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OPENING TIMES

TRADE HALLS

Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday: 9am – 6pm
Sunday: 9am – 4pm

OPEN GAMING AND TOURNAMENT SPACE IN NEC HALL 1

Thursday: 6pm – 11pm
Friday: 9am – Midnight
Saturday: 9am – Midnight
Sunday: 9am – 6pm

OPEN GAMING HILTON

Friday: 10am – Midnight
Saturday: 10am – Midnight
Sunday: 10am – 5pm

ROLEPLAYING ROOMS IN HILTON HOTEL

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

SEMINARS

Open during scheduled sessions –
see pages 23.

LIVE SHOWS

Open during scheduled sessions –
see page 20 & 21.



HOW TO GET HELP OR RAISE CONCERNS

Please go to one of our Help
Desks, see page 6

Mention below hashtags at the show
on your social media posts and we
will reshare the best ones!



#UKGAMESEXPO

#UKGE2026

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hands of the white wizard



5E

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GET OUR AWARD-WINNING GAMES AT BOOTH 3-1038



WELCOME

Tony, Richard, and the UKGE team extend a warm welcome as they celebrate the 2026 UK Games Expo our 20th anniversary show.

Spanning an impressive 72,000 sqm and two sites, the UK Games Expo boasts over 800 exhibitors, and features a plethora of tournaments, role-playing games, and live entertainment. Whether you're into seminars, workshops, cosplay, or living history events, there's something for everyone to enjoy. And fret not if it all seems overwhelming; we've got you covered.

Before you venturing into the bustling halls, take a moment to peruse the guide section of this programme for invaluable tips. Don't forget to pick up the map pack, detailing the layout of the NEC Halls and the Hilton Metropole Hotel.

Let's embark on a journey to uncover all the excitement.

In Hall 1 you can find Open Gaming, Main Stage, Tournament tables, the UKGE Museum, the Awards Area, The Pile of Games Raffle, Simuls, Megagame, Big Games Zone and Social Gaming Circles.

In Halls 2, 3, 3a and 4 we have 800 exhibitors in 46000 sqm of trade space showing games of all sorts for you to demo and, if you like, buy.

If you get tired carrying all your bags, head to one of the Shop & Drops in Halls 2, 3 and 3a, where you can store your purchases whilst you shop some more. In Hall 2, you can find the Playtest Zone and the Panda Game Manufacturing Press and Business Zone.

The Family Zone also awaits here, with delights like the Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG Children's Zone, Blue Orange Let's Play Zone and the Monte Cook Children's Roleplaying area. The Family Zone is run by Imagination Gaming, who have trained demonstrators on hand to help kids of all ages! Catch the cosplayers in the Cosplay Zone.

Hall 3 is where you can find the Gameslore Pack and Post who can send your games back to any UK address.

NEC Hall 4 houses the Sir Coates Masters Painting Competition, the Warhammer and P3 Paint & Take Zones, and the Pin Collective Swap Zone. Read more about these on the website.

In Hall 5 you can explore the world's largest Bring and Buy sponsored by Travelling Man and another Shop & Drop.

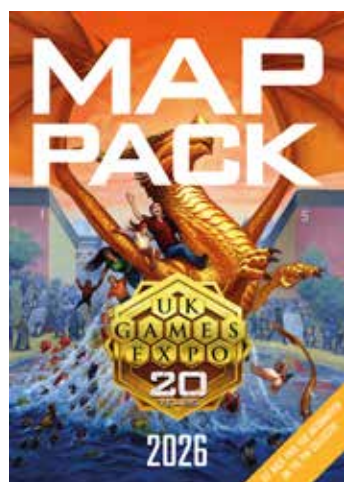
Venture to the lakeside area for a journey through the Living History Village, where the past comes alive.

At the Hilton Metropole Hotel, indulge in open gaming spaces, thrilling role-playing games, and captivating live entertainment shows.

Hungry? Visit Chow Street, the food court located in the Hilton car park.

Feeling a bit lost? Seek assistance at the Help Desks in Halls 2, 3a and 4 and the Hilton Library or approach one of our friendly 'Blue Shirt' Ambassadors for guidance.

RICHARD DENNING & TONY HYAMS



WHERE ARE THE MAPS?

Don't forget to pick up a Map Pack at the entrance.



HELP DESK



SCAN FOR INFO



LOCATION

NEC Hall 2 2-T47
NEC Hall 3a 3A-T26
NEC Hall 4 4-T30
Hilton Library

UKGE help desks are located in NEC Halls 2, 3A and 4 and in the Hilton library. They are staffed by UKGE volunteers who will be happy to answer any questions you may have. You can also stop any volunteer who will be wearing a UKGE logo shirt. These are yellow (general volunteer), Sky Blue (Ambassadors), Green (Team leaders). They will do their

best to aid you in any way they can. If you are playing in a tournament game, you can speak to the tournament officials or, in Role Playing Games, each room has a room captain designated by their table's yellow cloth. If you would like more information, then visit the website or use the QR code short-cut for this section.



EXHIBITION SERVICES



SCAN FOR INFO



LOCATION

NEC Hall 3
3-B24

Are you interested in exhibiting at UKGE 2027? Do you want to talk about convention support? Would you like to discuss marketing opportunities? If so, then please visit Exhibition Services on stand 3-B24 to find out how we can help you.

To get in touch about marketing and collaborations then email us at marketing@ukgamesexpo.co.uk.



EVENT DESK



SCAN FOR INFO



LOCATION

Hilton Hotel

Fancy recreating battles from long ago? Perhaps adventuring in a dungeon or exploring the galaxy? Maybe you want to sit back and enjoy a live show or hear industry experts talk about the latest news? Perhaps you fancy seeing a Viking battle or some silly games being played by influencers. Our schedule features hundreds of events. Generally, seminars,

podcasts and talks are free and open to all. Tournaments and roleplaying games and some workshops are ticketed and have an entry fee. The event description will make this clear. To find out more about each type of event read the sections below, ask a volunteer or else go to the Event desk in the Hilton or check in on a help desk.



There are two Open Gaming Areas at UKGE. One in Hall 1 of the NEC and the second in the Palace, Pavilion and Balmoral suites of the Hilton Hotel. These areas are available for you to play any games you have with you. This may be a game you have brought from home, a game you have purchased at the show or a game you have borrowed from the Board Game Library. With over 4000 seats available you are sure to find a place to sit and play.

Game Toppers are Open Gaming sponsors and have provided high quality, neoprene table topper game mats to enhance your Open Gaming experience. Open Gaming is free to anyone with a UKGE pass; please note that tables cannot be reserved. Hall 1 will be open from 6pm - 11pm on Thursday night, so early arrivals can get a pre-show gaming fix.



LOCATION

NEC Hall 1
Hilton Hotel Palace Suite
Hilton Hotel Pavilion Suite
Hilton Hotel Balmoral Suite

There won't be a Board Game Library at that time, but you can play any games you've brought with you.

Hall 1 also contains the Social Games Zone and a Big Games Zone in blocks GG, CC, EE and FF. Bigger, circular gaming spaces for social deduction games like Werewolf and Blood on the Clocktower, and if you have a big game and you need a lot of room, then the Big Games Zone has a solution for you.

OPEN GAMING TIMES

NEC HALL 1

Thursday: 6pm-11pm
Friday: 9am-midnight
Saturday: 9am-midnight
Sunday: 9am-6pm

HILTON HOTEL

Friday: 10am-midnight
Saturday: 10am-midnight
Sunday: 10am-5pm



The Board Game Library, sponsored by Chance & Counters, allows you to borrow a game from our collection of nearly 1000 games to play in the Open Gaming Area. If you want to use the library all you need is a form of ID, (bank card, driving licence or other photo ID), and a £10 cash deposit. Go to the Board Game Library, they will issue you with a library card and then you can pick a game to play.



NEC HALL 1

Friday: 10am-10pm
Saturday: 10am-10pm
Sunday: 10am-4pm

HILTON HOTEL

Friday: 5pm-11pm
Saturday: 5pm-11pm



LOCATION

NEC Hall 1
Location W

Hilton Hotel





LOCATION
Outside in Front
of NEC

Visit the Living History Village on the grass between the Hilton Hotel, Pendigo Lake and the NEC to experience life in AD 60 and AD 950. In the camps you can find out more about life in the past. In the Arena there will be demonstrations of weapons and battles.

Daily Schedule:

10.30am Dark Ages Weapons Display and Skirmish

11.30am Talks: The Realities of Advertising

12.30pm. Hrothgar's Saga and Kiddie Vike in the Arena

2.00pm (Saturday only). Hnefatafl Competition

3.30 Main Battle in the Arena

Here you will find, Ardenweard, a Warwickshire based group of Vikings. The Encampment is open from 10am till 5pm each day. The full time table is on the website and in the event listings.



LOCATION
NEC Hall 2
2-796
NEC Hall 4
4-509

All around UKGE you will encounter characters from movies, TV, anime, comics, and games brought to life by our wandering cosplayers. These are provided by the Galactic Knights, Who Zone, and cosplayers from Sussex Cosplay Alliance. They will be based in NEC Hall 2 and Hall 4, at Stands 2-796 and 4-509, but

will be wandering the whole show. Don't be afraid to ask for a photo with any of them. If you want to join in and come along in costume, you are most welcome. However, for the safety of all of us, check the online rules particularly around the carrying and display of weapons.



LOCATION
NEC Hall 1
1-0

Saber Guild is a Lucasfilm-recognized Star Wars costuming group that creates Jedi and Sith performances for charity. Members build screen-inspired costumes, train in choreographed lightsaber

combat, and appear at events worldwide to raise funds and bring Star Wars to life through theatrical, community-focused shows. Head to Hall 1 to join in the fun.



The Family Zone is an area specifically designed for families with children aged 5-15. It consists of two areas, the Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG Children's Zone for younger players and the Blue Orange Let's Play Zone

for the older kids. The whole area is run by the Imagination Gaming team who work with schools all over the country. Imagination Gaming will help you and your family explore games you can play together.



Here the whole family can come and relax, surrounded by games that one of our team will be more than happy to teach you. We will also have a range of themed games in the zone that

will include all your favourite heroes and films alongside the amazing range of family and educational games we know you love.



LOCATION
NEC Hall 2



LOCATION
NEC Hall 2 2-536



This zone is perfect for those families with younger gamers or that may be new to the UK Games Expo. This zone will have

a huge range of games that are ideal for younger, inquisitive minds including school based subjects.



LOCATION
NEC Hall 2 2-436





LOCATION
NEC Hall 2 2-646

This annually popular section of the show allows our younger players (aged 5-12) to experience their first chance at the great tabletop gaming genre of Role Playing Games. This year's zone is sponsored by Monte Cook and features a number of fantasy themed

adventures. No previous experience is required and the games are free on a first come first served basis. At an hour long, they will fire up your child's imagination as they take their first steps into the world of RPGs. Parents must stay with their child while they play.



LOCATION
NEC Hall 2 (2-299)
NEC Hall 3 (3-B10)
NEC Hall 3a (3A-806)
NEC Hall 5

If you find yourself in the position of having too much to carry or want to store your purchases while you play a game or go for food, then the "Shop & Drop" is ideal for you. For £3 you can store your purchases in the supplied box which measures 50cmx50cmx50cm. See conditions below.

- All items must be stored in a bag or container (One can be supplied)
- They must fit in a box 50cm x 50cm x 50cm
- They must be collected by close of trade hall each day (no overnight storage)
- Any items not collected are donated to charity at the end of each day

- While UKGE will endeavour to ensure the security of your goods, all items are left at the owner's risk.



LOCATION
NEC Hall 5 5-B

The Travelling Man sponsored Bring and Buy is a second hand market for your old games. You can bring your old games and we will sell them for you, for cash. You pay a small registration fee for each item and 10% of the sale cost that goes to charity. You receive back the other 90% at the show.

Our Bring and Buy is the largest hobby games Bring and Buy at any UK games convention — and, we believe, the largest in the world. In 2025, UK Games Expo donated £31,601 to charity, largely from commission taken on sales. The Bring & Buy is located in NEC Hall 5.



The Paint and Take, sponsored by Games Workshop and P3, can be found in Hall 4. Here you can sit down and paint

a miniature masterpiece or maybe get some tips and ideas on starting out with figure painting.



LOCATION
NEC Hall 4 4-802
4-814



The Pin Collective collecting craze is back for UKGE 2026. Celebrate the growing world of enamel pin collecting within tabletop gaming.

Designed exclusively for UK Games Expo, the Pin Collective offers attendees the chance to discover, collect, and trade unique enamel pins created especially for the event. Each participating exhibitor has designed their own exclusive pin, which are available from their stands across the show weekend.

Whether you're an avid pin collector or simply looking for a memorable keepsake

from this year's Expo, the Pin Collective is a fun and engaging way to explore the event, meet new people, and take home something truly special.

Head to the Pin Collective Swap Zone in Hall 4 (4-490) to find the pins you need to finish your collection.



LOCATION
NEC Hall 4 4-490
See the Map Pack
for all this year's
participating
locations



UKGE 2026 will see the return of the popular charity auction in Hall 1.

Pile 'O' Games Feature Zone is where you can purchase a raffle ticket and potentially win a massive pile of games!

Tickets are £1 per ticket or 5 for £4. All monies received will go to our three expo charities, SUDC, Lifelites and the Williams Montessori School Foundation.

The draw for the winning ticket will take place at the Hall 1 Main Stage at the following times:

- 17:30 Friday
- 17:30 Saturday
- 16:30 Sunday



LOCATION
NEC Hall 1 1-F





LOCATION
Outside Hilton
Hotel

There are a number of options for grabbing a meal, a snack, or a drink. The popular Chow Street food stalls return for 2026 in the open area at the front of the Hilton Metropole hotel. Here you can find a variety of tasty and affordable options, including vegan and



vegetarian offerings. Inside the NEC, there will be a food court in Hall 1 as well as restaurants in the trade halls. Outside in the Piazza, there is a Cornish Bakery, a Starbucks, a Subway and a Wetherspoons. Over at Resorts World are some 15 restaurants and cafés.



LOCATION
NEC Hall 2
2-108

The Playtest Zone is an area specifically designed to allow game designers and members of the public to test new games that are still in the design phase of their production. The gamers get to play new games before they are published, give their input, and maybe get a playtesting credit. The designers gain valuable feedback to help them develop their games further. Playtest UK is a friendly group of board/card game designers and playtesters that meet regularly in many UK cities.



LOCATION
NEC Hall 2
NEC Piazza Suite
NEC Tote Suite

These events are aimed at an audience of artists, writers, publishers, designers and others in the industry and focused around creating, designing, making, and selling games. We have partnered with Panda Game Manufacturing and Playtest UK to bring you a dedicated Publisher -Designer Track, offering playtest tables, game design and marketing seminars, panels, networking

events and opportunities for budding designers to pitch their ideas to publishers.

Please also visit the Panda Game Manufacturing Press & Business Zone in Hall 2 (2-102) where Media, Press, Publishers and Designers can meet. They can conduct interviews, pitch designs and discuss upcoming plans. There is no charge to use, but tables are unreserved.



HAVE YOUR SAY



EVERY PERSON WHO VOTES WILL BE ENTERED INTO A DRAW TO WIN SOME OF THE AWARD WINNING GAMES!

The UK Games Expo People's Choice Awards recognise and celebrate quality and excellence in new games and products in the tabletop marketplace. All submitted games are rated by a panel of expert judges chosen by UKGE. These judges select Judge's Award winners in 20 different categories of game, with the winning entries then going on to form the shortlists for the four categories of People's Choice Award. You can then vote for your favourite game in each short-list, with the winner of each category receiving a coveted People's Choice Award.

THERE ARE FOUR CATEGORIES TO VOTE IN WITH EVERY SHORT-LISTED ENTRY A WINNER OF A JUDGES CHOICE AWARD.

WHY VOTE?

- Shape the future of gaming by making audience preferences known.
- Be in with a chance to win award winning games*

THE PATRICK CAMPBELL AWARD

This year, we will also be handing out a Best Stand Award in honour of the late Patrick Campbell, one of the founders of UK Games Expo. His family will be in attendance to hand out the award at 3pm on Sunday 31st May, on the Main Stage in Hall 1.

AND THE CATEGORIES ARE...



HOW TO VOTE

It's simple - you can vote online or at the show, from 09:00 on Friday until 12:00 on Sunday.

Simply scan the QR code to vote in our web-app using your UK Games Expo account. Or vote at the show using our handy interactive screens in the awards space at NEC Hall 1, section.



VOTE AND BE IN WITH A CHANCE OF WINNING

Every verified individual who votes in the UK Games Expo Awards 2026 will be in with a chance to win a selection of games featured at the awards. All you have to do is vote!

ATTEND THE AWARDS

Come to the main stage in Hall 1 at 3pm on Sunday 31st May to find out who the winners are at the award ceremony

* Over 18s only. Only one entry per person. Winner is randomly selected by computer and will be notified via email. No purchase necessary.

20 YEARS OF



THIS SHOW MARKS THE 20TH UK GAMES EXPO. IT HAS BEEN QUITE A RIDE FROM OUR HUMBLE BEGINNINGS. COME WITH US ON A JOURNEY THROUGH TWO DECADES OF OUR HISTORY AND FIND OUT HOW WE GOT HERE FROM THERE?

BY RICHARD DENNING

BEFORE THERE WAS AN EXPO

UK Games Expo may never have been launched was it not for the fact that a Birmingham based club called the October Wargames Association of which I was chairman was dwindling in membership in 2005. The solution seemed to be to publicise the club by way of an open day run in a local gymnasium. I booked the venue, arranged for members to run games, booked about 15 exhibitors and promoted the event in magazines, forums and local flyers. It was a one-day affair, run in January 2006, completely forgotten now, and attended by only a few hundred individuals, but was fun to run and gave myself and others including Patrick Campbell and Kevin Townsend, the desire to run more events and out of that came an event called GAME.

GAME was first run in the spring of 2006 and was an organized play event consisting of the Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures European championship organised by a university friend, Peter Scott, and wargames such as Flames of War and Warmachines/Hordes. It had one exhibitor and just one roleplaying game that I ran. It was well attended for what it was. However, it did not quite tick the boxes that Pat, Kevin and I wanted in an event as it was a pure organised play based and not a public oriented participation event.

As it transpired Peter Scott wanted very much to run this sort of organized play event and wanted it to run in Manchester. So he took GAME up north where it ran successfully for 3 years whilst we agreed that Pat, Kevin and I would set up an event along the lines

we wanted in Birmingham. The question now was what would that show look like?

THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER SHOWS

In the UK at this time the show scene was divided into different genres. There were wargames shows like Salute, Colours and Triples that did have trade halls and demonstration wargames. There were board game gatherings like Manorcon and Midcon – usually consisting of about 200 gamers and maybe one retailer but not many if any publishers demonstrating games. There were Roleplaying conventions like Gencon UK and Dragonmeet. But at the time all the events were aimed at catering for the existing gamers and not really the mainstream visitors and family audience.

We wanted something that mixed all game genres together, but also

appealed to the general public and casual gamers as well as the hobbyist.

We had heard of events such as Gen Con and Essen Spiel, and we wanted to have elements of those shows. Essen had huge trade halls with large numbers of publishers running demonstration games where you could sit and try the games. Gencon had an organised play event structure and immersive convention experience where you game on into the evening. We looked to bring in a lot of that but give it our own twist and perhaps a greater mainstream and family appeal on top.

Now, as it turns out, there was a thirst at the time for a convention in the UK similar or based upon Essen Spiel. Individuals in the board game industry contacted us and invited us to meet with them at Manorcon at Birmingham University in the summer of 2006



and recommended that we attend Essen Spiel.

At Essen Spiel that autumn, we went around talking to publishers and discovered many UK publishers of board games who had nothing like Essen Spiel in the UK. So when we explained the idea that we were going to launch something like that, a satisfying number of UK Publishers were enthusiastic about it and so we set about finding a venue.

THE CLARENDON SUITES – OUR FIRST HOME

We needed a place that was affordable, that was local, and a place that hopefully we would be able to get on an annual basis, assuming the show was a success. We found this in the Clarendon Suites, which was a Masonic lodge on the Hagley road, now sadly demolished. It was commonly used for banquets, wedding receptions and examinations. We booked the venue for the May of 2007. The Clarendon was a memorable venue as it was labyrinthine, and it seemed there were always more rooms yet to be found: rooms full of Masonic regalia, which added to the atmosphere and even a cellar or “dungeon” as we saw it. We used just 850sqm of it in that first year. UKGE 2026 will use over 60,000 sqm by comparison. We set about organising it into exhibitor spaces with a special emphasis on demonstration tables for publishers to use, tournament areas and a small amount of roleplaying space. Initially we had no open playing areas but late in the day, we hired a few small rooms for this in the Strathallan hotel next door. With an event coming together we turned to

marketing. In these days before social media had taken off we took to game related forums all over the internet and announced the event and invited clubs and gamers to attend.

We did a lot of work on marketing the event in those early days, such as visiting other shows, going for walks around the middle of Birmingham with Star Wars stormtroopers handing out flyers, attending the Middle Earth Weekend at Sarehole Mill and showing games, along with anything we could to draw attention to the event, including giving out 50% off tickets on the backs of flyers and discounts on scraps of paper.

TONY JOINS THE TEAM

With a venue booked, layout mapped, exhibitors sold stands and tournaments announced and some marketing done, we were ready to launch ticket sales. At this stage in March of 2007 it became apparent we were missing one vital but overlooked element. We needed to be able to sell tickets online and we had no ticketing solution and no method to take orders from visitors. This is where Tony Hyams first got involved. A friend of Pat and Kevin, he was a website designer and IT professional and in a matter of weeks wrote and activated our ticket system. At Easter 2007 we launched ticketing. It was a slow start but a week or two from the show we had reached 400 ticket sales and reported that to the venue.

THE FIRST SHOW

Finally show time had come. As we opened the doors on that Saturday

morning for the very first show, we were astounded by the numbers that had turned up. That estimate of 400 was shown to be way lower than reality. We basically ran out of tickets. We gave out raffle tickets and bits of paper, and eventually we just waved people through, and we managed to get 1,200 individuals, we believe, that very first year. The venue ran out of supplies of bread rolls, other food products, and had to do runs to local supermarkets to resupply. But it was considered a success. The exhibitors were happy with their takings. The visitors seemed enthused by the concept, and we were away.

One abiding memory of that first year was the fact that Tony's wife, Claire, went into labour on the Friday evening. Tony had been at the venue that day sorting out the tickets whilst getting updates from home. Saturday dawned, and labour was still progressing slowly so Tony came up to show everyone how the ticketing worked. Meanwhile Claire's mum arrived at their house and then the time came when they went to the hospital. Finally it was clear that Tony had to join them so we handed him his keys and coat and took his radio off him and sent him on his way. His daughter Faith was born later that day and as a result usually has a birthday on or around UKGE each year.

EXPANSION IN THE CLARENDON SUITES

As the years went on, the enthusiasm for the show continued. It grew at a modest but satisfying rate year on year and we gradually took on more and more of the Masonic lodge. Over the years, we got to know the venue very, very well, and even provided them with much more accurate maps than they had previously had.

As the event expanded, there was interest from exhibitors in what we were doing, and in fact, the very first elements of sponsorships that we had came from things like the fourth edition of Dungeons & Dragons being released in 2008. That was a happy coincidence for us because it allowed us to run a first attempt at the living dungeon, and it also meant that we had a high profile, new game release, at only our second UK Games Expo. The Player's Handbook and DMG were placed in a glass cabinet, and every so often, someone would come and turn over a few pages, and everyone would go and stand





Fantasy series who visited us to give a talk on their careers as well as Kenny Baker (R2D2).

The funds that came in with the Dungeons and Dragons sponsorship allowed us to run a Living Dungeon in 2008 and 2009 - an immersive Dungeon experience that was a sellout success and great fun to run. In 2010 and 2011 Steve Jackson Games allowed us to run a Live Action Munchkin game where players actually kicked down doors and 6ft high foam monsters would emerge or occasionally real actors bellowing and scaring the daylights out of the players.

THE MOVE TO THE HILTON

By 2011 - in year 5 - we were using 2250 sqm of the Clarendon and all the meeting rooms in the adjacent Strahallan hotel and space at the Quality Inn. That year the venue told us they believed at around 2500 visitors and 3500 attendance that we were now at the limits of their space. That same year saw Dan Steel and Steve Buckmaster of Esdevium (who became Asmodee UK) visit us on the Saturday at the show and tell us they would support a move to a bigger venue. As it happened Larry Roznai of Mayfair Games was over at the invitation of Keith Thomasson of Heron games and he asked to see me and Tony. So, on Sunday morning, we met with the company who would become our first major sponsors. They would help fund the move to larger premises.

That winter we visited the Hilton Hotel, NEC and in the following spring of 2012 had our last Clarendon Show - and bid a fond farewell to our first home.

around and look at the product. Some RPG games were run using the new fourth edition system at that show. We had some of the writers across that year, as well as artists like Ralph Horsley, and this marked the beginning of the expansion of role playing as an element in the show.

COSPLAYERS & VIKINGS COME ON BOARD

From the very beginnings of the show, we had made friends with a local Viking group, and they have attended every year in increasing numbers to the extent that UKGE is now a significant event in their calendar. They have enthusiastically supported the show, and been a colourful popular part of the event right up till today.

Again, we have always had some element of cosplay from the start, typically Star Wars stormtroopers from the Galactic Knights, Doctor Who re-enactors, and other TV and movie cosplayers.

FAMILY ZONE, PLAYTEST AND CHILDREN'S RPGS

The origins of what has become our vast Family Zone was a single table with crayons and books and children's games run by my mother and mother-in-law, partially because we had young children when UKGE started. The year after, it expanded and my sister and brother-in-law ran it offering simple, fun, easy games for families with children. Nigel Scarfe of Imagination Gaming visited the show and offered to take on the zone and this was one of the first times we followed a successful strategy, since repeated often, find someone who knows what they are

doing and is keen, and let them take parts of the show and run with it.

A similar thing happens with playtest. We had a small area for game designers to show games in development and Rob Harris of Playtest UK offered to coordinate and run that area and they still do this today, albeit at a larger scale.

With Children's RPGs the area came about entirely because Richard Law who still runs it volunteered to run roleplaying games for 7 to 12 year olds and again still does today. We even gave him an award for it at the Clarendon in recognition of his enthusiasm and stamina as this task is one of the hardest at the show.

OUR FIRST GUESTS

In 2010 we were so excited to pay hosts to the great Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson, founders of Games Workshop and the Fighting



THE HILTON YEARS

Received wisdom in events is that if you move venue, you can assume you would lose 5 to 10% attendance. We needed to ensure this did not happen and so we put a lot of effort into marketing the move to the Hilton, including games days in local shopping centres, a lot of online activity and organising goodie bags for those who took a Hilton room. There were many donations from exhibitors but the most memorable was a huge pallet of Surprised Stare's Scandaroon game that turned up on Tony's doorstep one day.

Mapping and filling the Kings and Palace rooms with exhibitor stands seemed a daunting task. How could we hope to fill that volume with trade we asked ourselves. Had we taken on more than was sensible? It was a bit of a gamble.

The winter of 2012 to 2013, UKGE

the formal creation of a senior management team - the "Core Team" who would help us plan the show in advance and run it on the weekend. This team was very important in the time before we had paid staff.

The work paid off as the move was a success and unique visitors grew to 3500 and attendances to almost 6000.

The Hilton was the scene of a memorable event in 2015 when in the middle of the foyer surrounded by cosplayers and Vikings and with confetti cannons on stand by we had a marriage proposal, which required some coordination and military level planning. Fortunately she said yes and the rest is history.

LIVE SHOWS, T SHIRTS AND THE PROGRAMME

The Hilton move brought with it an expansion in our core offering. We still had large trade halls and

to sell souvenir T-shirts and later badges and other merchandise. I love seeing these shirts worn around the UK show scene and at UKGE.

That same year Matthew Comben - a graphic designer volunteered to take over the layout of the programme with Laura Hutchinson editing. Tony handed over the task with some sadness. At the same time, Ralph Horsley agreed to do the Dragon covers for our programme and his stunning art has been a set piece feature since.

THE BRING AND BUY

The origins of the Bring and Buy were in the Clarendon Suites and originally run by an exhibitor, Games Gazette from 2008 to 2012. At the Hilton, Jason Garwood who is one of our few 20 year volunteers took over the bring and buy and it expanded. It soon became a logistical problem as it had moved beyond the ability of traditional raffle-ticket methods to handle. It needed a complete rethink and the solution by Tony was to make it function somewhat like a shop with bar codes to check items in and out again. It is still, we believe, the world's largest bring and buy.

RUNNING OUT OF SPACE AGAIN

By 2014 it was clear that the Hilton would not be enough room long term and whilst we ran a cramped show there in 2015, with a marquee in the carpark, and 7000 unique visitors and 14,000 attendances, we had already taken the decision for another major step. We would add on a hall of the NEC.

10TH ANNIVERSARY AND THE NEC MOVE

2016 brought both our 10th show as well as our first event in the NEC and Hilton together. We used just two thirds of Hall 1 (about 10,000 sqm) along with 5500 sqm at the Hilton. Mapping Hall 1 was a big challenge to us and at first we were not sure how to go about it. The answer presented itself in a unique way. We used Lego to map it. We made each dimple 50cm and made a scale map of the Hall and set to laying out stands. This was fine until we tried to move blocks and lacked the special lego tool and ended up with very sore fingers. Another learning curve was power. Used as we were to hotels with power sockets in the walls, an exhibition hall where power is pulled up and sockets attached



became a limited company and we were relieved as exhibitors' sales flooded in. This happened so swiftly that we realised we had passed the VAT threshold and needed to pay VAT on all our sales. That could have been tricky - having to find the VAT having already announced prices with no VAT element, but the companies who were VAT registered graciously agreed to pay VAT on their bookings so we could afford to swallow the VAT of the smaller companies that first year.

The size of the show now required us to have a volunteer night team marking up and setting up stands, and this move brought in an expansion in volunteers and

lots of demo games, tournaments and an expanding RPG schedule. But in the summer of 2012, I visited the Edinburgh Fringe with my family and took in a few game related comedy shows including John Robertson's The Darkroom. I approached him at the end and invited him to UKGE. Initially there was some doubt in the Core Team that a live show programme would work at UKGE, but The Darkroom and other live shows like Jollyboat, Nightmare Live and the Performing Nerd quickly became a success and big part of many visitors Expo experience, whilst giving me the excuse to visit the Fringe each year.

Around 2013 was when we started

required us to master Ohm's Law - a flash back to 'O' Level physics.

Power costs also jumped a lot, and we had some negotiation to do to try and keep it affordable for all.

The split site brought some anxiety. Would visitors go to the NEC for the trade halls or just stay in the Hilton? We need not have worried as visitors jumped to 12,000 uniques and attendances to 25,000. I recall the first morning walking into the hall where some exhibitors had dropped banners and built more professional stands and thought that at last the hall looked quite a bit like one at Essen. What we had set out to emulate 10 years before was starting to happen.

With the move and the growth came larger stands, increasing numbers of exhibitors from around the world and more Sponsorships. In 2016 Hawk joined Mayfair as a major sponsor, we had three associate sponsors and Games Workshop came for the first time. The following years would see everything continue to grow.

In 2017 we used all of Hall 1 and part of Hall 3a. By 2018 it was Hall 1 and 2 and the first appearance of the Living History village at the lakeside. In 2019 Halls 1 and 2 and 3a were all used. Unique visitors rose through 16,500, 21,700 to over 25,000 by 2019 (and 45,000 attendance). That year also saw those numbers exceed that of another show we had long admired and seen as another inspiration, Origins Game Fair.

In 2019 I stood at the Volunteers' party Sunday night talking in expansive terms of using Halls 1, 2, 3 and 3a and maybe getting over 50,000 attendance in 2020.

Just goes to show you can't predict the future.

2020 – THE PANDEMIC AND THE WORLD GOES ONLINE

I was at the London Toy Fair in January 2020 when Corona Virus first became a subject of conversation albeit just spoken of as a 'thing in China'. At Nuremberg Toy Fair at the end of the month the main subject was Brexit as it was whilst we were out there that we finally left the EU. In February, exhibitor emails started coming in about whether we might cancel the show and what our terms were. I recall a chat in the office when we discussed it and at that stage even it seemed unlikely events would be cancelled "after all they would have to cancel the Premier League games and what are the chances of that."

Things became much more real a few weeks later when we were at Airecon and all the news was that a major announcement was looming. Tony drove up to see me at Airecon and we sat down and went through plans and contracts and the news and concluded that we would have to postpone the show. Initially we moved the show back 3 months and our good friends at Tabletop Scotland agreed to cancel, so we might run on their weekend. We even started mapping halls for an August show. But within a week or two it was clear the Pandemic would prevent major shows for at least a year.

Exhibitors were offered the options of refunds or rollover and many agreed to leave their funds with us and that helped us get by, through months of uncertainty and furlough schemes to 2021.

Having cancelled the show we decided to run an online event as did many other shows like Gencon, Spiel and Gameholecon. Indeed I got into a regular zoom call with other show organisers - links we still maintain - and that mutual support helped us all keep sane as well as sharing ideas.

The virtual show was named by Tony 'Virtually Expo' and in 3 months we coded our site to support it, learnt all about Discord and Zoom and Twitch, started doing live streams and educated ourselves on online game platforms like Tabletopia and Tabletop Simulator and Board Game Arena. We figured out how to have a virtual trade hall and how exhibitors might interact with visitors. The Discord channel grew a virtual queue with fun random phrases that it spat at you when you got to the front. The live shows did online streams. Tournaments were run online and OTT had 3 channels of activity. We ran playtest sessions and speed dating for publishers and designers and a schedule of online RPGs run in Roll20 and Fantasy Grounds and other platforms. We even had souvenir badges you could collect online including a virtual beer and hotdog you could buy other visitors. To collect the badges you undertook activities like visiting stands or playing games but there were a few easter eggs like the badge you only got by finding the hidden pixel in the 'Carparking page' - after all what virtual show needs carparking.

All in all it was considered a pretty good attempt at an online show, but as it ended we all knew it was not what we wanted to run and our minds turned to 2021 and the burning question - could we run again in the real world.

2021 – THE FIRST SHOW IN THE WORLD

As 2020 passed into 2021, we had to face the question about when it would be possible to run UKGE again. Early that year, with Covid vaccinations rolling out, the government published a plan for opening up the UK in stages. That plan allowed for the possibility of large-scale events in July or August of 2021 assuming everything went well with the vaccination rollout and there were no unexpected developments from the pandemic.

As spring came on, the staged opening up occurred and appeared to be going well. However, just as we were reaching the point





where we had to commit to paying for volunteer hotel rooms there was a delay on the decision as to whether or not large shows would be allowed.

We therefore had to make a decision about committing to run. It was Hobson's choice. If we committed to run, and could not, that would bankrupt us. Yet if we did not run, we would not be able to pay again to run in 2022. Either way, there would be no more UKGE. So we proceeded with the hope that we would be able to run and see what happened. Fortunately, we were able to run in late July 2021. However, we were going to be the first show in the world to run on any sizable scale. The only other event on the same weekend as us at the NEC was Quilting World, an event full of elderly ladies who seemed quite relaxed about the reopening process.

The NEC at the time did not have a policy in place for how to get people into events where COVID passports were needed and various other steps required. So I dug back into my General Practitioner knowledge and ended up writing a policy that was used by the NEC for events for the next nine months.

We ran a show around 40% the size of 2019 in just parts of Halls 2 and 3. The exhibitors were almost all from the UK as travelling internationally at the time was difficult. Visitor numbers were obviously much reduced and many features like the Bring and Buy were left out that year as we were cautious about encouraging crowded gatherings. The layout was deliberately spread out, which in normal times would make it feel quiet and sparse. Yet as we opened the doors we were happy to find that the visitors who were coming to the show were simply relieved that events were occurring and just happy to be there. It certainly had

a different vibe - perhaps because most of the larger companies were not present - and indeed many smaller and medium publishers enjoyed welcome attention from the visitors.

2022 – THE RECOVERY YEAR

Following that post pandemic show in 2021, we ran again on our normal date line at the beginning of June 2022. This year started to see the return of some of the international companies and the relaxation of Covid regulations by that point. It would still take at least another year until the majority of the international companies would be able to organise a full return to a normal show, but 2022 was around 95% the size of the 2019 show and did feel considerably more normal. We were back to two almost full trade halls but we found that tournaments were taking longer to recover and so we only needed part of Hall 3 for events.

2023 TO 2024 BREAKING RECORDS

2023 saw a full return to normality with an expansion of the trade halls and a filling out of all of Hall 1 and all of Hall 2 with trade and with Hall 3 fully in use we reached the point we had planned for in 2020. An increase in the numbers of visitors mirrored the growth of footprint so that we bypassed our 2019 previous high point and we reached around 31,000 visitors and 53,000 attendances. This too was the year that the bring and buy once again was growing to the level that the sheer volume of items was exceeding shelving space to stock it all. We saw that steps again would be needed to manage it whilst still allowing us to provide a feature many visitors enjoy.

2024 continued to see the growth

of UK Games Expo. We expanded into Hall 3A and we again saw numbers of attendances rise to record breaking levels nudging 40,000 visitors in 2024 and 65000 attendances. The 2024 show saw the 50th anniversary of Dungeons & Dragons, so our programme cover featured an image which echoed early editions of the game. It was also good in these years to welcome new guests and visitors including Luke Gygax, travelling over from the States and present during those D&D celebrations.

2025 – THROW AWAY THE PLAN AND START AGAIN

2025 required a total rethink of our layout. This was forced upon us as we were told we would not be able to use our oldest hall, Hall 1. Halls 2, 3 and 3A were needed as trade space which due to the expanding demand spilled over into Hall 4 which came into the plan for the first time. This became our tournament and open gaming hall as well as a home to many of the features of the show including the Sir Coates Painting Masters, a large paint and take area and the very popular new feature, the Pile 'O' Games charity games raffle. With trade all on one level and wider aisles the layout was praised for accessibility albeit we recognised more signage was needed to help navigation.

2026

So this year, our 20th show, will see UK Games Expo use all of Hall 1, 2, 3, 3A, most of 4 and part of 5 and will be the biggest footprint we have ever had with something like 65,000 square meters of space at the NEC and at the Hilton Hotel. This amount of space now makes UK Games Expo genuinely one of the world's largest shows and cements our position on that world stage. We are delighted you are with us in this historic year.



For tickets please go to Event Desk in the Hilton Library, or see the UK Games Expo website. You will also need a valid UKGE entry ticket to attend these events. Event tickets are subject to availability.



THE BOARD GAME COMEDY HOUR

If you're a gamer, these are jokes for you!



Saturday 18:00 - 19:00
NEC - Toute Suite

OFF WITH YOUR HEAD

Who Lives? Who Dies? You Decide!



Friday 14:30 - 15:00
NEC Piazza 5 - Meeple Theatre

Saturday 16:00 - 17:00
NEC Piazza 5 - Meeple Theatre

DISCWORLD: ALL THAT IS GOLD IS NOT BUTTER

Join the cast as they play a brand-new adventure from the upcoming starter set for the Discworld TTRPG



Friday 18:00 - 19:30
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

WEREWOLF: LIVE

A chaotic, adrenaline-fuelled hour of desperate defence, hilarious accusations and unparalleled mob justice.



Saturday 14:30 - 15:30
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

THE MOUSTACHIED MEMORY MAESTRO

Tom is back and this time he has a story to tell!



Friday 19:00 - 20:00
NEC Piazza 5 - Meeple Theatre

Saturday 13:00 - 14:00
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

JULIETTE BURTON - BOARD TO DISTRACTION

Get going with a geek girl living her best nerd life. Join her on a journey from cosplay to confidence.



Friday 16:00 - 17:00
NEC Piazza 5 - Meeple Theatre

Saturday 17:30 - 18:30
NEC Piazza 5 - Meeple Theatre

JULIETTE BURTON: VILLAIN ERA (WIP)

Calling all late-night legends, dungeon-crawling romantics, and big-hearted heroes! Juliette is summoning YOU.



Sunday 11:30 - 12:30
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

JOLLYBOX! LIVE PARTY GAMES

Interactive party games where the audience play along!



Saturday 16:00 - 17:00
NEC - Toute Suite

THE DARK ROOM TILL YA DIE!!!

You awake to find yourself in a dark room! And you'll be here til ya die!

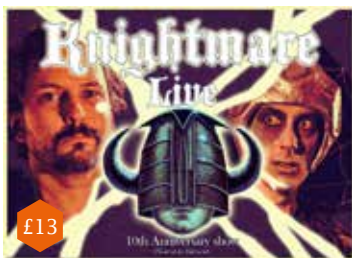


15+

Saturday £17 21:30 - 23:59
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

KNIGHTMARE LIVE

Light the beacons! Rouse the villagers! Gather all your courage... for the smash hit comedy show is back!



£13

Friday 20:00 - 21:00
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

Saturday 18:00 - 19:00
NEC Piazza 5 - Meeple Theatre

THE STORYMASTER'S TALES

Invites you into a world of thrilling fantasy and spooky folklore.



£10

Friday 13:00 - 14:00
NEC Piazza 5 - Meeple Theatre

Saturday 13:00 - 14:00
NEC Piazza 5 - Meeple Theatre

QUESTINY

Unleash your inner bard or barbarian, and prepare for an hour of epic laughs and unforgettable adventures!



£10

Saturday 13:30 - 14:30
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

BLOOD ON THE CLOCKTOWER: LIVE

Whether you're a Clockers expert or new to the game, there's guaranteed laughter and nonsense aplenty.



£13

Friday 15:00 - 16:00
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

Saturday 20:00 - 21:00
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

ROLL BRITANNIA - YOUR ADVENTURE AWAITS

Have your say in how this unique adventure unfolds in an improvised D&D oneshot!



£7

Saturday 20:30 - 22:00
NEC Piazza 5 - Meeple Theatre

CALL OF CTHULHU LIVE

Unearth the shadows of the Cthulhu Mythos - with horrific (and likely hilarious) results!



£17

Sunday 17:30 - 19:30
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

QUINNS QUEST: THE WEIRD HISTORY OF TTRPGS

The hilarious comedy panel show makes its UK debut!



£6

Saturday 19:30 - 20:30
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

JOHN ROBERTSON: THE GAMING SPECIAL (WIP)

New show for 2026! Stand-up! Gaming! More swearing than you'd expect at one in the afternoon!



£6

18+

Sunday 13:00 - 14:00
Hilton Hotel - Sandringham Suite

THE NEW EDITION OF
WARHAMMER 40,000

COMING SOON!



SIGN UP TO THE
NEWSLETTER
TO STAY UP TO DATE

Our Seminars explore and celebrate the fun of gaming and the games industry. For the full schedule see the events pages on the website by scanning the QR code. All these events will take place in the Piazza Suites in the NEC concourse, these are all located off the same corridor, near NEC Hall 2, and on the Main Stage in Hall 1.

Don't forget our Ambassadors are on hand to help you if you get lost – look out for pale blue UKGE shirts.

Free to UKGE ticket holders. No reserve seating at these events.



SEMINARS

BEHIND THE BOARD WITH EERIE IDOL GAMES	Friday 11:00am – 12:00pm	NEC Piazza 5 Meeple Theatre
LEVELLING UP: HOW TO BE A BETTER GM	Friday 11:00am – 12:00pm	NEC Hall 1 Main Stage
THE SECRETS OF BOARDGAME MANUFACTURING	Friday 11:30pm – 12:30pm	NEC Tote Suite
HOW NOT TO SUCK AT D&D	Friday 12:00pm – 13:00pm	NEC Piazza 4 Dice Room
SPIEL DES JAHRES	Friday 13:00pm – 14:00pm	NEC Tote Suite
DRACULA'S INFLUENCE ON ROLEPLAYING GAMES	Friday 13:30pm – 14:30pm	NEC Piazza 4 Dice Room
TCG PSYCHOLOGY: BUILDING CONFIDENCE	Friday 14:00pm – 15:00pm	NEC Piazza 1 Panda Room
20 YEARS OF UKGE	Friday 15:30pm – 16:30pm	NEC Hall 1 Main Stage
GENERATIVE AI AND TABLETOP	Saturday 10:30am – 11:30pm	NEC Piazza 3 Board Room
A SEAT AT THE TABLE: WOMEN IN TTRPGS	Saturday 11:00am – 12:00pm	NEC Tote Suite
DO DRAGONS DREAM OF SCORCHED SHEEP LIVE	Saturday 14:30am – 16:00pm	NEC Piazza 3 Board Room
RIVERS OF LONDON WITH BEN AARONOVITCH	Saturday 14:00pm – 15:00pm	NEC Hall 1 Main Stage
LAUNCHING YOUR GAME CROWDFUNDING Q&A	Sunday 12:00pm – 13:30pm	NEC Piazza 3 Board Room

PODCASTS

POLYHEDRON COLLIDER CAST LIVE	Friday 10:00am – 11:00am	NEC Piazza 4 Dice Room
PODCAST TO TABLETOP	Friday 12:30pm – 13:30pm	NEC Piazza 1 Panda Room
WAR WITH A MATE	Saturday 16:30pm – 17:30pm	NEC Piazza 3 Board Room
THE MAGNUS ARCHIVES TTRPG LIVE PLAY	Sunday 14:00pm – 15:30pm	NEC Piazza Tote Suite

WORKSHOPS

PREPRESS WORKSHOP	Saturday 14:00pm – 15:00pm	NEC Hall 2 Press & Business Zone
CREATING GAMES FOR ADULT EDUCATION	Saturday 16:00pm – 17:30pm	NEC Piazza Tote Suite

Listings correct at the time of printing

KONFLIKT'47[®]

Konflikt '47 is the tabletop wargame of heroes, horrors, monsters, and mechs, putting you in command of the nightmarish struggle for supremacy as the old world is torn apart and remade in blood and crackling energy.



US Firefly Hero



*M2A5 Linebacker
Jump Walker*



*US Firefly Airborne
Infantry*

THIS IS NOT WAR. THIS IS THE END.

It is 1947. Humanity has breached the barrier between realities, using Rifts to create previously impossible technologies. Driven by this esoteric knowledge and Rift energy, a new era of both science and superstition has engulfed humankind.

The fires of World War II rage as brightly as ever. Nations bloodied and scarred by years of fighting launch fresh offensives and counterattacks. Weapons of unprecedented destruction and beings of unnatural origin dominate countless battles across land, air, and sea.

In this horrifying new world, the only victory lies in survival.

This is not war. This is the end.



Axis Hero



*Vogelspinne
Light Walker*



*Axis Stahltruppen
Heavy Infantry*



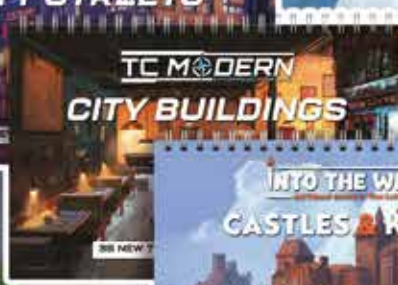
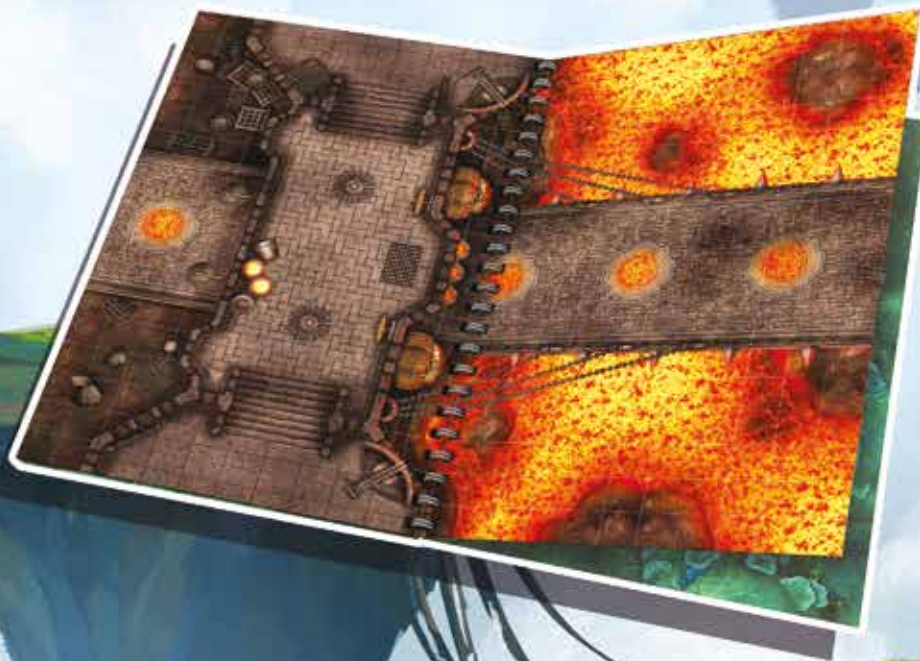
Ruined Buildings



Scan me to
discover more about the
Konflikt '47 game!



TOM CARTOS BATTLEMAPS



Visit us at **Booth 3-728** for 100's of Fantasy,
Modern & Cyberpunk **TTRPG Battlemaps** and
Game Accessories

INTO THE WILDS
BATTLEMAP BOOKS BY TOM CARTOS



TC MODERN
BATTLEMAP BOOKS BY TOM CARTOS

SPECIAL GUESTS



We're thrilled to welcome a brilliant line-up of special guests to UK Games Expo 2026.

Luke Gygax returns to UK Games Expo, hosting three exclusive events, being part of some panels and making appearances around the show.

Comedy favourite Chris Barrie will also be on hand, known to millions as Arnold Rimmer from Red Dwarf and for his sharp, unmistakable humour.

We're equally delighted to host Colin Baker, the Sixth Doctor, representing a classic era of Doctor Who.

Rounding out the guest list is Jason Salkey, Rifleman Harris from Sharpe, one of Britain's most beloved historical dramas.

Chris and Colin will appear in Hall 2, stand 2-363 across the weekend. Ian Salkey will be on stand 3-1102.

They can also be seen at the Meet & Greet stand in Hall 1 (1-F).

Check the website for times.

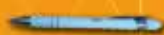
LOCATION

Hall 2 2-363
Hall 3 3-1102

SCAN FOR INFO



Grab Your UKGE 2026 Merchandise From Stand 4-T55



Want to try some new roleplaying games? Never roleplayed before? Too busy to fit a 4-hour RPG into your schedule?

Games on Demand is perfect for you. We welcome people of all levels of experience and interest. Our Games Masters



will present you with fantastic worlds to explore, enhance, and even, if you're feeling up to it, exploit.

Games on Demand run 2 hour sessions in the Gladstone Room of the Hilton Hotel and are £3 per ticket.



LOCATION
Hilton Hotel
Wellington Room



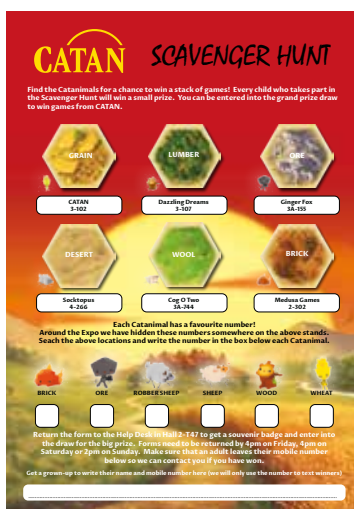
If you love adventure, then our roleplaying schedule is here for you!

There will be over 550 games running across 8 sessions over 3 days, in more than 50 different systems! With the largest RPG schedule in the UK, there's something here for everyone. Every game is designed so you can just turn up and play, with games for beginners and veteran players. Most RPGs take place in the Hilton Hotel, but some special games take place in Tote Suite NEC. The full schedule is on

the website, but you can also head to the Event Desk in the Hilton Library.



LOCATION
Hilton Hotel



Kids, don't forget to collect your Scavenger Hunt and Treasure Hunt sheets from the Help Desk in Hall 2 (2-T47). Find the clues and win some fantastic prizes.

LOCATION
NEC Hall 2 2-T47

SIR COATES MASTERS 2026

Get your miniatures ready to enter one of the UK's biggest painting competitions. Come and feast your eyes on some of the most stunning miniature painting in the hobby – the Sir Coates Painting Masters competition is here, and it's bigger, better, and more vibrant than ever. Run by the world-renowned Duncan Rhodes Painting Academy, the Sir Coates Painting Masters competition has been a standout favourite at past events, drawing in talent from across the globe and delivering truly jaw-dropping entries. This year is no different, except that the standard just keeps rising.

But perhaps the best part? All entries will be on display throughout the entire weekend. Whether you're a casual hobbyist, a curious newcomer, or a seasoned painter, you'll be able to admire the incredible craftsmanship up close, get inspired, and maybe even start planning your own entry for next time.

JUDGED BY LEGENDS

The competition will be overseen by a stellar panel of judges, led by none other than **Duncan Rhodes** himself – legendary painter, educator, and co-founder of the academy. Duncan brings decades of experience, a sharp eye for detail, and a deep appreciation for the miniature painting craft. Joining him are: **Martin Collier**, Founder and judge of the FEN Model Show and a prolific miniature painter himself, winning multiple awards across the hobby world; and **Natalie Heywood**, DRPA studio painter and professional artist. These judges will not only be evaluating entries, they'll also be on hand throughout the weekend to talk technique. Pop by the display, see the incredible miniatures, and don't hesitate to chat with the judges. They're always happy to talk painting, give feedback, and share their passion with fellow hobbyists.

COVETED PRIZES

Winners will receive the highly sought-after Sir Coates trophies, a mark of artistic excellence, and the best in show will take home the Sir Coates Grand Champion Award.

COMPETITION CATEGORIES TO CHECK OUT

There's a place for every painter and every kind of miniature.

Single Miniature: For any human-sized (regular scaled) character, from lone soldiers to heroic leaders, including those on bikes, beasts, or smaller vehicles.

Squad/Unit: A showcase for group dynamics and cohesion. Enter any group of three or more models, whether on foot or mounted.

Vehicle: Tanks, walkers, flyers and anything in between. From gritty realism to alien tech – this is the category for machinery of all kinds.

Monster: A celebration of the colossal, the strange, and the fantastical. If it's larger than human size, and mounted on a suitable base, it belongs here.

Large Scale Miniatures: New for this year, this category is dedicated to larger-format models, typically 54mm scale and above, including busts. It's all about pushing detail, smooth blends, and display-level finishes on pieces where every brushstroke can shine.

Board Games: A unique category for fans of boxed games. Eligible entries must come from board games (not wargames) and typically involve a grid or hex map system. Think Zombicide, Descent, or Gloomhaven.

CELEBRATE THE WINNERS

The competition will conclude with a special awards ceremony on Sunday afternoon, at 3 pm on the Main Stage, where the winners will be announced and honoured. All



are welcome, come along to cheer on your favourites, celebrate the talent on display, and take part in one of the most exciting moments of the event honoured. All are welcome, come along to cheer on your favourites, celebrate the talent on display, and take part in one of the most exciting moments of the event.

Whether you're competing or simply admiring, the Sir Coates Painting Competition is a centrepiece of the weekend. Come for the colour, stay for the conversation, and leave inspired.

LOCATION

NEC Hall 4 4-774

SCAN FOR INFO



Callum France
Grand Champion 2025





LOOK MOTHER!
MOUNTAINS!

YES, MY CHILD.
THEY ARE KNOWN AS
THE STAKES. THEY MARK
THE BORDER BETWEEN THE
GREENHOLD AND SEAT OF
THE VEMPIRE'S POWER,
BLEAKHARVEST.



HOW DO
YOU FEEL? WE
HAVE BEEN FLYING
FOR SOME TIME
NOW. ARE YOU
TIRED?



I AM
FINE, MOTHER.
WE SHOULD
CARRY ON.

THE
FURTHER WE FLY,
THE CLOSER WE WILL
BE TO FINDING
FATHER.



YOU ARE
BRAVE, CHILD, BUT
THE WEARINESS
IN YOUR VOICE
BETRAYS YOU...



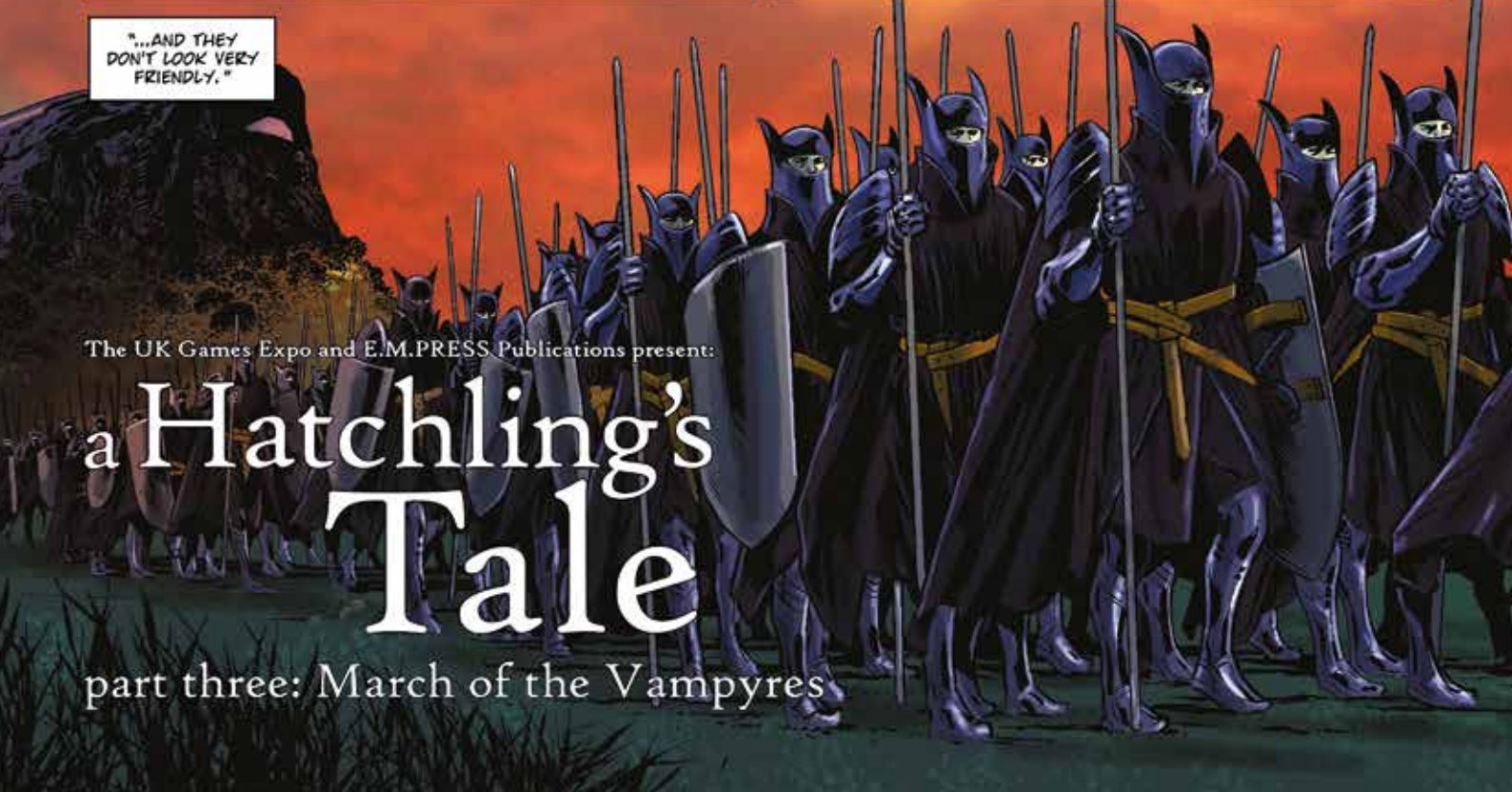
THOM! COME AWAY FROM THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE! YOU MUST REST; WE FACE ANOTHER LONG JOURNEY TOMORROW.



BUT MOTHER, I THINK YOU SHOULD SEE THIS...



...I THINK THERE'S AN ARMY MARCHING THROUGH THE CANYON BELOW US...



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a Hatchling's Tale

part three: March of the Vampyres



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IN THE MORNING."



"I'M SORRY,
MOTHER, BUT I
CANNOT WAIT UNTIL
THE MORNING..."

"...FATHER
NEEDS US..."

"...AND I
WILL NOT FAIL
HIM."



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VIEW FROM THE INDUSTRY

TO CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF UK GAMES EXPO, WE INVITED SOME OF OUR LONGSTANDING FRIENDS TO SHARE THEIR STORIES AND REFLECTIONS ON WHAT UKGE HAS MEANT TO THEM.

STEVE JACKSON THOUGHTS

I have never NOT had a good time at UKGE. The atmosphere is nonstop busy yet friendly, the organization is superior, the venue is large and clean, and the selection of talks and panels is first-rate. And, very importantly, the show floor is busy but not so loud as to preclude real conversation. Clearly it is a fun show for the gamers, but as a professional I find that it checks all the boxes.

To me, the dealer area is especially worth a mention. Of all the large shows that I attend, UKGE has the best-curated selection of booths. There seems to be a much higher proportion of interesting handmade "stuff" and startup publishers, and very few stands that are nothing but licensed junk.



It was at a UKGE that I first met James Simonds, founder of Lorescape, and that meeting eventually led to my becoming a Lorescape investor and supporter. It was at UKGE that I encountered my favorite "dinosaur gaming" book of all time, Dr Dhrolin's Dictionary of Dinosaurs, from

PalaeoGames. And it was at UKGE that I ran a game of Fantasy Trip that was so early in the morning, by my body clock's idea of morning, that all I can remember is "The players blew through my challenges, I had another hour, I faked it and everyone had a good time." I have NO memory of what we actually did. And I swear that no alcohol was involved! That was later.

FLAVIEN LOISIER FROM HACHETTE BOARDGAMES UK

I toured UK conventions since we moved in the UK 13 years ago, UKGE, Handycon, Airecon, but some of my favourite games felt unknown... so I started Hachette boardgames UK in 2021 during the pandemic to share the love of those titles I adore! And first outing was... masked UKGE (no, not Halloween).

I was on my own, bringing friends and costumes, and 5 years later, we're now 7, localizing 20 to 30 games a year just for the UK. We time about 10 new releases for UKGE, always the best timing to spread the love: we get to show them to friends, shops, and all the wonderful public we don't see elsewhere!

UKGE is always the biggest time of the year to bring back memories and build new ones: from the first dress up themed on the game we were demoing to tailored printed suit, friends to teach games to, have a hug, a laugh, meet designers and publishers, everybody's there!

Let's pick a few key memories, since I won't be able to list them all, and go back in time: first year, we didn't know what were the awards and we got 2,

best game of the year and best gaming novelty with "finding the dragon". It allowed us to show to French publishers and designers the UK gaming scene was ready to welcome us. Following that, I've been able to make the first deliveries to shops in July! Being close to the family zone has always been a strong position to us, allowing contacts with gamers coming to see us but a lot of non gamers ready to discover new sensations and games, and between 2022 and 2026, without Covid, having the kids coming for hugs, explaining the next year how much time they played Stomp the plank or Quoridor they discovered 12 months ago is just magic and only the family zone is bringing those fresh eyes.

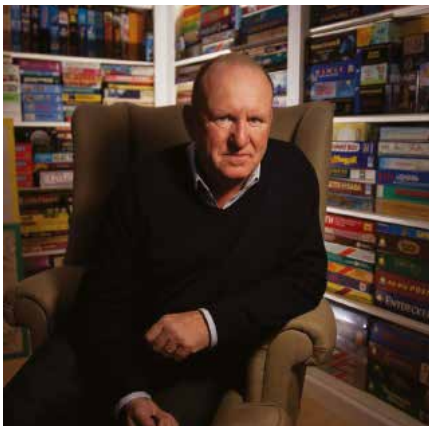
The last strong memory is having Bruno Faidutti from Citadels fame, Michael Smidt from Spielwiese/ Micro Macro Crime City or Florian Sirieix coming and having such a blast they want to come back. It's not a small feat: they travel all across the world and have seen all the biggest shows but enjoy so much the vibe that UKGE is permanently in their calendar! And having Bruno back at tabletop Scotland or Florian at Airecon is a bit like a consecration :D

I could ramble forever about members of the public I met there for the first time who are now friends or part of the team, players who spend half their weekend with us to play all the different titles or the staff who support our crazy ideas, like those lifesize Micro Macro silhouettes installed under unplanned gust! UKGE is about the people and we share this DNA so the match is perfect!!

Let's create memories together for years to come !

SIR IAN LIVINGSTONE

There is something very special and exciting about attending a tabletop games convention. And that is why UK Games Expo is such a key event in any gamer's calendar. The shared experiences and sense of belonging that gamers enjoy at the Expo meeting old friends, making new friends, seeing new releases, buying games, playing games and talking games is off the scale! From humble beginnings in 2007, UK Games Expo has grown into the UK's premier games convention and is now the second largest in the world. Total attendance exceeded 70,000 in 2025.



I have been attending the Expo for more than a decade. I enjoy the company of like-minded people and go there as a consumer, as a player and as a speaker. There is so much to see and do there - you could spend a day at the 'Bring & Buy' area alone trying to find that hidden gem you meant to buy years ago but didn't! You spend time talking to everybody you know there, trying to find out what the new hit game of the show is so you can buy it before it sells out. Then there are the competitions, the games-playing area, the events and seminars, the special guests and the hundreds of exhibitors' stands to go round. The atmosphere and the experience is brilliant and the weekend is over before you know it. Do I really have to wait a year for the next one?

LARRY ROZNAI

Once not so long ago, within the confines of this Galaxy two blokes from a not so insignificant island that were running a Gaming Expo approached the Grand Poobah of the not insignificant Gaming industry that, coincidentally was publishing a game about another not insignificant, but fictitious,

island. They politely asked if he would be willing to cross the large pond separating them and attend their show to see what they were doing and perhaps lend them some support.

Now these folks had been running this show for several years consecutively, and they seemed to be consistent where others who had tried to run a show on that island had failed.

The Grand Poobah had already worked together with some of his friends, also from the island to run some events and participate on the trade floor of this Expo as well. So, when he was asked to attend, he decided to grace them with his presence and perhaps have some fun.

Now, at this time the Expo was, while very well attended, still quite small. This was mostly due to the lack of room in the venue. The venerable old Mason's Hall, while interesting and somewhat fitting for a show of this nature was overfilled and much like a maze. One could go from here to there but not easily.

The Grand Poobah arrived and went to and fro around the maze of rooms, some with trade stands and some with gaming tables. While all of this was interesting, he discovered something that he had never quite experienced at any show he had attended. This was no less than the venerable Bacon Bapp! He had never had such a flavorful bit of sustenance at any show he had attended before. This was heaven on a bun, how could he not support a show that served such a wonderful thing.

After doing a few interviews with various media outlets and kicking off a tournament or two, it was time for the Grand Poobah to have a conclave with the folks running the Expo and discuss what impressions he had about the show. The Grand Poobah was led into an office and was shown a chair behind the desk. The blokes from the island sat down in front of the desk and so, the meeting began. First there was a major discussion about the Bacon Bapp and how wonderful that was and can I have one every day? After that important issue was resolved the conversation returned to the show. Oh that? Well, he told them that the show looked like it had great potential as a nice regional show. But what if we want it to grow larger, they asked? Therein

lies the rub he answered. A larger hall, more hotel rooms and more outlets for Bacon Bapps would be required.

At the end of it you have three choices, 1) continue as you are and cap attendance as a small show, 2) end it here on a high note, or..... 3) expand it into a real national show.

Unfortunately, this was seen as a difficult step to take, while more Bacon Bapps could be appropriated, a larger venue, though available was perhaps beyond the financial wherewithal of the group currently running the show.

Now, these were not your average British chaps. One was a Vicar and the other a Doctor. The Grand Poobah wasn't quite sure why he was being questioned, and also was wondering why two obviously intelligent people would even want to attempt a Game Expo of a larger size? But, there it was, nonetheless. The question of how to expand without losing momentum or losing all of their hard earned Pounds.



After a bit of back and forth the Grand Poobah introduced these folks to the wondrous concept of sponsorships. And what might this be? They asked. This is where you solicit other Grand Poobahs to give you money in exchange for being mentioned as a supporter. And will they actually give us money? Of course they will, just create various levels of exposure they can get and put a price on it. The conversation went on with many other boring details that are not important here, but at the end of the conclave a plan was formed to solicit sponsorships with the idea of expanding the show into a larger facility with room to grow.

The Grand Poobah offered two things. Firstly, to be the first

newly created Co – Sponsor and secondly to offer his first-born child and Assistant Grand Poobah to make introductions and help them sign other folks up for more sponsorships.

In return the Grand Poobah asked only for first choice on items to sponsor and always to be considered as a co-sponsor as long as he was able. And, of course, Bacon Bapps must be available.

This then set the tone for the next few conventions the blokes attended and with the help of the Asst. Grand Poobah at the large show across the channel enough sponsors were booked to allow the Games Expo to move to a large Hotel and ultimately to the NEC.

There are other tales such as lost luggage the first-time round, extra shirts, timing of finals for various game tournaments. But they are not really part of this story.

Most of the above might be true. Names have been omitted because some of you may still know someone in this story. At the end of it all The Grand Poobah and the Expo folks had many great adventures and a whole lot of fun.

SOPHIE WILLIAMS, GAME DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AT WARCRADE

UKGE has always held a special place in my heart. The first event, back in 2007, was the same year I started working in the tabletop games industry. From humble beginnings, I remember feeling the excitement and anticipation in the air attending my first convention. It was electric, full of potential, and wow has UKGE seized that and grown to the incredible event it is today!

From attending as an avid fan of all things tabletop, to working the event on a booth, to giving talks, to now seeing it as an opportunity to meet up with old friends and discover new ones, UKGE has always been a staple of my 'hobby calendar'. In that time I've played so many games, spoken to so many people and made connections, both personally and professionally, that will stay with me forever.



I have always been in awe of the pace this industry moves at. Each year I go, there's always something new! Every year there are new games, new expansions, new innovations in game mechanics and in manufacturing. Seeing it all together in one place, spanning a huge area at the NEC is frankly dizzying.

During my own time at Warcradle—just the last two years—we've done so much! One of my proudest moments was last year, when Warcradle won the Judge's Choice Awards for "Best Miniatures Range" and "Best Miniatures Rules" for Armoured Clash. It was an absolute honour and, I think, fairly reflected the enormous work and effort put

in by the entire creative team at Warcradle. It's an honour we're extremely proud of and not one we take for granted. Not to be outdone, we have, of course, released yet another miniatures game, more models than you can shake a stick at, and even expanded into game books and card games!

It's why I love this hobby / vocation / obsession / industry—call it what you will. Ultimately, we're all gamers who want to have a great time playing games. The last year has been busy, but next year, we're going to be even busier. Because we love it. UKGE gives us a chance to experience the scale of that dedication in the community at large and it is awe-inspiring. I look forward to many more to come.

STEVE BUCKMASTER AND DANIEL STEEL FROM ESDEVIVUM GAMES

When Richard and Tony asked us to write a piece looking back on 20 years of UKGE, my first thought was how incredibly far we have all come from those early days. Today UKGE, is an internationally renowned and respected show, bringing in players and exhibitors from around the world to Birmingham. But this was not always the case!

In the early 2000's, the UK's Premier hobby gaming show was Gen Con UK, run and funded by gaming giant Wizards of the Coast. Gen Con UK was predominantly focused around their big properties Magic the Gathering and Dungeons and Dragons. As Esdevium we ran a small area at Gen Con, supporting smaller board game and RPG companies showcasing their games.

OLIVER MCALLISTER

Tony & Richard laid down the Challenge to the Esdevium team to a Duel of Lazer Guns. Little did they know that I was a veteran of Lazer gun gaming, with many years of practice under my belt. Naturally I came first, but sadly the rest of my Esdevium team did not have years of pew pew experience and all came bottom of the score board. Overall victory went to Tony & Richard & the UKGE team!!

Left – Right

Justin Ziran – Was President of Wizkids, Now Co-President of Sirius Dice.
Dan Steel – MD of Esdevium Games, Now Semi retired, Director of All About Games.
Steve Buckmaster – Director of Sales, Chief Commercial Officer of Asmodee Global. Recently stepped down this December to be Part time & play more games
Christian Peterson – Founder of Fantasy Flight Games, Now Owner of Strang Star Entertainment
Oliver McAllister – Esdevium Hobby Sales Manager, Now Asmodee UK Organised Play Manager



Soon after Wizards of the Coast was bought by Hasbro, they spun off Gen Con to separate organisation, lead by Peter Atkinson, the founder of Wizards of the Coast. Gen Con UK continued for a few years in a couple of different formats but ultimately folded in 2005, leaving the U.K. without any major hobby games show.

From the ashes of Gen Con UK sprung multiple companies looking to build a hobby gaming convention in the UK. One of which was the team at UKGE.

From humble beginnings, UKGE immediately stood out. We felt that the show brought together a great mix player experience, location, and ambition—particularly with the big decision to step up to first the Hilton and then NEC.

As the show has grown, we have been proud to partner with UK Games Expo and to have played our part in its journey. It's not always been easy, but Richard and Tony have delivered on what they promised with a practical approach and a healthy dose of good humour.

We believe that UK Games Expo stands out on the world stage, we feel it brings together the best elements of both Spiel and Gen Con, here in the U.K.

Today we are pleased to bring our largest team of staff and demonstrators, showcasing games and events for thousands of attendees.

Looking forward, may the show continue to bring players together, to share experience, to meet with friends, discover new games and build new memories. Here's to UKGE and to the next 20 years!

LUKE GYGAX

My Journey to UK Games Expo: From Gen Con to the NEC

It all began in August 2022 at Gen Con, where I had the pleasure of meeting Richard Denning. We were both guests at Peter Adkison's dinner party and happened to be seated next to each other. Over the course of the evening, we bonded over our shared love of gaming, stories from my military service and that of a his friend, Finny and a variety of other topics. By the end of the night, Richard extended an invitation for me to attend UK Games Expo (UKGE) the following summer as a guest. Having not been to England since my father

took me to GamesFair '83, I saw this as the perfect opportunity to bring my family across the pond.

As an American, my adventure began with a flight into London, followed by renting a car to drive to Birmingham. Little did I know that a UK "7-passenger car" is not quite what I was used to back in the States. After some negotiation, I upgraded to a Volvo XC90 that could actually accommodate five people and our luggage—at four times the cost, of course! Navigating London traffic on the left-hand side of the road while jet-lagged was an experience my children may never forget (or forgive). But we survived, and after a few days exploring London, we made our way to Birmingham for the main event.



First Impressions of UKGE

I had heard that UKGE was the Gen Con of the UK, but nothing could have prepared me for the sheer scale of the NEC. The vastness of the venue was awe-inspiring. With my family in tow—my wife Bouchra and our daughters Miriam (15), Amira (11), and Sabrina (9)—we set up a vendor booth for my company, Gaxx Worx. Thankfully, all the boxes we shipped arrived intact, and Richard kindly helped us navigate VAT payments through his games company, making the process relatively smooth. While my family wasn't thrilled about the long hours in the hall (Sabrina spent much of her time hiding under the table), the experience was overall a success.

For me, the highlight was running D&D games, participating in interviews, and sitting on panels. By Saturday, however, my family was feeling the fatigue. That's when Richard and Tony suggested we attend The Dark Room, a live show they highly recommended. My wife and I eagerly accepted, and Miriam decided to join

us. What followed was an unforgettable experience.

The Dark Room: A Night to Remember

If you've never seen John Robertson perform The Dark Room, do yourself a favor and buy a ticket this year. It's a wildly entertaining, if slightly irreverent, interactive show. John was thrilled to see me in the audience and invited me to be one of the first players. He promised that if I survived, I'd win £5,000. Despite my decades of gaming experience, I perished rather quickly—a humbling moment, to say the least. But as the show went on, I got into the spirit, chanting along with the crowd.

Then came the moment that truly stole the show. John called for a volunteer to try a new game, and Miriam jumped up without hesitation. Before I knew it, she was on stage, taking her shot at the JFK assassination simulator. Miriam, a consummate gamer, nailed it on her first attempt. After recovering from the shock of the game's theme, I couldn't help but feel proud of her skill. John was equally impressed and rewarded her with "valuable prizes"..... a stack of about 15 vintage Amiga video games. Yes, the Commodore Amiga from the 1980s! Miriam was so thrilled with the campiness of these "antiques" that we packed them all up and brought them back to California.

A Tradition of Friendship and Gaming

Since that first UKGE, I've returned every year with great enthusiasm. Over the years, I've forged friendships with incredible people, including John Robertson, and have had the honor of presenting UK Games Expo Awards, assisting with D&D Epic events, and even sitting on a panel with Sir Ian Livingstone. Last year, I got to play an RPG with him and his son Jack—a memory I'll cherish forever.

As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of UK Games Expo this year, I'm deeply honored to be a guest once again. My heartfelt thanks go to Richard and Tony for their continued hospitality. I look forward to reconnecting with old friends, making new ones, and creating more unforgettable memories at this incredible event.

Here's to another fantastic year at UKGE—see you at the NEC!



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These tournaments and megagames are subject to availability. Please scan the QR code for more information on all tournaments at UKGE 2026. Listings correct at the time of printing, please check the website for full listings.

MINIATURES TOURNAMENTS

[Batman Miniatures Game Tournament](#)
[Bushido Jungle versus Jumo](#)
[Heroclix Community Tournament - UKGE 2026](#)
[Infinity UKGE Satellite Tournaments](#)
[Kill Team Grand Tournament](#)
[Star Trek Attack Wing - 2026 - UK Nationals](#)
[The Official Marvel: Crisis Protocol No Kaiju](#)
[The Official Marvel: Crisis Protocol GT](#)
[The Official Star Wars: Legion GT](#)
[The Official Star Wars: Legion Grand Army](#)
[The Official Star Wars: Shatterpoint Threemie](#)
[The Official Star Wars: Shatterpoint GT](#)
[UKGE Blood Bowl Brawl](#)
[Warcrow Tournament at UKGE](#)
[Warcry Narrative/Casual Event - WorldCryUK](#)
[Warcry Matched Play Tournament - WorldCryUK](#)
[Warhammer 40,000 Grand Tournament](#)
[Warhammer Age of Sigmar Grand Tournament](#)
[Warhammer Underworlds Grand Clash](#)
[XWA presents: Star Wars X-Wing 2026](#)

BOARDGAME TOURNAMENTS

[7 Wonders](#)
[7 Wonders Duel](#)
[Ark Nova](#)
[Azul](#)
[Brass: Birmingham](#)
[Bunny Kingdom Town Challenge](#)
[Carcassonne \(4 player\)](#)
[Carcassonne UK Championship](#)
[CATAN UK National Championship Open Qualifier](#)
[CATAN UK National Championship Tournament](#)
[Crokinole UK - The Great British Flick Off](#)
[Dominion](#)
[Dune Uprising \(Imperium\) Tournament](#)

[Heat: Pedal to the Metal](#)
[King of Tokyo Tournament](#)
[Mega Civilization](#)
[Rummikub 2026 UK Championships](#)
[Terraforming Mars](#)
[Ticket to Ride](#)
[Unmatched Tournament](#)
[UK Hive Cup Finals 2026](#)
[Wingspan](#)

MEGAGAMES

[Tales of the All Father](#)
[Touched by Darkness](#)
[Halloween Night](#)
[Crisis: Mars](#)

CARD AND DICE TOURNAMENTS

[AH LGC: The Blob that Ate Everything Else](#)
[AH LCG: Machinations Through Time](#)
[Disney Lorcana Sealed Side Event - Friday](#)
[Disney Lorcana On-Demand Constructed Events](#)
[Disney Lorcana TCG - CCQ](#)
[Disney Lorcana Sealed Side Event - Sunday](#)
[Digimon TCG 1v1 Ultimate Cups](#)
[Digimon TCG 3v3 Ultimate Cup](#)
[Dragon Ball: Fusion World TCG Side Events](#)
[Dragon Ball: Masters TCG Side Events](#)
[Flesh and Blood TCG Armory](#)
[Flesh and Blood World Championship Qualifier](#)
[Flesh and Blood New Player Tournament](#)
[Gundam TCG 2v2 Netwtype Challenge](#)
[Gundham TCG Side](#)
[Keyforged Sealed Tournament \(Single Deck\)](#)
[One Piece TCG Treasure Cups](#)
[Star Wars: Unlimited Constructed Main Event](#)
[Star Wars: Unlimited Sealed Main Events](#)
[Star Wars: Unlimited Constructed Side Event](#)
[Star Wars: Unlimited Pack Rush Side Events](#)



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UKGE MUSEUM

20 YEARS OF UK GAMES EXPO, WITH MANY STORIES TO TELL.
FIND OUT HOW THIS ALL STARTED AND WHY.

If you've ever wondered how UK Games Expo grew from an open day at a wargaming club into the country's biggest celebration of tabletop gaming, then the UKGE Museum in Hall 1 is well worth a visit.

It's a walk through the shows since the beginning, see the games that shaped our hobby, and the community that turned a small gathering into a yearly pilgrimage for gamers across the UK.

Inside, you'll find early programme covers from the very first Expos, classic photos and forgotten treasures — the sort of relics that make you grin and say, "I remember that year."

You'll also be able to pinpoint when our famous show features started and why. See who were our first special guests and why we thought it was a clever idea to create the show map with lego.

It's a nostalgia hit. A reminder of the games that made us love tabletop gaming, the friends made across tables, and the moments that keep us coming back. Whether you're between, halls, tournaments, waiting for a demo slot, or just fancy a breather, come along to Hall 1 and take a look.



SCAN FOR INFO



LOCATION

NEC Hall 1 1-F

Our dragon is guarding the museum this year. Don't forget your picture opportunity. 



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EXHIBITOR MEMORIES

Jason Thornton from Tritex Games

Tritex Games has been involved with UK Games Expo from its origin. In fact in 2006 the year before the first UK Games Expo we were invited to an event that was being held at the Clarendon Suites in Birmingham, where we were the only trader. This event focused on the Dungeons & Dragons miniatures game, and we were one of the main sellers of these collectable miniatures in the UK at the time. The first event was so successful, that the following year Tony and Richard came up with the idea of running a much larger show that would be great for families to play board games, role-playing games, card games, and wargames all under one roof. We were very excited to be part of the first UK Games Expo show in 2007 and in the last 20 years we have seen the impact this show has had on the community as a whole.

I remember the first UKGE, as an exhibitor, and for the organisers, we were all trying to figure out what worked and what didn't, but what struck me about what was different about this show was just how personable it was. Having a show run for gamers by gamers with solid core values around hospitality and inclusion made a huge difference to the feel of the show. The feedback from those attending the first show was really positive. However, the early shows were only two days long and they were over so quickly everyone was left feeling hungry for more.

Over the years the show has evolved, bringing a lot more exhibitors, gaming events, cosplayers, creators and collectors alike to the event and the popularity has meant that UKGE



has quickly outgrown every venue that has held it. It is important to note that the core values of making it a fun family show as well as a very professionally run event have been consistent throughout the years and this is a credit to the organisers and volunteers alike. In fact it actually feels like it has evolved into a community of itself.

Tritex Games is a local store based just 40 miles from the NEC in Stafford and we have a lot of local customers that go to the show every year. The weeks leading up to the show are a buzz with friends arranging gaming meet ups and lifts. Post show, the fall out gaming nights are equally alive with locals bringing an array of new games to the table and sharing stories from the event.

As an exhibitor it is the highlight of our trade show calendar. It is the best opportunity to further engage with our customers from across the UK. It always requires an extensive amount of planning and preparation to get it right from all sides, but the reward is seeing the smiles on people's faces who are attending year after year. Ferris Bueller once said 'Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it' If you haven't been to a UK Games Expo lately what are you missing?

Hasan Paracha of Red Cannon Games

Two years ago, I was made redundant from my job. Like many people in that situation, I suddenly had time, time to think, reflect and try something I'd always wanted to do. Out of that uncertain period came an idea for a card game called Fight for Inheritance and I began developing it from my kitchen table with no real expectation of where it might lead.

Fast forward to UK Games Expo last year, my very first UKGE. On the morning the doors opened, standing behind our small stall surrounded by creators, players, and pure excitement, we launched the Fight for Inheritance Kickstarter. Less than 38 hours later, it was fully funded. I still struggle to put into words how that felt.

None of it would have been possible without the love, enthusiasm and encouragement of the UKGE community. The people who stopped to play, asked questions, shared a laugh or simply wished us luck made that weekend unforgettable. What started as a rough idea during a difficult time suddenly felt real.

In January 2026, we fulfilled the game. Seeing backers share photos of their copies arriving, knowing something that began as a personal project was now on tables across the country, was genuinely surreal. The smiles didn't leave our faces for a long time.

What started as an idea during a difficult time became a reality because of the passion of the UK Games Expo community. UKGE will always be the place where Fight for Inheritance truly came to life and I'll never forget that. Thank you.



Alan Paull
from Surprised Stare Games

Surprised Stare Games has been at every UK Games Expo since the very first. Way back then, we were demoing our soon-to-be-published fourth release, Scandaroon, and selling our first 'big box' game, Tara, Seat of Kings, as well as our earlier card games Coppertwaddle and Bloody Legacy. The biggest game at that show was Martin Wallace's Brass, so there was some competition!

We were always on the ground floor - in the most accessible space - but pity those lost in the upper floors of the Masonic Lodge! We still remember the digital music coming from the Wii (just launched) on a stand opposite; from our perspective, it palled pretty quickly. That earliest of venues was typified by its rabbit warren of corridors and rooms, far removed from the large, open halls it now occupies. However, we formed

a small, friendly community of publishers and gamers looking for the new and looking to the future. We soon decided, year on year, to time our new releases to Expo to help establish it as much more than just another (small) trade show: Confucius in 2008 (only 20 copies made it in time), Fzzzt! in 2009 (which won the Best Card Game), Paperclip Railways in 2011, and - most notably for us - the final layout previews of Snowdonia in 2012.

As the show moved to larger, grander premises, we enjoyed the bigger crowds and the excitement of being part of a serious show with a national and then international reputation! And, yet, though it's now homed in multiple halls of the NEC, there are plenty of familiar faces from those first years to reach back across the decades and maintain that personal connection: though it's now an adult, we can still see the child in the UK Games Expo - long may it endure!



Charlie Wilson formerly
Northumbria Games

For the twentieth time I see the UKGE approaching with anticipation.

For the twentieth time I see the UKGE approaching with trepidation as to how exhausted I will be at the end of it.

For the twentieth time I see the UKGE approaching realising that I will miss some standout item.

For the twentieth time I see the UKGE approaching knowing that I will see the results of herculean efforts to put on the biggest and best table-top gaming show in Britain.

For the twentieth time I see the UKGE approaching confident that it will confirm that table-top gaming is still vibrant and in good hands.

For the twentieth time I see the UKGE approaching with that warm glow of looking forward to meeting old and new friends fuelled by the gaming vibe.



Keith Thomasson
formerly Heron Games

When I was asked to write about my memories of UK Games Expo over the last 20 years, I had to stop and ask myself how I even became aware of the show.

My first contact was an email from Richard Denning in September 2006, asking if I could mention the event on my web site. I am guessing he found me because I was publishing a play-by-mail zine (For Whom the Die Rolls). What he couldn't know that I was setting up Heron Games to sell games online, so not only was I up for promoting the event, I was definitely interested in attending as an exhibitor.

That first show in 2007 was a baptism of fire for nearly everyone,

with many more people attending than expected. Not a problem, indeed it was a very pleasant surprise.

No sooner had the show ended than I put the next year's dates in the diary with every intention of coming back, and I did that for the next seven years.

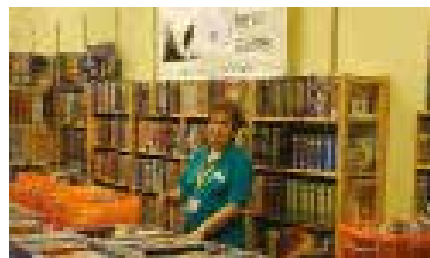
Highlights for me were introducing Richard and Tony to Larry Roznai of Mayfair Games in 2011, who then surprised me by sponsoring the show for the next few years, which has directly led to the continued major sponsorship from Catan Studio.

My last Expo as an exhibitor was in 2013, by which time the venue had changed and the attendance had grown year by year. I wasn't done with the Expo, though. From 2014

I was part of the organising team, and looked after the exhibitors for ten years. A bit like herding cats.

As for memories over that time, not many specific things, just a general feeling that it was fun, hectic, chaotic at times, but never dull. I am proud to have been involved on both sides, and take my hat off to Richard and Tony for what they started and continued to nurture through the years.

Long may it continue.





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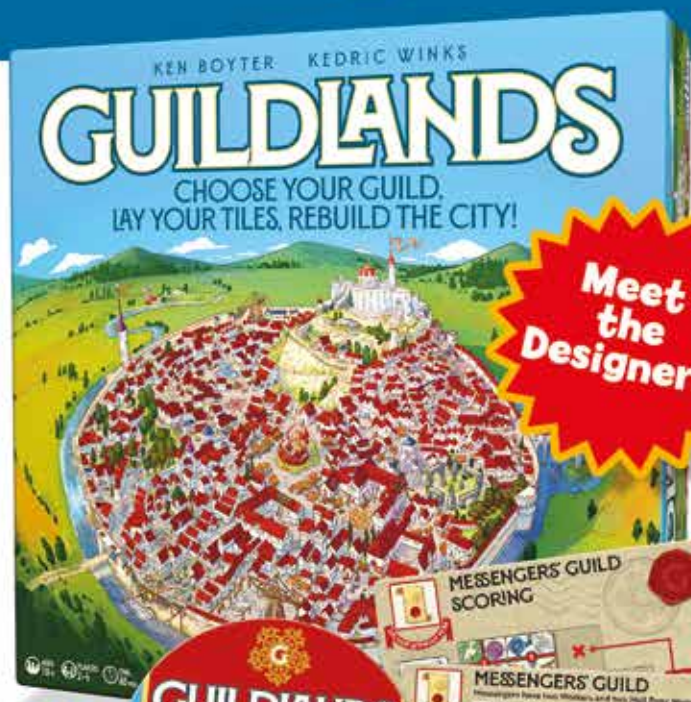
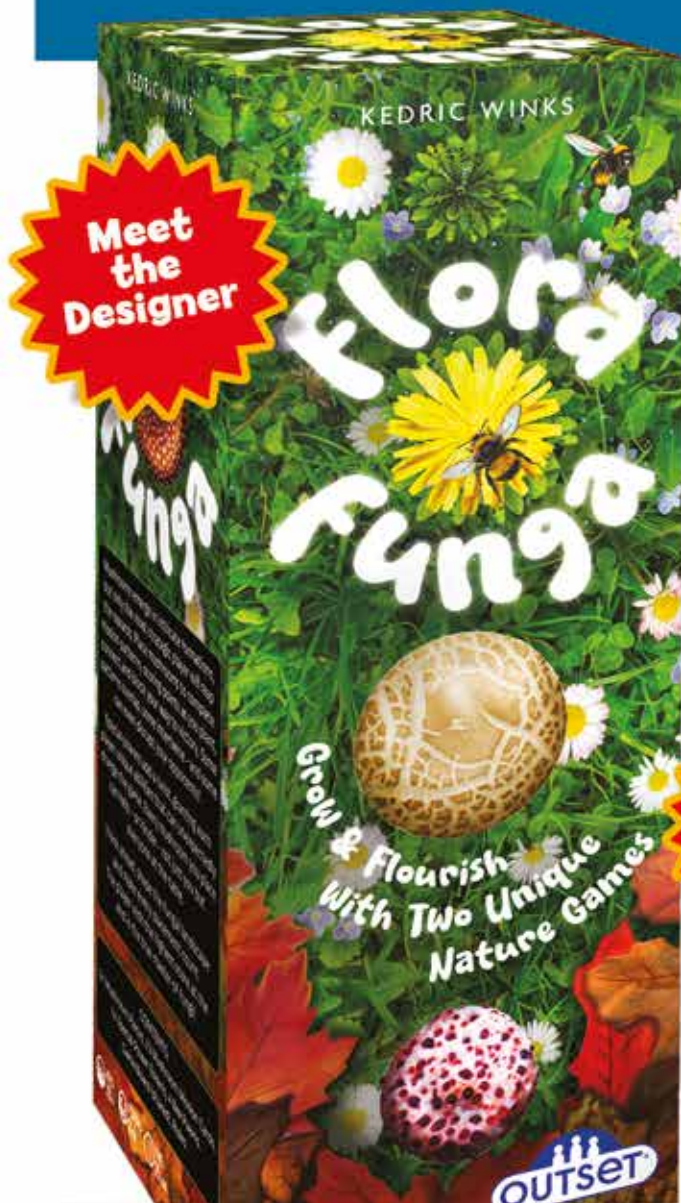
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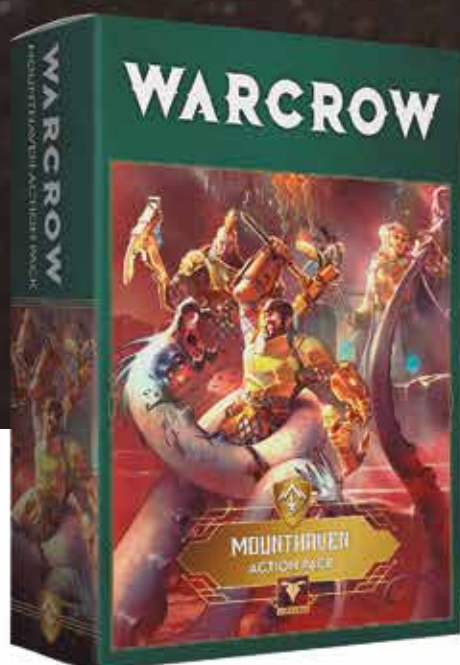


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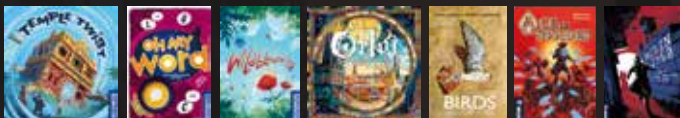
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VISITOR AND VOLUNTEER STORIES

My story about UKGE is from last year when I spent a morning testing my first game design in the UK Playtest area. I was very nervous beforehand worrying that people would think my game is rubbish but everyone who played it gave great feedback that gave me the confidence to keep working on the game.

The three hour session flew by! Having people willing to spend some of their precious time at the Expo playing complete unknown prototypes is a special part of the event. I was glad I'd chosen the morning session as I was able to relax and enjoy the rest of the day buying new games and checking out some of the great workshops/seminars. Maybe one year I'll have my own stall selling one of my finished games!

James Morley



I wanted to share this memory with you from UKGE 2019.

Warhammer Champions were there doing a promo, take a photo and be in a chance to win a fancy Championship Box. Take a photo with their props and pull your best war face (photo included, quite possibly my favourite photo of myself ever)

Well the next day as we were Demom-ing Star Wars Leigon I got tagged to say that I'd won! We jumped up (sorry Demo Man), ran to the stall and I claimed the fancy box!

Quite possibly my favourite memory as an attendee (we attended 2017-2019 & have been exhibiting since 2022)

Thanks for reading!

Gelatinous Cute



I remember this game!!!

Pandemic live, with Tom Vasel, John Robertson and Colin Baker. It was unhinged! Colin Baker was cheating uproariously and the crowd were cheering him on, with a despairing GM.

At one point, John said, "I just need two more red cards..." at which point, Colin happily said, "I have two. You can have them!" The GM practically wailed, "You can't DO that!"

At which point, Colin beams and says, "Nonsense! He's right here. Here you are!" and HANDS THEM OVER, while the crowd roared their approval!

Andrew Prowse



A game of werewolf past midnight in the crew room, about 12 of us playing, same dude was the werewolf every time. We were very tired and very drunk so it was hilarious.

Paul Davis

I first went to Spiele in Essen in 2001 and I can remember wishing we had a game show like that in the UK with families and friends openly playing games. I attended the first Games Expo at The Clarendon Suites in 2007, I thought I hope this catches on.

I'm so glad that we can now see the show as it is today, we have grown and it is such a friendly show open to everyone. I'm proud to be involved with it in a small way.

Pete Jones

My first was 2008, I was working abroad in 2007, but I have been to every event since either as an attendee or more recently as a games demonstrator. What a journey from the Clarendon Suites to the NEC.

Jaken Elwoode

WE ASKED VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS FOR SOME MEMORIES AND STORIES OF THEIR EXPERIENCES AT UK GAMES EXPO.



I am a freelance concept artist and illustrator, and I was exhibiting last year selling and sharing my artwork.

I was approached by a Canadian creative director for Outset Media studios at UKGE 2025, and then last year I landed a short but sweet gig as an illustrator for a puzzle game for Cobble Hill!

We created this awesome puzzle featuring my creature concept and illustration, named 'From The Depths'.

I believe it may even be distributed and available at this years UKGE! It could be a really awesome full circle moment.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this story with you,

Emily Chapman



Three years ago we got to the Saturday event super early to the point we were one of the first ones through the doors when they opened. Right in front of us was the Warhammer painting table so I sat down and spent a chill 20-30 mins painting, which was ideal after a 2 hour 30 min journey. At the end I was very happy with my work but wanted to make sure I didn't ruin the paint work so I took him to the men's toilet and shoved him in the hand dryer to dry the still wet paint. He sat on my Heroquest box (which I purchased on the day and popped into my tote bag) all day in my bag and made it home safe and sound.

Neil Shaw

Visited in 2007 because my mate heard there would be LAN gaming and video games. had never played a RPG before, but picked up a copy of the Serenity RPG because I liked the tv show, Joined the BCRPS after reading it so i could see what it was like to play. Got recruited by Patrick not long after that to come run some games of 4th edition in 2008 and have been volunteering ever since. 1 year as a punter, 4 years running grown up rpgs, 14 years running kids rpgs and 1 year as virtual tech support for virtually expo, and I still have the copy of the Serenity rpg sitting on the shelf in my now very crowded games room.

I've just realised my maths are slightly off as the first two years of running the kids RPG I ran it alongside running grown up rpgs in the evenings, so its actually 16 years of kids rpg. I got given an expo award in 2011 for doing that, and taken aside and told I was insane and should slow down and stick to running one thing.

Richard Law



Members of Roll The Dice, have visited UKGE since 2018.

Last year, 2025, we were with a group of 10 members. When wandering around the halls, a familiar name caught our eyes, Roll The Dice ...

We know that "Roll The Dice" is not unique, but seeing it at UKGE was the first time for us.

The group of Roll The Dice Cornwall saw us coming, we where with six at that time. And they noticed our name and logo!

Then my legendary words ... "We need to talk". I think the three of them had a small panic attack. "Did we miss any copyright or trademark while picking a name?", "Do we have to find a good lawyer?"

But soon we put on our smiling faces and had a good and friendly chat, reassuring them that we were not in fact a company trying to claim a trademark.

Turns out we have a lot in common. We both started with gaming night for youngsters, now also for adults. They were founded in 2024 as we are founded in 1999!

One visitor of UKGE who knows us, went over to Roll The Dice Cornwall assuming that it was us.

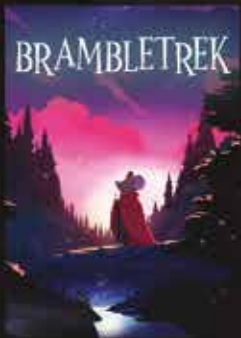
Pieter Syroit



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ONTABLETOP

WITH UK GAMES EXPO CELEBRATING ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR, WE HERE AT ONTABLETOP THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GREAT CHANCE FOR US TO ALSO LOOK BACK AT OUR TIME WORKING ALONGSIDE THE TEAM BEHIND THIS AMAZING EVENT AND HOW IT HAS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS!

Whilst UK Games Expo has been around for a while, we started back in 2014 (seems like a million years ago!) Back then, UKGE wasn't taking over huge swathes of the NEC but instead was packed into rooms within the Hilton. At this point, I (it was just me covering the show back then! - OTT Ben) was just marvelling at all of the new games that we'd never even heard of before and even though getting from one stall to another was something of a battle (it was so hot in there!), there was plenty of charm to UKGE and you could see that it had the makings of an amazing convention that not only brought big games to attendees but the smaller ones too.

From 2016 onwards, OnTableTop, then known as Beasts Of War,

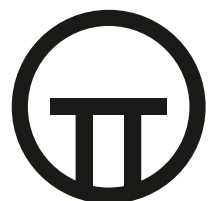
started live blogging at the show. More of the team came over and became involved in the coverage of the weekend, and we started roving the halls, interviewing game creators, trying out games, checking out the events that were being run and showcasing, and finding out what the attendees were so enamoured by when it came to UK Games Expo.

Our live blogs continued over the years that followed and our team expanded. The bigger that UKGE became, the more people we needed! We started to take over bigger and bigger rooms as our partnership grew and that meant we could go and check out even more games and give different perspectives based on our team members' personal loves. This

partnered up well with the growth of UKGE itself. It had always been a haven for board gamers but we started to see roleplaying games, card games and on the show floor in greater numbers. Even with the growth of the event and the appearance of bigger and bigger names gracing the hall, what stuck out to us was that the little folks, the independents, were still getting their time to shine and we loved exploring everything new and diverse that came out of that.

OnTableTop, as we later became, then began to do more live streams directly from UK Games Expo! Alongside our exhaustive live blogs covering all the awesome stuff we could find on the show floor, we also held designer interviews and gameplay demos of our own, giving a chance for big and small creators to share what they had been working on and give sneak peeks into the industry.

Talking of live streaming, even the events of the pandemic (insert "remain indoors" skit from Mitchell & Webb) couldn't stop the UK Games Expo and by extension, our coverage of the event. Whilst the



OnTableTop



physical version of the show was cancelled in 2020, we worked with the team at UKGE in order to put on Virtually Expo where we continued to provide live streams and entertainment to get us through those times where we were separated from our gaming groups and we couldn't see our friends and family. We got to chat with lots of designers and publishers and keep folks pumped about the world of tabletop gaming.

Returning back to some relative normality in 2021, we still got to enjoy the best of UK Games Expo and what it had to offer but we really started to crank things up to eleven once we came back to UKGE proper in 2022! That was when OnTableTop went bigger and better than we'd ever done before, launching our live stage and streaming throughout all three days of the convention!

With a big stage (and a big banner), we welcomed some famous faces to the stage including the likes of UK Games Expo stalwarts, Ian Livingstone and Luke Gygax. Lots more people joined us, giving

insights into their lives within the hobby as well as companies showing off their brand new games.

In addition to our coverage of new games and interviews with big names within the tabletop gaming industry, we also shone the spotlight on other folks from the hobby. You might have been in the crowd to watch Shut Up & Sit Down running some of their live shows or having a chance to ask No Rolls Barred questions! We've also had great roleplaying groups like Roll Britannia sitting down to tell funny stories and keep folks entertained both on the show floor AND online, around the world.

It was particularly great when we got to run some of our big live games like Hues And Clues and Codenames. In those cases, we were able to bring up members of the audience to join in or get celebrities from the tabletop gaming world to team up and have some fun!

This all sat at the core of what we were trying to achieve with the live streams that we ran over the years.

A chance for those who couldn't make it to UKGE to get a taste of what it was like and get stuck into the madness alongside us. We hope that if you were in the crowd for any of those live shows, you got to have some fun and maybe take a bit of a break from all that shopping and gaming!

Last year, in 2025, it also gave us at OnTableTop a chance to get involved alongside UKGE and Duncan Rhodes' Painting Academy for the Sir Coates Painting Masters! As the show evolved once again, we got to see the first competition come to life, interviewing the minds behind it. It showcases just how much UKGE is still changing.

As we move into the 20th anniversary year for UK Games Expo, OnTableTop are back and we're wandering the halls of the NEC once again. You certainly won't miss us (keep an eye out for the shirts with the big OTT symbol on them!) so if you're enjoying the event over the weekend, make sure to wave and say hello!

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RICHARD: Ok, so are we just going to go straight into it with our top 10?

FINNY: They might not be in any order particularly

TONY: So do we do one each? OK, well, go on then. What have you got first, Richard?

NUMBER 10

RICHARD: Ok, number 10 on my list is Azul. I am not a great fan of abstract games but I really like the variance of it and will happily play it.

TONY: Azul is a bit like Mahjong?

RICHARD: No it's not like Mahjong.

FINNY: It's not but it uses similar tiles, but the game is very, very different. It's very tactile and beautifully done.

TONY: Ok Finny, what have you got?

FINNY: Terraforming Mars is an absolute classic.

TONY: Oh I've got that on my list as well.

FINNY: But that means we are winning because that's two of us.

FINNY: But the point is, it doesn't matter if I win or lose, I still enjoy the game. That's quite telling, there aren't many games like that. I like the euro style, the less confrontational stuff

TONY: Yeah the replayability of it is through the roof.

FINNY: 100%. It's actually relatively easy to teach, even James (from the expo team), managed to get his head around it.

RICHARD: Ok Tony, what have you got?

TONY: Arkham Horror LCG

RICHARD: Ok yeah, that's a good game.

TONY: Yeah it's absolutely fab, I'm on the 6th campaign.

FINNY: Really wow!

TONY: You can play it single player, which is really good, it's not one of those sad single player games.

RICHARD: It's a co-operative game isn't it?

TONY: Yeah.

RICHARD: I thought you didn't like co-operative games?

TONY: Yes but the other two can lose. So they die or go mad.

RICHARD: So there's a consequence that can affect the people.

TONY: I don't like cooperative games, but I play role-playing games, which are the ultimate cooperative.

FINNY: It's a card RPG essentially.

NUMBER 9

RICHARD: Ok next one on the list, I've got Star Wars X-Wing.

TONY: I've got X-Wing on my list. You get a pre-built miniature.

RICHARD: Exactly, you can pop it out and be playing in 5 minutes.

FINNY: Everyone knows it, it's a great miniatures game.

TONY: X-Wing, it's great and you can go pew, pew, pew and then put a bit of music on.

FINNY: Right my turn, I have Dune Imperium.

TONY: Didn't they also make Clank?

FINNY: I don't know, maybe?. It's a very stereotypical worker placement game. The artwork is beautifully and it does work really well.

TONY: Thing is, because it's not on my list, and I've never played it, it's

clearly not one of the greatest games.

FINNY: Well that wasn't the remit was it, it was what is your 10 favourite games.

TONY: Yeah, my favourite 10 games!

TONY: Ok next on my list, Call of Cthulhu.

RICHARD: Has there been an edition during the last twenty years as well?

TONY: There is and it's cool and it's the best role-playing game that has ever been made.

FINNY: It's a great IP.

TONY: It is, I love the whole sanity mechanic. I love the horror, I love the comedy. I am not sure if there's meant to be comedy, but there is.

NUMBER 8

RICHARD: Ok, I'm going to hit you with a war game and its Black Powder Napoleonic Wars.

FINNY: Oh, so you've narrowed it down to the Napoleonics, have you?

TONY: I'm losing the will to live.

TONY: What happens is, I'll end up setting up for six hours and then the night is over.

RICHARD: This is a proper war game that requires nice miniatures and it does take a while to set up. But it's great when you have everything planned out.

FINNY: Black Powder is on my list also, and the nice thing about it is it plays very quickly and it's great fun.

TONY: I best throw something into the pot and it's Magic the Gathering.

FINNY: Is that within the timeframe?

TONY: Still being released now.



RICHARD UKGE DIRECTOR

TONY UKGE DIRECTOR

FINNY GREAT FRIEND OF THE SHOW

TONY: Magic the Gathering is the most frustrating annoying games in the universe and also the most additcive.

FINNY: The success alone is just phenomenal.

TONY: I also think it's been challenged a lot over the last 5 to 10 years.

TONY: It is one of those game most dependant on luck, while convincing you, your skill matters.

NUMBER 7

RICHARD: Next for me is Red Dragon Inn.

TONY: What? I have never heard of it.

FINNY: It's a good game actually.

RICHARD: You're all adventurers and you go into the tavern at night. Um, and you're basically drinking and gambling, and occasionally beating other people up.

FINNY: Yeah, it is fun and it's not very complicated.

TONY: What have you got Finny?

FINNY: Dominion

TONY: Ooh I like Dominion. There we go, we got a winner!

FINNY: It's innovative, it's a great gateway game.

TONY: Was it the last 20 years?

FINNY: Yes it was 2008.

RICHARD: Ok Tony, what have you got?

TONY: I might as well say it, D&D. I am not sure I can refer to roleplaying without emotionally referring to D&D.

FINNY: The grandaddy isn't it.

TONY: Yes, I failed my A-Levels playing it. Also I wouldn't have played Call of Cthulhu or

Pathfinder if I hadn't played D&D.

RICHARD: I've got Pathfinder on my list, i've turned to that as I am playing by the rules and D&D was before then.

TONY: What? 5th Edition?

RICHARD: Well Pathfinder saved the D&D world for that type of game system when they moved into the 4th edition.

TONY: What Pathfinder got absolutely right were the adventure parts.

RICHARD: Yes, endless amount of campaigns in a very fleshed out world.

FINNY: Plus the support from the Pathfinder society.

NUMBER 6

RICHARD: I'm going to hit you with 7 Wonders.

FINNY: Classic.

TONY: I enjoyed playing it, but I am not sure I would play it now.

RICHARD: I am quite happy playing it at club night if somebody has got it.

FINNY: But everybody's involved all the time. There's no waiting for someone else. That's the good thing.

TONY: Ok Finny what have you got?

FINNY: I am going for Firefly: The Game.

TONY: Do you have the expansions.

FINNY: Yeah but they are a little bit hard to come by. You need a big table to play the full game.

FINNY: Its fabulous and really captures the atmosphere of the series.

TONY: I have watched the demo, but never got to play it.

FINNY: Yeah. But again like, Terraforming Mars, it's great and a pleasure to play. It doesn't matter if you win or lose, really?

RICHARD: Ok Tony, what have you got?

TONY: But yeah, so this may be slightly controversial as to whether it's a game or not... Deathtrap Dungeon the book.

FINNY: I think it classes as a game, but was it in the last 20 years?

RICHARD/TONY: The latest edition!?

TONY: Well Warlock of Firetop Mountain was my first entry into any kind of gaming outside of Cluedo or Monopoly. In the back of the book was mention of D&D, and the next day I went to school and my mate said he had a copy and that's how I got into gaming. Deathtrap Dungeon was by far my favourite.

FINNY: So, Sir Ian Livingstone is the reason.

TONY: Yeah it's his fault.

TONY: I love the whole of that book.

FINNY: The solo play is fantastic.

TONY: Learning to put your fingers in 12 pages at once is a skill.

NUMBER 5

RICHARD: I am going for the Mongoose version of Traveller.

TONY: Woah, that's not in the last 20 years?

RICHARD: This is the revived version from Mongoose and it looks like the original version in the black and red box.

RICHARD: You can't die in character generation which is a shame. But you can get fairly badly wounded.

FINNY: Yeah they did take it out, and what a revelation again in the original Traveller.

FINNY: Ok, I am going with Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay 2nd Edition.

TONY: Is that the one with loads of bits in it?

FINNY: No that's 3rd Edition, which is a great game.

TONY: Another game I have got that I have never touched.

FINNY: Its really roleplaying, but it's fabulous like 4th Edition

FINNY: Absolute classic. 1st Edition was quite rough but brilliant, 2nd Edition was really polished, 3rd Edition is great and 4th is beautifully produced.

TONY: I may be in trouble again, I have Talisman as my next choice.

RICHARD: (points to Finny) He doesn't like it at all.

RICHARD: I told Finny, Christmas Day we are going to play Talisman, come on over, the family will like it. We were still going, after he left!

FINNY: I would have played on for sure, I do however find it painful.

TONY: It is an endurance test of pain.

FINNY: I quite enjoyed the original game, but the expansions where you had a one in six chance of actually having an objective. to win.

TONY: You have to embrace the suffering of Talisman. I like watching other people suffer playing it.

RICHARD: Used to be a game of choice at university.

TONY: Its the game you can never finish. It's like the bottomless buffet of gaming.

NUMBER 4

FINNY: I am going for a fabulous game called Oranges and Lemons.

RICHARD: Oh wow.

TONY: It's got no oranges in it though.

RICHARD: Well it has pictures of them.

FINNY: It is a worker placement

that doesn't suffer from first player syndrome.

TONY: Oranges and Lemons or as I call it Lemons!

RICHARD: I call it income!

TONY: As a disclaimer we have to mention that Richard created the game.

FINNY: It just works and I love it.

RICHARD: Ok I am going to go with Dragonbane.

RICHARD: Its based on this old Swedish role-playing game, which goes back to D&D days. It's a lite quick play roleplaying game, with well written adventures.

RICHARD: It's crunchy and a little abstract.

TONY: Are you a crunchy gamer?

RICHARD: I am a crunchy gamer! There is enough in there to keep going. What I quite like is the homicidal ducks!

TONY: Ok, my number 4 has been said already, which is Terraforming Mars. Finny what have you got for your number 3?

NUMBER 3

FINNY: Space Base

TONY: Have you made that up?

FINNY: No, not at all, its a mixture of dice and cards and its partly luck of the draw. Its partly managing what you spend your resources on. Whats interesting for me is each active player rolls two dice and uses those to activate cards they have in front of them. But the inactive players also use those same two dice to also activate cards.

RICHARD: So you are constantly in the game with no down time.

FINNY: You will need to be aware all the time.

RICHARD: Both Tony and I have chosen Dominion as our number three, so lets move on to number 2.

NUMBER 2

FINNY: Ok, I have Five Parsecs from Home.

TONY: What? I swear you are making these up.

FINNY: Nope, Modiphius, it is a science fiction skirmish game for solo play and it works brilliantly.

RICHARD: It doesn't matter how long it takes you to set up.

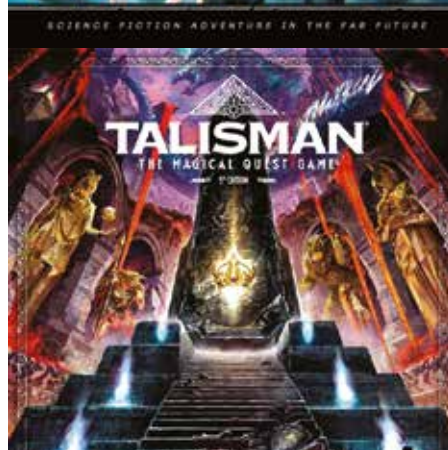
TONY: It does and I still get bored if I am the only one playing it.

FINNY: It's beautifully presented and very well written.

TONY: So what is it?

FINNY: It's a sci-fi skirmish game, you play on a 2x2 board and you form a crew and there is a combination of dice roles and choices to determine what your next mission is going to be.

FINNY: There is a variety of weird



space creatures and plants.

TONY: Fighting vegetables?

FINNY: Feed me Seymour!

TONY: Turnip with attitude, taking out your entire team!

RICHARD: Ok, almost there! Both Tony and I have Pathfinder and X-Wing as our choices at number 2, both of these have been discussed already.

NUMBER 1

RICHARD: Ok, last one, what have you got.

TONY: Unstable Unicorns.

RICHARD: Alright, ok.

TONY: Our family have spent many an hour swearing at each other and laughing.

FINNY: It's a fabulously silly game that brings out so much laughter.

TONY: You can play with a few people and teach them within 30 seconds.

RICHARD: Great to play with a few beers.

TONY: Yes while you are trying to look unassuming whilst trying to stack a unicorn. It's a great gateway game.

RICHARD: I am going for Agricola.

RICHARD: One of the early worker placement, crunchy games. Sort of game you can really get into and you never have enough turns in it and you can be pushed to the end.

FINNY: It's a great part of all worker placement games, you never had enough resources, workers or actions.

TONY: Clearly a classic in terms of sales, but I haven't got round to playing it.

FINNY: My last one is a classic - Battletech AlphaStrike.

RICHARD: This is the recent version right,

FINNY: It's not a version it's a variation. I love BattleTech it's a classic. It's great fun and essentially, it's colouring in for accountants.

FINNY: AlphaStrike is an actual war game that uses Battletech figures. It's fabulous because you haven't got hundreds of figures, then it doesn't take too long to set up.

TONY: Honorable mentions?

FINNY: For me Flip 7.

TONY: Flip 7 for me you've got one or two choices and that's it.

FINNY: The mistake you made is you've done it sober!

RICHARD: for old times sake, Galaxy Trucker

TONY: Ooh that's a great game!

FINNY: That's a very good comprehensive list between us. There's a few overlaps which is great.



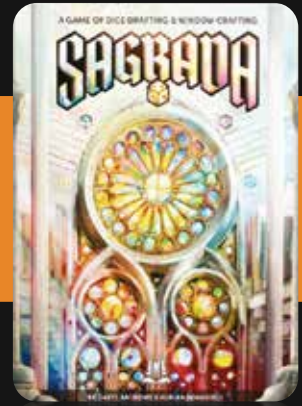
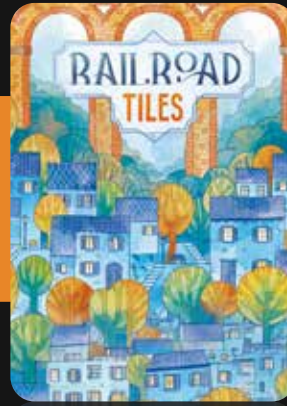
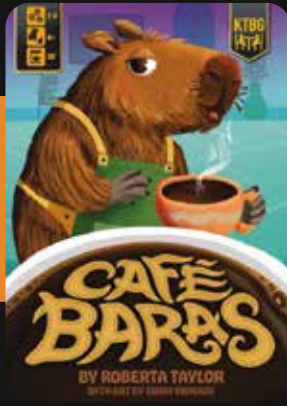
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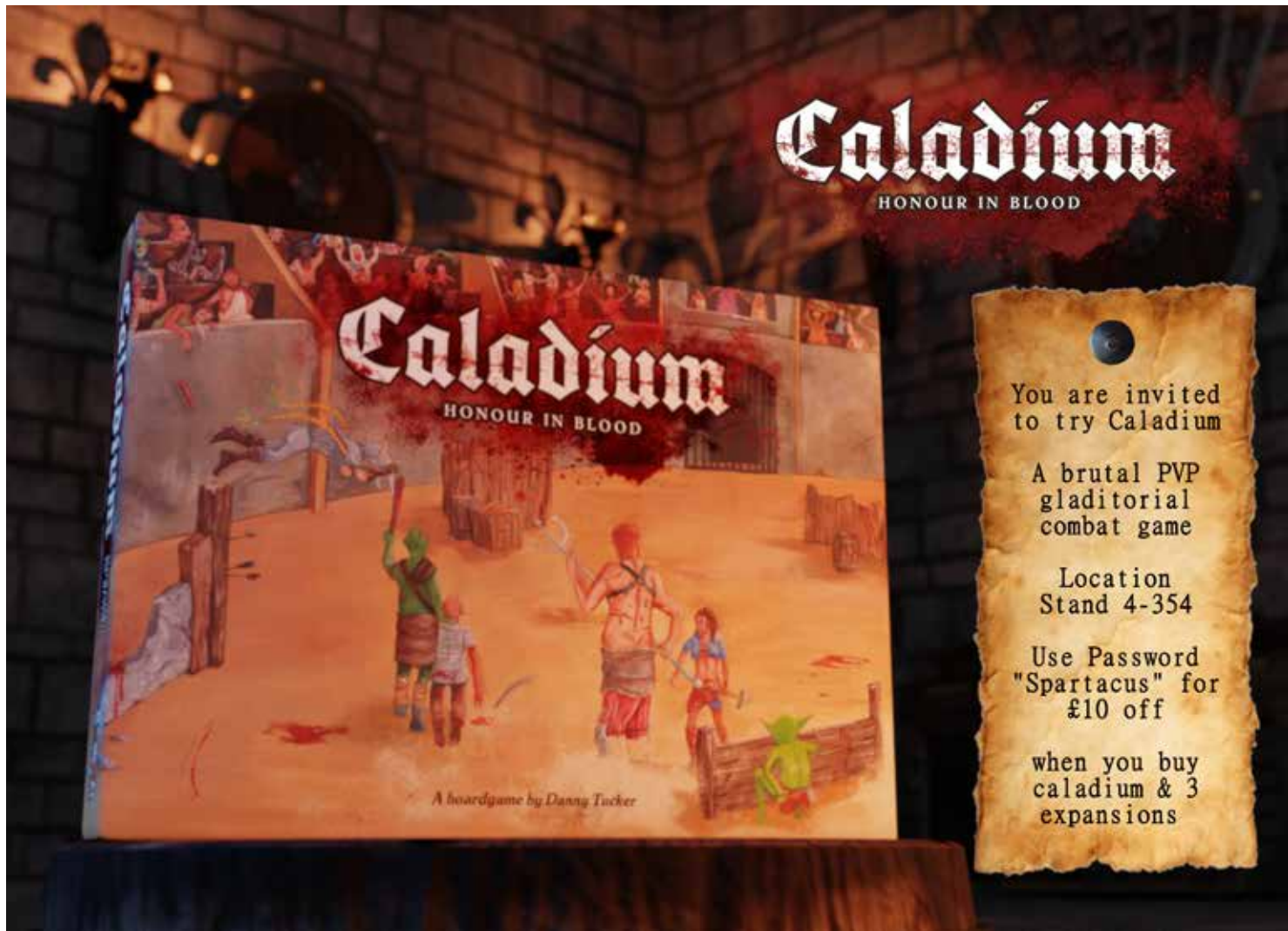


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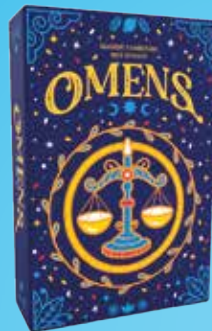
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HATCHLING TO DRAGON

BY RALPH HORSLEY
STAND: 2-260

IN 2016 I WAS INVITED TO PAINT THE ARTWORK FOR UKGAMESEXPO, THUS APPEARED THE VERY FIRST SIGHTING OF OUR BELOVED DRAGON.

Thirty years prior I had received my first professional commission, and embarked upon my career as an artist working in the print games industry. I have always been an avid gamer, and this saw the combination of my twin passions – art and games. Those passions have led me to working on many iconic games, including Dungeons and Dragons, Magic the Gathering, Warhammer, World of Warcraft and Pathfinder.

Attending shows has been part of my journey, and I first exhibited

at UKGamesExpo in 2008, when it was held in a masonic lodge on the outskirts of Birmingham. Since then it has become an integral part of my calendar, and one of the highlights of my year.

In this article I am going to share my process in creating the UGKE artwork. A process which has slowly evolved alongside our Dragon. The development of the painting has always been a collaborative effort involving the UKGE team and myself, the first stage of which is to come up

with an idea expressed through composition studies, sometime referred to as thumbnails. The Dragon's first appearance was just a quick doodle, (#1) one of many ideas I explored, but it was the one that stuck, and was developed into that first painting.

Initially the Dragon had equal footing with the human family, either carrying, or welcoming, them to the show. I also think it was fiercer looking. Over time the features have softened, the spikes have become more rounded, and



#1 FAMILY RIDING A DRAGON
GAND PILLS UP + FALLING OFF
VENUE ON GRAND BLOW



2



3

disposition jollier. It also began to eclipse the human family until in 2024 they were supplanted by it's own child. Less a baby, and more a teenager, it made it's first appearance in a sketch idea I had for a T-Shirt design (#2). The design wasn't adopted but the dragon was too cute to be ignored! Together parent and child now make a great combination.

bunting, and a celebratory feel. In the studies (#3) you can see how I tried out different approaches, and interestingly threw in a wild card of the Dragon popping out of a box. Whilst not used that time it did then become the basis for the next year's artwork (#5). Every year the Dragon goes on another adventure, and has travelled from the NEC into space and through a time tunnel!

are much quicker to create, and can allow you to go as wild as you choose. In the example (#6) you can see how colour choices affect the impact and impression made.

I have always enjoyed working traditionally. Initially solely in acrylics, but latterly I also adopted Oils. My colour studies are acrylics, but my final paintings have all been in oils, up until this past year when I have just been using the former. I especially enjoy the physicality of paint and paper, something that I miss with a screen and drawing tablet. Yes, all my artwork will end up as a digital file, after being scanned, and I may make tweaks in Photoshop, but I also end up with a physical painting. I still get huge satisfaction from the transformation of blank canvas into final artefact.

WORKING ON THE UKGE ARTWORK HAS BEEN A GREAT PLEASURE

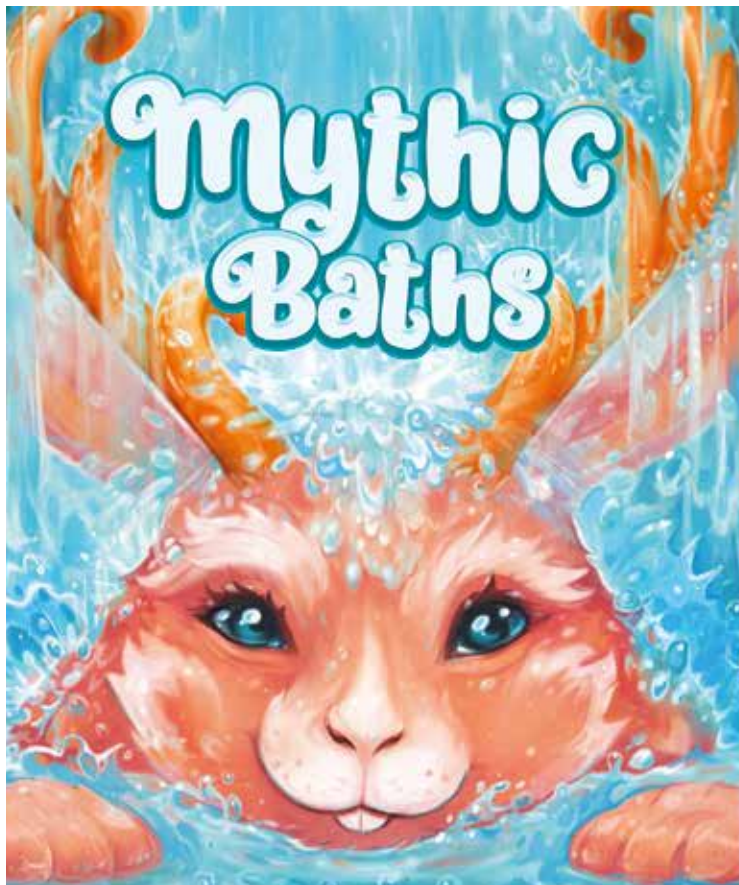
As the Dragon has evolved so have my studies. I now create scaled down drawings on toned board using a brushpen for the line work, with sepia ink and acrylic paint for the shading. This method works well to show the lighting. This is a part of the process that the public never gets to see, but is the foundation for my painting.

2022 saw the Queen's jubilee and it was decided to explore ideas of the Dragon on a throne, with

The chosen composition is recreated as a line drawing. I paint over my sketch, which is drawn directly onto the art board (#5). I then print out scaled down versions to make my colour studies. Using acrylic paints I can try out varied colour combinations. Like the composition studies this is a quick way to try out ideas. If I am not happy, or want to try out a different palette, I can simply print out another. Being a fraction of the size of the final piece these

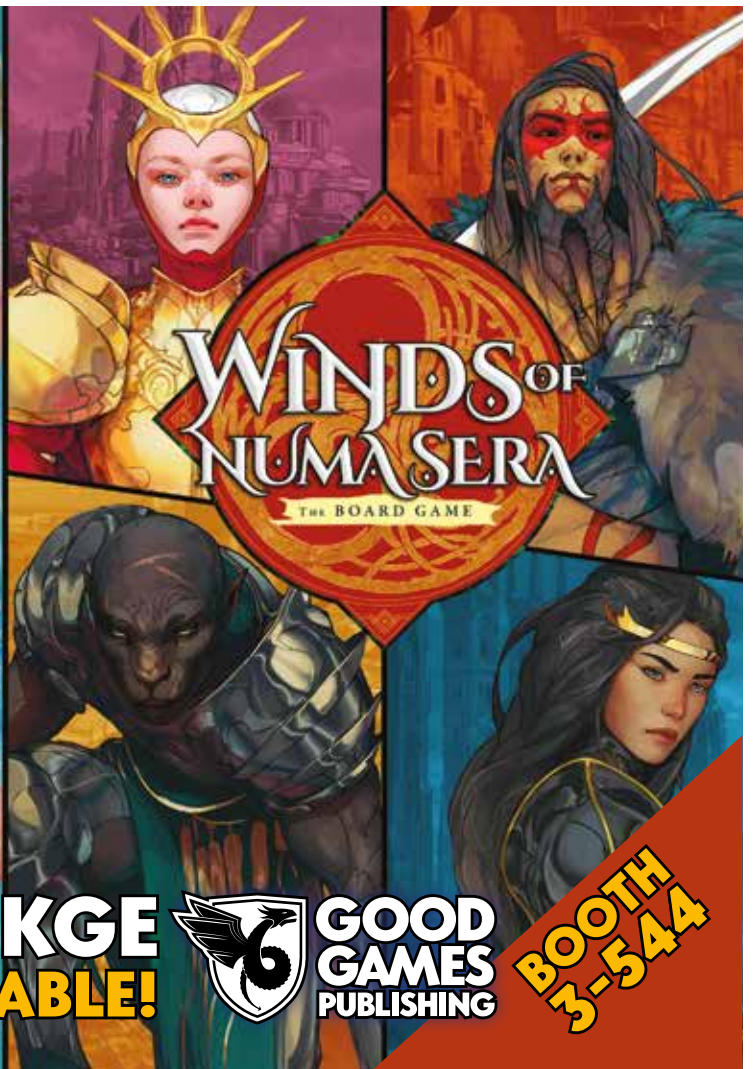
Working on the UKGE artwork has been a great pleasure, exploring ideas and developing the Dragon has been immensely rewarding, as is seeing the final painting on billboards, signage, the programme, and everyone's badge. This year's artwork depicts the journey that UKGE has been on, I look forward to where that takes us in future.





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THE DARK ROOM: ADVENTURES IN GEEK COMEDY

COMEDIAN JOHN ROBERTSON IS BACK AT UKGE WITH HIS LEGENDARY INTERACTIVE COMEDY GAME SHOW THE DARK ROOM (FRI + SAT), TRYING OUT HIS NEW STAND-UP HOUR THE GAMING SPECIAL (SUN) AND PERFORMS IMPROV WITH SIR IAN LIVINGSTONE IN FIGHTING FANTASY LIVE (SAT).

Howdy, folks! It's the 20th UK Games Expo and I hope you're having a beautiful time. I'm here doing my favourite things: shows, chatting to people, buying more dice and playing weird party games late at night (I got confused once during a children's game about bees and shouted out something from the previous game we'd played. Unfortunately, that game was Secret Hitler. Not everyone has loudly accused a bee of being a fascist in a hotel lobby at 3am, but it's pretty good.)

UKGE has been kind enough to have THE DARK ROOM for about 12 years, but I still get asked sometimes what it's like doing comedy at gaming cons. The short answer is "It's terrific", the long answer is "It's terrific, and a lot more like doing a metal festival than you'd expect." Here's why:

1. When I see beards, piercings, cosplay, corsets, glasses, a geek t-shirt or long or dyed hair, I know I'm among friends. (If you look like you've used the word "lore" at some point in your life, I'm immediately comfortable.)
2. Both are full of folks who know how to have fun and will literally show you the way they like to have fun.
3. Everyone is equal in the face of how expensive the food trucks are.
4. Your odds of meeting a wizard at either event are frankly pretty good.

The key difference between a gaming convention and a metal festival is our toilets are mercifully indoors, and I've never been dragged to see a band named something like LIZARD DEATH ON KILAMANJARO at UKGE. (It always turns out to be a roleplaying game someone's trying to Kickstarter.)

Gaming cons are great for comedians. I've crowdsurfed men in Flamboyant Potato costumes, played Pandemic with a Dr Who, ripped on D&D with Luke Gygax, killed the creator of DOOM in the game that I created (now you know how it feels, Romero!) and met a global audience that I love. I've also spent a lot of my fee on boardgames I rarely win at.

So, yeah! Gaming con crowds are the best! It's almost like everybody's here to have fun!

And speaking of fun, ye gods, have you seen how many live acts are here this year? It's a goddamn festival in itself! I've been to comedy festivals with less shows than this, and certainly less audience. (RIP to the alleged city of Hull.)

The mighty Paul Flannery is back with Questiny and hit show Knightmare Live*, there's a new Discworld TTRPG to watch (check your luggage), Tom Crosbie will twist your noodle and Rubik's Cubes, The Storymaster's Tales is new here and looks awesome, Werewolf Live returns (Awoool),

it's Nerd Mentality's first time and they're both funny and good eggs, Sam See's hilarious Off With Your Head gets medieval on your ass, those sons of fun Jollyboat are singing and playing party games, Juliette Burton's got boardgame comedy and a new geeky stand-up show to delight you, Blood On The Clocktower's become an international hit, from the US we get the UK debuts of Grant Lyon's Board Game Comedy Hour and Quinns Presents (welcome, gentlemen!), Roll Britannia roll out a new oneshot, and a great old one is a great new show in Call Of Cthulhu Live!

Then you've got me with The Dark Room, The Dark Room Til Ya Die (thanks to a tech update we'll now have a larger game map than ever before = more laughs, more ways to die), new show The Gaming Special and of course, having Sir Ian Livingstone try to murder me repeatedly in Fighting Fantasy Live.

Happy 20th session, UK Games Expo! Thank you for all the laughs and the shelves at my house that are filled up with the hobby you gave back to me. YA DIE! YA DIE! YA DIE!

John Robertson

Somewhere in The Dark Room, 2026

*I think Paul Flannery is the reason we all put "Live" at the end of our show titles. If he is, thank you Paul. And sorry, we probably all owe you money.





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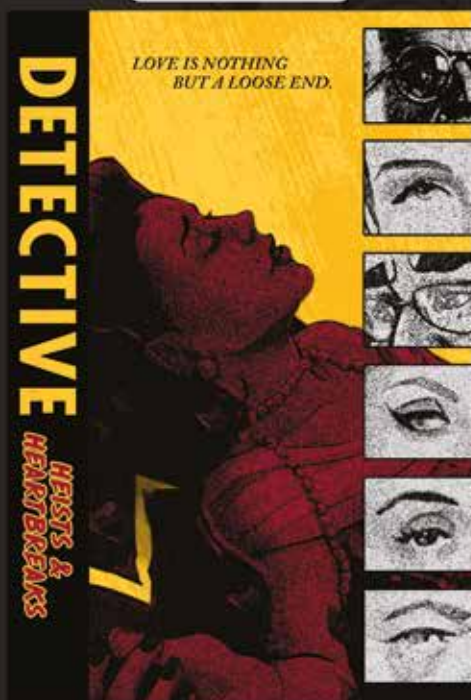
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TABLETOP MINIATURE WARGAMES: A POTTED HISTORY

BY PETE SIZER

Miniature wargames are big business these days, and I think they'll only get more popular. Moving armies of wonderfully painted models across a table full of beautiful terrain (in the company of friends) makes for an impressive spectacle, immersing players in a way that something like a video game never could. The hobby has many components: from painting the figures and crafting the terrain, to building an army and fighting epic battles, then reliving said battles in the bar or cafe afterwards, there is something for everyone. Whether your preferences are fictional or historical or outright fantastical, nothing fires the imagination, or brings people back for more, like a personalised force of your own!

Wargames go back centuries. Just look at chess for an example. Metal (mostly lead) soldiers have been produced since the 18th century and were popular collectables for the upper classes, but it wasn't until the early 19th century that a more familiar-looking tabletop game first emerged. Developed by Georg Leopold von Reisswitz, it had a realistic, open-plan gaming area, with blocks representing formations of soldiers. It was called Kriegsspiel and was intended as a parlour game for Prussian princes. Reisswitz's teenage son saw that it

could be a useful training tool for the Kaiser's army, and developed it into Reisswitz Kriegsspiel (1824). As the 19th century progressed, British civilians concerned about imperial defence set up 'Tactical Societies' to play games of Kriegsspiel.

With the emergence of a middle class in the latter half of the nineteenth century, people started to have both the disposable income and the space in their homes to collect toy soldiers. They started to play games with their collections of toy soldiers and eventually formalised those games with rules, often as a continuation of childhood games or as an activity with their own children. The floor was an ideal place to play these wargames as they took up a lot of space, with the figures usually being 54 mm tall and the accompanying cannons firing real projectiles over an impressive range. The best known of these early wargames is H.G. Wells' Little Wars from 1913, the war-focused follow-up to his 1911 Floor Games. Nor was he the first. Fellow writer Robert Louis Stevenson was playing rules-based wargames some fifteen years earlier. Others likely had their own games too, but these have sadly been lost to time.

Little Wars has the rules you'd expect from a modern wargame as well as some that are seldom seen nowadays. Hidden movement allowed players to conceal the exact makeup of their units until the opposition got closer, while rules for logistics provided units and cannons with a fixed number of shots, requiring the player to reload by moving a supply wagon up to them. This kind of depth is less common in today's wargames, although Osprey Games' Black Ops and the classic Fury of Dracula are good wargames for hidden movement and stealth. The big difference between Wells' and Stevenson's early games and those of today is the absence of dice, the random factor represented instead by the players' skill in firing a toy cannon.

If you are of a certain vintage (50-ish), you may remember a range of toy soldiers from a company called Britians. Sold with the toy soldiers was a variety of toy cannons which often fired a projectile. Obviously, it's great fun lining up toy soldiers and taking potshots at them, and having played such games myself, I can confirm that the inaccuracy of toy cannons is a fair randomiser by itself.

These books are a wonderful window into the past, although the language can be distasteful to modern ears (Wells was actually seen as progressive in his time). It is clear, nevertheless, how they formed the foundations of the hobby we know today.

After the Second World War, the production of cheap plastic figures made miniature wargaming more affordable. Wartime experience and the post-war cultural milieu of books and films saw recreational interest in military matters at its peak. Players and clubs sprung up all through the anglosphere. In the US, Jack Scruby started organising tabletop miniature wargaming conferences in the mid 1950s. Tony Bath published a set of rules for fighting Medieval and



H.G. Wells' Little Wars from 1913

Ancient battles in 1956 and with Donald Featherstone (who took a copy of Wells' book with him to war) co-edited the UK version of Scruby's newsletter. Featherstone wrote War Games in 1962, collating a lot of rules previously available only in newsletters into a single mass-market book. It also started off Don Featherstone's long writing career, with some 49 books on wargaming and related subjects.

This period introduced many of our now-familiar mechanics. The classic roll-to-hit, then saving throw has its origins in Tony Bath rules. Different armour and attack ratings can be found in Lionel Tarr's 'Modern' rules. Most of these men were World War Two veterans, and recreating that conflict was considered modern in the 1950/60s.

When it comes to running campaigns (one of my favourite ways to play), I always go back to these original books. Tony Bath ran a seminal campaign using ancient and medieval armies battling across a map of Hyboria that Conan would feel at home in. The influence of this approach is clear in narrative-driven campaign games such as Frostgrave and Necromunda. Tony Bath's campaign was also an influence on Gary Gygax's Chainmail, which prefigured Dungeons and Dragons.

Featherstone's Wargaming Campaigns (1963) is another go-to for me - I'm planning a campaign based on it at the moment. Using his principles of having multiple players on a given side making moves on a map, then having them use light, fast units to seek out the

enemy. I'm hoping it will give a nice bit of pre-game tension as the two sides suss each other out before piling on for a big climactic battle.

Although I'm primarily a narrative gamer, it was remiss of me to not mention the Wargames Research Group (WRG) and the contribution it has made to the modern wargaming tournament scene. The multiple editions of their Wargames Rules 1000 BC to 500 AD, written by Phil Barker, were used to run whole leagues of competitions throughout the 1970s and 1980s. WRG's rules ended up covering the whole of human history, from the Battle of Kadesh, in the 13th century BC, through to 1980s speculative Cold War battles.

In 1990, the revolutionary ruleset De Bellis Antiquitatis (DBA), also by Barker, was published. This system reduced ancient armies to a semi-abstracted format, with base sizes consistent across armies, but varying the amount of soldiers they represented. Side-stepping overcomplexity in the name of 'realism', DBA enabled armies of fifty figures or fewer to be collected from any period of history up to the middle ages, all of which could fight each other on a modest-sized table.

But of course, the 800 pound elephant in the room is the rise and rise (and rise) of Games Workshop. They started off making wooden puzzle games but their big commercial success came from becoming the UK distributor for Dungeons and Dragons. This led to their printing UK editions of other Roleplaying Games, such as Call of Cthulhu, RuneQuest and

Traveller. The figure range was originally to support the needs of the Roleplayers, but expanded hugely with the first edition of Warhammer Fantasy Battles in 1983. Warhammer 40,000: Rogue Trader, written by Rick Priestly in 1987, introduced the iconic Space Marines and helped the company grow into the FTSE 100 behemoth it is now. Many former staff have gone on to success with their own companies. From Warcraze's Dieselpunk Dystopian Age games of Armoured Clash (in which gamers command massed land battles) and Dystopian Wars (where they take charge of naval vessels to fight on the high seas), to Mantic's popular 28 mm 'rank-and-flank' fantasy battle game Kings of War and their Firefight science fiction combat game. Turning towards the historical end of the tabletop wargaming market, you have Warlord's Bolt Action and Black Powder, backed up by their own range of historical figures from Perry Miniatures.

Tabletop wargaming is going strong and will be around for a long time to come!

I got my gaming start with Rogue Trader back in 1989, before spreading out to all sorts of different games, but looking back into tabletop wargaming's history has taught me just as much as playing the latest games. All of the books that I've mentioned are available as modern reprints, but I enjoy searching out original copies secondhand. All come recommended and will reward the time you put into them. I'm sure you'll come away with plenty of ideas to put in your own games.



Little Wars as displayed by Pete Sizer

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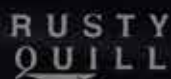
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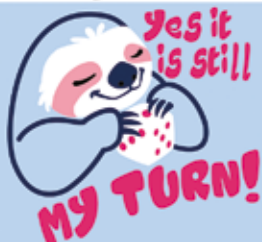
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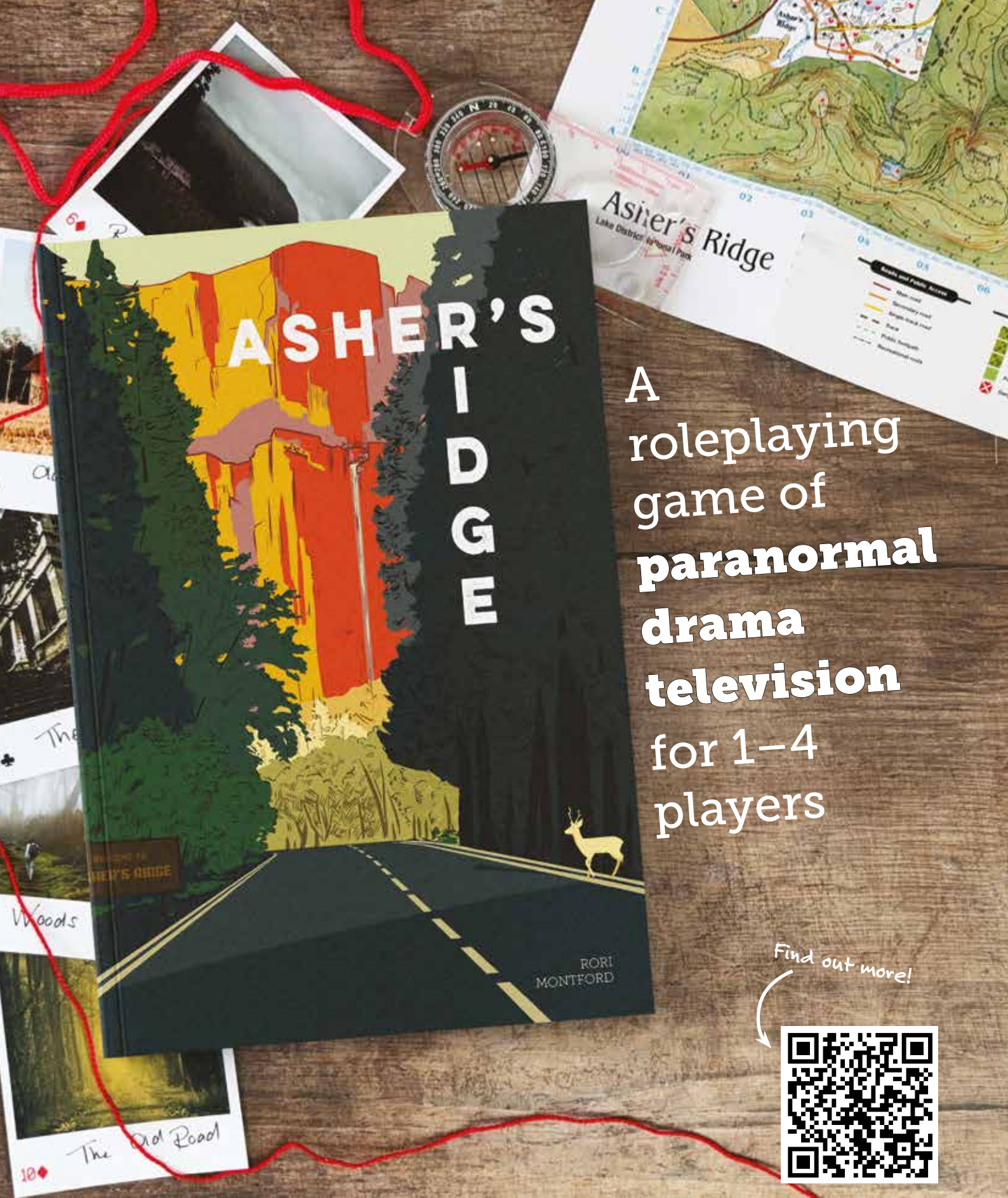
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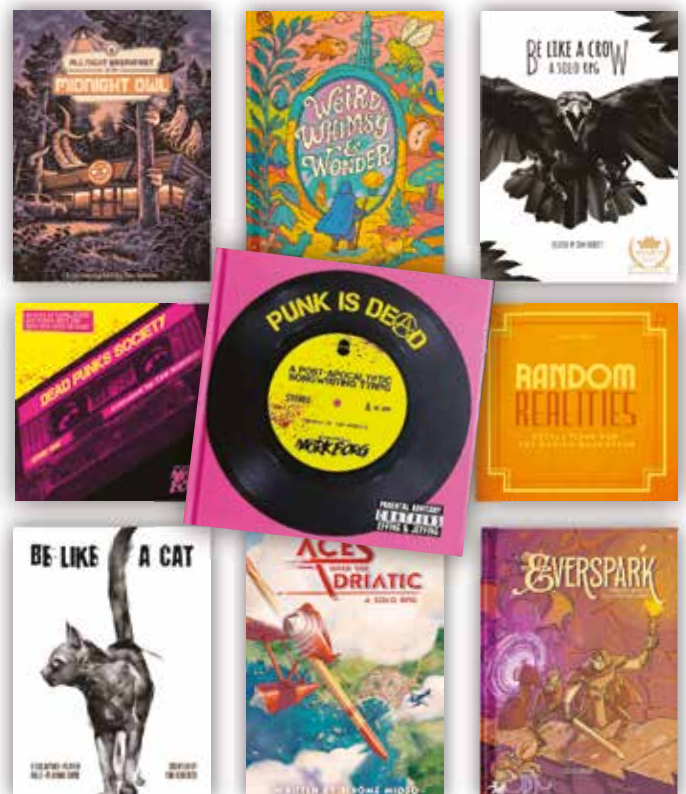






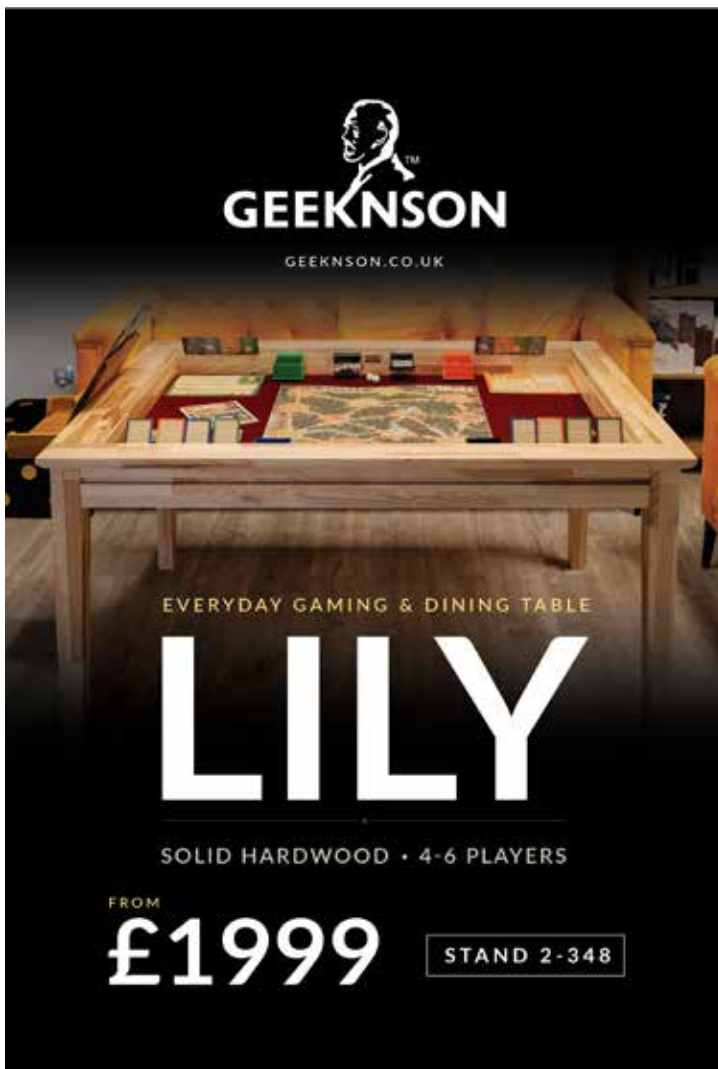

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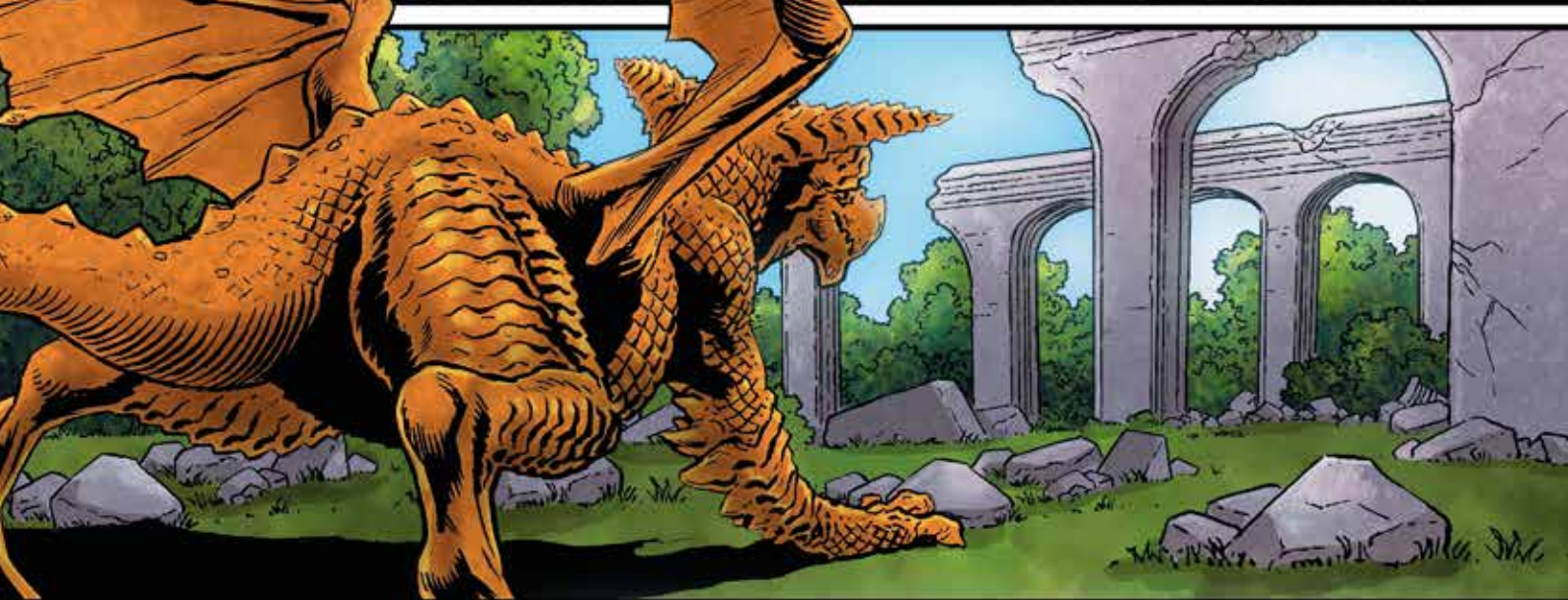


BUT I AM TIRED...

...VERY, VERY TIRED...

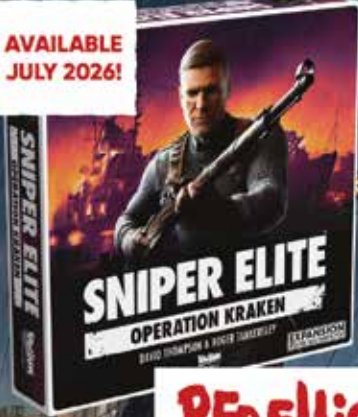


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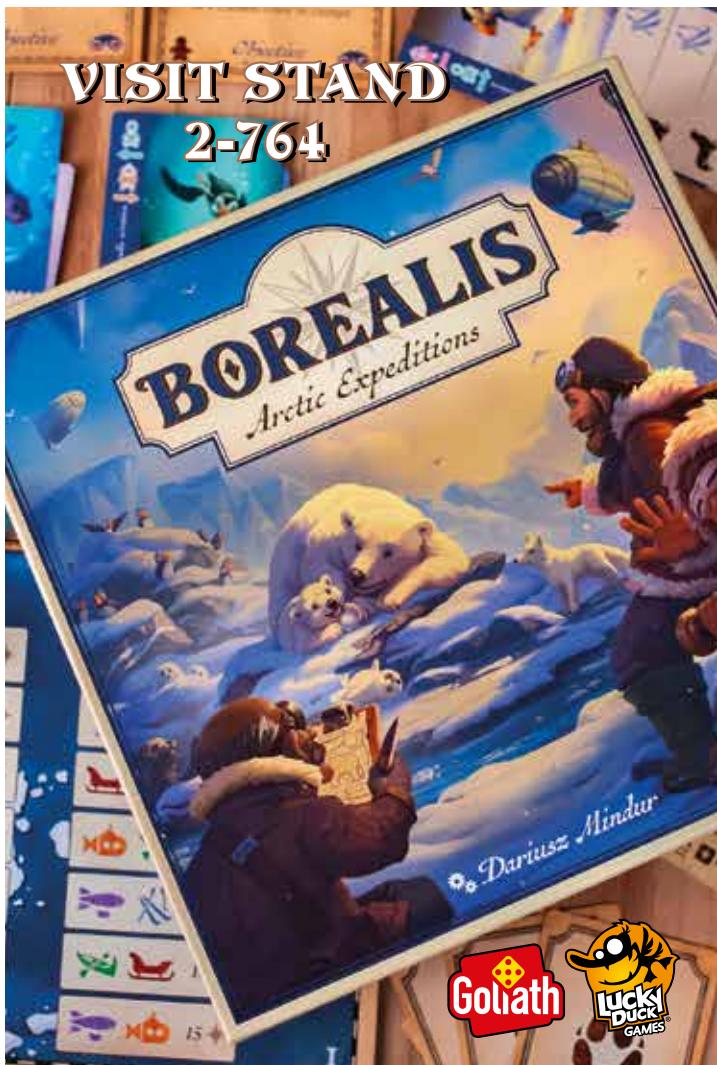
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A BIG THANK YOU

Richard Denning and Tony Hyams would like to thank everyone who helped plan, build and run UKGE 2026 – the largest tabletop games show ever run in the UK. In particular we thank –

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Tessa Norris – UKGE Administrator
Beth Lacey – UKGE Administrator
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James Bowles – UKGE Trade Manager
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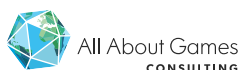
Ian Hawthorne

Richard and Tony would also like to express gratitude for the partners who run sections of the show: Playtest UK, Mind Sports Olympiad, Imagination Gaming, Vanguard Tactics, OnTabletop, Galactic Knights, Ardenweard, Sussex Cosplay Alliance, The Who Zone, MiniWarGaming, Duncan Rhodes Painting Academy, Steamforged Games and Games Workshop all our live acts, podcasters and seminar speakers and of course our show build partners Creative Hire, Periscope Live and Be Events.

Above all we would like to thank the 300+ volunteers, umpires, GMs, cosplayers and others without whom UKGE just couldn't happen.

Additional thanks to the Duty Managers, Team Leaders and other individuals who come on board on Expo weekend.

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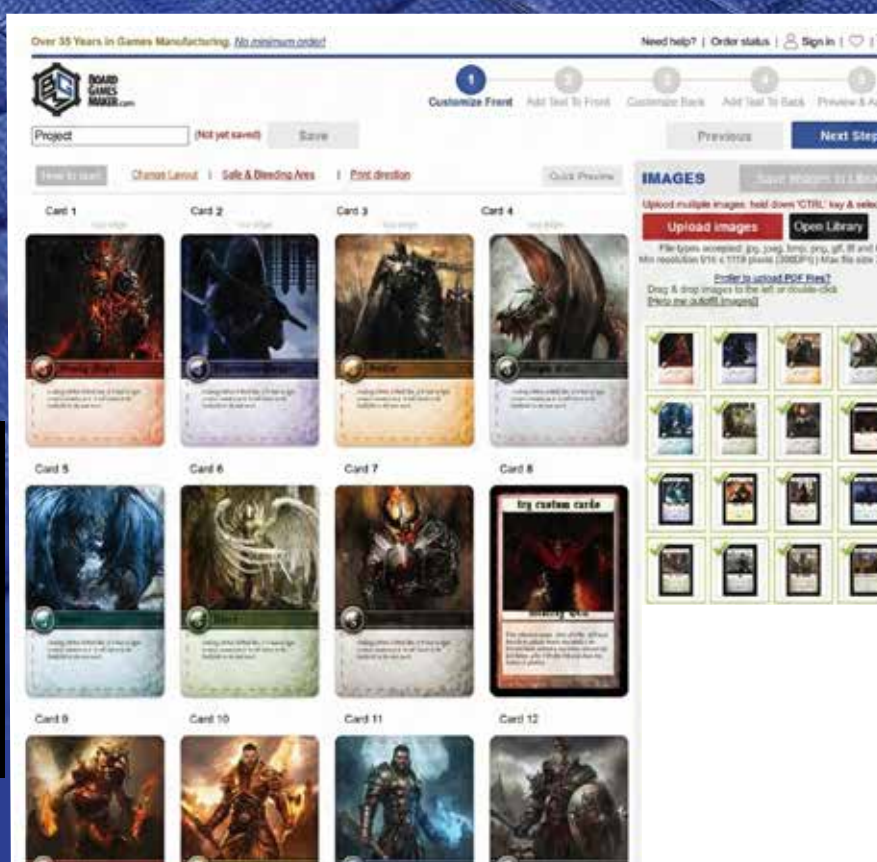
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