

MidCon 2016

Hallmark Hotel, Midland Road, Derby, DE1 2SQ
11th – 14th November 2016

YOUR CONVENTION MENU

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NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

WELCOME!

T' committee welcomes you to the 37th **MidCon** convention. Is it really six years since we decamped from Birmingham to set up our stall in the Hallmark Hotel? By golly, it is, you know.

One of the reasons we moved from Birmingham was that the Royal Angus – as it is now once again called – was running out of space to fit in the increasing number of people attending Britain's longest-established board games convention. When we moved to the Hallmark we expected it would have enough capacity to last us for the foreseeable future. It turns out "the foreseeable future" is about five years, so far as the committee is concerned, as record bookings this year have prompted us to book gaming space across the road in the sister hotel, the Hallmark Inn.

We recognise it is not an ideal arrangement to have a kind of satellite con taking place, and that in all probability most attendees will want to do their gaming in the main hotel, or, to put it another way, some attendees might feel disappointed to discover the only suitable gaming space available is over the road. We've had a think about this and decided that some sort of inducement to play in the Hallmark Inn is in order. Somewhere in the booklet there should be more details on the wheezes we have come up with.

Other than that, the con should be much the same as it usually is, though it would be wise to check this booklet to see if we have altered the locations of our traditional offerings. For instance, is the Bring & Buy now taking place on a flat-bed lorry in the car park at three in the morning? (Answer: no, but it is starting earlier

on the Saturday morning). There should be some crib cards knocking about listing the main details of the con, such as meal times, times of events (quiz, Bring & Buy, etc.) and what to do if attacked by an elk that is suffering an iron deficiency.

Most of the space in the Hallmark Hotel will be available to us across the entire weekend, with the dining room in the Hallmark Inn available from 11am on Saturday and Sunday.

If you have visited a games convention before, this booklet should suffice as your go-to guide to the con, and you probably only need to skim read it to find out if we've been rude about you. If you are totally new to this kind of thing, then we have produced a Beginner's Guide (available separately), which will be available from the **MidCon** Registration Desk (in the Garden Room) all weekend.

CALL ME DAVE

The committee has a new member, this year: Dave Clasby. This means half of the committee is now called David, and also means the average age of the committee is in double figures - mind you, it was before. Dave C is a local lad and a keen board gamer, but only discovered **MidCon** relatively recently, and we're hoping that having fresh blood on the team will lead to some improvements, particularly in terms of making it easier for **MidCon** first-timers to get quickly into the swing of things.

To that end, we have set aside a table in the Garden Room specifically for first time attendees. The idea is that when they arrive, they'll have a table to play on that is right in the thick of things; someone from the committee will either sit and play with them or rustle up

some relatively friendly (i.e. non-cut-throat) players who will play the first game with them. Once they have settled in, the idea is the newbies move off into the **MidCon** maelstrom, freeing up the table for the next lot of fresh meat. Of course, it probably won't work like that, and if space is really tight and no one appears to be using the "newby table", feel free to ask a member of the committee if it is OK to commandeer it.

FEEDBACK PLEASE

Despite our projection of omnipotence, even the committee can't see everything, so if you do encounter any problems over the course of the weekend or if you have any suggestions of things that we could do to improve the **MidCon** experience for you or for everyone, do let us know. Please don't hesitate to talk to us during the convention rather than waiting to the end, especially if it is in relation to something that we can help you to resolve.

The best place to look for a Committee member is at the Registration Desk in the Garden Room, but you should be able to spot us by looking out for our large, brightly coloured badges (and our generally sunny disposition). A committee member will frequently show his boat-race over the road at the Hallmark Inn gaming area, and these visits may coincide with the handing out of **MidCon** vouchers, of which more anon.

We also welcome feedback on social media, by email, at the bar and whatever other means you'd like to use.

We do have a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MidConBoardgames>) so you can leave feedback there, if you wish; alternatively, if you are reading this ahead of the con (unlikely, as traditionally it is posted

on the web site about 3.28 seconds before the con starts, but we live in hope ...) then you can use Facebook to float ideas for the con, or arrange game sessions.

"Just one more needed for a game of Railway Rivals," as the old cry used to go out.

We also have a guild on Boardgamegeek (<http://www.boardgamegeek.com/guild/1872>), which can be used for much the same thing as is suggested for Facebook in the paragraph above.

Occasionally, a forum thread flares into life, <http://www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/1611133/midcon-2016-it-was-so-good-first-36-times-were-doi> for example, where people can discuss what games they want to play, travel arrangements and all sorts of con-related stuff.

The feedback we have received from the Hallmark staff has been really positive on each of our years here, and we are enjoying the unusual status of being preferred guests as we continue to be good humoured, reasonable and generally cause the hotel less bother than the average customer. This situation is purely down to you all, so thank you very much for making **MidCon** a success.

About the only negative feedback we have had from the hotel - we've had it more than once - concerns consuming food and drink on the premises that was not purchased at the hotel. It is entirely possible the hotel staff would be prepared to turn a blind eye to a crafty Kit-Kat, a pernicious Pringles tube or a surreptitious sausage roll being devoured in the Garden Room, but they find it hard to ignore a stack of pizza cartons or, worse still, an empty bottle of booze. So, please have a bit of courtesy and a bit of discretion.

CONVENTION FACILITIES

THE GAMING ROOMS

This year, **MidCon** has access to four named rooms in the Hallmark Hotel throughout the weekend for gaming, plus the dining room over the road at the Hallmark Inn on the Saturday and Sunday (after 11am).

The Garden Room at the back of the hotel is the largest space and offers the most facilities close at hand. The doors at the back of the room open out on to the garden itself, which is also a gaming option if it's not too stormy outside, or you are feeling heroically northern, but are also a fire exit. Please be responsible if you are sitting close to this exit and make sure that you don't block the exit with chairs or bags chock full of games. Thanks!

The Garden Room will contain the registration desk, games stall, the **MidCon** bar and the serving area for **MidCon** meals. Across the main corridor from the Garden Room is the Edale Room, which is our second general gaming room, generally slightly quieter than the Garden Room and with less through-traffic.

The Dovedale room at the front of the hotel is reserved for Diplomacy. Next door to this is the Darleydale Room (the 18XX dot station) and beyond that along the same corridor you will find the Milldale Suite. We have access to all of these rooms, which are good locations for those large games or those seeking a quiet location. (other than when the larger room is reserved for the quiz!)

As in previous years, the lounge area at the front of the hotel is also available for gaming, for those who prefer the comfier chairs or larger tables offered here. The lounge is just past the hotel bar, which may also have space available

for gaming, but is more likely to be a place to sit with a drink than a game. All of these rooms are covered by the hotel's free Wi-Fi, which has proven to be rock-solid to date. You can find a plan of the hotel on the back of this very booklet if you should require it – or even if you do not.

THE BARS

There are two bars at the Hallmark. The main bar (situated close to the main entrance) and the Garden Room bar (situated in the Garden Room). The Garden Room bar is our own private bar, and will be open from lunchtime on Friday until midnight, re-opening again at 11:00 on Saturday and Sunday. The main bar at the front of the hotel will be open all day. The bars WILL shut at midnight because of the hotel's licence conditions (no cash transactions after midnight); however, it will still be possible to buy drinks (including the ales available in our private bar) from the main bar, provided that those drinks are charged to a room.

Technically, this is only meant to be available as room service, but the main bar may well remain in service as a credit-only facility after midnight depending on how much custom there is. We've generally been well looked after in this regard in previous years.

Coffee and tea will be available from the Garden Bar at £2-a-go as well as the fabulous selection of proper beer. We will have a range of cask beers available at the Garden Bar over the course of the convention. The hotel doesn't normally do "real" beer, but as in previous years, they have allowed us to select our beers from a quality brewery. This year your beers are: Gold (*Gold!*) (4.2%) – a golden bitter; Cleopatra (5%) – pale with a hint of Apricot; Barbarian (5.5%) – dark stout; Anno X (4.6%) – American pale ale; one other, to be confirmed.

MidCon is supplied by the Derventio Brewery, a micro brewery here in Derby, and as in previous years, we will stock the initial range and then re-up as required over the weekend. The hotel will not want to take any of the beer back from us, so we do need to consume all of it. This proved beyond us last year, surprisingly enough, due, we suspect, to some of our gold medal-standard drinkers being a little the worse for wear on the Friday (after “training” on the Thursday).

GAMING AT THE HALLMARK INN

As we dashed near ran out of space at peak times last year, we have arranged this year for the Hallmark Inn dining room to be available for gaming this year on the Saturday and Sunday, from 11am onwards. This room has been earmarked for official **MidCon** tournaments, such as Ben Bateson’s Reiner Knizia’s Decathlon (a series of 10 short dice games), and set-piece games at scheduled times, which may include tutorials of some of the hot games from this years Essen game fair.

Please note, the room will also be available for *ad hoc* gaming of the sort that is the mainstay of **MidCon** convention, and so keen are we to encourage gamers to take a stroll over the road to play a game or three that committee members will, from time to time, visit the Inn's gaming room and bestow upon unsuspecting *ad hoc* gaming types a soon-to-be legendary **MidCon** voucher, that can be used (once only) at the Hallmark Inn bar (yes, there will be one, offering real ale, as per the Garden Room bar) or on the Spirit Games stall.

These vouchers are set to be more collectable than the **MidCon** T-shirts and we strongly suggest you retain them rather than doing what might seem, on first thought, to be the obvious thing of trading them in for beer or using them towards the cost of a game.

GENERAL TIMETABLE

The con starts at 9.00am on the Friday but checking in to your room at the Hallmark Hotel or the Hallmark Inn will not be possible until the stated 2pm check-in time. Both the Hotel and the Inn are able to store your luggage before you get your room key. Games typically start after breakfast on Saturday and Sunday (about gam for the earliest players). People do carry on playing games until the small hours, which can even become the medium hours on the Saturday night and Sunday night, for the hardcore few. The convention theoretically closes at 6pm Sunday, when our booking of the games rooms expires, but an increasing number of folks stay overnight on Sunday as well. There will be no problem about continuing to play into the evening and even with Hallmark Hotel guests gaming through part of Monday as well, as has happened in previous years. You may well be asked to move to the public lounge on Sunday night should the hotel staff want to clean up the gaming rooms, which certainly tend to resemble bomb sites by then, so please bear this in mind if you are looking to set up something with thousands of pieces on Sunday evening.

MEAL TIMES

Breakfast 7.30-10.00 Breakfast is served in your hotel restaurant (in the Hallmark Hotel or Hallmark Inn).

Lunch 12.00-13.30 A **MidCon** lunch menu is available from the Buffet table in the Garden Room, near the bar. Since you are all so keen to turn up early, this is now available on Friday lunchtime as well as Saturday and Sunday.

Dinner 18.00-19.30 Also served from the Buffet table in the Garden Room, still near the bar.

The main bar in the hotel serves bar food “all day” for those wanting something different. This includes posh burgers, high-end sandwiches, fish and chips and the like, but not as cheap a rate as the fare available for **MidCon** from the Garden Room. In addition, the Brasserie is open throughout the evening to give you yet another on-site food option. You may want (or need) to book this in advance, as it’s open to all. A considerable number of local pubs and restaurants are listed later in this booklet. A monumental amount of local research has been put in to this section of the booklet by heroic philanthropists.

Please note the earlier admonishment about those naughty types who bring takeaways or off-licence booze into the hotel. This is a big no-no.

QUIZ

David Norman runs the **MidCon** quiz, which is held at 10pm on Saturday, pub quiz style, in The Milldale Room. Teams of four work best, but there is room for some flexibility with the numbers if required (e.g. a team of three is allowed, or just one, if it is Webley). There’s no advance sign-up required, so if you wish to enter, just turn up. That said, the quiz is always incredibly popular, so be prepared to arrive early if you want a decent table.

DIPLOMACY

Believe it or not, there are still people knocking around who think the majority of people at the con are there for the Diplomacy (rather than the beer).

The tournament is certainly not as popular as it once was, but there are usually enough players to ensure it goes on, and they are always on the look-out for more. Held in The Dovedale Room, at the front of the hotel, the Diplomacy

tournament at **MidCon** is the UK National Championship. New players are always made welcome and to this end, the Friday night round is set up to be a teaching round as it can go on a little longer if required and instruction will be given beforehand.

Games will be played to end after Fall 1907, keeping the game duration to around four hours. The scoring system is C-diplo 73, which basically means that you get most points for topping the board, no matter what your centre count is. The Avalon Hill 5th Edition rules will apply, although in any rules dispute, the Tournament Director’s decision is final. There are four rounds available to play, but only your best three rounds will count towards your final score. Each player’s individual round scores contribute to their overall score, counting 100%, 100% if two games were played and 100% 80% 40% if three or four.

Diplomacy Tournament Schedule	
Fri 17:30 - 18:15	Registration for the first round
Fri 18:30 – 22:30	First Round (teaching round)
Sat 09:15 – 09:50	Registration for 2 nd round
Sat 10:00 – 14:30	2 nd Round (with lunch break)
Sat 14:30 – 15:15	Registration for the 3 rd round
Sat 15:30 – 19:30	3 rd Round
Sun 09:15 – 09:50	Registration for 4 th round
Sun 10:00 – 14:00	4 th Round (with lunch break)
Sun 15:00 – 15:30	Awards and trophies

Find out more about the Diplomacy scene in the UK at <http://www.ukf2fdip.org>

REINER KNIZIA’S DECATHLON

Ben Bateson is going to be running the second Annual **MidCon** Kniziathon on Sunday afternoon in the dining room of the Hallmark

Inn, which is “the other place” across the road from the Hallmark Hotel. Here’s some information from Ben about this:

Reiner Knizia’s Decathlon is a series of 10 short dice games with the loose theme of the events of an Olympic Decathlon: 100-meter dash, long jump, shot put, high jump, 400-meter dash, 110-meter hurdles, discus throw, pole vault, javelin throw, and 1500-meter run. The rules are available for free on Knizia’s web site. The game is played with eight dice, pen, and paper. In each event, each player rolls a pool of dice, re-rolling a limited number of times, and freezing desired rolls. The goal is to obtain the highest score across all the events.

THE COMMITTEE

MidCon is brought to you by the following gamers, who will be happy to assist you throughout the weekend.

Jeremy Tullett has been chairman of **MidCon** for flipping ages and has overseen the renaissance of Britain’s longest-established board games con. He manages the booking of the rooms and all things Hallmark related. Ran the Diplomacy tournament under the previous management; has played at the EDC and WDC Diplomacy conventions and is a one-time National Diplomacy champion. These days he prefers shorter games that aren’t called Puerto Rico or Agricola (e.g. the rather splendid Splendor). He is usually found at the convention registration desk, hiding behind a laptop.

Most likely to say: *This is a games convention, not a beer convention*

David Norman used to look after the Diplomacy at **MidCon** (and still does so at ManorCon). He generally looks after convention advertising and is also the designer of the “Convention Booking System”. A

frequent visitor to EDC and WDC, his claim to fame is that he has soloed boards in tournaments in different countries on consecutive weekends. David also runs the Quiz on Saturday evening and does any shouting when mass punter attention is required.

Most likely to say: *Does anyone want to hear those questions again?*

John Harrington administers the **MidCon** web site (that’s Midcon.org.uk), is senior beer bore on the committee and also runs the second-hand games sale. John poof- reads [sic] this guide. He loves a hyphen and, like nature, abhors a vacuum cleaner. John often deliberately mixes up the correct usage of the words “less” and “fewer”, though fewer often than he used to.

Most likely to say: *Take two [somethings] into the shower?*

Peter Card runs the Bring & Buy stall with John, and is assistant beer bore on the committee. As likely to be seen at a miniatures war games convention as he is at a board games convention, he’s definitely got the coolest surname on the committee from a games playing perspective, and his first name isn’t Dave.

Most likely to say: *I am awake. Whose go is it anyway?*

Dave Simpson printed this document, so it’s all his fault. Dave ran EDC at **MidCon** in 2011, after which he was suckered into joining the committee – and he’s still running the Diplomacy at the con. Now a regular EDC / WDC attendee and still the only non-French winner of the European Grand Prix of Diplomacy, Dave won the Diplomacy World

Team Championship last year (admittedly in conjunction with two other people).

Most likely to say: *I'll support you into Piedmont if you buy me a beer*

Dave Clasby is the committee's newest member. Easily recognisable by the impressive amount of ironmongery attached to one of his ears, he is a well-known face in the Derby board gaming scene. A vegan, cyclist and Guardian reader – now there's an unusual combination (up there with port drinker, Rover driver and Daily Telegraph reader) – his remit, among other things, is to suggest ideas that make **MidCon** more accessible to the increasing numbers of people who have not been attending the con since the year dot.

Most likely to say: *I've got Radio Derby interested in covering the con*

BUYING GAMES AT MIDCON

SPIRIT GAMES

The Spirit Games stall will be open from Friday afternoon until Sunday evening (with gaps for sleeping), and as their shop is local, they may well be able to bring stuff along next day that isn't on the stall if you ask them nicely. It is also possible to contact them in advance and they'll reserve stuff for you and bring it along on the day.

Spirit Games have a monopoly on selling new games at **MidCon**, so if you wish to sell your own latest design, you should discuss this with them or the Committee. You certainly shouldn't even attempt to try selling a pile of stuff you just brought back from Essen. You can find Spirit Games conveniently set up in the Garden Room next to the window, so you can see what it is you are looking at.

SECOND HAND GAMES (BRING & BUY)

The Bring & Buy sale this year will be held in the designated meeting room in the Hallmark Inn. Yes, that will mean schlepping your games across the road to the other venue, unless you've had the foresight to park in the Hallmark Inn car park. Committee member John Harrington is running it, ably assisted by first lieutenant and fellow committee member Peter Card.

Sellers – early birds

If you are the organised sort, and want to log the games you have for sale early doors, then you should find some Bring & Buy forms on the Registration desk on the Friday and until about 9.15am on the Saturday. Grab what you need, and fill out the details: name of the game, your name, and the price you are asking (you may change this price later in the sale process).

Each line on the Bring & Buy form should have a game ID, so what you need to do after completing said form(s) is grab some post-it notes from the Registration desk and on each post-it note put the following information: Game ID (e.g. 009) – as per the Bring & Buy form; Price.

Make sure you slap the right post-it note on the right game and **make sure you return the Bring & Buy forms and the unused post-it notes to the Registration desk**. At the appropriate time (see schedule below), bring the games along to the Bring & Buy and lay them out on the tables.

Sellers – Saturday's all right for selling

Assuming you have not been an early bird organised type (see above), you can bring your games for sale along to the Bring & Buy stall any time between 10.00am and 10.30am.

1. Report to the Bring & Buy reception desk and tell whoever is manning the desk how many games you have for sale.

2. You will then be given one or more Bring & Buy forms and a some post-it notes

3. Complete the forms, providing the following details: name of the game, your name, and the price you are asking (you may change this later).

4. Now do the post-it note thing, putting the following information on each note: Game ID (e.g. 009); Price.

5. Put the post-it notes on the relevant games, and your games on display on the Bring & Buy display tables

6. Return the forms and unused post-it notes to the Bring & Buy registration desk. When the buying session is over, sellers may collect any unsold games and monies owed if they are not going to be around to do so after the evening session. In other words, we'd prefer to get back to do some gaming rather than hang around handing out money after the first session.

There will be a second session of selling in the early evening. Sellers will be offered the opportunity to amend their selling prices by popping over to the Hallmark Inn between 6.00pm and 6.30pm and informing the Bring & Buy team of the new prices. Don't forget to adjust the prices on the post-it notes as well. During this session, people who did not register games for sale in the first session may register games, as per the procedure listed above.

Between 7.15pm and 7.30pm sellers should come and collect their unsold games and any monies owed to them. Please note 5% of all sales will be deducted to cover the cost of hiring the room.

Buy, buy, baby; baby, buy, buy

The buying part is relatively straight forward. Turn up for the first buying session between 10.30am and 11.00am. Grab a game you want to buy, and take it to the Bring & Buy desk. Hand over the post-it note from the game and the requisite amount of money. Bigger off and play the game, or buy some more games. Do it all again between 6.30pm and 7.00pm.

SECOND HAND GAMES SALE SCHEDULE	
10.00 – 10.29	Sellers bring their games to the sale
10.30 – 11.00	Buyers let in to spend, spend, spend
11.10 – 11.30	Sellers can collect unsold games and proceeds from sales
18.15 – 18.29	Sellers may bring more games to the sale & adjust prices of unsold games
18.30 – 19.00	Buyers let in to spend, spend, spend
19.10 – 19.25	Sellers collect unsold games and proceeds from sales
Inquest into how we paid out more money than we took in	

EATING OUT IN DERBY

The Hallmark Hotel has its own Brasserie, but for those who wish to leave the hotel to eat, there are at least eight restaurants within a short distance of the hotel and a considerable number more in the city centre, which is a 20-30 minute walk, depending on which part you are aiming for. If that's too long a walk, there is a taxi rank directly outside of the hotel.

Rather conveniently, there are also several takeaways in Midland Road and some shops and a cash point in the train station. There is

also a cash point outside the Post Office in Midland Road. **Please do not bring your take-away meals and alcoholic drinks into the hotel.** The former undermines the food sales, which we have asked them to provide, and the latter breaches their licence conditions.

Here is a list of venues that you may wish to try, which are generally arranged by increasing distance from the hotel out to a distance of about 1.4 miles. Most of these places get very busy on Friday and Saturday nights, so booking is strongly advised if you plan to go mid-evening; however, some of the restaurants in Midland Road and London Road do 'early bird' offers if you have ordered and/or eaten by 7pm.

Please do let us know about where you went this year for inclusion in next year's booklet – as you can guess we've been entirely reliant on the local gamers' knowledge and feedback from the past few years when compiling this list.

RESTAURANT LIST

(Listed in rough order of distance from the hotel) Note: Midland Road is the road with the car park entrances; London Road is the main road at the end of Midland Road. This guide is made from personal experiences rather than from any web site comments, so it's worth using the web for additional information and views. We welcome any feedback you may have on any establishments you visit this year (be they listed here already or not).

Hallmark Hotel Brasserie. 0 yards. Used by several groups, and impressions were generally favourable. Incredibly convenient.

Antibo 01332 201700 21 Midland Rd, Derby, DE1 2SL. Italian, 50 yards

A 'modern' Italian restaurant, with tiled floors, and thus rather noisy. Popular with parties, and

often busy. The food is decent and the location convenient.

Shalimar Gold Restaurant 01332 366745 15 Midland Rd, Derby, DE1 2SN Indian, 250 yards

Since 2014, this has moved closer to the hotel and has gone up market, and now gives Anoki a run for its money.

Viceroy 01332 209991 8-9 Midland Rd, Derby, DE1 2SN Indian, 100 yards

The staff has a tendency to rush the clients, especially the ones on 'early-bird' sittings. The food, though, gets the approval of the customers.

Mansion House 6-7 Midland Rd, Derby, DE1 2SN. Steaks, etc., 150 yards

Has become well-established and increasingly popular in recent years. Started out as a wine bar selling food, now seems to be going for the posh food market, while selling wine with it.

Mogal E Azam 01332 294040 2-3 Midland Road, Derby DE1 2SN. Indian, 200 yards

As Shalimar got closer to the Hallmark, this place has opened up on the vacated premises.

Anoki 01332 292888 129 London Rd (R), Derby, DE1 2QN. Indian, 250 yards

Gourmet Indian cuisine. Pricey, but worth it. Probably only one of two restaurants in the immediate vicinity that it is worth dressing up a bit for (because you'll feel out-of-place if you don't). Worth booking a table, unless you go early (i.e. before 7pm). Very large operation.

Bella Mora 01332 360850 147 London Rd (R), Derby, DE1 2QN. Italian, 250 yards.

Booking strongly advised as the web reviews are hugely positive, so custom is likely to be increasing.

Pepitos Ltd 01332 360663 127 London Rd (R), Derby, DE1 2QN. Tex-Mex, 300 yards.

Chilli peppers with everything, including the ham and pineapple pizza, and the steaks. Hugely popular, so booking definitely advised.

Mount Everest 01332 298060 165 London Rd (L), Derby, DE1 2SU. Nepalese, 300 yards.

This place serves food that is recognisably a variant on Indian - same names, but slightly different flavours, and not strongly coloured (so possibly more authentic). Also a little cheaper than its sub-continental rivals. Totally chaotic service with meals arriving at random intervals, if at all, but small groups may be safe. Good Indian food not noticeably different to the standard range but above average quality.

Harvester 01332 371471 Roundhouse Rd, Pride Park, Derby, DE24 8JE. Chicken, burgers, etc. 400 yards. Have you been to a Harvester before? Across the railway from the hotels, which can cause access problems when the station ticket barriers are running, this is a typical Harvester, with the 'usual' selection of chicken, burger and steak dishes, and other stuff beside, with the main claim to fame being the 'all you can eat' salad bar. Not for food snobs.

Steliana's & Sapho's Greek Taverna 01332 385200 11 London Rd (R), Derby, DE1 2QS. Greek, 500 yards.

This place certainly has character, and sometimes has live music. If you want a Greek dinner, this is pretty good, but doesn't have many tables. Booking recommended.

Hana Puri 01332 340707 Unit FT12 Level 2, West Mall, Westfield Centre, Derby, DE1 2PQ. Indian, 700 yards.

Nandos 01332 203263 Copecastle Sq., Derby, DE1 2NQ. Chicken, 700 yards.

Pasta4u 01332 360001 8 Copecastle Sq., Derby, DE1 2NQ. Pasta, 700 yards.

These three food outlets are in the Intu Shopping Centre's food hall and are probably not open evenings.

Pizza Express Level 2, West Mall, Intu Centre, Derby, DE1 2PQ. Take a wild guess, 700 yards.

Also in the Westfield but open evenings (the side entrance to the centre is open until the cinema empties), large, the usual Pizzaexpress experience.

The Engine Shed 01332 87487 Derby College, Pride Park (immediately on the far side of the railway station).

Situated in the converted old Engine Shed house of Derby's historic Roundhouse. Derby College's catering training college students open service at lunch times and evenings, with menus reflecting excellent locally sourced seasonal produce, at a competitive price, with instruction from experienced and skilled chefs. The service can be amusing as the students don't always get it right, but they try hard. Good food, with white linen tablecloths, at a reasonable price, a hidden gem.

Swiss Cottage 01332 344402 89-91 St. Peters St, Derby, DE1 2AB. Cafe 900 yards.

Mogul 01332 203343 41-43 Green La, Derby, DE1 1RS. Indian, 1000 yards. Good reports heard.

Seven Restaurant and Café Bar 01332 332277
Weelwright Way, Pride Park, Derby, DE24
8SQ. Café Bar, 1100 yards.

Cucina Cafe Restaurant 01332 346796 26-28
Green La, Derby, DE1 1RP. Spanish, 1200
yards.

Thai Boran 01332 343933 6 Green La, Derby,
DE1 1RP. Thai, 1200 yards.

Mick Haytack thinks it's good.

Little Frankies 01332 867830 39 Cornmarket,
Derby, DE1 2DG. Italian, 1200 yards.

'Instant Italian', from the people who brought
you the floundering Frankie and Benny's chain.
Does what it says on the tin.

New Water Margin Cantonese Restaurant
01332 290482 72-74 Burton Rd, Derby, DE1
1TG. Chinese, 1200 yards.

Nandos 01332 371459 Assembly Rooms,
Market Pl, Derby, DE1 3AH. Spicy chicken
dishes, 1300 yards.

Shing Do The 01332 345644 27 Wardwick,
Derby, DE1 1HA. Chinese, 1350 yards.

Slug & Lettuce 01332 341946 11 Iron Gate,
Derby, DE1 3FJ. Chicken, steak, burgers, etc.
etc. 1350 yards

If you know what goes on at a Slug and Lettuce,
you'll know what to expect. If you don't, I
shouldn't bother finding out this weekend.

Wonky Table The 01332 295000 32-33 Sadler
Gate, Derby, DE1 3NR. English, 1350 yards

Typical English menu, with prices ranging from
£10 for a vegetarian dish up to £20 for the most
expensive steak.

Pizza Express Ltd 01332 349718 2 Iron Gate,
Derby, DE1 3GL. Italian, 1350 yards

It's a pizza chain, but without the bad features.
Typically smart modern interior and a big range
of Italian starters, pizza and pasta. Bring your
money-off vouchers for a Sunday night send-
off.

Excelsior The 01332 364907 6-8 Becket St,
Derby, DE1 1HT. Chinese, 1350 yards.

Mick Haytack approves of the Excelsior.

Mexico 01332 3420903 4-3 Sadler Gate,
Derby, DE1 3NR. Mexican, 1350 yards

Frankie & Benny's 01332 333210 Unit
3A/Derwent Parade, Pride Park, Derby, DE24
8BW. Italian, 1400 yards

Another outlet across the railway line, but
you'd probably get a taxi to this one.

Thai Dusit 01332 372016 8 Bold La, Derby,
DE1 3NT, Thai, 1400 yards.

Another with a reasonable reputation.

Shabab Balti House 01332 341811 11 Curzon
St, Derby, DE1 1LH. Balti, 1400 yards.

Emily's Steakhouse 01332 368863 24 Monk
St, Derby, DE22 3QB, Steak, 1400 yards.

Iberico World Tapas Tel 01332 345456, 9-11
Bold Lane Derby DE1 3NT 1400 yards

"Iberico World Tapas brings together the rustic
simplicity of Spanish tapas together with the
refined ingredients of world cooking."
Whatever that means - chips with everything,
possibly.

Limes Bar & Restaurant 01332 613665 102
Friar Gate, Derby, DE1 1EX. Modern, 1600
yards.

Le Bistrot Pierre 01332 370470 18 Friargate, Derby, DE1 1BX. French, 1 mile. One local likes it, while another thinks it looks good without having become a customer at any point to date.

Zizzi's 01332 208297 16-17 Friar Gate, Derby, DE1 1BX4. Italian, 1 mile

Another pizza chain. See if you can taste the difference that a wood-fired oven is supposed to make.

Pietro 01332 34029938 Friar Gate, Derby, DE1 1DA 1 mile

Baseball Balti & Barbecue 01332 771444 193 Harrington St (no relation), Pear Tree, Derby, DE23 8NZ 1 mile

Pizza Hut 01332 660880 Wyvern Way, Chaddesden, Derby, DE21 6NZ. Pizza 1.14 miles

Nico's 01332 208220 12 Brick St, Derby, DE1 1DU 1.23 miles

Toby Carvery 01332 662504 Nottingham Rd, Chaddesden, Derby, DE21 6LZ 1.24 miles

McDonald's Restaurants Ltd 01332 296257 181-193 Osmaston Park Road, Derby, DE24 8BT 1.42 miles

Balti International 01332 383044 266-268 Uttoxeter New Rd, Derby, DE22 3LL 1.43 miles

Highly rated by those who go there, this little restaurant has no alcohol licence, but you can take your own drinks, or bring them round from the nearby pub. It seems fine to me, but most of the people who like its authenticity haven't been further east than the North Sea, so opinions on that aspect of it are a bit suspect, in my view.

Mick Haytack also recommends the Zing Vaa for a Chinese as "the best in Derby", but it is three miles from the hotel. For an Indian, he rates the Jaipur in Repton, but that's a 15 minute drive.

For a Chinese buffet meal, MH suggests the May Sum in Babbington Lane.

Jeremy Tullett: Probably the poshest restaurant in the city centre - it certainly lays claim to be - is in the Cathedral Quarter Hotel, about a mile away. With crisp white tablecloths and nice wine glasses, it probably is worth looking smart for. I had a very good New Year's Eve meal there a few years ago.

There are also quite a few pubs in the vicinity, several of which serve food in the evening. You can find some of the better ones listed on the next page.

We're still awaiting feedback on the following restaurants in particular;

Masa Restaurant Tel 01332 203345, The Old Wesleyan Chapel, Brook Street, Derby DE1 3PF

"Masa is renowned to be one of the best restaurants in Derby. Set in a lovingly converted chapel, we've built a reputation for culinary excellence throughout our ten-year history at the heart of Derby's ever-changing restaurant scene."

Okra Restaurant Tel 01332 987873, 5 Friar Gate, Derby DE1 1BU

"O-kra offers a unique and sensory dining experience built on a belief that our food should be authentic and enlightening."

Thanks to Mick Haytack for the additional information provided in this section.

DRINKING IN DERBY

As you may notice, there are a few pubs nearby. Below is a list of the nearest and also some of the better pubs at a bit more distance. I suggest looking at the Beer In The Evening web site (beerintheevening.com) for current information and customer reviews. If a nearby pub isn't in this list then you should probably take that omission as a hint.

LIST OF PUBS

Victoria Inn Tel. 01332 740091 12 Midland Place, Derby, DE1 2RR, 50 yards.

In the last 15 years this has been variously Derby's gay pub, Derby's premier live music venue, closed, reopened, and refurbished. Currently staging occasional live music evenings, it is a considerably more user-friendly place than it once was, but probably less interesting for that.

Waterfall Tel. 01332 366517 Railway Terrace, Derby, DE1 2RU 50 yards.

A large, airy, bar with Sky Sports and the usual array of mass-produced beers. Quite nice as these places go, as it isn't usually rammed. It has tables big enough for playing games, should anyone wish to decamp from the hotel

The Brunswick Inn Tel. 0.1332 290677, 1 Railway Terrace, Derby, DE1 2RU, 200 yards

Fantastic pub, considered the best pub in this area until we discovered the next one along. The Brunny is Everards-owned but with loads of guest beers. Lots of small rooms for a quiet game of 18AL (the staff don't mind that sort of thing). Food is good quality pub grub, like pies served until 5.00pm Friday and Saturday, but there is no food served on Sunday – or there was not a few years back, but it might be worth checking. This is the place to go if you can't wait for the Friday evening **MidCon** buffet; a

dozen or so gamers now turn up on the Thursday before **MidCon** to play games in the pub in the afternoon, before repairing to the Alex for more drinking in the evening.

Part of the original 1840s railway cottage development, this Grade II listed building has heaps of old world charm, unlike the staff. It brews its own beer, and generally has a number of guest beers. We used to source **MidCon's** beer from the Brunswick until they let us down one year. Manager looks like he'd like to introduce the concept of Unhappy Hour.

The Alexandra Tel 01332 293993. 203 Siddals Road, DE1 2QE. 230 yards.

An even better pub, in the opinion of professional drinker Paul Oakes and rank amateur John Harrington. Walk past The Brunny and carry on away from the hotel for about 30 yards and you'll see this place. A Freehouse owned by Castle Rock brewery (a very good thing) with some really cheap B&B rooms. With big selection of Castle Rock beers and some guest beers too, this is the best pub within staggering distance of the hotel for those who like their beer tasting of beer. Sublime cold pies (rated best ever experienced by one frequent pie eating **MidCon** attendee); a rabbit (pet, not pie); railway memorabilia heaven (check the pub clock) and – well what else do you want, apart from the cheesecake night to be moved from Tuesday to the weekend? The Scorpion Chilli Chocolate is an ideal gift for people you do not like very much.

Royal Telegraph, 73 London Road, Derby, DE1 2QS, 500 yards.

A wannabe J D's pub, but only sells Marston's (one of the few FTSE 350 companies that knows how to use an apostrophe). OK for the

basics, but if this is the fare you're after, then you're better off going a little further, to..

Babington Arms (Wetherspoon's) Tel. 01332 38364711-13 Babington La, Derby, DE1 1TA 900 yards.

Tesco with hand-pumps. Serves food, with a good choice of ales. It's a 'Spoons, so cheap food and beer that should still be in date – but only just - by the time you finish it.

The Smithfield, Meadow Road, Derby, DE1 2BH, 1000 yards.

A bit further north from the Alex, across the park, then the river. Has recently changed hands and been refurbished. Now serves food and a limited range of real ales.

Exeter Arms 01332 346679 Exeter Pl, Derby, DE1 2EU 1000 yards.

Located just north of the A52, The Exeter Arms is a traditional real ale pub and Dancing Duck Brewery Free House. Stocks six excellent real ales and does food 12-9 (12-4 Sunday). Small pub, wooden floors, tables, chairs. Crowded on a Saturday night.

The Jorrocks Tel. 01332 346852 41 Iron Gate, Derby, DE1 3GA4, 1300 yards.

Its narrow frontage gives it a quaint Dickensian appearance. Good real ales.

Standing Order (Wetherspoon's) Tel. 01332 207591 28-32 Iron Gate, Derby, DE1 3GL, 1500 yards.

Located towards the city centre through the pedestrian area from the Exeter. The word in brackets is all the information you need, Shirley (and co.). Serves food with a choice of ales, cheap. Better architecture in here than the other 'spoons, but this one is further from the

hotel. Pete Mason gets an orgasm just walking through the front door.

Ye Olde Dolphin Inn Tel. 01332 267711 5a Queen St, Derby, DE1 3DL, 1500 yards.

North from the Standing Order. Said to be Derby's most haunted pub, it is attractive enough, with a half-timbered façade. This genuinely old building has a number of tiny wood-panelled rooms inside, but is not otherwise remarkable. Good pub, albeit upmarket, that serves food, and a good choice of ales. Just around the corner is what used to be called The Old Silk Mill...

The Silk Mill Ale & Cider House 19 Full St, Derby DE1 3AF, 1500 yards.

Reopened a few years ago, with a slight renaming. Serves a selection of real ales and ciders and also serves British food "with a twist". Popular with those heading for the Silk Mill comedy club.

The Flower Pot 23-25 King Street, Derby, DE1 3DZ, 1600 yards.

North of the Dolphin, a gem of a pub, many lovely beers, tucked away around a corner at the northern end of the central part of the city, on the A6. No food in the evenings

Falstaff Free House Tel. 01332 342902 74 Silver Hill Rd, Derby, DE23 6UJ, 1600 yards.

Good real ales. The Seven Stars is nearby

The Seven Stars, Tel 01332 340169, 97 King Street, Derby, DE1 3EE, 1600 yards.

Also serves real ales, but "if you're in Derby and only have time to visit one pub, this probably isn't it" says one review online. Only one beer when Pete Mason went - and no food either. Head further north to...

The Five Lamps, Tel 01332 348730 25 Duffield Road, Derby, DE1 3BH, 2000 yards.

Food: 12 - 8pm Sun: 12 - 5pm. The highlight of MidCon 2012 for Pete Mason, despite the 20 minute walk to get there. Friendly staff, excellent pub food at a reasonable price and more beers than you can shake a stick at.

Our thanks go to Pete Mason for providing additional input in to this section. Additional thanks go to Pete Mason's Liver.

FURTHER GAMING OPPORTUNITIES

There's an extensive calendar of gaming conventions scattered across the country throughout the year (but they can't be as good as **MidCon**, obviously).

Unless you didn't give an address when registering at one of several UK board-gaming conventions, you will get a copy of **Queen's Lane Advertiser** (QLA) posted to you several times a year and this fine publication lists most of the forthcoming UK cons on its front page.

If you know of a convention that isn't listed there, you simply have to let the QLA guys know. Even better, hand a copy of the QLA to the convention organiser and suggest they get in touch.

There's also a lot of games related stuff on the web, so for starters, try these web sites...

Royal Society of Gamers: A UK based gaming podcast with an extensive map of UK games clubs (now with worldwide reach too).

Games Lore: Telford games shop which also hosts a large list of games clubs on their web site.

BoardGameGeek: Don't claim you don't know it! Gigantic collection of reviews, game aids,

rules translations, videos, forums, Uncle Tom Blogley and all ... about playing board games, RPG's, computer and tablet games etc. The Guilds section (under Misc.) has a games club listing.

Make sure you check under the entry for the United Kingdom as the England and Wales and UK sections are moribund. A bunch of people are keeping the club entries up to date in this guild, so it's definitely worth a look.

Shut up and Sit Down: games blog in a video format, rather than an audio podcast.

BrettSpielWelt: offers instant web gaming with either downloadable versions of many of the games you see at **MidCon** to play against the computer (St. Petersburg is excellent) or live games. Many other sites like this exist, such as **Boiteajeux.net**, which is where about half the 1980's postal gaming set hangs out.

VASSAL: for those who like their games to feature shooting, a level of realism and monster rule books, but cannot find a similarly minded person locally, this site offers a huge array of war games (and miniature games) and it truly has a global reach.

For Whom The Web Rocks: a large selection of 18XX and other games run by hobby hero Keith Thomasson via e-mail on a turn-at-a-time basis. Takes about three months to play a long game, but you can plan your turn when you have the time, and think about it for as long as you want instead of being pinned at a computer all night.

There is also a large number of board game related happenings and groups to be found on the increasingly popular Meetup site – there's also an app for that, so no matter where you are in the world, it's quite likely that you will be able to track down some local gaming action.

Shops: Spirit (the stall here), Shire, Games Lore, Board Game Guru, and there are also plenty of German sites that ship to the UK cheaply too.

If you've not yet been swept up by the Kickstarter crowd funding phenomenon, then you should know that there are an increasing number of board games are launched there – especially those miniture heavy games which rack up hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of preorders.

LINKS TO SITES MENTIONED HERE

www.royalsocietyofgamers.com

<https://www.gameslore.com/>

<https://boardgamegeek.com/>

www.shutupandsitdown.com/

www.brettspielwelt.de/?nation=en

<http://boiteajeux.net/index.php>

www.vassalengine.org/

www.fwtwr.com/fwtwr/

www.meetup.com/

<https://www.spiritgames.co.uk/>

www.shiregames.com/

www.boardgameguru.co.uk/

<https://www.kickstarter.com/>

JOHN DODDS (1961 – 2016)

Chris Tringham (MidCon chairman from 1981 – 1996) writes: It is with great sadness that I find myself having to write an obituary for my good friend John Dodds, who passed away a few weeks ago, very shortly after being diagnosed with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.

I had known John for more than 35 years, initially through the **MidCon** committee, and we had remained in contact even though I have been living in Hong Kong for 20 years (we last met up two years ago when I visited London). I hope I can do justice to John's significant involvement in the games hobby over many years.



John Dodds

15th February 1961 to 16th September 2016

John Dodds was a key member of the MidCon committee from 1981 – 1996 (the 1981 event was the first one at the Royal Angus hotel, but we called it **MidCon** III because there were two earlier **MidCons** in Digbeth in the late 70s organized by Dave Allen).

For the first few years, John's official responsibility was publicity, and from 1982

onwards he ran the (highly successful) quiz on Friday and Saturday nights.

In 1988, John took over as tournament director for the National Diplomacy Championships. Then in 1993, he came up with a proposal to run qualifying events all over the UK. This was hugely successful, and the official record shows an increase from 37 to 117 players. Needless to say, this required a huge amount of effort by John – coordinating and publicising the events and turning up at most of them himself. John repeated this heroic effort in 1994, but then had to stand down due to his increasing workload (at that time John was working at HM Treasury as Head of the Budget Coordination Team). Stephen Agar took over, and I believe the qualifying events continued for a few years, and they certainly increased attendance at **MidCon**.

John was editor of **Perspiring Dreams** (44 issues from June 1980 - June 1984). This was a first-rate traditional Diplomacy zine, and it appeared very regularly and then folded efficiently (which is far more than most of us managed). This is all the more amazing when you consider that John was studying at Christ's College Cambridge for the first two years of the zine's existence.

John did many good things to promote the board games hobby. He co-edited 37 issues of **Hobby News** (from 1992 – 1995), wrote the **Novice Package**, ran the **Zine Bank**, and also produced the **Hobby Services Bulletin**. John was a regular at cons both large and small, and was always an affable and patient games player, whether winning or losing. On top of that, he was always good company and invariably had something interesting to say on a wide range of subjects.

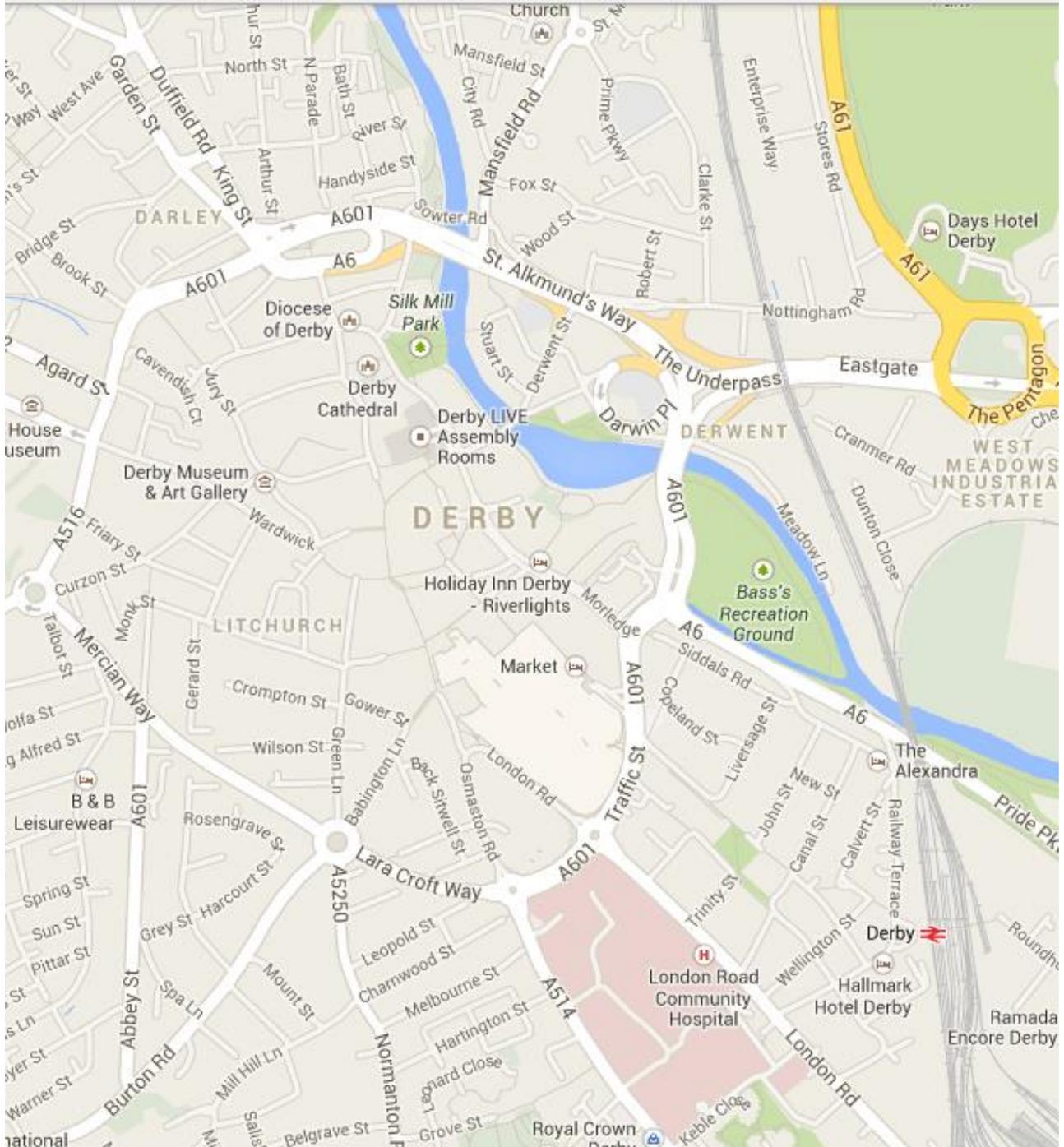
I will always remember a group of us meeting up to watch the 1992 election results. We all expected a Labour victory, so when we heard the results of the exit poll shortly after 10 pm most of us thought there must have been a mistake. John then quietly informed us he had

placed a (fairly substantial) late bet on the Tories to win, which of course they did.

There was a memorial service at Stationers' Hall in London on 20 October, where we heard a lot more about John's early life, his time studying at Cambridge, his interest in board games (from Dane Maslen), his love of reading, watching Darlington FC and Durham CCC all over the country, and his long career in the civil service - including 15 years with HM Treasury. It was certainly a life lived to the full.

Please raise a glass to John during the weekend, and for anyone who wants to make a donation in his memory to Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis (the charity nominated by John's wife Clare) there'll be a bucket on the registration desk or you can go online to <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/johncdodds>.

MAP OF THE LOCAL AREA



MIDLAND HOTEL PLAN

