

Introduction

Board games are played by everyone, young and old. They have a universal appeal that transcends cultural and language barriers. They can both teach and entertain us. The playing of board games is embedded into our culture, not just the games themselves but the act of playing, the interaction with family and friends, the lessons to be learned and the fun to be had.

We have a natural instinct to play, to escape reality to a place where there are rules but no real consequences. Everyone enters a board game on the same level. After that there is strategy and luck, rules and rivalry; there is learning and enjoyment, elation and disappointment; there is life. Board games create a framework within which we can interact in friendly competition in a safe environment.

Board games have always reflected the world we live in and the way we live our lives. Why do you play board games? What is the most important thing about playing? What's your Game Plan? Explore the exhibition, play the game and discover if you really are the type of player you think you are.

Senet, about 664-525 BC

The oldest surviving board games come from the Middle East, where game playing was a serious pastime in countries such as Egypt and Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq).

Senet is often referred to as the national game of Ancient Egypt. It dates from before 3000 BC and was played across all levels of Egyptian society. Although the actual rules are unknown it is assumed to be a race game for two players using at least five playing pieces, each moving across the board's thirty squares. Some squares have markings to indicate particular movement. *Senet* means 'passing' and is thought to have connections with the afterlife.

Simple boards have been found moulded in clay and many complete sets have been found in Egyptian

tombs, including that of the boy pharaoh Tutankhamun. This siltstone board survives without its playing pieces, or its four two-sided stick or knucklebone dice.

Kindly lent by Petrie Museum, University College London

Square One

The classic board games played today have been around for a long time. Most have their origins in the Far or Middle East - in Egypt, Persia, India and China - with some originating in Europe. Many games have been adapted to suit new players and customs as they reached other parts of the world.

Originally these games were played by adults and mostly enjoyed in the courts of kings and rulers. As trade and movement between countries and continents developed, knowledge about games spread. They became popular with a broader range of society. Some adult games were later adapted to be played only by children.

Many of the classic games are two-player games, some relying on chance, some on strategy and some on a combination of both. Early games introduce the various types of play –

race, chase, space and displace – that form the basis of all board games.

Draughts

This is a classic strategy game where players battle to take all their opponent's pieces to win. Pieces move diagonally forward, jumping to capture opposing pieces.

Draughts is thought to have been invented in France in about 1100. It developed from three other board games that have their roots further east. It uses the chequered board of *chess*, the playing pieces of *backgammon* and the rules of *Alquerque*, a game that originated in Egypt and came to Europe with the Arabic Moors from North Africa.

There is no world standard for playing *draughts* – different versions are found in different countries. The original name of the game, *Checkers*, is still used in the United States, as it came from England with early settlers in the 17th century.

Game type - Displace

Number of players - 2

Number of playing pieces - 24 (12 of each colour)

Medieval draughts

Early English games pieces like these would have been used to play both *draughts* and tables (*backgammon*).

They are made from bone and antler, by-products of a medieval way of life.

Simple materials and design made *draughts* an inexpensive game to own and play.

Made: England, 1000-1100

Classic draughts set

The relatively simple rules of play have made *draughts* a popular family game.

This mass produced set was designed with a hinge to allow the board to fold in half, making it easier to carry and store.

Maker: JW Spear & Sons

Made: England or Germany, about 1900

The Draughts Players

The artist Joseph Clark made several paintings capturing the pleasure and concentration of playing games in Victorian England. These images reinforced the importance of game playing in family life at a time when there was increasing interaction between the generations.

Painted: England, 1859

Pachisi / Ludo

In this game players race four counters around the board using a roll of the dice. The winner is the first player to get all their counters home.

Pachisi has been described as India's national game. Records date it back to the 15th century but it is likely to be at least 500 years older. The board is a simple cruciform design and usually made of textile.

In the 16th century, Emperor Akbar had one of his palace courtyards marked out as a giant *pachisi* board and used enslaved girls dressed in appropriate colours as playing pieces.

The Western versions of the game, *Ludo* in England and *Parcheesi* in the United States, have always been designed for children.

Game type - Race

Number of players - 2-4

Number of playing pieces - 8-16 (4 of each colour)

Pachisi board and counters

The playing squares on this board have been created with decorative stitching. The ones marked with a cross are safe squares. The ivory playing pieces have a traditional minaret shape and open up to reveal delicately carved and painted figures inside. The long dice were used as an alternative to cowrie shells. The four scoring sides reflect the four world ages of Hindu cosmology – Krita (4), Treta (3), Dvapara (2) and Kali (1).
Made: India, 1850-1900

Ludo

This game has an unusual diagonal cruciform design. Western *Ludo* boards are always very colourful, harking back to their Eastern roots. What colour do you choose when you play *Ludo*?
Maker: Chad Valley Co. Ltd
Made: England, 1920s

Check Your Facts

Games from India

Two of the most popular classic children's board games played today originated in India - *Ludo* and *Snakes and Ladders*.

Both games have a long and distinguished history. They were originally played seriously by adults. When these games came to Europe, and specifically England, at the end of the 19th century, they were redesigned to appeal to children.

They are often produced on either side of a double board and both feature regularly in modern compendia.

Backgammon

This is one of the earliest race games, combining strategy and luck with a roll of the dice. A player wins the game when all their counters have travelled around the course and been removed from the board.

Backgammon has its roots in the ancient games of *Senet* and *The Royal Game of Ur*, and was invented in Persia in the 6th century. The board has a number of astrological references. The twelve points on each side of the board are thought to represent the months of the year and the thirty playing pieces the days of the lunar month.

Backgammon was regarded as very glamorous in the mid-20th century and more recently has become a very popular game to play online. The First Internet Backgammon Server has been running since July 1992.

Game type - Race

Number of players - 2

Number of playing pieces - 30 (15 of each colour)

Bad'Gammon

This modern travel *backgammon* set is designed for children, to be easy to play and fun to carry around. Play is based on the Aesop's fable *The Hare and the Tortoise*, a tale of moral instruction.

Maker: Les Jouets Libres

Made: France, 2015

Fox and Geese

This is a game of unequal forces. One player takes the role of a single fox who must try to capture their opponent's geese, whilst the player with the geese must evade and trap the fox.

Fox and Geese was popular among all classes of society from the 14th century onwards and was still being played in rural England in the 1930s. Boards have been found scratched into church cloisters and King Edward IV had two silver sets in the late 1400s. It is said that Queen Victoria played the game with Prince Albert during their courtship.

Game type - Chase

Number of players - 2

Number of playing pieces - 14 (1 fox and 13 geese), though this varies

Check Your Facts

Fox and Geese and other animals

Fox and Geese is the English version of a game that is played in different parts of the world. One of the oldest is the Icelandic *Halatafl* (the Fox Game).

The name of the game changes depending on where it is played. In various European countries it is called *Wolf and Sheep*. In south-east Asia there are both *Cows and Leopards* and *Sheep and Tigers*, while in Mexico one finds *Coyote and Chickens*.

Nine Men's Morris

This comes from the family of games that include Three and Six Men's Morris as well as the more usual *Nine Men's Morris*. It could be played on a specially made board similar to this one, or chalked onto the ground with people as playing pieces.

Made: England, 1970s

Fox and Geese pieces

These painted wooden playing pieces are shaped to look like a real fox and geese. They are from a version of the game that has 18 geese instead of the more traditional 13.

Maker: Green Board Game Company

Made: England, 1995

The Game of the Fox and Geese

This traditionally circular wooden board uses bone pins for geese and a marble

for the fox. The same board design was adapted to play *Solitaire*.

Made: England, about 1850

Nine Men's Morris

In this strategy game players place a counter or 'man' on the board in turn, trying to form 'mills' - three men in a line. This allows the player to remove one of their opponent's men. The winner is the player who reduces their opponent to two men.

A version of the game was played in ancient Egypt about 1400 BC. From there it spread across Europe, reaching England after the Norman Conquest in 1066. It is part of the family of games known as mill or merels, originally from Latin, meaning counter or gaming piece.

The simple design of the Morris games can be drawn or scratched onto any surface and with the use of stones can be played anywhere. The game is often combined with *chess* and *backgammon* as a compendium box.

Game type - Space

Number of players - 2

Number of playing pieces - 18 (9 of each colour), though this varies

Go

This strategy game has two players competing to encircle as much territory of the board as possible. Any surrounded pieces are captured. The player gaining the most board space and captured stones wins the game.

This ancient game originated in China about 3,000 years ago. It became popular in Japan from the 5th century where it was traditionally played by the noble and warrior classes.

It is usually played sitting on the ground using a low table, with players in turn placing one of their stones on an empty intersection. There are 180 white stones, and 181 black ones, as black always starts. Play is encouraged between opponents of varying skill or experience. The weaker player is given the advantage of placing up to nine stones on the board before play begins.

Game type - Space

Number of players - 2

Number of playing pieces - 361 (180
white and 181 black)

Check Your Facts

Go - the most complex board game in the world?

The basic rules of *Go* may be simple, yet *Go* has almost limitless variations of play, making it a very complex game. There are more possible positions than there are atoms in the known universe!

Until recently *Go* was considered too complex to programme a computer to play. This changed in early 2016 when world *Go* champion, Lee Se-dol of South Korea, played Google's DeepMind software AlphaGo. He was beaten four games to one.

Go

The traditional design of the *Go* board has remained unchanged for hundreds of years. Boards are often hollowed out underneath so that the pieces make a louder sound when laid. The black and white counters are kept separately in wooden bowls.

Maker: Just Games Trading Co. Ltd

Made: England, 1977

Cup and saucer

This delicate tea cup and saucer from the Qing dynasty shows Chinese ladies playing *Go*. An everyday object showing an everyday activity.

Made: China, about 1740

Snakes and Ladders

In this classic game of chance players race their pieces from 1 to 100 using a roll of the dice. They are helped or hindered by ladders and snakes, which take them upwards or downwards. The winner is the first player to reach the last square.

In India the game has been played since at least the 13th century. It was known by several different names and had a deeply religious and moral significance.

In 1892, the game first appeared in England as a circular board. This soon changed to the original design of a boustrophedon track, running right to left and then left to right consecutively, proceeding upwards in layers. Early English games reflected the morality lessons of the Indian game, simplified for children. Today the game just features the snakes and ladders.

Game type - Race

Number of players - 2+

Number of playing pieces - 1 per player
(each a different colour)

Kismet Snakes and Ladders

Kismet means fate or destiny and harks back to the original Indian idea of the game. The seven virtues will help the hero succeed, but there is the ever present danger of the snakes leading him astray. What happens when the cruel boy kicks the dog?

Made: Germany, 1895

Chess

Chess is a two player strategy game where each player has a range of pieces that move differently. The winner is the player that traps their opponent's King and declares 'checkmate'.

The game originated in north-west India in the 5th or 6th century. Known then as *chaturanga*, it was a strategic game of warfare, reflecting the make-up of an Indian army.

As with many games, *chess* spread across Europe via the Islamic world. It was played by wealthy men and women at the higher levels of society. The modern form of the game was more or less in place by the end of the 15th century.

Chess today can claim to be the best known game in the world. It has retained its ability to make players think, plan and learn.

Game type - Displace

Number of players - 2

Number of playing pieces - 32 (16 of each colour)

Check Your Facts

Standardising Chess

The early Indian form of chess, known as *chaturanga*, had playing pieces reflecting the four main elements of an Indian army - elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry.

When the game reached Europe, these adapted to their new cultural setting, evolving into the pieces we know today – bishop, knight, rook or castle, and pawn. The Raja and Vizier became the King and Queen and the board became chequered.

Standardised chess today is the western form of a game played in different ways all over the world.

Pirate Chess set

This set is designed to appeal to children with the playing pieces as pirates and soldiers. You have to make up the board and the *chess* pieces before you can start playing the game. Can you find the soldier with the baguette and the pirate with the banana?

Maker: LEGO TM

Made: Denmark, 2015

Mirror back

This carved ivory scene shows a typical medieval courtly scene with a man and woman playing *chess*. *Chess* was often used as an allegory of courtship and love in the romantic poetry of the time. In this scene, the lady seems to have the upper hand having captured three of her opponent's pieces.

Made: France or Germany, about 1320

Staunton design Chess set

This classic design was first made in England by John Jaques in 1849. It was designed by Jaques' brother-in-law, Nathaniel Cook, and named after Howard Staunton, who was recognised as the best player in the world at that time. Staunton sets are still used in most major *chess* tournaments today.

Maker: Just Games Trading Company

Made: England, 1977

Combined Pocket Chess and Draught Board

This is an early example of a board game designed for play while travelling. As its title suggests, it could be carried around in a pocket. The playing pieces can be turned over to reveal the draughtsmen.

Maker: Thomas De La Rue & Co. Ltd

Made: England, 1890s

Chess table

This table and pieces were made for Ligaraja Wodeyar, ruler of Coorg in south-west India from 1811-20. It is an unusual design for an Indian board, showing English influence in its cabriole legs and acanthus leaf decoration. It is also higher off the ground than is usual in Indian chess play.

Made: India, about 1815

Chess pieces

This unique *chess* board is made up using pieces from sixteen different *chess* sets - a piece and a pawn from each set.

They are made from different materials – ivory, plastic, wood, ceramic, glass and metal. They come from different countries - India, China, Burma (Myanmar), Indonesia, Germany, England and Scotland. Some are finely made sets for adults and some are more playfully designed for children.

Made: various countries, 1150-2015

Game of Life

In the 18th century, a more direct focus on the state of childhood led to the publication of both books and games for children. The aim of these was to entertain while teaching. Children were given space, both physical and intellectual, to play and develop. To fill these spaces, commercially produced toys and games became accessible to increasingly well-off middle class parents.

As part of this development, a particular type of board game emerged in Britain in the middle of the 18th century and remained popular for the next hundred years. These beautifully designed games were intended for play at home by children under the guidance of adults.

Their basic race design follows the pattern of the *Game of the Goose*, which was first introduced into Britain at the end of the 16th century. This playful game expanded and developed into a way of teaching children a wide range of

subjects, from the purely educational to the morality of good behaviour.

General Knowledge Games

Children's formal education at this time focused very much on the acquisition of facts. These games delivered facts, but in a light-hearted way. Some games featured traditional school subjects, such as history and geography, whilst others demonstrated a wider approach to teaching, bringing in science, astronomy and astrology.

The all-encompassing scope of these games was reflected in their titles. Examples of which include - *The Circle of Knowledge*, *The Wonders of Nature* and *The Chronological Star of the World*.

Games also reflected contemporary developments. Edward Wallis' *Locomotive Game of Railroad Adventures* from the late 1830s shows pictures of various locomotives, carriages and railway stations, as well as passengers and accidents.

Check Your Facts

The Influence of Educators

Three important figures dominated thoughts about children's education in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The influence of John Locke was still strong - that a child's mind was a blank slate and learning should be enjoyable. Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed that children learned best through experiencing the consequences of their actions.

Maria Edgeworth's *Practical Education*, published at the end of the 18th century, became the hand-book of choice for many parents. This developed Locke's ideas into an educational programme to be followed at home.

The Noble Game of Swan

This playfully designed game contains a wide variety of facts ranging from information about whirlwinds, to details about painting techniques, to warnings about the bad nature of jockeys. Darton published several games of a similar design using an elephant, an ostrich and a basket of fruit.

Can you find... two dogs?

Playing spaces: 19

Publisher: William Darton

Published: England, 1821

Science in Sport or the Pleasures of Astronomy

This game, first published in 1804, was revised by Mrs Bryan of Blackheath, a well-known educationalist. The central panel depicts Flamsteed House, site of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, surrounded by four famous scientists - Ptolemy, Copernicus, Brahe and

Newton. Some playing squares lead to rewards or consequences.

Can you find... a bear (in the sky!)?

Playing spaces: 35

Publisher: Edward Wallis

Published: England, about 1815

Geography Games

Educators in the 18th century thought using maps was the best way for children to learn geography. Creating games using maps was already popular in France by the time the first educational game was produced in England in 1759.

This was *A Journey Through Europe or The Play of Geography*, a geographical game based on the Grand Tour. It was played like a *Game of the Goose* with hazards and rewards. The playing spaces were all geographical locations that offered information to players who landed there.

Dissected (jigsaw) puzzles were also widely used for teaching geography and several board games were also published as puzzles. These included Edward Wallis' *Picturesque Round Game of the Produce and Manufacture of England and Wales*, an illustrated map that showed landscape views and

people working, rather than place names.

New Game of Wanderers in the Wilderness

This game reveals a surprising amount of knowledge about South America, probably learnt from Charles Darwin's exploration in the 1830s. The flora and fauna are accurately and beautifully illustrated, although the tiger in the cartouche is a creature from Asia rather than South America.

Can you find... a man-eating crocodile?

Playing spaces: 84

Publisher: Edward Wallis

Published: England, about 1830

A Tour Through the British Colonies and Foreign Possessions

The British Empire was expanding, and playing this game at home would have reinforced the Imperial knowledge that children gained in school. The game begins in Heligoland, two small islands off the coast of Denmark belonging to

Britain at the time. The winning space is London, heart of the Empire.

Can you find... two tigers?

Playing spaces: 37

Publisher: John Betts

Published: England, 1850

Moral Games

Good behaviour and morals were very high on the list of educational priorities. Children's literature showed the way with a series of short fictions known as moral tales, published in the 1740s and 1750s.

In 1790 *The New Game of Human Life* was published by John Wallis and Elizabeth Newbery, a game that would 'contrast the happiness of a virtuous and well spent life with the fatal consequences arising from vicious and immoral pursuits'.

Early moral games were very serious and play sometimes involved severe penalties for wicked crimes and bad behaviour. These were simple race games of chance. Players cursed with the misfortune of continually landing on punishable spaces might understandably get upset and even behave badly! The later games became more light-hearted and were played just for fun.

The Cottage of Content or Right Road and Wrong Ways

Instead of playing spaces this game proceeds via several crossroads on the board. A four-sided teetotum marked F, R, L, B would have given players the options of going forward, right, left or back when they reached a crossroads. The roads have amusing names such as Laughing Stocks Lane.

Can you find... a bull?

Publisher: William Spooner

Published: England, 1848

The Mirror of Truth

A 'Lord of the Game' is appointed who moves all the players' pieces but does not have one themselves. They benefit when players land on a vice by getting two counters from them. If they land on a virtue however, the Lord has to pay them one counter.

Can you find... elephants?

Playing spaces: 45

Publisher: John Wallis and Edward
Wallis

Published: England, 1811

Check Your Facts

Design and Invention

These games were not cheap to produce or to buy. They were available as plain engravings, but were more usually hand-coloured with remarkable attention to detail. The games had accompanying booklets full of factual and entertaining information. They were produced like travelling maps, printed, backed onto linen or canvas, folded and kept in a slipcase.

The inventors and illustrators of these games are largely unknown. George Fox and Thomas Newton were two inventors of moral games but nothing more is known about them. Games would have been illustrated by the same people who worked on puzzles, books and other juvenile publications.

Check Your Facts

Movers and Shakers

Board games played in the 18th and 19th centuries required two different types of playing equipment. The first were pieces that were actively and consistently used in play for the entire game. The second were those that entered the game occasionally and became the physical prize to be won.

Instructions for games sometimes called the playing pieces 'pyramids' or 'markers'. The word 'counter' could also be used. However, this was the term more commonly applied to the larger number of pieces that went into and came out of the central pool.

Columbia or the Land of the West

As a way of learning geography, dissected (jigsaw) puzzles were more popular than board games. They were seen as more playful and are mentioned more frequently in writings and literature of the time. This game can be played either historically on the outer two circles, or geographically on the inner three.

Playing spaces: 36 and 38

Publisher: E & MA Ogilvy

Published: about 1850

Teetotums

Teetotums were used in children's board games instead of dice, which were associated with gambling. They were carved from bone and often decorated with painted lines and flowers. The number of sides varied from four to twelve. Sometimes the numbers or letters were added by the maker, and sometimes by the players.

Material: Bone

Made: England, 1800s

Dice and shakers

These four dice and two carved shakers were made for the high-end export market to Europe. Less expensive shakers and dice were made from bone.

Material: Ivory

Made: China, 1850-70

Gaming counters

Coloured gaming counters were used when a game dictated that each player should have their own colour counters, as well as playing pieces.

Material: Stained bone

Made: England, 1800s

Gaming pieces

These two boxed sets each contain four pieces. Each individual piece is different and would have been used by four players in a game. The wooden set is Tunbridgeware, a particularly intricate wood inlay technique. The tortoiseshell pieces are marked with one to four silver stars to distinguish them.

Gaming counters

This type of counter was very popular in the 19th century and used extensively as gambling chips in a variety of games. The counters came in a range of sizes and designs and could be marked, according to the game being played, with numbers or initials.

Material: Mother of pearl

Made: China, about 1875

Material: Wood and tortoiseshell

Made: England, about 1850

Game pieces and slipcase

This generic boxed set would have been used with many games. It is designed for children's games with a teetotum rather than dice, and differently coloured playing pieces to move around the board. This set was used with an example of the game *The Jubilee*, which would have been stored in this slipcase.

Material: Wood, bone and card

Made: England, about 1810

History Games

Learning history in the early 19th century was all about knowing the kings and queens of England and what happened during their reigns. As the *Historical Pastimes or A New Game of the History of England* of 1803 put it:

‘There cannot be a more agreeable study than History, and none more improving to Youth, than that which conveys to them, in a pleasing and comprehensive manner, the Events which have occurred in their own country.’

These games have over a hundred playing spaces, each one a miniature image of a person or event. The booklet accompanying the games was packed with information, all of which the young players were expected to learn and remember for the next time they played.

The Jubilee, An Interesting Game

This game is one in a series, all very similar in design using a spiral track illustrated with historical events and famous people. Some begin with Adam and Eve, while others confine themselves to British history. This example celebrates the Golden Jubilee of George III and details significant events during his reign.

Can you find... a whale?

Playing spaces: 150

Publisher: John Harris

Published: England, 1810

Check Your Facts

An excerpt from the instructions for *The Jubilee*

‘In playing this Game, a teetotum of eight sides is made use of, together with six counters of different colours, as markers, to avoid confusion in telling the game. Each player should also be provided with about two dozen of counters, on which a nominal value should be set, that any player who happens to be out, may purchase of the winners.’

Le Nouveau Jeu du Costume et des Coeffures des Dames

In this version the theme is ladies' fashion and hairstyles. The winning space is *La Belle Poule*, the name of a French ship that fought the British in 1778. A new hairstyle was invented using a model ship as its centrepiece. The lady in the game, however, has a real poule (chicken) in her hair!

Playing spaces: 63

Publisher: Jean Baptiste Crepy

Published: France, 1778

Juego De La Oca

The *Game of the Goose* is still a popular game in some countries. This is a recent Mexican version designed for children, featuring a variety of cartoon animals. The death space on 58 has a nasty troll-like figure.

Do you recognise the mermaid and her fish friend?

Playing spaces: 63

Publisher: Unknown

Published: Mexico, about 2010

Game of the Golden Goose

This unusual design for the game places the playing area within the body of an actual goose. An American copy was published twenty years later in which the goose is reversed. Laurie published another version called the *Game of the Snake* where cupids take the place of the geese.

Playing spaces: 63

Publisher: RH Laurie

Published: England, 1831

Game of the Goose

The *Game of the Goose* is recognised as the earliest illustrated race game, introducing images and themes into board games. It is a simple race game harking back to the Egyptian game of *Mehen* which had a spiral snake pattern. The *Game of the Goose* is thought to have originated in Italy sometime in the 15th century and remains a popular game in some European countries.

Why geese, why 63 squares, why these particular hazards? No one knows for sure. Geese were considered lucky in Italy and superstitions surrounding numbers and symbols were important to people. Life was seen as divisions of seven year periods, with 63 (the ninth seven) considered a pivotal and potentially dangerous point. Winning the game takes the player past 63 and all is well.

Check Your Facts

A Game of Chance

The *Game of the Goose* is played on a spiral track with 63 playing spaces and uses two dice. The goose spaces are lucky and allow the player to throw the dice again.

The same hazards are always found on the same spaces and always have the same penalty. At the inn one misses a turn, and in prison one has to wait until another player lands there to be released. The death space on 58 sends the player back to the start.

The Game of Goose

This game was made by the well-known company, JW Spear & Sons, and was boxed up with Christmas crackers by their inventor Tom Smith. The game follows the traditional spiral but there are 68 playing spaces rather than the usual 63. Actions are required every three spaces and all feature geese.

Can you find... a fox?

Playing spaces: 68

Publisher: JW Spear & Sons

Published: Germany or England, about 1910

Check Your Facts

The Mansion of Happiness

This series of images shows the game at different stages of its production in 1800, from blank outlines through a combination of printing and handwriting, to the finished version.

The publishers, Laurie and Whittle, dedicated this game to the then Duchess of York, and the Mansion of Happiness itself is represented by Oatlands Park, the residence of the Duke of York.

The crimes - theft, lying, drunkenness, cheating - have strict punishments, including prison sentences, whipping, the stocks and ducking in water.

Fun and Games

Today we are playing more games than ever. The foundations of this were laid during the second half of the 19th century when growing prosperity led to an increase in leisure time. People began seeking more diverse and entertaining pursuits, this included playing board games.

By the end of the century, new and easier printing techniques had led to mass production and cheaper goods, making board games more widely affordable. These were seized upon by families determined that their children should play and have fun.

Games companies actively pursued new ideas, seeking the one game that would prove an instant hit. The 20th century saw not only the emergence of the modern classic games still played today, but also a proliferation of games based on all sorts of human endeavour.

Games were inspired by invention and exploration, sport and leisure, conflict and politics, travel and transport, and the factual and fictional worlds of books, television and film. The world around us and popular culture in particular, continue to be reflected in the games we play.

Check Your Facts

Card, number and word games take over... briefly

In the second half of the 19th century, with the new emphasis on fun, the previously popular educational board games were no longer in fashion.

They were replaced by other types of game which were cheaper and more entertaining. Card games for children, like *Happy Families* and *Snap* became all the rage. *Lotto*, word making, and question and answer games emerged and became immensely popular. This was, however, only a temporary lull in the story of board games.

Current Affairs

The rapidly changing and expanding world of the early 20th century saw a number of board games influenced by major events. Early manufacturers were quick to produce games based on current affairs, whether it was inventions such as wireless communication or recounting the exploits of the Suffragette movement.

Later in the century, widespread interest in space exploration influenced several games. Although based on real life events, the game play was relatively simple with the continuing idea of fun family play.

As well as these more specific games there were also general ones which contained a great deal of information. They tended to focus on the financial world, news and politics. These games were complex and serious and had more of an educational purpose.

Halma

Invented by Howard Monks in 1883, *Halma* can be played by two players using 19 men or four players using 13. It was also known as *Hoppity* because the pieces hop over each other without capture. The aim of the game is to get all one's pieces from a corner of the board to the opposite one.

Maker: Woolley & Co.

Made: England, about 1900

The Strand War Game

This is one of many board games made during the First World War depicting the conflict between the Allies and Germany. It is a cross between *Halma* and draughts, played corner to corner with the aim of placing a piece in the opposing capital. The game was published by *The Strand Magazine*.

Maker: George Newnes Ltd

Made: England, 1916

The Great Wireless Game

This *Ludo*-style game was published at a time when radio transmissions were becoming a regular form of communication between countries. The radio inventor, Marconi, had made his first successful trans-Atlantic transmission in 1902.

Made: England, about 1910

Kindly lent by Vestry House Museum

Across Africa with Livingstone

This game shows the travels of David Livingstone, the 19th century missionary and doctor who was famous for exploring Africa. The board is illustrated with the places he visited and the wildlife he would have seen. One picture shows Livingstone being attacked by a lion, a danger he famously escaped.

Maker: Chad Valley Co. Ltd

Made: England, 1920s

Check Your Facts

Modern Classics

There are very few games that can be classed as modern classics. It is ironic that most were at first rejected by major companies until they proved their worth and popularity.

Monopoly is the best known and is still going strong after 100 years. *Scrabble* and *Cluedo* emerged in the 1940s, both setting the standard for two popular genres of game play - word and mystery. The other game that stands out is *Trivial Pursuit* from the 1980s, arguably the last major game that fits the classic description.

Scrabble

Scrabble was first developed as *Lexico* in the 1930s by an American, Alfred Butts. Following World War Two, his friend James Brunot came up with the name *Scrabble* and the idea that play should start in the centre of the board. Patented in 1948, by the early 1950s its mass appeal had spread across America.

Maker: JW Spear & Sons

Made: England, 1970s

Cluedo

Cluedo is a murder mystery game invented in 1943 by Anthony Pratt, a solicitor's clerk from Birmingham. His wife is credited with helping him design the board. The game was first made by Waddington in 1949 and is known in the US as *Clue*.

Who and what are missing from this game?

Maker: John Waddington Ltd

Made: England, late 1950s

Conflict

Board games are often highly competitive so wars and battles are an obvious choice of theme. Games based on real warfare were already being produced in the mid-19th century and a succession of conflicts for the next hundred years ensured that this continued. During the two World Wars, Britain and Germany published many games that reflected the real conflicts between the two countries.

Games based on real conflict fall into two categories – those which reflect the historical facts, and those that do not necessarily have the correct outcome. General Custer can win the Battle of the Little Big Horn and the Axis powers might be victorious against the Allies in World War Two.

Other games of conflict, like the strategic *Halma* or the conceptual world domination *Risk*, are purely imaginary.

Risk

The game was devised by French film director Albert Lamorisse and was originally called *La Conquete du Monde* (World Conquest). Unofficial alliances can be made but just as easily broken, as the aim of the game is for only one player to gain world domination.

Maker: Parker

Made: France, 1980

Sport and Leisure

The earliest leisure themed games were based around travel and sports. More people had more time to travel. This was reflected both in games featuring different or new modes of transport - planes, trains, cars and bicycles - and in ones based on visiting places at home and abroad. Later leisure pursuits found their way into games. These included going to the theatre and hobbies such as stamp collecting.

Horse racing was the first sport to influence board game design and the playing track used was copied for other sporting games that had a racing track in real life. Other sporting activities did not convert so well. Some team sports however, such as football and cricket, were successfully made into board games.

Escape From Death Star

The *Star Wars* films have generated a vast range of merchandise, including this game. It is based on part of the plot of the original film, released in 1977.

The challenge is to help the heroes Luke, Leia, Han and Chewbacca escape from the Imperial space station, the Death Star.

Maker: Palitoy

Made: England, 1977

Mousetrap

Invented by Marvin Glass, Mousetrap launched in 1963 as an early 3D game. Some of the actual building of the game is part of the play. The whole thing is a chain reaction contraption. It may be inspired by the US cartoonist Rube Goldberg who drew complicated designs that performed easy tasks.

Maker: Ideal

Made: England, about 1980

Tufty Road Safety Game

This game features characters from the Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents campaign to teach road safety to children. Created by Elsie Mills in 1953, Tufty the squirrel featured in books and public information films. In 1961 the Tufty Club was set up and by the time this game was made had over two million members.

Maker: Spear's Games

Made: England, 1973

Trivial Pursuit board, Master Game Genus Edition

This game was invented and developed in 1979 by four Canadian friends. They brought it to the 1982 Toy Fair in New York where interest was slight. Two years later the game had sold over 20 million copies. Its appeal lies in combining a simple race game with answering questions to show off one's knowledge.

Maker: Parker and Horn Abbott

Made: France, late 1980s

Game of Life

The original *Chequered Game of Life* from 1860 was a moral game of virtues and vices. The modern version is more a game of chance. Each player must spin the Wheel of Fortune and move along the path through life. The aim of the game is to amass the most money by the end.

Maker: Milton Bradley

Made: Ireland, 1984

Trivial Pursuit question cards and playing pieces

Players move around the board answering trivia questions in six categories - geography, history, arts & literature, sports & leisure, science & nature, and entertainment. Receiving a different colour wedge for each category they answer correctly, the first player to collect all six wedges and answer a question in the centre, wins.

Maker: Parker and Horn Abbott

Made: France, late 1980s

Pictionary

A game that followed the *Trivial Pursuit* idea of using cards and off board action in what is a simple race game. It was invented by Robert Angel in 1985. The game is played by teams of two, each taking turns at guessing a word from their teammate's drawings.

Maker: Tonka

Made: France, 1987

Popular Culture

From literary characters to the latest blockbuster film or cult television series, popular culture has had a huge impact on the design and production of board games for all ages. Young players can interact with favourite characters from Peter Rabbit to Minions, and also learn about health and safety while they play.

Since the 1950s young and old have seen their favourite television characters feature in a range of games covering many genres, from the Wild West to superheroes. The original *Star Wars* film in 1977 was the first to generate a multitude of branded merchandise, a trend that has now become standard practise for popular films and television programmes.

Music too has had its influence with several games based around popular bands or groups. A recent strand has

been games based on television quiz shows, a format that lends itself to game design.

Grape Escape

This short-lived game involved playing pieces made of modelling clay that ran the risk of getting squashed or mutilated as they went round the board. The game has more recently been re-imagined as Play-Doh's *Smashed Potatoes Game*.

Maker: Parker

Made: Ireland, 1992

Cranium

Cranium was created in 1998 by Whit Alexander and Richard Tait, and marketed as 'the game for your whole brain'. It includes a wide range of activities and tests four different skills - artistic, trivia, language and performance. In 2003, its first year of British production, *Cranium* was awarded 'Game of the Year'.

Maker: Cranium Inc.

Made: China, 2003

Frustration! – Despicable Me

This gives a modern twist on the classic *Frustration* game. It is essentially a *Ludo*-style game with the addition of the Pop-O-Matic dice holder. The playing pieces are Minions, animated characters who appeared in the *Despicable Me* films before starring in their own movie in 2015.

Maker: Hasbro Gaming

Made: Ireland, 2015

Monopoly

Did you know that the first version of *Monopoly* was designed to demonstrate the evils of exploitative landowners and the benefits of taxation on land ownership? This was *The Landlord's Game*, patented in 1904 by Elizabeth Magie. As *Monopoly*, the educational element has been lost and instead the game is all about the richest player winning.

Monopoly was first published in the United States in 1935 by Parker Brothers. The inventor is credited as Charles Darrow whose version was one of many copies of Magie's original game.

Often cited as the world's most popular board game, *Monopoly* is sold in over 100 countries and printed in around 50 languages worldwide. It was used in 2011 by the Occupy movement to

highlight the inequality between rich and poor throughout the world.

Brer Fox an' Brer Rabbit

This early *Monopoly*-style game is based on Elizabeth Magie's *The Landlord's Game*. It follows the original game's anti-capitalist intentions and illustrates Britain's Liberal politics. The box lid features a cartoon showing David Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as the fox and the rabbit as a greedy landlord hiding behind a fence.
Maker: Newbie Game Company
Made: Scotland, 1913

Monopoly

This is one of only two known sets of Charles Darrow's early game. It is printed on oilcloth and would have been rolled into a tube and sold in this tie storage box. Darrow's wife, Esther, gave this particular game to her nurse and it survived because the family played with newer versions.

Maker: Charles Darrow
Made: USA, 1933

Monopoly Zipangu

This recent version of the game celebrates traditional Japanese arts and crafts. Properties are acquired and studios and shops are built. Landing on someone else's property results in buying goods rather than paying rent. The playing tokens are miniature replicas of Nara folk toys called Shika Koro Koro.

Maker: Takara Tomy

Made: Japan, 2016

Games Design

The late 19th century was a revolutionary time for games design. The use of chromolithography, printing in colour, became widespread and meant that games could be produced more quickly and cheaply than before. There was no further need for the laborious process of hand colouring.

As the 20th century progressed games companies employed dedicated designers and some of these people became well-known, something that had not happened in the past. Prototyping and testing became more rigorous and safety standards were introduced. The wide-spread use of cheap plastic enabled games to be made in 3D.

The remarkable thing about board games is that anyone can design one. Some get published, but some remain home-made and only played within one family. These vary from simple versions

of existing games to complicated ones with hundreds of playing pieces.

Check Your Facts

Games Companies

From the mid-19th century, games were produced by toy companies rather than publishers, some of whom came to specialise in board games.

In early 20th century Britain, the leading companies were John Jaques & Son, Chad Valley Co. Ltd, JW Spear & Sons, and Roberts Brothers. Later John Waddington Ltd became the big name in Britain, while Parker Brothers and Milton Bradley dominated the American market.

Today, many of these famous names have been taken over by the Hasbro company, which still makes many of the well-known games of the past.

The Game of Peter Rabbit

This replica of Beatrix Potter's 1904 design for a game features her most famous creation, Peter Rabbit. Potter approached her publishers with this idea, but Frederick Warne decided to publish its own game in 1917 featuring four of Potter's characters. Potter's game was finally produced some 90 years later!

Maker: The Traditional Games

Company and Frederick Warne Ltd

Made: England, 1995

Peter Rabbit game

This game was made by Miriam Pratt as a student in Darlington Training College. It is inspired by *Snakes and Ladders* but without the snakes. Some of the squares are painted with scenes from Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit tales. The five playing pieces represent members of Peter's family.

Maker: Miriam Pratt

Made: England, 1930s

War of the Daleks game prototype

This Dr Who *Ludo*-style game became very successful, partly due to its realistic plastic Dalek playing pieces. The playing surface is very chunky and the control centre could be twisted to make the underlying card surface rotate. This made the Daleks patrol randomly. Players were exterminated if a Dalek bumped into them.

Maker: Denys Fisher Toys

Made: England, early 1970s

Game Changer

There has been a radical change in the way we play board games. Two major strands have emerged - digital play and a new trend towards social tabletop play.

Technology has revolutionised game play. From early console-based computer games to the latest mobile apps, players continue to enjoy classic board games. Digitally enhanced play has become part of everyday life and can be a solitary pleasure or a shared experience.

In contrast there has also been a major development in physical board games with the rise of designer games and a renewed interest in playing games with friends and family. These games involve the players more and give them control over what happens.

The sharing aspect of the internet provides a platform for both these strands of game playing. It gives us online access to play our favourite board

games in different ways. It provides information through websites devoted to games and game playing. The world is changing rapidly. We can use this to our advantage in the sphere of gameplay, but we can also slow things down and enjoy playing.

Digital Elements

Digital developments within board games began in the 1960s using the same vinyl technology as in music records. As other technologies such as video and DVD developed, these too were used to enhance the experience of playing on a board. *Stop Thief* from 1979 was one of the earliest board games to actually integrate an electronic component into a traditional cardboard playing surface.

Digital additions to existing board games are designed to expand the playing experience and attempt to bring them up to date. The *Monopoly Playmaster* from 1982 is an accessory that adds sounds to the game and keeps track of the play. Despite improvements and alterations to existing games, playing them in the virtual world has proved more popular.

XCOM: The Board Game

This is a co-operative game for four players who become members of XCOM and are tasked to repel an alien invasion of earth. XCOM is based on a computer game of the same name and is played using a digital app that generates random elements that either help or hinder.

Designer: Erik M Lang

Maker: Fantasy Flight Games

Made: China, 2015

Atmosfear

This game is played using information given via a video cassette tape. The Gatekeeper appears on screen and gives instructions. The aim is to collect keys and reach the centre of the board. If no one reaches the centre before an hour is up, the Gatekeeper wins the game.

Designers: Phillip Tanner and Brett Clements

Maker: Spear's Games

Made: Australia, 1992

Computerised Board Games

The 1980s saw a dramatic rise in the use of home computers. These were originally designed for people to create their own programmes and were regarded as mainly educational. The companies that produced them soon realised that users also wanted to play games. This resulted in a huge variety being made available. Among these were several based on popular board games.

Now you could play a board game but you did not need an actual board. Cassette game versions of *chess*, *Monopoly*, *Cluedo*, *Scrabble* and *Trivial Pursuit* were manufactured for use on platforms such as the *ZX Spectrum*, the *Amstrad CPC* and *Commodore 64*. Computerised chess has always been a particular favourite and small home computers dedicated to playing the game have been around since the 1970s.

Castle or Rook

This chess piece has a piece of cable embedded in its centre. It commemorates the first chess game played remotely between the House of Commons in London and the House of Representatives in Washington DC in 1897. The game was played via a transatlantic cable with moves transmitted by telegraph.

Maker: Carlo and Arthur Giuliano

Made: England, 1897

Mini Sensory Chess Challenger

Fidelity Electronics has developed and produced dedicated chess computers since 1976. The company produced a series of ever-more sophisticated models and this version was first made in 1981. It was owned by Iain

Chambers, a young chess enthusiast, who played for his school and local club.

Designers: Sidney Samole and Ron Nelson

Made: USA, 1983

Computer board games on cassette

Classic board games were among the earliest to feature as computer games. Companies such as Amstrad and Sinclair produced games to play on their own hardware. Other companies, such as Virgin Games Ltd concentrated on making games for all the major hardware platforms. In common with most computer games from this era they could be very slow to load and very noisy.

Makers: Amstrad, Virgin Games,
Domart, Psion Ltd
Made: England, 1983-86

ZX Spectrum keyboard, joystick, and joystick interface

The *ZX Spectrum* personal computer was released in 1982, quickly becoming Britain's best-selling home computer.

The series sold over 5 million units worldwide between 1982 and 1987. The keyboard was designed for use with portable television sets and the game cassettes were played through an external player.

Designer: Rick Dickinson

Maker: Sinclair Research Ltd

Made: England, 1985

Check Your Facts

Video gaming became big business in the 1980s. Early arcade games evolved into home playing on consoles using TV screens. Sega and Nintendo dominated the early market with Sony and Microsoft following close behind.

Characters from all these games became instantly recognisable brands. In the 1990s the American company Milton Bradley produced several board games based on both arcade and video games and their characters.

Pac-Man

Pac-Man was an arcade video game released in 1980 where players controlled a munching Pac-Man through a maze. The aim was to eat all the dots while avoiding bumping into the ghosts. The board game has turned the dots into balls and the person with the most at the end of the game wins.

Maker: Milton Bradley Ltd

Made: Holland, 1982

Sonic the Hedgehog 3D Chess

Instead of being based on a particular video game, this chess set features characters from the well-known Sega game series, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, devised in the 1990s. The chess board is based on the Green Hill Zone of the game. Do you recognise any of the characters?

Maker: Gaya Entertainment

Made: China, 2009

ePlay - Apps and Zaps

The modern digital world is full of game play. We can now play anywhere and with anyone, whether on our own, pitted against technology, or with players who may be physically distant.

As with the early computer versions of the classic board games, these are now available online and as apps. *Monopoly Zapped* from 2012 is played on an iPad. Playing on the go also continues the tradition of travel games.

The popularity of modern designer games has resulted in many of these now being available to play online. In 2011 *Ticket to Ride* won digital game of the year in Denmark for its iPad version. Board games are everywhere, even in the digital world of Minecraft. You have probably got one in your pocket right now!

Modern Board Games

What is different about modern games? They are known by several names - Euro, Designer, Hobby. They have rules that tell you how to play, but not what to do. It can be different each time you play.

These games are largely non-conflict, with all players remaining in the game until the end. This makes them more social, and in many cases, co-operative. In *Scotland Yard* (1983) players acting as detectives join forces to track down the criminal as they travel around London.

The modern gaming movement developed in Germany during the 1970s and 1980s. Designers and publishers now share responsibility for a game's success. Players too are a major force within this industry. They not only play these games, they fund them as well,

with many new games published as a result of crowdfunding.

Check Your Facts

Awards for Games

The German Spiel des Jahres (Game of the Year) is the most sought-after award for modern games designers. Created in 1978 it is awarded specifically to this new style of game.

It has awarded a prize for children's games since 1989 and now also has the Kennerspiel des Jahres (Enthusiast Game of the Year) for more complex games. All of the modern games displayed here have either won or been nominated for these awards.

The Settlers of Catan

This was one of the first German-style board games to achieve popularity outside Europe. As of 2015, more than 22 million copies in 30 languages have been sold. It is a strategic game with the use of dice adding elements of luck.

Designer: Klaus Teuber

Maker: Mayfair Games Inc.

Made: USA, 2007

Carcassonne

This is a tile-laying board game for two to five players. The game board is a medieval landscape built by the players as the game progresses. The aim is to acquire features and populate them with pieces known as meeples – a combination of my and people.

Designer: Klaus-Jürgen Wrede

Maker: Z-Man Games

Made: Germany, 2012

Ticket to Ride

This award-winning game, designed by an American, helped the spread of designer games outside Germany. The original *Ticket to Ride* is a travel game based on a map of the United States and southern Canada. Expansions of the game include other countries and continents.

Designer: Alan R Moon

Maker: Days of Wonder

Made: Germany, 2013

Pandemic

Invented by Matt Leacock and first published in 2007, *Pandemic* is regarded as a classic co-operative game. Following its release there was a significant increase in the number of new co-operative games produced.

The basic idea came from a game that Leacock had invented when he was a teenager. His aim was to make a game that was fun, where players each had specific roles and powers and who would have to work together to win. The mixture of strategy and luck makes the game different every time it is played.

Together with Rob Daviau, Leacock designed *Pandemic Legacy*, published in 2015. This version has a limited number of plays – between 12 and 24 – as parts of the game gradually get destroyed. The play evolves each time and the choices made affect the subsequent games.

Ants Game Prototype

Matt Leacock has been working on this game for many years but says “the design was never good enough for me”. *Ants* is based around an ant colony foraging for food and guarding its home. Leacock continues to refine the game and maybe one day it will be good enough!

Designer: Matt Leacock

Made: USA, ongoing

Pandemic

Pandemic is a game for two to four players who join forces to defeat the game itself. Each player takes on a different role with specific powers. The aim is to prevent four deadly diseases from destroying the human race. It can be as much fun to lose as to win.

Designer: Matt Leacock

Maker: Z-Man Games

Made: China, 2012

End Game

We continue to enjoy playing board games, both physically and digitally. Social face-to-face gaming is on the increase. We play at home, in pubs and cafés, at mass gaming events. There are now board game competitions and conventions and board game design is taught in schools and universities.

Old and not-so-old classic games have stood the test of time. They have embraced the digital world and developed along the way. They have retained their appeal through the many generations that have played them. New and exciting ways of playing board games have added to our enjoyment. Modern designers have introduced games where we can create the story.

Our competitive nature and deep-rooted desire to play has ensured the continuing evolution of board games. It is an escape from our increasingly busy and demanding lives. Forget the real

world, become someone else, play the game.