

## The Mahjong group

Mahjong is a traditional Chinese tile game with many variations. An ancient game which is widely played in China and Japan. American Mahjong was introduced to the United States in the 1920's and spread throughout the world. The game played in China is simpler than the American version but many people prefer it. The game is similar to the card game Rummy and can be very addictive..

A Mahjong set consists of three suits, circles, characters and bamboo numbered from 1-9. There are four tiles of each number. It also has four winds, East, South, North and West and there are four of each of these. There are three dragons, red, green and white which also has four of each. There are also four seasons and flowers. 144 tiles in all. In Chinese sets the characters are the Chinese characters for the figures they represent but in the American sets the English numbers are added to the Chinese characters therefore making it easier for us to play. The one of bamboo is usually a bird.

The game is played in an anticlockwise direction and the aim of the game is to be the first person to get a Mahjong. The literal translation of Mahjong is "flax/hemp" or "sparrow clattering". Therefore when we mix the tiles before starting the game we twitter the sparrows. There are many variations of the game, some people play with loose tiles (Jokers) and some people score for points or money. Organisation of a good Mahjong hand requires judgement in selecting a game plan which will afford the best chance of success and also requires sufficient versatility to be able to change hands when you realise that one of the tiles you need has been played.

There are many hands to play for and because of this we play the hands which are in The Mahjong Players Companion and no other hands are accepted.

Our group does not play with loose tiles or score. We play for fun and the challenge and it certainly keeps the grey matter working.