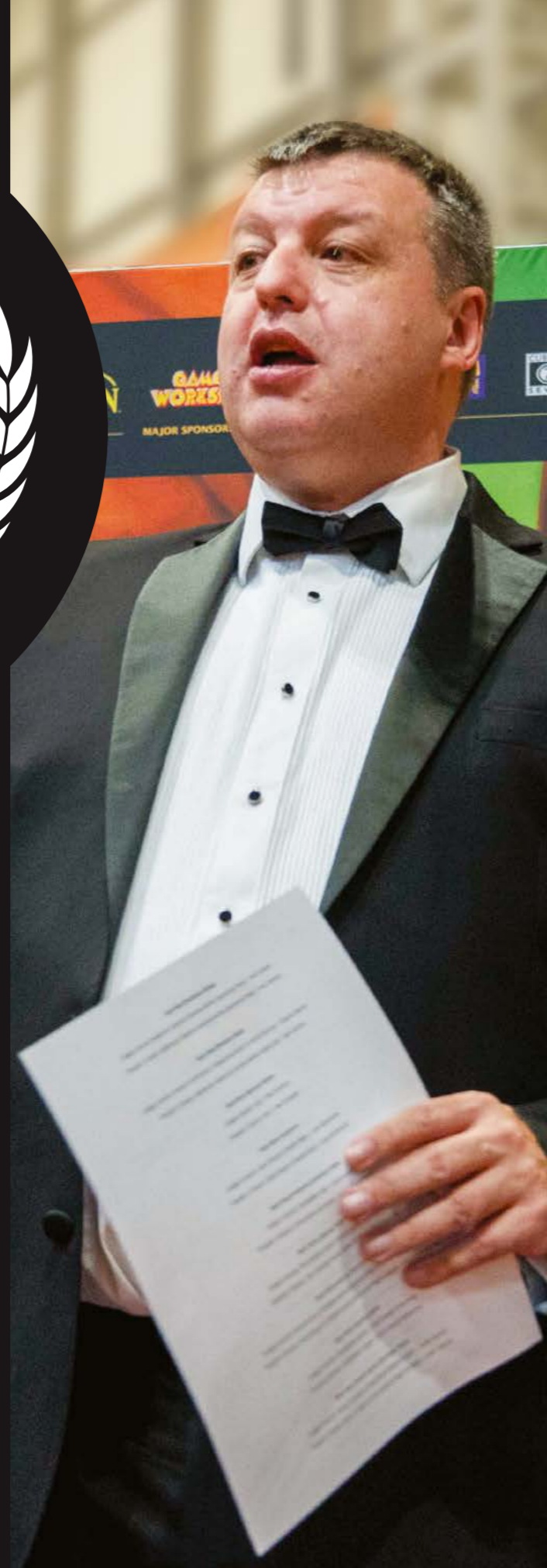




THE UK GAMES EXPO AWARDS RECOGNISE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MANUFACTURERS AND PUBLISHERS IN A VARIETY OF GAME GENRES.

The UK Games Expo awards are organised in to eighteen different categories reflecting different styles and types of games. There are two awards in each Category: a Judges' Award and a People's Choice award. All submitted games are rated by a panel of expert judges chosen by UKGE. These judges produce a shortlist of the top games in each category, as determined by the judges' ratings. Judges use various methods to reach their findings but can consider such factors as Theme, Originality, Quality, Playability, Balance, and Fun Factor.

Expo visitors can also vote on these shortlisted games via their Expo account and the top voted game in each category will receive a People's Choice Award. Depending on the number and quality of the entrants into any category the Judges may decide to issue a short list with fewer than 3 items. One of the shortlisted games will also be selected as the Judges' Award winner. The People's Choice and Judges' Awards results will be announced on Sunday at 3pm on the OnTableTop Main Stage in NEC Hall 2.



BEST ABSTRACT GAME

An abstract game is a game that minimises luck and does not rely on a theme. It typically focuses on strategy where skill and careful planning is the key. This year the judges selected a short list of 2 games.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
GEMBATAN
MINDWARE

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
AZUL SUMMER PAVILION
ASMODEE



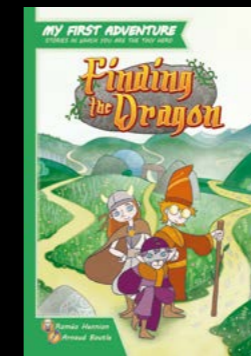
DISTRIX
DISTRIX GAMES

FLASH 8
SCORPION MASQUÉ

BEST GAMING NOVELTY

The category covers items and products which are not directly used in or with games but are themed or related to the world of gaming. Examples would include clothing, food and drink, books and journals, jewellery etc.

THIS IS A NEW
CATEGORY FOR 2021



FINDING THE DRAGON
GAME FLOW

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS:
POISON RIVER
BY JOSH REYNOLDS
ACONYTE BOOKS

SENET MAGAZINE
SENET PUBLISHING

BEST CHILDRENS GAME

A game which is specifically designed for younger children (10 years or below) to play with or without adult supervision but not a game adults would play on their own.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
L.L.A.M.A.
(LLAMA CARD GAME)
VR DISTRIBUTION

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
VALLEY OF THE VIKINGS
HABA



MICONS
GIGAMIC

DRAGOMINO
BLUE ORANGE

DETECTIVE CHARLIE
LOKI/YELLO

BEST ACCESSORY

The category covers items and products which are used in or with games often to enhance or improve or add to game play. Examples would include game storage solutions, character sheet folio, dice trays, dice bags etc.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
THE ETERNAL JOURNAL
THIN KING PUBLISHING

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
THE DUNGEON BOOK OF
BATTLE MATS
LOKE BATTLEMATS



5E CONDITION CHIPS
DUNGEON BONES LTD

DM'S LITTLE BLACK BOOK
SQUAREHEX

BOX OF ADVENTURE-VALLEY OF
PERIL
LOKE BATTLEMATS

BEST NEW DICE GAME

Generally these games may not involve a board, but dice will be the predominant feature.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
KINGDOMIND DUEL
BLUE ORANGE GAMES

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
D6 DUNGEON
MLEEG BOARDGAMES



ESCAPE THE DARK SECTOR
THEMEBORNE

PAPER DUNGEONS
ALLEY CAT GAMES

TREK 12
LUMBERJACKS STUDIOS

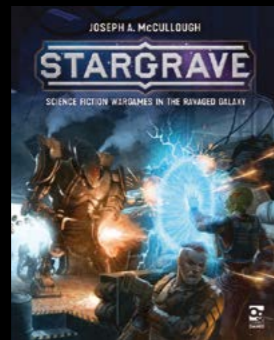
BEST MINIATURES RULES

A rules system where the core part of the game is using miniature figures to fight out battles. This may include variants and expansion of Miniatures Rules such as additional campaigns etc. This year the judges selected a short list of 2 games.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
FROSTGRAVE PERILOUS DARK
OSPREY PUBLISHING

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
FROSTGRAVE PERILOUS DARK
OSPREY PUBLISHING



STARGRAVE: SCIENCE FICTION
WARGAMES IN THE RAVAGED
GALAXY
OSPREY GAMES

DYSTOPIAN WARS:
RULES & GUBBINS SET
WAYLAND GAMES

BEST PARTY GAME

A game which is usually light and easy to play, with simple rules and designed for larger groups or a party.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
TASKMASTER THE BOARD GAME
GINGER FOX
(HACCHE RETAIL LTD.)

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
TASKMASTER THE BOARD GAME
GINGER FOX
(HACCHE RETAIL LTD.)



INKLING
OSPREY GAMES

WORD ON THE STREET
COILEDSRING GAMES

50 CLUES: PART I
THE PENDULUM OF THE DEAD
50 CLUES

BEST MINIATURES RANGE

A miniatures range for use in wargames or roleplaying games.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
FROSTGRAVE WIZARDS II
OSPREY PUBLISHING

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
FROSTGRAVE WIZARDS II
OSPREY PUBLISHING



STARGRAVE: SCIENCE FICTION
WARGAMES IN THE RAVAGED
GALAXY
OSPREY GAMES

DUNGEONS AND DIVERSITY -
ROLE PLAYING MINIATURES
STRATA MINIATURES

DYSTOPIAN WARS: HUNT FOR
THE PROMETHEUS
WAYLAND GAMES

BEST FAMILY GAME

A game which is ideal for children (perhaps older children) and adults to play together and all enjoy equally. Something for parents and kids to have fun together with.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
DEEP BLUE
DAYS OF WONDER

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
DEEP BLUE
DAYS OF WONDER



DARING DUSTBUNNIES
HOPWOOD GAMES

ZOMBIE TEENZ EVOLUTION
SCORPIDON MASQUÉ

GHOST ADVENTURE
BUZZY GAMES

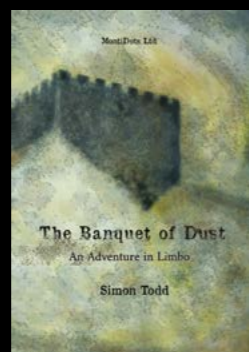
BEST ROLEPLAYING ADVENTURE

An adventure, scenario or campaign or campaign setting for roleplaying games.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
WFRP: ROUGH NIGHTS &
HARD DAYS
CUBICLE 7

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
CHARIOT OF THE GODS
(ALIEN RPG)
FREE LEAGUE PUBLISHING



ALIEN RPG
DESTROYER OF WORLDS
FREE LEAGUE PUBLISHING

BANQUET OF DUST
MONTIDOTS LTD

JACKALS: THE FALL OF THE
CHILDREN OF BRONZE: A GRAND
CAMPAIGN FOR JACKALS
OSPREY GAMES

BEST NEW BOARD GAME (EUROPEAN STYLE)

Generally, these games will have less direct player interaction, limited elements of luck and less conflict. Sometimes called a Eurogame or German-style board game. (Game with a target age of 12+ and specifically not for young children.)

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
TAPESTRY
STONEMAIER GAMES

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
TAPESTRY
STONEMAIER GAMES



DINNER IN PARIS
FUNNYFOX

EXCAVATION EARTH
MIGHTY BOARDS

MERV: THE HEART OF
THE SILK ROAD
OSPREY GAMES

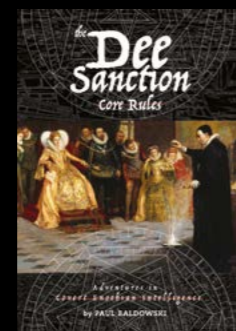
BEST ROLEPLAYING GAME

The main rules set for a game in which players assume the roles of characters in a fictional setting and where the main thrust is players take responsibility for acting out these roles within a story generally run by a games master.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
PALADIN - WARRIORS OF
CHARLEMAGNE
CHAOSIUM INC.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
ALIEN: THE ROLEPLAYING
GAME
FREE LEAGUE PUBLISHING



JACKALS: BRONZE AGE FANTASY
ROLEPLAYING
OSPREY GAMES

THE DEE SANCTION
ALL ROLLED UP

VAESEN - NORDIC HORROR
ROLEPLAYING
FREE LEAGUE PUBLISHING

BEST NEW BOARD GAME STRATEGIC

These are games that involve tactical and strategic game play, involve direct player interaction, and sometimes military themes. Specifically not for young children.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
ISHAR
IELLO

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
DUNE
GALE FORCE 9



PRISMA ARENA
HUB GAMES

UNMATCHED: BATTLE OF
LEGENDS, VOL.1
IELLO

UNDAUNTED: NORTH AFRICA
OSPREY GAMES

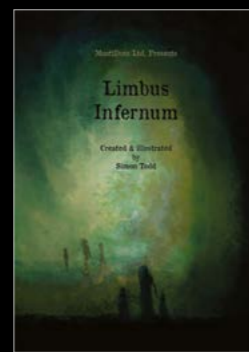
BEST ROLEPLAYING EXPANSION

An expansion or supplement for roleplaying games which expands or adds to an existing game system.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
BERLIN: THE WICKED CITY
CHAOSIUM INC.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
BERLIN: THE WICKED CITY
CHAOSIUM INC.



LAND OF THE RISING SUN
BRITANNIA GAME DESIGNS

LIMBUS INFERNUM
MONTIDOTS LTD

THE COMPENDIUM OF
EQUESTRIA
RIVER HORSE GAMES

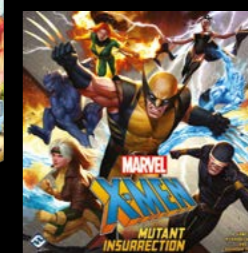
BEST BOARD GAME (AMERICAN STYLE)

Generally feature a prominent theme, encourage direct conflict between players, and have a significant degree of luck. (Games with a target age of 12+ and specifically not for young children.)

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
FLOTILLA
WIZKIDS

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
EMPIRES OF THE NORTH
PORTAL GAMES



KITARA
IELLO

MEEPLE LAND
BLUE ORANGE

X-MEN MUTANT INSURRECTION
FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES

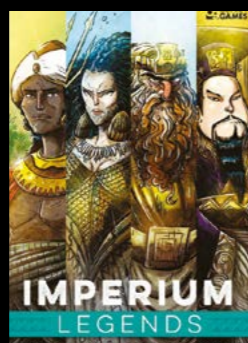
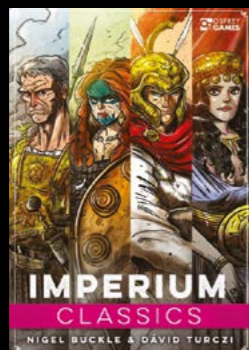
BEST NEW CARD GAME STRATEGIC

Generally, these games will not involve a board, but cards will be the predominant feature. This category features a high degree of tactical or strategic play. Examples may include Collectible Card Games. (Specifically, not for young children.)

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
DRIFLAMME
STUDIO H

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
MARVEL CHAMPIONS:
THE CARD GAME
FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES



IMPERIUM: CLASSICS
OSPREY GAMES

IMPERIUM: LEGENDS
OSPREY GAMES

SCHOTTEN TOTTEN 2
IELLO

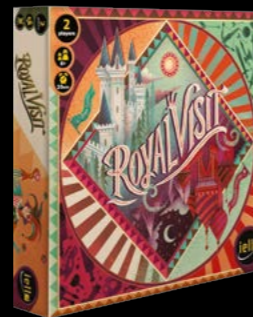
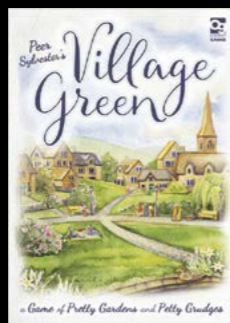
BEST NEW CARD GAME GENERAL

Generally, these games will not involve a board, but cards will be the predominant feature. This category includes lighter and more family orientated games.

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

JUDGES' AWARD
SOLAR STORM
DRANDA GAMES

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
SOLAR STORM
DRANDA GAMES



ABANDON ALL ARTICHOKE
GAMEWRIGHT

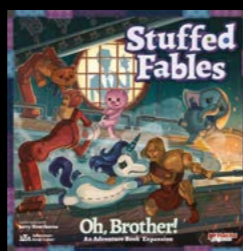
VILLAGE GREEN: A GAME OF
PRETTY GARDENS AND PETTY
GRUDGES
OSPREY GAMES

ROYAL VISIT
IELLO

BEST GAME VARIANT OR EXPANSION

The category covers variants such as new boards and maps or new themes applied to an existing game system or design. It also includes expansions to a game which introduce new components or mechanics

THIS IS A NEW
CATEGORY FOR 2021



DICE HOSPITAL:
COMMUNITY CARE
ALLEY CAT

SMALLWORLD OF WARCRAFT
DAYS OF WONDER

STUFFED FABLES:
OH BROTHER EXPANSION
DAYS OF WONDER



PLANET



PHOTOSYNTHESIS™

UNDER THE MOONLIGHT



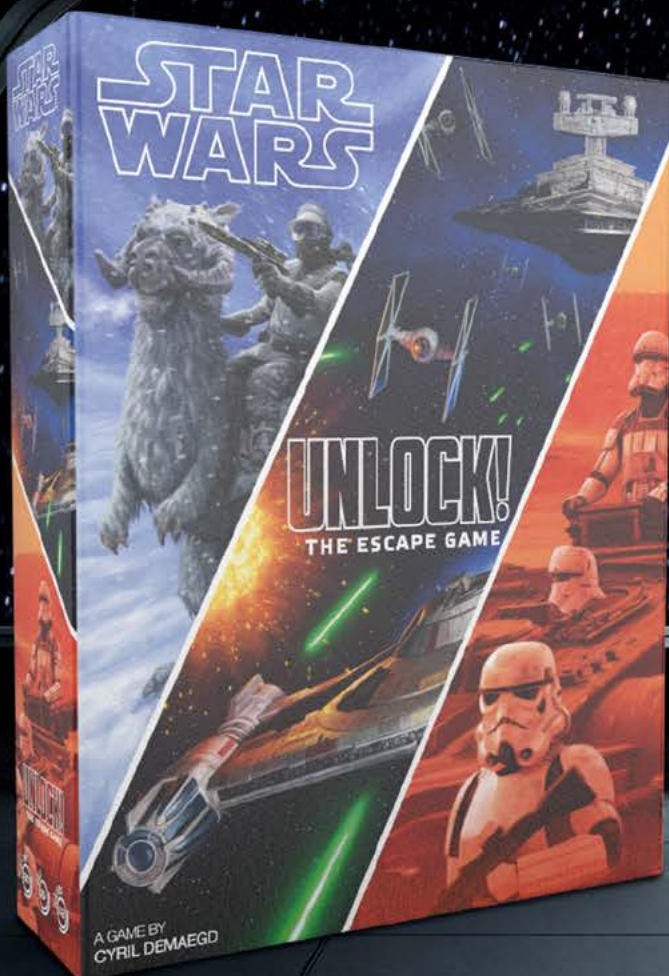
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Local Board Game Store

UNLOCK!

With 21 adventures already available, the bestselling game is back with three brand new adventures inspired by a galaxy far, far away...

STAR WARS

THE ESCAPE GAME



Play Rebels,
smugglers, and
Imperial agents!



A COOPERATIVE CARD GAME INSPIRED BY ESCAPE GAMES!

Explore locations, combine items, and use the free dedicated companion app to immerse yourself in the *Star Wars*™ galaxy, solve riddles, and successfully make it through three adventures.

PLAY TIME
60'

AGES
10+

PLAYERS
1-6

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