THE BEST OF

# WHITE DWARF

ARTICLES
Volume II

£1.50

Selected material from White Dwarfs 15 to 30, including An Introduction to D&D, The Dungeon Architect and Backdrop of Stars.

# THE BEST OF

# WHITE DWARF

**W**hite Dwarf has established itself positively as the British voice of role-playing games. As more and more people are attracted to the hobby, it is inevitable that they will want to read useful and important articles concerning their preferred RPGs. We have always endeavoured to publish material that will help and guide players in their games, and quite often amuse them at the same time. Unlike *news,* this material is still relevant despite being written a long time ago. However, like all magazines, issues of White Dwarf go out of print. Consequently, for the benefit of many of our more recent readers, we present here the *Best of White Dwarf Articles Volume II.*

*Ian Livingstone*

## ARTICLES

# An Introduction to Dungeons & Dragons

by Lewis Pulsipher

**This article is the first in a series written for those who have little or no experience of playing *Dungeons & Dragons*. More experienced players will discover something of interest in most of the articles, for as Gary Gygax (the game's co-inventor) says, there are few DMs so skilled that they cannot improve their campaigns.**

*Dungeons & Dragons* and its successor *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* are usually referred to collectively as *D&D*. D&D is a "role-playing" fantasy game, that is to say, each player acts as an individual hero, wizard, priest, or other character out of the fantasy traditions of J.R.R. Tolkien, Robert E. Howard, Fritz Leiber, Michael Moorcock, and other authors. Pretending to be Conan, Aragorn, Gandalf, Elric, or your own made-up hero is part of the fun. A referee or "DM" (standing for "Dungeon Master") is required to establish places of adventure, and to control monsters and non-player persons which the players will encounter. The game is best with about four players plus a DM, but any number of people can play. Though competition can be arranged, normally players do not fight each other; they are on the same "team", and play against the sinister creatures controlled by the DM.

Players create their game personae or "characters" with the aid of dice rolls, and each uses the same character in each game session, trying to become more skilful, wealthy, and powerful, and pursuing whatever other goals they desire. Characters are far from Conan's equal when they begin, and death is an ever-present danger. Commonly, in a game session a group of players will explore a "dungeon" or underground labyrinth (perhaps like Tolkien's Moria), an outdoor wilderness, or a town mapped and populated beforehand by the DM. They hunt for evil monsters to kill, maidens to rescue, secrets to unravel, gold, and magical items. An adventure can take two hours or twelve, depending on the desires of the players. The average group plays once or twice a week.

Appearances notwithstanding, *D&D* is not a pastime for crackpots. It isn't necessary to believe in the occult, astrology, or other such things to enjoy *D&D*; in fact, few players do, and their ranks include lawyers, doctors, executives, and scientists — hardly crackpots. Nor is it necessarily a "kid's game"; one of the designers is in his early 40's, a minister and former insurance executive — the average age of players is around 21. Some players are accustomed to games of mental skill such as chess, others are parlour game fans, and others still don't play other games.

Anyone who reads fantasy literature knows that a willing suspension of disbelief is necessary to enjoy these works. The same principle applies to *D&D,* and once you accept the game within its own magical context, you can participate vicariously to a depth not found in any other game.

Although *Advanced D&D* consists of over 400 pages of rules, the *Basic* version is only 50 pages long and either version is *very* easy to play — you imagine yourself in the situation the DM describes and tell him what you intend to try to do. If no rules cover your idea, the DM invents them on the spot. Special 4, 8, 12, and 20-sided dice are used as well as the ordinary 6-sided kind; these are referred to respectively as d4, d8, d12, d20, and d6, and are used to determine the success or otherwise of certain actions which have less than a 100% chance of success.

Of course, the best players and DMs know the rules fairly well, but there are many play-aids to make the DM's job easier.

An example, the dialogue during a small part of an adventure might go something like this . . .

*Referee:* . . . you come to the bottom of the stairs. A corridor 10 feet wide and 12 feet high — stone, of course — runs east and west.

*Players:* We go west.

*Referee:* You travel 50 feet without any change in the corridor. Then you come into a large chamber. 12 kobolds are in the northern part, where you also see a chest. A fungus on the walls dimly lights the chamber.

*Players:* (After consultation) Brak casts a *sleep* spell, Kranor and Rill shoot their bows, and the rest of us rush the kobolds.

(A brief battle ensues, with all concerned rolling dice to see if their weapons land, and if so, how hard they hit; the DM does this for the kobolds.)

*DM:* OK, so there are 8 kobolds lying still on the floor, one grazed by an arrow but still standing, one definitely dead; the remaining ones run north, shouting . . .

And so on until the adventurers leave the dungeon or die. If a player imagines himself actually participating in the adventure, if he keeps alert, then he can have a fine time while knowing nothing more about the rules than he can learn from this article.

The DM is the vital figure in a *D&D* game. He must be willing to exercise his imagination to the utmost. Unlike games such as chess, in which the players know all the rules and can extrapolate all possible outcomes, *D&D* has non-rigid, open-ended rules. This is inevitable when one tries to create an entire world; the DM must not only be able to find quickly what he does not know and be familiar with all the rules, he must also make up his own rules for specific situations.

Much of the attraction of the game is the fear — or anticipation — of the unknown. There are always unusual statues, pools, traps, and monsters.

The DM must devise the dungeon or wilderness in which the players adventure. Though there are rules to help him, it is still a matter of long thought and hard work. The dungeon is usually mapped out on graph paper, and a typical one might have 5-10 levels, each on one sheet. The DM draws all the rooms, corridors, caverns, pits, stairs and other features, and records in a notebook the contents of each. Despite the work involved, many players sooner or later build their own dungeons. In 1972 Dave Arneson described the original campaign to me, although I didn't know it would become *D&D*. It sounded like a normal armies vs. armies campaign, but the role-playing element existed in the background. In the next year Arneson got

together with Gary Gygax, who used his *Chainmail* fantasy rules (written with Jeff Perren) as a base for emphasising the individual action of the game. The result was *Original D&D,* three 40-page rule booklets. *Chainmail* was needed to conduct combat, and the whole game suffered from rushed production. It isn't surprising that the major wargame companies wouldn't publish such a revolutionary and undeveloped game; Gygax decided to publish it himself. *D&D* was the first role-playing game and the first fantasy game to be marketed commercially.

The rules problems, derivation from miniatures rather than from boardgames, a high price, and limited distribution all meant that the game did not immediately become the remarkable phenomenon that it is today. However, with the publication in 1975 of a supplement, *Greyhawk, D&D* began to take off. *Greyhawk* introduced a new combat system and clarified many ambiguities of the old rules. It was so popular that three other supplements were produced; *Blackmoor, Eldritch Wizardry,* and *Gods, Demi-Gods and Heroes* were published in 1975 and 1976. By this time, however, many other role-playing games were on the market, some threatening to overtake *D&D.*

Gygax then began to revise the rules completely. The result, *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons,* is much larger, more detailed, and far better produced.

All three versions have much in common, but anyone who intends to move around should learn *Basic* and then *Advanced D&D,* because those who prefer the original are becoming a distinct minority. A number of *D&D* play-aids are available. These include maps of dungeons and wilderness, ready-made lists of room contents, inhabitants and treasures, composite game charts, and complete adventure "modules". The latter include everything a DM needs to run a game, so that the time-consuming setting-up can be avoided. Experienced DMs only occasionally use such aids, preferring to devise their own worlds, but novices will find them quite useful. So you've just heard about this amazing game, *Dungeons and Dragons.* How do you find other people to play with, in particular a reliable group you can comfortably play with frequently? That's an easy problem for experienced wargamers who live in big cities, but the average novice sometimes sees it as an insurmountable difficulty. I'll now try to help these unfortunates, and perhaps more experienced players as well.

Firstly, I'll assume that you don't own the *D&D* rules; after all, some people want to play before they buy a game. This eliminates the most common way to find other players — teach your friends — but

leaves many possibilities.

If there's a game shop near you, ask the proprietors if they know of any local groups open to new players. There may even be a weekly session at the shop. Addresses of players might be found on a notice board. If all else fails, you can ask permission to put up your own notice — be sure to state your age and experience as well as address/phone. Unfortunately, many groups are "closed shops" because they already have enough players; and in many cases age counts for a lot, as school-kids may not want a 25 year old player, or college students may not want school-kids. There are so many different styles of *D&D* that a newcomer often doesn't fit into an established group, and age differences can exacerbate different views of what the game ought to be like. Don't be discouraged if your first contact with *D&D* players is disappointing; the next group may be different. I know of people who tried *D&D* and didn't like it, but who became enthusiastic about it as played by my group; and there were those who played frequently elsewhere but never cared for our kind of game.

(By the way, I don't want to emulate Emily Post, but I must say it is bad form to drop in on a group without giving prior warning, unless the group's announcement invites people to do just that. Write or phone first. This also could save your a wasted trip if a meeting has been cancelled for some reason.)

If you're in a school or university, scan the local notice boards and newspaper for references to wargames clubs. Put your own notice on boards or in the paper. You're having rotten luck if you can't find anyone this way; every fair-sized university seems to have a group.

If you're still empty-handed, don't despair; there is at least one active player per 2,000 people in the country, so unless you live in a remote area there should be players near you. Look at the "opponents wanted" and other adverts in wargames magazines. Don't look just for *D&D* — any wargamer living near you may know of local groups even if he doesn't play himself. Write to anyone near you and explain your problem. Sometimes you won't get an answer, because some gamers don't care about other people, but others go out of their way to help newcomers.

If there are no promising ads, consider placing an ad in the magazine yourself. There may be someone just across the street who reads the magazine, but who never needed to place an ad.

By this time, though, if you still haven't found any players you like to play with, you'll have to give up or buy the game and start a group the hard way, by teaching people how to play after you've taught

yourself. Brothers and sisters are useful first recruits; even if they lose interest, they'll help you play the first few times. Tell your friends, especially those who enjoyed *The Lord of the Rings,* about the game. If you know a local science fiction club you might recruit players there. Many schools and universities allow informal groups to reserve rooms and use regular channels to announce meetings. For example, at Duke University (USA) in 1975 I reserved a room in the name of Duke Gamers, put an announcement in the university paper, and appeared at the appointed time. Fortunately I had earlier encountered someone who played — he was the only person to turn up. But the next week more people came around, and when we changed the time of the meeting, yet more appeared. One needs to persevere. Virtually none of these people had played before, and many had never heard of *D&D* until they saw my announcement. After several months, though, I was finally able to play myself, rather than DM, and by the end of the year we had six to eight DMs. In a situation like this you should encourage the new players to become DMs, though not immediately, and have them start with a level appropriate to the state of the campaign. For example, at Duke we ended with a 9-level dungeon and associated wilderness, two independent wildernesses, a third, a fourth, and a sixth level dungeon. If everyone starts with a first level dungeon you soon have nowhere for the more experienced characters to go. The average newcomer won't want to construct more than one level in his first six months of play.

TSR's ready-made dungeon modules can help you establish a new group. You can rely on the author's experience to establish a good adventure situation, but be sure you get a beginners' module and not one for ninth-level characters. When the players you've taught gain some experience they can run other modules before they devise their own places of adventure.

(Incidentally, I returned to Duke four years later and couldn't find a group, so I advertised in the newspaper for wargames players. Several days later someone came by and told me about the *D&D* group which still exists, but which doesn't announce its meetings in the paper. I was able to steer to this group nearly a dozen *D&D* players who didn't know about it. Moral: never quit looking.) ∎

**Part II will contrast and compare Dungeon Mastering styles.**

# Part II Dungeon Mastering Styles

by Lewis Pulsipher

The most important thing to remember about *D&D* is that the nature of play depends on the DM. If you try it once and dislike it, in many cases it will be dislike of a particular style rather than of the game itself. I have known players who tried "absurd *D&D*" and decided *D&D* was a lousy game; but when persuaded to try "wargamer's *D&D*" they loved it.

Consequently, the first thing you must decide when you start constructing your own world is "what style do I prefer?" Usually you'll want to DM the kind of game you prefer to play.

Basic *D&D* style ranges from the "simulation" through "wargame" to "absurd" and finally "novel". As one moves along this continuum the DM's procedures become less rigorous — remember that no DM uses every rule. At one extreme we have a DM who uses a pocket calculator to compute results, at the other a DM who makes up almost everything as he goes. Most campaigns fall toward the middle of these two extremes.

The simulationist wants to reflect reality as much as possible. A fight with broadsword and chainmail ought to work just as it did in the Middle Ages. Coins should be as scarce as in the same period. Some players recreate feudalism and chivalry, and model their magic after the traditional magic of the period. These people have no place in *D&D*; *D&D* is solidly in the war*game* camp, and simulationists should try *Chivalry & Sorcery* or make up their own games.

The "wargame" style is how *D&D* is designed to be played, though this doesn't mean you must play it this way. Players don't play against each other, but can still "win" or "lose" according to whether they survive and prosper. As much as possible, all that happens should be believable. My standard is: could you believe the event if you read it in a fantasy novel?

Now the "absurd" style condones unbelievable occurrences. Much that happens seems arbitrary. There is often plenty of button-pushing in such a game. Monsters such as a "spelling bee" may appear, causing magic-users to foul up spells by misspelling them. This style is great for laughs when played occasionally, and some players prefer to play it exclusively. The average game tends to fall between wargame and absurd game.

Finally we have the "novel" style. In effect, the DM writes an oral novel in which the players are participating characters. This can be pretty bad, but the players don't mind because they're helping to "write" it. In such games the DM may make up everything as he goes along.

As one passes along the continuum one finds that players are most passive in the novel style and most active in the wargame style. (The simulation style stresses realism so much that characters tend to be hostages to the dice, the rules, and the DM.) When you choose a style, keep the preferences of your potential players in mind.

In addition to choosing a style, consider other facets of the game. First some

DMs rely on fighting to provide action and interest to players, while others rely on a variety of puzzles. The average DM or player prefers fighting with an occasional puzzle to vary the pace. Unless you're good at devising puzzles you'll probably take the same line. Beware: a few players become bored with frequent fighting, but most become bored with numerous puzzles.

Another choice concerns magic. Are only the spell-casters, rare items, and even rarer areas magical, or is magic almost everywhere? I prefer the former, less "supernatural" alternative, for there is less luck. After all, magic can do anything if you let it, and if you do players won't know what to expect.

You must choose some relationship between risk and reward. When characters often die and only slowly rise in level players may become discouraged. Risk is too high for the corresponding reward. On the other hand, when reward is higher than risk some players become b bored. Level of risk and reward should be roughly the same. I prefer low levels of both. In this case experienced *players* seldom lose characters, but around ten adventures are required to raise a character one level. Other players like a game with 25% or 50% casualties per adventure, with just a few adventures required per experience level. The problem with the latter is that it becomes difficult to run the game, which isn't designed to cope with characters above tenth level. Spells become so powerful, and options available are so numerous, that the DM becomes lost in details and possibilities. *D&D* is most fun for third to sixth level characters, who are strong enough to adventure without fear of immediate death, strong enough to have more combat options than flight, melee, and *sleep* spells, but not so strong that they can laugh at monsters.

Another aspect of risk and reward is whether players earn their results. Risk can derive from frequent monster encounters, or it can come from unavoidable traps and unbeatble monsters. For example, an old dragon flies to a party of first level characters camped outdoors and kills one. At that level players can do nothing — the dragon could kill all of them with a yawn. This is arbitrary risk. Reward can be similarly arbitrary. For example, a player can pull three levers and gain two intelligence points, or a party can kill five orcs and find 5,000 gp. The players haven't *earned* these rewards. Whatever relationship of risk and reward you choose, avoid arbitrary types.

To say that risk and reward in a given campaign tends to be arbitrary is another way of saying that luck plays a great part in the campaign. Many wargamers dislike luck, for who wants to play well and still "lose"? *D&D* can never be a game without luck, but the DM can choose the extent to which luck dominates a game. My objective is to force the players to make choices. The more often they must choose, the more often the skilful player can make

the better choice and increase his chance of survival. For example, some DMs allow a sword with detecting powers to operate at all times. Consequently the players gain the advantages without needing to make a choice. Better to allow the sword to detect only when the owner stops for a few rounds to concentrate on detection.

The DM's attitude affects his style. Some DMs just want to see what will happen; others want to be entertained. This is a difference between impartiality and egoism. Is the DM a neutral party or is he a "god" who demands that his subjects — the players — entertain him and do his bidding? Ideally, the DM is serving the players, not vice versa; one supposes that the DM enjoys his job also or he wouldn't do it, and many enjoy it without egoism. One may enjoy the sight of one's ideas being useful, one may enjoy enabling one's friends to have fun, or one may DM with philosophical resignation; someone has to do it.

Another form of egoism is a DM's inability to distinguish between himself and his creations. A strong sense of identification is an asset when you play but not when you DM. When the DM conceives of the monsters which inhabit his dungeon or world as extensions of himself, rather than external creations which he manipulates according to settled procedures, he loses any semblance of impartiality. You may know the type — his favourite dragon gets killed so he says "I'll get you for this" — and of course he *does,* since any DM can kill off a group without difficulty.

Granted there are players who want the DM to manipulate their characters. They won't mind who want the DM to manipulate their characters. They won't mind egotistical DMs, may even prefer them. Role-playing fantasy is big enough to offer a place for all tastes, but it is sad when inexperienced players who want to play a game get stuck with a DM wants to play god.

A new DM who has considerable playing experience will be able to choose a campaign style intelligently, but the novice may feel lost. In this case it is best to begin with a ready-made module. After you've played *D&D* a while you'll know what style of game you want to run. Whatever you choose, be consistent. There is nothing more annoying to a player than a DM who sometimes runs something one way, sometimes another. If you find you've made a mistake in choice of style, don't be afraid to change, but stick with the change — don't vacillate. ∎

**Part III to follow will look at the spell-using character classes.**

# Part III: The Spell-Using Classes

by Lewis Pulsipher

## The Magic-User

*Fifteen large hellhounds approach down a long corridor. What can the adventurers do to avoid crippling damage? "Step aside," says Orion the Mage. From his finger a spark flashes, becoming a deafening, raging bolt of energy as it streaks down the corridor. When their eyes readjust, the adventurers see five dead hellhounds and ten more running away. '"Twas nothing," says Orion, modestly . . .*

Every *D&D* veteran remembers the first time he used a lightning bolt, and how satisfying it felt. The magic-user class is the overwhelming favourite of experienced players, partly because magic is the unique aspect of fantasy games, but also because magic-users are the most powerful characters at high levels. One of the flaws of the game is that magic-users become capable of mass destruction at relatively low levels. Moreover, unless the Dungeon Master works to restrict certain spells, by strict rule interpretation or by rule changes, they get out of hand.

A magic-user's strength is in his spells; everything else is weakness. About one quarter of a party will be magic-users; many of them elves. Magic-user's should be protected by armoured characters, but able to see beyond the front or back line of the party. Since they represent the party's last line of defence, they should be closely protected; each spell they must use for their own survival is one less for the party to call upon at need. A party with only one magic-user is asking for trouble, since a single *charm* or *magic missile* can incapacitate him.

Most magic-users pick a dagger as their first weapon, but a few like darts; throwing either weapon can be surprisingly effective.

### TACTICS

A magic-user can play many roles, some of which are:

**Commando:** This role calls for high hit points, or magical protection such as *Bracers of Defence,* and some kind of *invisibility.* The ideal is a fighter/magic-user. The character uses spells to penetrate enemy defences, then strikes from the rear, a favourite target being the strongest enemy magic-user. Careful planning is required, or poor co-ordination may leave him stranded. Common infiltration spells are *fly, invisibility* and *dimension door.*

**Radar:** *Detect magic* and *detect invisible* are often used. The latter is vital when magic-using enemies are expected. *Wizard eye* is good for scouting complexes or dark chambers.

**Information gatherer:** A *charmed* person can reveal a lot. *ESP* and *clairvoyance/clairaudience* are used to 'case' a place for a future attack. *Read language* and *identify* can only be taken if you have spells to burn.

**Decoy:** *Dancing lights* or *phantasmal force* combined with *audible glamer* or *ventriloquism* can play a big part in evasion or attack. The illusionist subclass is better suited to this.

**Defence:** A *web* is good defence in a dungeon, and so it's the most commonly used second level spell. *Stinking cloud* also stops pursuit. Both spells can be used offensively as well. *Hold portal, wizard lock, protection from evil, invisibility, haste,* and *dispel magic* are all commonly used.

**Anti-individual:** *Charm, hold person* and *suggestion* are often used against powerful individual opponents. To petrify a small group, a magic-user can use a *phantasmal force* of a medusa head.

**Provider of cannon fodder:** *Charmed* persons can sometimes be persuaded to open chests or fight for the party. More fun are *charmed* monsters, if you can speak with them. Learn trollish, for a regenerating *charmed* monster is worth any two others. Before an adventure a magic-user can *polymorph* an insect into a troll, then *charm* it. What a bodyguard! And it impresses the yokels.

**Artillery:** Most players prefer to use magic-users as heavy artillery. When tough monsters appear, *lightning bolt, fireball, fear,* and *confusion* are unlimbered. Although *charming* a dragon is elegant, blowing it up is more exciting. Nonetheless, a magic-user who relies on brute force will meet a bad end. There are many possibilities for the victory of brain over brawn — don't waste them. In your spare time, read through the spells to think of new uses and combinations. For example, *ventriloquism* can be used to convince ignorant creatures that a skull is a god. Some spells are ends; others are means.

Most magic-users try for a *homunculus* when they reach seventh level, depending on their hit points and the availability of the necessary spells. Most ignore the *find familiar* spell, because the average familiar's powers aren't worth the loss of hit points when it dies.

Much of this applies to illusionists as well as the standard magic-user. This subclass lacks the heavy artillery, though; spells tend toward deception and uncertainty. The illusionist player must be more cerebral.

## The Cleric

*A bedraggled, sorrowful band of adventurers carries a body to a temple at dawn. "O enlightened high priest," pleads the paladin, "Ammendil the ranger gave his life to defend us, killing four ogres before he fell. Is there no way to restore him to our ranks, to be an example to all by his deeds and dedication to our cause?"*

*The priest ponders; then intones: "In the name of our patron saint Georgias, I beseech thee, O Lord, to restore life to our lost comrade-in-arms. Let him once again smite thine enemies, for thy Name's sake."*

*And the dead man awakens!*

Raising the dead is the most unusual move in gaming. It is the definitive attainment of any good cleric, and its opposite, *slay living*, is the aim of any evil one. Since most clerics are good, this advice is addressed to them; just remember that evil clerics are in every way opposed to what the good clerics stand for, though tactics are occasionally similar.

In *D&D*, clerics are religiously inclined warrior-spellcasters. They are not such a popular class as magic-users or fighters, but this stems partly from misconception of their role. A cleric who merely casts spells while watching events is wasting his potential, for many of the best warriors in *D&D* are clerics. Their spells are comparatively unspectacular and weak. A cleric might hang back when first level for lack of hit points, but thereafter he should smite in his god's name whenever a good chance appears. The cleric has no outstanding strength, but no weaknesses; in many ways, this is the most interesting character class.

Roughly 20% of a party will be clerics; they take positions near the front or rear of a party, where they are well-placed to drive away undead or cast spells as well as fill a hole in the front line during a fight.

There are three good choices for a cleric's first two weapons: mace, hammer and flail. A mace does more damage, but requires twice as much room as a hammer; a flail is useful only outdoors or in large rooms.

## THE CLERIC'S ROLES IN A PARTY

Despite what I've said above, the cleric must think of spells first and fighting second. On the other hand, the stereotype healing cleric wastes the character. Options are:

**Healer:** *Cure light wounds* is the most common first level spell. *Cure serious wounds, raise dead, neutralise poison,* and others all serve the cleric-as-medic.

**Radar:** *Detect magic* and especially *detect evil* can be useful. *Know alignment* can be useful in town, dealing with artisans and merchants — just don't let them know you're using it. *Commune* is a marvellous source of information which many players fail to use.

**Defence:** *Speak with animals* is excellent outdoors, since it often prevents meaningless fighting. *Protection* shouldn't be forgotten, especially when demons and devils are around. *Continual light* should be cast on objects well before an adventure, since it lasts until dispelled.

**Offence:** *Silence* is great against spellcasters or when you want to sneak about. *Light* and *darkness* are also useful. *Hold person* is better than the magic-user's *charm*. *Bless* should be used against opponents of good armour class. *Command* can be used in some situations. — usually 'surrender' is the word.

Many players avoid cleric characters because they prefer neutral or non-religious types. The good cleric must concern himself with the conversion of unbelievers, kindness to the innocent, and devotion to his gods. In some campaigns he will not want to hurt a fly, but more often he is a church militant willing to smite evil whenever necessary. Even so, he must not turn a blind eye to unnecessary violence. He is the strongest proponent of teamwork in a party.

### Subclasses

Monks are closer to fighters than clerics, and will be dealt with next issue. Druids are really a separate class, with strong, specialised outdoor magic. They should use the *animal friendship* spell and *speak with animals* to gain scouts and bodyguards — even a trained dog is a match for most first level characters. Space precludes dealing with them in any detail though.

Part IV examines fighters and thieves and how best to play them. ∎

# Part IV: Fighters and Thieves

by Lewis Pulsipher

## THE FIGHTER

The list of heroic warriors in epic fantasy stretches endlessly. Even though magic-users are more popular in *Dungeons & Dragons* than fighters, the latter are preferred to clerics and thieves, probably because of the close identification with the literary origins of the game. Magicians are the bad guys in fantasy if they figure at all — a ''hero'' is by definition a fighter. Yet there isn't much one can say about the *D&D* fighter, for this is the most limited of the classes in its fields of action, though very efficient and powerful within this narrow purview. Fighters have more hit points than other classes, the best armour, and the best weapons. They defend the spell-casters, attack when necessary or when spells must be conserved, and do those deeds which require toughness. On the other hand they can use few magic items not related to melee, their save vs. magic is poor, and they probably take more casualties than other classes by virtue of being more exposed. Where the magic-user is finesse, the fighter is brute force; but even the most avid MU cannot deny the joy one feels at chopping a balrog or giant.

A party of about 12 characters will include about five fighters, two or three in both front and back lines as the party marches down a corridor. Often a bow-armed fighter will follow a dwarf fighter. Dwarf fighters are popular, but elf fighters are rare. Combination fighter-magic-users, thieves, or clerics are also popular and are the most powerful characters at low levels.

The fighter has a broader weapon choice than any other class. Normally a fighter will choose one bow, one outdoor weapon such as a lance, one sword, and one weapon good against plate mailed opponents. A composite longbow is the best, though some DMs don't allow use of any longbow indoors. Silver tipped arrows are a must. Heavy lance is an ex-

tremely useful weapon for horseback — 3-18 damage to larger than man size is hard to beat. Longsword is superior to broadsword or shortsword against good armour classes and large opponents, but 20% of magic swords are broadswords, so a few characters may lean toward them. The bastard sword is an excellent com-



promise for the aggressive fighter, but very few magic ones exist. Remember that fighters choose another weapon at fourth level, so they can learn to use a magic sword if they obtain one of inappropriate type. A military pick is the best weapon vs. plate and shield; against a monster with AC 2 you'll use whatever weapon does most damage since hit probability modifications don't apply. Some bronze or stone weapons should be carried for use against rust monsters.

Often parties are cursed with hack-itis.

The fighters are so eager to lay steel on flesh that alternatives are neglected. Some DMs alter the rules to encourage this. For example, most ''spell point'' magic systems allow clerics to cast large numbers of cure spells. The party hacks anything it sees, the fighters are cured, the party hacks, cure, hack, *ad nauseam.* This is a perversion of the game, and boring to boot. In a good campaign those with ''hack-itis'' will die of it. Fighters should fight only when no other course of action offers a better chance of success. A sensible fighter will want the odds against him reduced by magic or other means before he wades into the fray.

Another aspect of hack-itis is poor organisation. Fighters should arrange themselves to have the maximum number attacking the minimum number of enemies. A replacement should be ready if a wounded man must disengage. Except in desperate circumstances, or during a mop-up, several characters able to melee should wait in reserve. Some fighters are big dumb guys with muscles, but thought is needed in any battle.

### Subclasses

The really interesting fighters are the ranger, paladin, and (somewhat oddly) the monk. These classes fight often, but they have other powers. The monk's ultimate role is to fight, but he can use his thief-like abilities to gain an advantageous position before he dives in. Even at low levels when hand-to-hand combat can be dangerous, a monk can contribute by throwing a spear, speaking with animals (''keep the mules calm''), or scouting ahead.

Paladins and rangers are closer to normal fighters, and the uses of their powers are obvious. Don't waste a paladin's laying on of hands to cure hit points; disease is a more fearsome enemy. Any cleric can cure hits, but a fifth level cleric is needed to

*cure disease.*

**General Party Tactics.**
If you can, first read Gary Gygax's advice on pages 107 and 109 of the *Players Handbook.* Knowing when to fight, when to run away, when to go home, are essential to survival. If you're not sure you can beat the enemy, don't attack. Ascertain enemy strength and location using spells like *detect magic* and *detect evil.* Always question non-player adventurers, local rulers, and denizens of inns and taverns, to discover what you might encounter. If an encounter looks too tough you can come back later fully prepared to attack. *DON'T BE GREEDY.* In a good campaign those whose avarice exceeds their wisdom die.
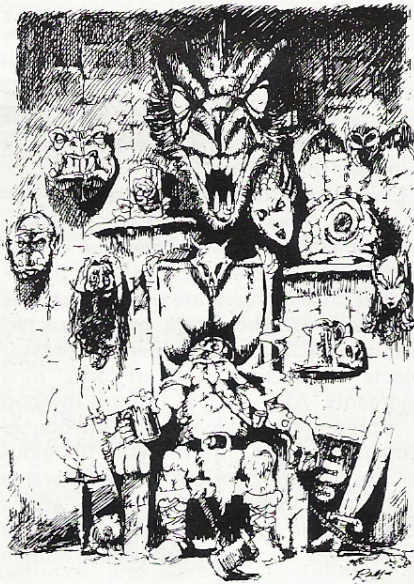
## THE THIEF

*"Someone's coming," whispered the elven thief. "You lot wait back there," he said as he seemed to disappear into the shadows of the corridor. Soon two men in armour, followed by another in robes, advanced confidently down the passage; the fighters charged the adventurers while the MU began a spell. \*CRUNCH\* — the MU fell as the thief cleaved his skull from behind, and soon after the enemy fighters died or surrendered. Thus a first level thief inflicted 14 hits on a fourth level magic-user, killing him from behind in one blow. This is the stuff of thievish legend, but the over-confident thief's fate is a warning: later on he tried to sneak down a corridor during an archery "firefight", but the enemy saw him and shot him dead.*

The average *D&D* player treats a thief as a weak, sneaky fighter or chest opener. But to succeed as a thief one must think thievishly, to accomplish tasks by stealth rather than force. The strengths of the class are the ability to move silently (and hide in shadows when not moving), to go where no one else can (climb, open locks), to strike swiftly (backstab). Thieves are poor warriors owing to poor armour class and low hit points. And while they're good at opening chests, this is a minor facet of their abilities. Most neutral thieves are non-human, not only to gain bonuses to abilities but to have infravision. A human thief in the dark isn't much use to anyone.

A dungeon party of about 12 characters normally includes just one thief (and occasionally a monk with thief-like powers). The thief usually lurks in the middle of the party until his skills are required. The thief is by far the least liked of the four main character classes, though not with complete justification despite the weaknesses. A player who uses his thief abilities fully has more options than a fighter and more chances for glory than an MU. Look at the roles the thief can adopt:

**Pure Thief.** Sadly, a thief in a dungeon or wilderness has many more chances to steal from his supposed friends than from non-player characters. This can be unhealthy, for many players happily (and justifiably) kill anyone who tries to steal from them. For a thief to steal from NPCs consistently he must adventure in a town, either alone or with other thieves; thieves are so unpopular with players partly because the average DM doesn't provide enough opportunities for theft. Moreover, stealing is a dangerous vocation — traps and wary NPCs can kill a low level thief pretty easily. Consequently, many thieves reach fourth level without stealing anything — except from their associates.

**Scout.** My thieves like to scout ahead of the party, especially when a friendly MU has turned one *invisible.* An *invisible* (and possibly *silent)* thief is pretty safe if he has infravision, and he may be able to steal something before he returns to tell his associates what is ahead. Pits are a danger, but one can never be completely safe. The party is safer with a scout ahead, and for that reason they're likely to offer *invisibility* to a thief unless they distrust him. It isn't always in the thief's interest to steal, especially from a predominantly good party. Of course, with a bunch of evil characters the thief must look after number one.

**Commando.** A brave thief can cause havoc to enemies by raids into their rear. The thief who killed the fourth level MU is a good example. More commonly, thieves depend on their ability to climb and disappear from sight to engage in one-man flanking movements. A high level thief reading a scroll can be devastating. A successful raider can pick up choice treasure before the party arrives. But careful planning is needed. In all cases thief and party must work out recognition codes so that the party won't accidentally

kill the thief. When raiding, always kill magic-users first, for they are most powerful offensively and weakest defensively of all classes.

**Chest Opener.** Thieves are good at de-trapping and unlocking chests. A smart thief doesn't depend solely on the dice for safety; positioning and investigation may reveal something or save the thief even if a trap is sprung. Don't stand right in front of a chest! And before you try to unlock it, be sure it's locked — I've seen thieves inadvertently lock unlocked chests.

**Missile Firer.** Any tall thief can help a party by throwing darts or daggers during melee. If he can climb to a balcony or tree-branch he can have a field day, but this is not recommended if the enemy carry bows. Sometimes missilery is more effective, and safer, than a backstab.

**Reserve.** A thief can fight passably for a while; with high constitution or good magic items he can be a formidable opponent, but thieves should fight only as a last resort.

**Miscellaneous**
For his first two weapons a thief usually chooses longsword and darts or daggers. A thief's most prized magic item is a *Ring of Invisibility.* This, combined with silent movement, trebles the thief's power. Hiding in shadows is uncertain and cannot be combined with movement, a weak thing compared to *invisibility.*

A smart thief will devise simple objects to aid him: A hollow breathing tube allows the thief to sneak through shallow pools and rivers out of sight; a rope ending in a three-pronged hook, a kind of extensible pole, and piton rings all help climbing; caltrops slow pursuit; and a fake magic item or two may scare the rubes. Some thieves like to dress as magic users to sell fake scrolls, especially when an accomplice can cast *Nystul's aura* or *magic mouth* on them.

Always "case" a target for several days; if you blunder into a theft head first you'll end up without a head. Try to "frame" someone so there will be no pursuit after a theft. If the heat's on, get out of town and stay out. Some victims go to great lengths to revenge themselves on a thief. A thief who steals from the powerful must be prepared to migrate periodically!

**Subclass**
Assassins are similar to thieves but for their avowed purpose. Assassins may choose to scare people and build a reputation, or to seem like a normal thief. Naturally assassins often work alone or with evil rather than neutral or good parties. Much depends on how your DM structures the world.

**Part V following will give some hints on role-play.** ■

# Part V: Characterisation and Alignment

by Lewis Pulsipher

The average *Dungeons & Dragons* player is not the stuff adventurers are made of — otherwise he would be doing something more active. But the player must act as though he were an adventurer. There are two ways to approach this characterisation. Most wargamers tend to 'put themselves' into the game and the character's goals are the goals the player would pursue in a fantasy world. The character's personality is not too different from the player's.

Many non-wargamers, on the other hand, create elaborate personae for their characters different from their own. The idea is to play in accordance with the strictures of that persona. For example, if the character has a low intelligence the player will refuse to mention things which he is intelligent enough to perceive but the character would not. If for some reason the character is terrified of rats he will flee from them, even though the player knows there is little danger. The character becomes a separate person with a will of his own.

One player succeeds by acting out an interesting persona, while the other succeeds by acquiring make-believe power, wealth, or whatever. There is nothing wrong with either method, they are just different ways of viewing the game. The two kinds of players can play together, though with some friction, as long as the DM does not force players to play in persona.

Some players want to create personalities for their characters different from their own, but don't know how. The easiest method is to adopt a fictional personality — Conan, Fafhrd, or Gandalf. Don't let sneers from experienced players bother you — they started the same way. Another method is to roll a personality using the Non-Player Character tables on pp 100-102 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*. A third method is to dice for the character's reactions to events during his first few adventures. Write down how he reacts and after a while you'll know his personality. (I sometimes leave a character unnamed for several adventures so that I can pick a name appropriate to the character I slowly perceive.) The final method is to choose one or two peculiar characteristics — say dislike of certain weapons or races — and work from their consequences. In any case, you should develop the character's background — where he was born, what happened during his childhood, etc. Don't forget that personality doesn't remain static, it develops. (I remember the cleric who, after a bad experience, collapsed in terror whenever he met a kobold, though stronger monsters didn't scare him.) One more thing — don't feel that you can't play a character of the opposite sex. Even the most macho male can learn from 'being' a woman for a while, and vice versa.

Every *D&D* player must adapt a persona to some extent, unless he plays only one character alignment, the one corresponding to his own. Those who dislike the idea of alignment are usually extreme proponents of the 'I am my character' idea, though occasionally a persona-creator objects to the limitations of 'only' nine alignments. Alignment is a simple method of representing religion and introduces elements of fanaticism and war. Religious war has been responsible for innumerable deaths and frightful devastation, and a fantasy world is a good setting because the gods *do* exist and can affect human actions.

The reason for the penalties for changing alignment is that otherwise players change alignment whenever it suits them, and alignment then has no meaning. Moreover unless there are advantages to being good or evil, everyone will be neutral. The obvious advantages of being good are a more positive response from people of different alignments, and resurrection. In my campaign, it is easier for a good character to find a means of resurrection than a neutral or evil character. If the DM allows neutrals to be resurrected as often as good types, or allows neutrals to attack anyone at any time without alignment change to evil, then everyone will be neutral and the whole point of alignment differentiation of character would be made irrelevant.

How do you force chaotic players to be disorderly and unpredictable? Few game players have naturally chaotic personalities. A few roll dice to determine what their chaotic characters do, but you can't force this on everyone. Nonetheless, there are several ways to force disorder on them.

First, remember most DMs do not force players to make decisions in 'real time', as fast as the character would in the actual situation. The rules recommend real-time play, but most players prefer a more relaxed atmosphere. After all, though the characters are trained adventurers who make life and death decisions in seconds, the players are just people who play once a week. Why expect them to make snap decisions?

Having said that, the way to force players to act chaotically is either to require immediate decision, or require players to write down what they'll do, without talking to each other. Don't allow standard plans or code words. The idea is to make the players' actions unpredictable.

Treasure distribution also offers an opportunity to force chaotic behaviour on players. Lawfuls might distribute treasure evenly, but chaotics might roll dice separately to see who gets each item or bag of coins, or a 'grabbers keepers' rule might be used.

Finally, give experience points for deeds outstandingly consistent with alignment. For example, if good characters save a village from destruction, or evil characters destroy a (non-evil) village, 1 to 5 experience points per villager should be divided among the party. Double experience should be given for a creature converted to a good player's alignment, or formally tortured and sacrificed by an evil player. ∎

# CONVERSION



**A New Clerical Ability**                      **by Roger Musson**

It has been remarked before now that venturing down dungeons, treasure-seeking and killing monsters is a very strange activity for a man of God. Clerics tend to behave in a not-very-clerical fashion in *D&D*, except when actually casting spells or turning undead, and any attempt at any experience point system that is based purely on class-related activities tends to get into difficulties over the matter of clerics. The following proposal is, I hope, one of getting over the problem, and making clerics a little more colourful. However, I will admit that what follows is a basic plan rather than a fully worked-out and tested system. In the following text, by the way, the word "cleric" should always be taken as meaning any clerical class, certainly including paladins, and to a lesser extent monks.

My basic premise is that clerics have no great wish to kill, but rather to convert their enemies to the One True Faith. This certainly ought to be the main aim of any paladin (consider Sir Galahad); the only time I have seen a paladin played really well was a certain character who used to apologise to monsters before killing them, that he was truly sorry they wouldn't listen to reason, and that they really left him no alternative but to remove their heads. Therefore:

*1:* Clerics may, at any time, attempt to convert a monster or non-player-character to their own alignment and religion. They may also attempt to convert other clerics.

*2:* Whether the intended convert wishes to listen to the cleric's casuistry is another matter. If a cleric boldly walks into an ogre's lair and greets him with "Good Evening, I wonder if I could interest you in the One True Faith" he may simply get his head bashed in. In any situation, the DM must determine the likelihood of the cleric getting any sort of audience, and this will probably depend to a high degree on charisma. However there is no reason why a cleric should not attempt conversion in circumstances where he has definitely not got the upper hand; for instance, if a party had been captured, and were chained up in a cell, a cleric in the party could always deliver a homily to the jailor, who might well be bored enough to listen.

*3:* The conversion procedure is rather like combat, consisting of an indefinite number of rounds in which each side attempts to score points off their opponent. Think of it as argument and refutation tossed to and fro. In each round, both sides throw for initiative in the usual way for combat; highest throw speaks first, and throws 1d20. To score, he must roll higher than his opponent's wisdom. Then the other side throws in the same manner, etc. Applicable die-roll modifiers are as follows: clerics add one to their roll for each experience level above first; non-clerics add one to their roll for every two hit

dice. Clerics and non-clerics alike may both add one to their die-rolls if they have charisma in excess of 15.

*4:* When one side or the other has scored a total of six points, the argument is over and that side has won. If the winner is the cleric, the loser immediately changes alignment to that of the cleric. This change is permanent in the case of humans; in the case of chaotic non-humans, the force of the cleric's arguments may wear off with time. In the case of Chaos converted to Law, the convert will feel grateful to the cleric for opening his eyes, but when Law is converted to Chaos, despondency is likely to override any gratitude.

*5:* The argument may be curtailed before coming to its conclusion, either by outside interruption (in which case the argument ceases without effect on either side), or by the withdrawal of the cleric (if he's making heavy weather of it). In the latter instance, the cleric is subject to certain penalties according to the number of points his opponent has scored against him (how many points he himself has scored has no effect). The penalties are as follows:

| Points scored against cleric | Penalty |
|---|---|
| 1 | No effect |
| 2 | No effect |
| 3 | Experience points reduced to minimum for level |
| 4 | Loss of one level |
| 5 | Loss of one level plus disillusionment |
| 6 | Conversion or total disillusionment |

A cleric who suffers disillusionment may use none of his clerical powers until he has performed some severe penance. A cleric losing six points to another cleric is converted to the other cleric's faith; if he loses to a non-cleric he suffers total disillusionment, loses his clerical powers, and may never enlist in the service of the same god again; to regain clerical abilities he must find some other religion of a different alignment to his previous one. Experience point loss in such a case is at the discretion of the DM.

*6:* When two clerics debate with one another, neither may withdraw voluntarily from the argument.

*7:* If a cleric tries to convert a group of monsters, the group will respond as the wisest member of the group. If the wisest member is converted, the whole group will be converted. If two clerics of the same religion wish to combine forces in an argument, only the wisest of the two will actually have any effect.

*8:* Members of the cleric's party should not be allowed to interrupt a debate whenever their cleric is losing; they should be considered to be entranced by the exchange of theological niceties, unless some outside interruption (wandering monsters, etc) occurs.

*9:* Intelligence is not considered to affect the debate; though the less intelligent may be less able to refute clever sophistries, they are also less able to understand them, and therefore less likely to be swayed by them. However, there is a lesser likelihood of creatures of lowish intelligence joining a debate in the first place. And no, you may *not* try and convert an ochre jelly!

*Other points:* for the calculation of a monster's wisdom, I'm afraid you must fall back on your own resources, but I think a basic range of 3—18 with a few modifiers should be sufficient most of the time. Players who traffic in very high-level characters (anything above tenth) should scale down the die-roll modifiers for debates. Note that monsters converted to Law will not just give up their treasure on that account, and if they are lawful, other lawfuls (in the party) can't attack them for it. Give clerics experience points for converting and not killing creatures, and you should get a nice clash of interests within a party, always a thing to spice the game up a bit.

Obviously, some monsters are totally unsusceptable to conversion; undead for instance. But the prospect of converting a roomful of goblins to Reformed Calvinism ought to appeal to all those with a fondness for clericism . . .  ∎

One major problem in *Traveller* campaigns is the question of 'background' — or rather the lack of it. This article proposes some ideas on how the problem can be solved.

First 'background' must be defined. As used here, 'background' is a solid, believable and consistent campaign world; if a campaign has this background, then characters become 'real' people rather than statistics. When background is present, there are times when the players literally see through their characters' eyes, and identify with them to a degree impossible in lesser games.

It is this which distinguishes a good referee from a bad one. A good games master will create a good background, and as a result games in that campaign will be good regardless of which rules and scenarios he is using.

A campaign without a detailed backdrop causes problems: The games master who can't think of a scenario, the player with a new character saying "What shall I do with him? What's the point of the game?"

Let's look at other games and see why *Traveller* is particularly prone to these problems.

Like myself, most *Traveller* players started off in *D&D*. This game has few problems of background. The DM has no trouble setting up a Mediaeval backdrop for his campaign, because thanks to hundreds of fairy tales, films, comics and books absorbed almost from birth, you needn't spend hours describing a village in detail, or how a crossbow works, or what a horse looks like: you simply say 'You enter a village,' 'They have crossbows,' or 'You see a horse in front of you.' And everyone present knows what you mean, instantly.

There is likewise no trouble in developing a personality for a character, complete with objectives. Looking at die rolls for characteristics, you can see at once what the character will be best as. Once a character class is chosen, a rough sketch of the character is already present; a paladin will be generous and kind to small children and animals, a monk may imitate Grasshopper or Shang Chi, and so on.

If a struggle is present, the players can side with one party or the other, or play both ends against the middle. Where possible, work out several layers of plot, then interesting rumours and encounters can surface.

Some useful struggles that could be set up are:

### 1: Mission: Impossible
This is typified by the *Sable Rose Affair* in *White Dwarf 17*. Here we have a group of players who have been recruited by a highly secret organisation to perform tasks which cannot be openly countenanced; of course, while all possible aid will be given, the players must work out their own methods; and should they be caught or killed, the Imperial Senate will disavow all knowledge . . .

Tasks here are numerous and will keep most characters usefully employed. Possible operations set up by the referee, acting as the group's Case Officer, include surveillance, kidnapping, blackmail, arson, murder, paramilitary commando raids, piracy . . . the list could go on for pages. Bear in mind, too, that there will usually be several government agencies of this kind on both sides of the border, which will be competing for appropriations and thus unfriendly towards each other. (My own Covert Survey Bureau spends more time trying to discredit Naval Counter-Intelligence than it does breaking up Zhodani spy-rings . . .)

### 2: Punishment Battalion
This plot requires a war, and is suited to militaristic or 'hack-and-slay' players. Players represent the vilest psychopaths their stellar empire has produced, who have been banded together for convenience and sent off on those suicidal missions which are so prevalent in futuristic warfare. This leads to fairly straightforward bloodbaths and some enjoyable table-topping.

### 3: Where No Man Has Gone Before
Here the group has been given the task of exploring a new subsector — this one is obviously good for solitaire play. In a suitable exploration ship,


# BACKDROP

Most fantasy role-playing games are similar: *D&D, C&S, T&T, TFT,* and so on ad infinitum draw on a backgound of wizards and warriors ingrained below the conscious level in most of us. There are a few of another kind: These games do not draw on an immediately familiar background, but instead describe a novel one. *RuneQuest* is the prime example of this: after reading the description of Glorantha, looking over the map, and learning our cult's aims in life, we quickly feel at home. Yet these games are 'cheating'; Glorantha may be strange, but a crossbow is still a crossbow, a horse is still a horse, and trolls still behave like the trolls of fairytale despite different statistics.

A *Traveller* referee cannot draw on historical prototypes for his milieu. Thus statistics rarely become clothed in flesh; referees give up because the game lacks something, players discuss *D&D* trips in little huddles while he dices up encounters, and everyone goes back to the dungeon.

GDW produce an excellent background in *The Spinward Marches,* the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* and other sources. However, this article is for those referees who don't want to buy these supplemental materials. Here then, for what they're worth, are some tricks that can be used to get around this problem of background. Nor are they limited to *Traveller;* some of these ideas will be useful in other games and have probably been thought of before by a lot of other DMs . . .

### Rolling Your Own
Don't be afraid to plagiarise. If you see a good idea anywhere, grab it and weld it on. After a while your campaign doesn't look much like anyone else's, but that's part of the fun of role-playing games. By adding and deleting rules, scenarios and so on, you eventually wind up with a game that has been tailored to your own group's preferences. A lot of people refuse to use anything that isn't 'official'; don't be one of them.

Don't try to roll up a million planets right away; this makes it difficult to generate any detail. Even if the players have a starship to begin with, start with a couple of planets and work them out in depth. If the players want to move on, and you want them to stay, either admit that you haven't worked out anywhere else — most players will understand — or invent some reason why their characters can't leave. ('I'm sorry, guys, but the nearest stockist for that spare you need is fifty parsecs away. You'll have to wait for the mail.)

Start with the statistics, and ask yourself: Why did these come to be? With a little practice, and some dice rolls to inject variety, you'll be generating immensely devious and interesting backgrounds in no time at all. Don't reroll 'nonsensical' results until you're sure you can't explain them.

Have an overall struggle into which the players can fit. This gives them some kind of overall goal which will carry them through several early adventures, until they find purposes for their characters. (It's rare for someone to play more than a few sessions without coming up with some long-term aim for himself — this can be anything up to and including ruling the galaxy. Often this will mean they abandon your carefully-plotted goals; let them.)

the crew proceed from world to world, mapping the subsector as they go. Depending on whether they are sponsored by a government or a merchant company, their opponents may be hostile aliens, native life-forms or explorers from other organisations. Their objectives may be to negotiate trading deals, diplomatic treaties, or simply establish a naval or scout base.

### 4: Shogun
This does not take place on the frontier of your empire, but near the capital worlds. It is postulated that the emperor is involved in some kind of power struggle, where the nobles and other powerful beings of the empire have split into factions, each vying for control of the throne. This scenario lends itself readily to assassinations and underhand skullduggery, not so well to straightforward slaughter. The players will be hired by one faction or another, and from there events will proceed much as in case 1, Mission: Impossible, with the difference that the enemies are internal rather than ouside the empire.

### 5: Star Wars
In which the heroic (or villainous) players strive to overthrow (or preserve) the corrupt and tyrranical empire. Or the hideous barbarians attempt to sack the ancient galactic civilisation. It's up to you.

Other set-ups will suggest themselves; this list is by no means exhaustive. It is perfectly feasible for a campaign to have several of these plots running at once; once a campaign has been going for a while, such crutches will no longer be needed as players develop their own goals, but will still be useful background material, providing opportunities to the group.

### Methods
There are several methods of generating backgrounds besides working it all out from scratch. These vary in usefulness, and are presented here without comment.

The referee can generate a character for himself and run solo trips for this character, noting down all encounters for use in later games. By means of asking the dice questions and noting the answers, a background quickly appears.

Let some of the non-players encountered by the group be 'personality' non-players; that is, NPCs who have been worked out in considerable detail, like a 'real' player-character. These people will have their own goals and plots which may (or may not) involve the players. How to do this, will be covered later in the description of patrons.

Write up the trips and adventures of your band as stories and circulate them. This forces you to concentrate on describing a character's surroundings and equipment; and once these descriptions have been circulated, people all 'know' what a phase-interlocked grunge rifle (or whatever) looks like. This is important for the 'feel' of the game. If someone in the group has artistic talent, drawings are even better.

Let the players work out some of the background for you. They, too, can design a planet, an alien, a ship; sometimes this develops into whole

subsectors run by another gamer in which you can adventure.

You will find that after a brief period — usually a few months — the campaign becomes 'self-sustaining'; the characters already present, and the world descriptions, begin to generate scenarios and background information by themselves. Often thereafter, you will find that you are observing your universe as it unfolds rather than consciously creating it.

### Players' Complaints

The first one to arise will be: 'What character class shall I be?' In other words, which career/service should the character enter? The best method for a new player is to ask him which fictional hero he'd like to imitate and insert him into an appropriate service. Alternatively, pre-dice a character for him; *Traveller* characters, particularly in the expanded generation mode, take a long time to dice up, during which some players may wander off and join another game. At the other extreme, there are those who don't actually play, but enjoy dicing up characters. Encourage these people to leave you the results, and you have a ready-made supply of NPCs . . . (something I've not actually tried yet is making new players start as Barbarians (from *Supplement 4)*, so that being bewildered at the background is in character).

The next problem will be choosing a long-term goal for the character once he's been diced up. Many players will expect the life's purpose of their character to be spoon-fed to them. This is where your carefully prepared background and struggle will come in. Until he knows what kind of universe he's in, how can a player plan anything? Don't expect much for the first few sessions, because everyone involved has to learn their way around your universe. For really bad cases of confusion, use the method suggested for patron generation below.

Soon (particularly if hard-core *D&D* players) your group will ask the embarrassing question: how do I improve my skills? (Translation: Where are the experience points?) This occurs less frequently with experienced players, who tend to go in more for developing a character and global

ific, detailed patron actually would hire a given band for. They're fairly apparent.

If not, seek further information. Ask the dice: Is this commission concerned with some kind of person? (If so, dice up a random person or patron; generate a character to fit; flesh him out in the same way as the patron, and ask yourself: How would these two relate to each other, and why are the adventurers involved?) Or, is the job concerned with some kind of cargo? (Dice a random cargo on the trade and speculation table, and try to figure out why the patron is interested.)

This becomes easier as the campaign goes on, and the background which you've generated is invaluable. Eventually some characters will become powerful enough to hire other bands to do their dirty work for them — by which time they should have been retired from play, but will occasionally participate as military commanders, trading magnates, etc. In this case, they will already have a clear aim which the band can further, or they wouldn't have made it that far.

Another kind of 'commission' is the rumour; rumours can be simply rumours of a patron as generated above, or snippets of your background surfacing for the first time. If a scenario is alredy in progress, it will be fairly easy to think of a rumour which can help/thwart/confuse the party (delete where inapplicable). If the rumour is the starting point, then a piece of your local Library Data might be enough to spur the band into action. For example, on page 28 of *The Spinward Marches,* we note the planet Zila as a reknowned wine producer, while its neighbour Psyadi is ruled by a religious dictatorship which prohibits alcohol. Someone with a Jump-2 drive and few scruples could surely make quite a killing there, smuggling booze.

(A similar method to the patron/rumour generation process can be used to develop your background. You might dice up several nobles from *Supplement 4,* and declare them to be the last few emperors. Compare their service records. One might have died in service — did his successor assassinate him? Or, if he retired, was he forced to abdicate? If so, how?)

# OF STARS

By
Andy
Slack

domination than accumulating experience points and going up levels. In all such awkward moments, never tell a player it is impossible to do something. Just make it very, very difficult. For example, most people in my group (including myself, to be fair) wanted experience points. So a system was devised, which ended complaints despite the fact that since its form stabilised only two people have gone up a level in any skill by experience. It's far faster to use a friendly instructor — and since *Book 4's* Instruction skill, the experience problem has died down.

Next we come to the hack-and-slayers. *Traveller* is not really for them. The first decent hit anyone scores on you in *Traveller* will render you unconscious at the very least. So even with restrained players, it's advisable for them to run a couple of characters each (two seems to be optimum —people can't usually develop more than two characters at once). In *Traveller,* fighting is something to be avoided if at all possible, as in real life. This seems to sit better with older or more experienced players.

Another complaint comes from people who have set their hearts on some particular item, usually powered armour or a phaser. Don't be afraid to put your foot down and say they can't have it, if it will upset your campaign. It is better, however, to let them have a reasonable facsimile — with a reasonable drawback. For example, see Joe Haldeman's *Forever War* for all the things that can go wrong with powered armour.

### Referee's Problems

The main and recurring problem for a referee is setting up commissions. When all else fails, let the dice decide!

First, you must generate a patron. (This technique is also useful for working out personality NPCs, and the characters of inexperienced players.)

Dice up a suitable character. Examine his UPP, skills, and record. How does he look? His terms of service will give you his age. Does he look muscular (high strength)? Tough (high endurance)? Graceful (high dexterity)? Is he a good conversationalist (high intelligence and education)? What social class does he come from? Do his skills (Leader, Carousing, Streetwise) make him especially easy to get on with? And so on. UPP, skills, service. These tell you more about a character than you'd think. When a difficult choice appears, consult the dice for an answer.

Similarly, what kind of person is he? Is he smart (intelligence and education again)? Can you trust him? (Probably not, if he's got Forgery-3.)

The merchant in *Book 1,* provided as an example of character generation, is the sort of thing you will get here. Service history is a valuable aid in working out a character. Has he got wounds of some kind, for instance — yes, if he barely made his survival roll a time or two.

You now know what kind of person the patron is; what would a man like that do with his life? What is his long-term goal, and how close is he to achieving it? Once you know these things, since you know what the players' characters are like, you will know why he wants to hire *them* instead of anyone else. Usually there are few commissions which a spec-

The most intriguing method of generating rumours can be used with great effect when you are refereeing several independent groups in the same campaign universe. One group can then uncover rumours of the other's activities. They may be recruited by the Imperium to stop those activities if the other group has been obnoxious enough. If the first group is rich enough, the second may decide to rob them. There are endless possibilities. This does give some problems when the groups meet; either you can call them together and watch them battling with a ferocity never achieved against NPCs, or you can 'split' your time-lines; you then have two parallel universes, in which each group in turn is used as a non-player gang while the other is run by the players concerned. In this case, with a little extra record keeping, after the fallout has settled each side can blissfully go on believing it has won — after all, if the groups met each other regularly the whole set-up would have been impossible.

There is a third, bastard kind of commission: The linked list of patrons. Here there is some vast treasure/intriguing rumour/ancient lost city, or some similar interesting thing which has been well-documented in your background as a legend, for example. The group runs into a patron who is tracking down the source of the legend. He hasn't much to go on, but he himself has a rumour which states that such-and-such a person knows some important key fact about the whole affair. When this person is unearthed at last, he too has a rumour, leading to a third patron — and so on for as long as your ingenuity holds out. Several of *GDW's* adventures run this way, with the group fulfilling minor commissions along the way, all the time gathering more evidence to lead them to the Big One.

Of course, there are times when all these fail, or you haven't had time to work out a scenario. In this case, there are a few standard fall-back options.

*Trading.* Someone will have a starship in most groups; if they have, they probably need money. Most groups in this position will cheerfully wander around trading and beating off the odd pirate. Frequently a commission will appear as if from nowhere, for example if they found the Zila/Psyadi setup described above. This requires at least one subsector mapped out, though not in great detail; just the stats. will do. Things like animal encounters can be diced up as they happen.

*The shadows of the past.* When a group has been going for some time, at least one of them will have made a powerful enemy. He could decide it was worth tracking the group down to settle accounts.

*The arena.* If a group is really hard-up, there is always the arena in which Dumarest frequently finds himself. Here, with varying degrees of legality, travellers down on their luck fight each other with assorted weapons to defeat or to the death. There is an arena at most starports of A, B, or C class where the jaded appetites of the nobility are slaked with the blood of others; the winner gets a percentage of the bets made, and can expect to realise enough money for a High Passage after a few weeks or months — if he survives. ∎

# DUNGEONS &...DRAGOONS?

*Authentic Historical Troop Types in Underworlds and Wildernesses.*

by Phil Masters
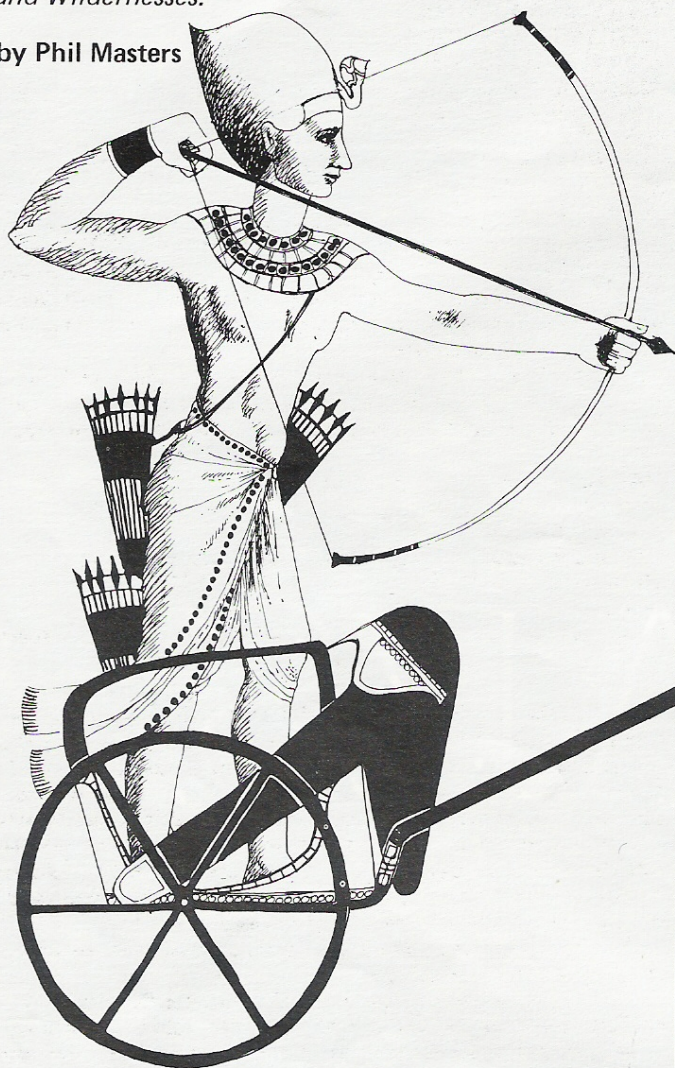


The majority of role-playing games take place in vaguely "high medieval" universes. A world of knights and bishops, feudal keeps and fifteenth-century technology is implicit in *Dungeons & Dragons*, explicit in *Chivalry & Sorcery*. To be sure, Glorantha and Tekumel have their own characteristics and the science fiction based games are another matter again, while both *D&D* and *C&S* take the Middle Ages as they saw them, rather than as they really were — hence the monsters and the magic. But only one small part of European history justifies plate armour and jousting without gunpowder or heavily centralised government. Strangely, however, some umpires import troop-types as well as monsters from other eras and areas, while others drop unfortunate characters through time-warps and dimensional nexus-points into very different settings. Some such encounters are *pure* fantasy — I know of both Greman storm-troopers and U.S. marines on the loose down underworlds — but it is possible to find historical warriors who can provide our plate-clad, spetum wielding heroes with a fair fight; the notes that follow describe a few possibilities.

The troops described are my attempt to give a general impression of the typical warrior of one area and time. Remember that most armies varied in quality and equipment over time, and virtually all employed auxiliaries, scouts, supports, levies and guards, who would be very different from the "typical". (About half the Roman army was made up of auxiliary skirmishers or cavalry; this article mentions only the famous legions.) To a certain extent, also, these notes show

nations as they saw themselves, rather than as we see them; hence the Romans are supremely disciplined, Picts have druidic leadership, Vikings have lycanthropic berserks, and so on. This, it is felt, matches the "medieval-romantic" view of medieval troops taken in the published rules, with their saintly paladins and miracle working priests.

Troops are defined in a number of ways:

**Quality:**
This will be one of four ratings:

*Poor:* Troops will be 75% 0-level fighters; 20% 1st-level; and 5% 2nd-level.

*Average:* Troops will be 50% 0-level; 30% 1st-level; and 20% 2nd-level.

*Good:* Troops will be 40% 0-level; 30% 1st-level; 20% 2nd-level; and 10% 3rd-level.

*Elite:* Troops will be 20% 0-level; 25% 1st-level; 30% 2nd-level; 15% 3rd-level; and 10% 4th-level.

**Armour Class**
AC in all these ratings is based on the *Advanced D&D* system; it is left to umpires to make any adaptions necessary for other systems. The class given is that of a normal man in the most prevalent type of armour in the force.

**Alignment (Gods)**
This is a very rough guide, given that any man is free to choose in such matters. All that is attempted is a rough guess at the position of the troops' civilisation on the Law/Chaos, Good/Evil axes, with, in parentheses, the name of the god(s) or powers most likely to be worshipped by the troops. Note that, although Gary Gygax regards both Olympus and Gladsheim as Chaotic Good, many of the deities involved must be rated very Lawful and/or Evil. Note too that few civilizations regard themselves as basically Evil, or even Chaotic, although those following individualistic codes of honour or chivalry are probably best rated as Chaotic Neutral or Chaotic Good.

**Organisation**
This is rated on a five-point scale, 1 indicating a rabble of near-uncontrollable individuals (e.g. berserks), 5 a tightly-knit, well-disciplined elite.

**Morale**
Also rated on a five-point scale: 1 suggesting quivering peasants, 5, unshakable heroes. Men particularly prone or immune to being worried by displays of sorcery are noted as such.

**Weapons (Adjustments)**
This lists the troops' usual equipment, or their nearest equivalent in the *D&D Players' Handbook* lists. Some troops were especially good with particular gear; a few were notably bad. Such specialities have been indicated by bonuses (or penalties) "to hit" (*NOT* on damage).

And so to cases. Only pre-gunpowder armies have been considered; rules for firearms in *D&D* don't appeal to me!

## EGYPTIANS
| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Average* |
| Armour Class: | *9* |
| Alignment (Gods): | *Lawful neutral (Egyptian Pantheon)* |
| Organisation: | *3* |
| Morale: | *3* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Mixed; all have daggers and one other (see below)* |

Middle-Kingdom Egyptians were able, disciplined troops, infantry with a spinkling of light two-man chariots from which fought the noble *Elite*; all would tend to feel contempt for non-Egyptians, and magic would hold few terrors for followers of their potent religion. Weaknesses include arrogance, over-confidence and bronze weapons — umpires may develop their own rules on these, but remember that a good bronze blade is better than a poor iron one. Little or no armour was available, but all save archers bore leather shields of various sizes. Many different types of weapon were known to the Egyptians; reckon on perhaps 40% of units carrying spear, 20% bow, 15% three javelins, 10% sling, 5% long sword, 5% maces and 5% battle axes, with archers and battle-axe men AC10.

Allow for one officer per 20 men, a third-level fighter with mace and shield.

## ASSYRIANS

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Good* |
| Armour Class: | *5* |
| Alignment (Gods): | *Lawful neutral, evil tendencies (Assyrian pantheon, notably war gods).* |
| Organisation: | *5* |
| Morale: | *4* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Mixed; see below* |

The Assyrians were an unashamedly aggressive, arrogant nation with one of the best armies in history. A wide range of armour and equipment was known and used, giving possible AC ratings from 4 for a few "ultra-heavies" to 10 for light skirmishing archers. 5% of units would be *Elite* guards with AC5 with shield, short sword, spear, bow and dagger; 60% would be other heavy types with spear and shield *or* bow (all have sword or mace and dagger) and the rest, light skirmishers with javelins, slings or bows. Similarly equipped but shieldless men rode horses or huge chariots.

Officers — one per fifteen men — would be fourth level fighters with mace and shield.

## HEROIC-ERA GREEKS

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Elite* |
| Armour Class: | *6* |
| Alignment (Gods): | *Chaotic good (Olympian pantheon).* |
| Organisation: | *2* |
| Morale: | *5* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Spear, javelin, short sword (+1); 40% add short bow (+2)* |

These are the Greek nobles of the Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer; they fought on foot or from light chariots, with support from large numbers of spear or sling-armed peasants (0-level). Armour was primitive bronze plate and bronze-faced shields, and most weapons were also bronze. There is a 15% chance that any group would have a paladin leader of level 3—12, with 15% chance of magical arms or armour.

Greek warriors of this era would be confident and pre-pared to fight sorcery if necessary. The Odyssey is recommended for further reading.

## GREEK HOPLITES

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Good* |
| Armour Class: | *5* |
| Alignment (Gods): | *Lawful good (Olympic Pantheon)* |
| Organisation: | *5* |
| Morale: | *4* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Spear (+1), short sword* |

These were the well-drilled citizen militia of the later Greek city-states; they operated with long thrusting spear in close order. Shields were large and bronze-faced, armour could be leather, canvas or bronze, and weapons (as with all troops described hereafter) were iron. Support came from light troops of variable quality and inferior cavalry.

From the time of Philip of Macedon (Alexander the Great's father) on, Macedonian tactics came to predominate. These involved re-arming with pikes and small shields, and an im-provement in the quality of support troops.

The famous Spartans were generally better armoured and should be rated as *Elite* quality.

One man in four (1st level or better) would have NCO rank. For every twenty men, there would be an officer (first to fourth level) of respectable intelligence and wisdom.

## PERSIAN IMMORTALS

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Elite* |
| Armour Class: | *5* |
| Alignment (Gods): | *Lawful good (Auramazda)* |
| Organisation: | *4* |
| Morale: | *5* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Spear, dagger, short comp. bow (+1)* |

The Immortals (so called because unit numbers were always kept constant, casualties being replaced immediately) were the elite palace guard in the early days of the Achaemenid dynasty. They wore iron scale armour and rich robes, and carried wicker shields. Support came from cavalry, other infantry and chariots of distinctly variable quality.

Fourth level fighters would act as officers, and would be of fair intelligence. The Persian religion before Islam was highly lawful and strongly opposed to the chaotic power of magic.

## HAN CHINESE

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Average* |
| Armour Class: | *6* |
| Alignment (Gods): | *Lawful neutral (Chinese pantheon)* |
| Organisation: | *5* |
| Morale: | *3* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Long sword, plus spear (50%), polearm (30%) or heavy crossbow (20%)* |

China has been ruled by many dynasties with many different types of army; the Han, who ruled from the 2nd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D., were one of the most able and military-skilled. The heavy infantry backbone of the army was well supported by lighter foot, heavy and light cavalry and chariots.

Armour was leather reinforced with iron rings, and wooden shields were employed. Polearms included halberds, glaives, guisarmes and related types. Lighter troops made effective use of bows, crossbows and other missile weapons.

For every ten men there would be a third level officer of good intelligence and wisdom.

Note that earlier Chinese dynasties had feudal armies with nobles fighting from ornate heavy chariots, followed by mostly inferior infantry, while later armies tended to use mainly heavy cavalry of varying armament and skill.

Chinese religion and philosophy is a complex subject, but is based on the idea of a highly ordered, "lawful" society.

## ROMAN LEGIONARIES

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Average (45%) or good (55%)* |
| Armour Class: | *4* |
| Alignment (Gods): | *Lawful neutral tending to good (Greek & Roman pantheons, Mithras, many others)* |
| Organisation: | *5* |
| Morale: | *4* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Pilum (see below), dagger, short sword (+2)* |

These were the famous legionaries who carved out and kept the Roman empire. They were highly disciplined and trained, although some units sank below par (and some others were very good indeed), and carried large wooden shields and good weapons. Armour was segmented iron, roughly equivalent to chain mail. The pilum was a heavy javelin, barbed and with a soft iron shaft which bent after use, making it useless for throwing back. It cannot be used at long range, but if it is thrown at a shielded man and misses, it has a 20% chance of lodging in his shield and making it useless (1 to 4 rounds to dislodge if the shieldbearer stops to try).

Support came from a wide variety of cavalry and light infantry (*NO* chariots — these were used for racing only!), mostly with javelin or bow. Later, more use was made of such light forces, and the legions had to make do with leather armour instead of metal. ►

▶ Bodies of eight or more legionaries would have a 50% chance of being commanded by a centurion — an NCO of fair intelligence and high wisdom, second to fifth level, with sword and dagger only.

The Roman empire was strongly aligned to order and law, but legionaries had a high degree of freedom of religious choice; soldier-gods such as Mithras were apparently preferred.
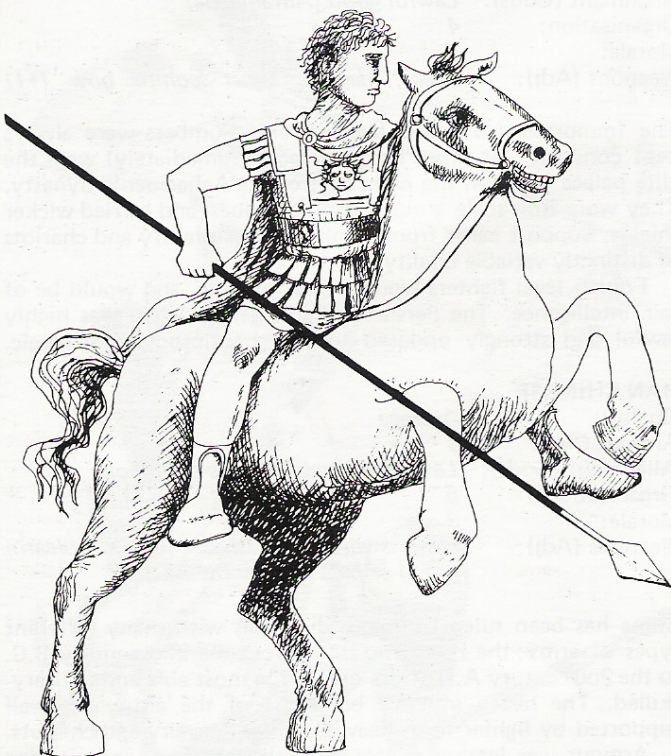


## CELTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Average* |
| Armour Class: | *9* |
| Alignment (Gods): | *Neutral or chaotic neutral (Druidic or Celtic pantheon)* |
| Organisation: | *1* |
| Morale: | *4* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Two javelins, long sword* |

The Celts included both the Gauls and the Britons of pre-Roman conquest times. They were brave warriors, but rather lacking in tactical intelligence — in short, they just charged the enemy as soon as possible. Armour was scarce, but large wooden shields were standard. Supporting troops were light missile infantry and noble light cavalry.

Generally, the best fighters present served as leaders, but chiefs and priests may be included as for *tribesmen* in the *Monster Manual* . . . British chieftains rode light chariots. Make 50% of Celtic tribes have Druidic priests, the other 50%, more normal chaotic clerics.

(Note; fans of *Asterix the Gaul* may have their own ideas as to how to organise Celts . . . . . .)

The following races can also be considered here:

**Germans** fought similarly to Gauls, but were still more primitive and even more ferocious; 10% may be considered berserkers (see *Monster Manual*). Weapons were javelin, spear and dagger.

**Picts** were very primitive, woad-painted savages. All would be (Druidic) neutral. Nobles rode chariots, a fair number of archers were employed, and the rank-and-file had spear and dagger. Arrows were flint tipped but carried a weak poison; −1 to hit, but with a 40% chance of contracting some kind of disease from hits. Picts surprise on a 1—4 in outdoor situations and all have ranger tracking abilities.

**Franks** were similar to Celts, but not so impulsive; all can be classed as chaotic, and instead of javelins, they used heavy spears or throwing axes, both similar in effect to the Roman pilum.

**Visigoths** were similar to Franks, but preferred javelins.

## OSTROGOTHS

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Average* |
| Armour Class: | *7* |
| Alignment (Gods): | *Varies (varies)* |
| Organisation: | *2* |
| Morale: | *4* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Two javelins, spear, broad sword* |

These were the Gothic cavalry that helped destroy the Roman Empire. Armour varied from chainmail through leather to none, wooden shields were employed, and some of the spears may have served as cavalry lances. Lesser tribesmen served as archers.

Generally, the highest-level men present lead, but exceptional types may be allotted as for *steppe nomads* in the *Monster Manual*.

Originally, the Goths worshipped the usual chaotic tribal gods, but later they were converted to a neutral good variety of Christianity; note that this is regarded as a heresy by conventional Christians.

## HUNS

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Good* |
| Armour Class: | *9* |
| Alignment (Gods): | *Chaotic evil (tribal deities)* |
| Organisation: | *2* |
| Morale: | *4* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Two javelins, short comp. bow (+2), short sword (−1)* |

The Huns fought China, Rome, and virtually everyone in between. They were a militaristic and savage race of light cavalry, living off their flocks and their victims. They conform to the class of *steppe nomads* in the *Monster Manual* in many ways. Apart from small leather shields, the only armour or protection was the miscellaneous loot picked up by a few nobles, who also used lances; others much preferred to skirmish.

Many later steppe races, such as the Turks and the Alans, conformed to this description.

## BYZANTINES

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Average* |
| Armour Class: | *3* |
| Alignment (Gods) | *Lawful good (Christianity)* |
| Organisation: | *5* |
| Morale: | *3* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Long sword, three darts, heavy lance* |

While not as ferocious as European knights, the cavalry of Constantinople were usually better drilled and more intelligent in their tactics. Horses might be barded, and mounted archers were often mixed into lancer formations.

Indeed, the better-trained if lighter-armoured early Byzantine cavalry carried bow as well as lance and darts. Infantry could be as well-armed as cavalry, with similar armour, long spears and darts. Light missile troops, both horse and foot, were also extensively employed, as were foreign mercenaries.

One man in ten (determined randomly) should be considered an officer of reasonable intelligence and wisdom.

Note that although the city now known as Istanbul was renamed Constantinople in the days of the Roman Empire, its people still called themselves Byzantines!

## ARTHURIAN BRITONS

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality: | *Good* |
| Armour Class: | *4* |
| Alignment (Gods): | *Lawful good (Christianity)* |
| Organisation: | *3* |
| Morale: | *4* |
| Weapons (Adj): | *Dagger, bastard sword, spear, two javelins* |

Despite the Hollywood myth of plate-armoured idiots, there is good evidence that the knights of Arthur (or Arturus) were a real force, who fought for some time to hold back the Saxon invaders. They wore chain mail, carried wood-and-leather shields, and fought from horseback supported by a feudal levy of spearmen and archers.

Third level fighters act as officers. For every man in a force, there is a three percent cumulative chance of an additional officer, level three to eight, with a forty percent chance of paladin status.

## CAROLINGIAN FRANKS
Quality: *Good*
Armour Class: *4*
Alignment (Gods) *Lawful good (Christianity)*
Organisation: *3*
Morale: *4*
Weapons (Adj): *Bastard sword, spear*

These were the knights of Charlemagne, or Charles the Great. They were raised by a feudal system, and so had a wide variety of infantry as support troops. Shields were large and wooden, armour was of several different types, and a few may have used lance rather than spear.

For every man there is a four percent cumulative chance of an officer, AC3, level two to five, with a twenty percent chance of paladin status.

## VIKINGS
Quality: *Good*
Armour Class: *5*
Alignment (Gods): *Chaotic neutral (Norse pantheon)*
Organisation: *2*
Morale: *5*
Weapons (Adj): *Varied; see below*

The Vikings were a very varied bunch; even assuming that we are dealing with a fairly successful raiding party, armour can range from none to good quality splint mail, and weapons from dagger-and-bow to bastard sword, spear, javelin, hand-axe and pole-axe. If necessary, dice for the number of weapons borne by a man — from two to five — then select from those named above, plus long sword, broad sword, battle-axe and club; swords should be near universal, and bows and axes widespread, with the latter claiming a +1 adjustment. All fight on foot, of course.

For every five men, include an additional berserk, level 0 to 2, as per the *Monster Manual*, but each such has an (independent) 5% chance of being a lycanthrope; either werewolf or wereboar (equally likely). Parties of twelve or more Vikings will have a leader-type, level four to nine, and a five percent chance of a cleric; 35% of these will be druids, 65% chaotic neutral. In either case, level is one to eight.

## MONGOLS
Quality: *Good*
Armour Class: *5*
Alignment (Gods): *Neutral, varying tendencies (Mongol pantheon)*
Organisation: *4*
Morale: *4*
Weapons (Adj): *Long sword, mace, axe (hand), heavy lance, short comp. bow (+2), long comp. bow (+1)*

The Mongols were one of the most powerful armies in history; each man was a skilled and well-equipped horseman, either heavy cavalry lancer or lighter types with javelin. Support came from similar but less well organised or equipped steppe cavalry, or later from various kinds of infantry. Armour varied from splint with horse barding to leather. The lasso was sometimes used in melee.

Mongol religion involved the worship of a number of nature-gods, and a healthy respect for, but not terror of, magic.

Each Mongol has a four percent chance of being a chaotic

good ranger. Third level men act as officers.

## SAMURAI
Quality: *Elite*
Armour Class: *4*
Alignment (Gods): *Chaotic neutral (Japanese pantheon)*
Organisation: *1*
Morale: *5*
Weapons (Adj): *Short sword, bastard sword (+2), long bow (+1)*

The Japanese Samurai knights were brilliant individual warriors, but their obsession with individual codes of honour and bravery could prevent effective use of any complex group tactics. However, Samurai would *never* show fear or surrender.

Japanese armour was intricate and highly useful, being flexible but strong and comprehensive. Shields were not employed, as the preferred weapons were used two-handed. Note that the short sword was generally more ceremonial than anything, although quite usable, and that a few spears and pole-arms were also known. Support troops were mainly infantry, ranging from peasant spearmen to well-equipped professionals.

Two percent of a Samurai force might be unusual types; one percent paladins, one percent ranger. In addition, any group has a ten percent chance of a leader of fourth to thirteenth level.

We may also note here the *Ninja*, the historical group coming closest to the *D&D* "assassin" character class. If the rather superfluous *Ninja* character class is not being employed, treat these specialist killers as assassin guilds, but with guild head-quarters more often hidden in a wilderness area than inside cities. Weapons are as per Samurai, with the addition of miniature darts and bows capable of easy concealment about the person. As the *Ninja* carefully studied any and every method of concealment and murder, 1—6 members of a community will rate as monks of levels one to eight, and there is a forty percent chance of one to three illusionists; the first as a fourth to seventh level master, the others as apprentices of level one to four.

## AZTECS
Quality: *Good*
Armour Class: *7*
Alignment (Gods): *Lawful neutral (Aztec pantheon)*
Organisation: *5*
Morale: *4*
Weapons (Adj): *Spear, "sword-club" (see below)*

The Aztecs were perhaps the most sophisticated stone-age culture in history; they created a remarkably complex society, empire and army, yet without horses, oxen or camels, and with weapons and tools edged only with obsidian (which actually does a great deal of damage to flesh, although −1 against heavily metal-armoured opponents).

Armour was made of padded or quilted vegetable fibres, and shields were of hide; all equipment was highly decorated and patterned. Offensively, heavy spears and javelins were employed, the latter being given an increased range (say 50% extra) by means of a "throwing stick" akin to that employed by Australian aborigines. The "sword-club" was a flat, heavy wooden weapon, edged with obsidian, which can be equated in effect to a battle-axe. Light support infantry would have short bow or sling and club.

For every twenty men, there will be an additional officer of level five to eight, with a twenty-five percent chance of being a cleric; religion played a key role in Aztec society, and one of the functions of warfare was to obtain victims for human sacrifice, which was deemed necessary to feed the gods for their struggle against darkness and chaos. War-gods, Sun-gods and Earth-gods were amongst the most important.

Aztec youths were brought up in Spartan conditions and well trained for warfare. Their belief in a warriors' heaven, combined with the money and position awarded to great warriors, ensured bravery and determination, but Aztecs, being used to victory, were easily disheartened by defeat or unfavourable omens.

# THE BEST OF
# STARBASE
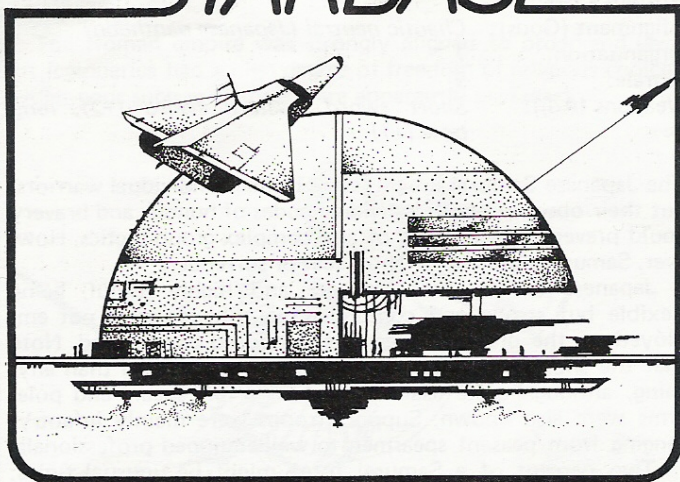


## by Bob McWilliams

*Welcome to the* Best of Starbase. *The following suggestions were the first ever* Starbase *column that appeared way back in WD20. Since then* Starbase *has covered a variety of topics, all of which were of some use, I hope.* Traveller Campaigns *and the two* Starbases *to follow were chosen on the basis of referee utility. They should provide some useful tips and play-aids.*

# TRAVELLER CAMPAIGNS...

## SETTING UP
First, you need an idea. There are many sources — SF novels, magazines, films and TV shows, plus your own imagination, though often an idea I think is original turns out to be from a story I read years ago. Be prepared for a lengthy search, and be ruthless about throwing out ideas that don't make the grade. Keep notes, even of ideas that don't work — they can stop you from making the same mistake again, or they might work out at a later date. Stay on the side of simplicity; a simple idea can be embroidered as much as you like, but a complex one is difficult to handle and there may only be one solution which the players unerringly discover in ten minutes. Disguise the origins of your idea; you can almost guarantee that one of the players has read the same book.

Start out with a simple encounter if you haven't played before; a party of player-characters against brigands, law officers or animals would be suitable. Then go on to another similar encounter, adding a little more detail and complexity at each occasion; before you know it a campaign is in progress. Make sure that you as the referee can sustain the adventure at the level you have chosen both in terms of preparation and control over players' actions — another reason for keeping things simple until referee and players gain confidence. None of this will be wasted; you will be committing to memory some of the 'nuts and bolts' of the rules, which will stand you in good stead later.

I cannot stress enough the importance of thorough preparation for a playing session — the referee needs to have all the background information, carefully divided into what the players know at the start, what the players may find out, and what the players should not know. The referee should anticipate likely responses to situations. Allow plenty of time for preparation; have a clear idea of the length of time available, and tailor the adventure to suit. You may be able to continue later if you underestimate the time needed, but, if you overrun, avoid skipping over important parts of the game as playing, rather than finishing, is the essence of the game.

## PURPOSE
The main ingredients of a good situation (not usually all at once) are:

1: personal danger
2: monetary gain
3: improvement of personal skills or characteristics
4: job prospects
5: social advancement
6: expunging some force of evil (or good)
7: satisfying curiosity through exploration/investigation

These ingredients are as they are due to the nature of the 'reward' in *Traveller*. Due to the influence of other role-playing games, it has come to be accepted that characters should be rewarded by accruing experience points and rising in 'levels'; this is not to be found in *Traveller*. It is in keeping with the logic of the game system, and more truly 'role-playing', that it is the player rather than his characters who is rewarded by the increasing facility with which he negotiates the rules of the game and the situations thrown at him by the referee; he becomes more skilled at coping with the universe as, one hopes, all of us do in the real world. I feel that players enjoy participating, rather than 'winning', much more when freed of an artificial system of measuring their ability.

Despite all that I have just said, player-characters have to eat, so one of the most important factors to be considered is whether the possible rewards match the dangers, difficulties and expense involved. Players can expect a reduced reward if they fail to solve problems, but having worked hard to find their only recompense doesn't even pay for the ammunition used may lead to thoughts of grievous bodily harm on the person of the referee. Only in campaign play should 'lean' periods be considered. Make sure also that player-characters are suited to the situation, particularly with regard to skills required. There is no need to go overboard about this — no player can expect that every skill he possess will prove useful each time he plays. Players can however expect a fighting chance. This applies overall; facing players with impossible situations will only leave everyone frustrated. There is no necessity for a solution to be easy, but it must be possible.

## BACKGROUND
It is unlikely that you will be the master of every skill required in *Traveller*. A background in science fiction and fact is required to play and referee the game well. The referee needs to keep the game universe as consistent and realistic as possible, and this often entails areas of science with which you are unfamiliar. Two general references I use in this respect — apart from the usual things like a good dictionary and encyclopaedia — are Asimov's *Guide to Science* (2 vols, Pelican) and *Chambers Dictionary of Science and Technology* (2 vols, Chambers). For dealing with the social side of planetary affairs a good historical grounding is invaluable.

## SUMMARY
To sum up then, the essentials when considering whether an idea will make a good adventure are:

1: Will the adventure stand up as worthwhile; is there enough interest in the situation? Is the idea sufficiently, or apparently, dissimilar to previous recent adventures?
2: Can the referee cope with the background preparation required and the subject matter involved, and the possible directions players may take?
3: Does the situation fit into the time frame envisaged, and is there a possibility of a further playing session if it overruns?
4: Are players' likely rewards commensurate with the risks involved?
5: Are player-characters' skills at least reasonably matched to the tasks they might have to undertake?

I hope this is of some interest to budding *Traveller* referees and, will give some appreciation of all the work that goes into producing an adventure. I am aware that I have not dealt with the details of the process, which is a subject that I shall treat in a future issue. For now, good travelling. ∎

# THE BEST OF TREASURE CHEST

# Amulets & Talismans
## by Lewis Pulsipher

Talismans and amulets, derived respectively from Arabic and Roman traditions, often play a part in medieval fantasy but are rarely seen in *D&D*. Technically, an amulet is a passive defensive device while a talisman confers some power or ability. In either case only the wearer benefits from the magic. Anyone may wear an amulet or use a talisman provided he knows the magic command word.

In *D&D* an amulet provides protection against a particular spell, while a talisman enables the wearer to use a particular spell even if he is not a spell-caster. A given amulet or talisman may be 'tuned' to only one spell, but an individual may wear any number of such charms at one time. Sometimes the amulet or talisman will fail to operate, and each time it is used there is a chance that it will disintegrate after use. A method is provided below to enable spell-casters to construct these charms, but their primary function should be as minor magic treasure items where a more powerful item is not justified.

The determining factor in creation, operation, and disintegration of charms is the level of mastery of the creator, that is, the number of experience levels he has advanced counting from the level before he became eligible to construct charms of the order in question. Only a character class which can cast the spell can create the amulet or talisman — for example, a cleric cannot make a *fireball* amulet. The caster must be of sufficient level to create the object, as shown:

| Charm Order | Class MU/Illusionist Level | Cleric/Druid Level |
|---|---|---|
| I | 7 | 7 |
| II | 9 | 8 |
| III | 11 | 9 |
| IV | 13 | 11 |

For example, a magic-user must be at least ninth level to make a second order amulet or talisman. The sorcerer would be at third level of mastery for first order charms, first level of mastery for second order.

### Amulets

Each amulet takes two weeks per order number to make, and costs the order number squared, times 100 gp. Time and cost are assessed even if the amulet is a failure.

The chance of successfully creating an amulet is 10 times the level of mastery of the creator, plus 20%. The chance of successful operation of the amulet when the specified spell is cast at the wearer is 10% times the level of mastery of the creator, plus 10%. If failure results, the amulet has no effect. If it operates, it gives an additional saving throw versus the spell, or a save against a spell that normally allows no save. (If two saves are successful against spells which may do half damage, such as *fireball*, they do quarter damage.)

When an amulet operates, there is a chance that it will disintegrate after operation. This is 100% divided by one plus the creator's level of mastery.

For example, a wizard (eleventh level) makes a second order amulet. Cost is 400 gp and four week's work. Chance of success is 10 x 3 + 20 = 50%. If the wizard succeeds, the amulet will work 10 x 3 + 10 = 40% of the time. When it works it will disintegrate on a roll of 1-25 (100 divided by [1+3] = 25%).

### Talismans

A talisman takes two times the *spell* level of weeks to make, and costs 1,000 gp times *order* level. Costs apply even if the creation fails.

Chance of successful creation: 5% times creator's level of mastery, +20%. Chance of operation: 5% times creator's level of mastery, +10%. Chance of disintegration is 10% times spell level, rolling after the wearer attempts to operate the talisman even if he is unsuccessful.

When the talisman operates treat it as though the wearer has cast a spell of the specified type.

The following tables list all spells for which amulets or talismans can be created. The number and letter following the spell name indicate spell level and class (C = cleric, D = druid, I = Illusionist, M = magic-user).

## Amulets
### Order I

| Spell | Level/Class |
|---|---|
| Burning hands | 1M |
| Cause fear | 1C |
| Cause light wounds | 1C |
| Charm person | 1M |
| Charm person/mammal | 2D |
| Chill metal | 2D |
| Colour spray | 1I |
| Command | 1C |
| Curse (reverse of bless) | 1C |
| Heat metal | 2D |
| Hold animals | 3D |
| Hypnotism | 1I |
| Shocking grasp | 1M |
| Sleep | 1M |
| Magic missile | 1M |

### II

| Spell | Level/Class |
|---|---|
| Blindness | 2I |
| Deafness | 2I |
| Detect lie | 4C |
| Enfeeblement | 2M |
| Hold person | 2C, 3M |
| Hypnotic pattern | 2I |
| Scare | 2M |
| Silence | 2C |
| Stinking cloud | 2M |
| Web | 2M |

### III

| Spell | Level/Class |
|---|---|
| Bestow curse | 3C |
| Blindness | 3C |
| Cause disease | 3C, 3D |
| Cause serious wounds | 4C, 4D |
| Clairvoyance | 3M |
| Clairaudience | 3M |
| Explosive runes | 3M |
| Insect plague | 5C, 5D |
| Phantasmal force | 1I, 3M |
| Slow | 3M |
| Suggestion | 3M |

### IV

| Spell | Level/Class |
|---|---|
| Aerial servant | 6C |
| Confusion | 4M |
| Fear | 4M |
| Fireball | 3M |
| Fire charm | 4M |
| Hallucinatory terrain and massmorph | 4M |
| Ice storm | 4M |
| Improved phantasmal force | 2I |
| Phantasmal killer | 4I |
| Polymorph | 4M |
| Slay living | 5C |

*Note* — yes, amulets can be worn by animals, thus the *hold animals* amulet.

## Talismans
### Order I

| Spell | Level/Class |
|---|---|
| Light | 1C, 1M |

### II

| Spell | Level/Class |
|---|---|
| Bless | 1C |
| Change self | 1I |
| Comprehend languages | 1M |
| Continual light | 2M, 3C |
| Curse | 1C |
| Detect charm | 2C |
| Enlarge (self only) | 1M |
| Feather fall | 1M |
| Hold portal | 1M |
| Resist cold | 1C |
| Sanctuary | 1C |
| Shield | 1M |
| Spider climb | 1M |

### III

| Spell | Level/Class |
|---|---|
| Detect lie | 4C |
| Find traps | 2C |
| Infravision | 3M |
| Know alignment | 2C |
| Mirror image | 2M, 2I |
| Misdirection | 3I |
| Protection/evil | 1M, 1C |
| Protection/good | 1M, 1C |
| Slow poison | 2C |
| Speak with animals | 2C, 1D |

### IV

| Spell | Level/Class |
|---|---|
| Continual darkness | 3C |
| Cure blindness | 3C |
| Cure disease | 3C, 3D |
| Detect invisible | 3M |
| Invisibility | 2M |
| Neutralize poison | 3D, 4C |
| Non-detection | 3I |
| Protection/fire | 3D |
| Protection/lightning | 3D |
| Protection/normal missiles | 3M |
| Speak with plants | 4D |
| Tongues | 3M, 4C |
| True sight | 5C, 5I |

# A Spellcaster's Guide to Arcane Power

## by Bill Milne



This article describes a system which relates spell casting to a numerical value for the power that causes spells to take effect.

Each and every spell user is capable of handling and manipulating, for whatever purpose or cause, this other-plane energy, in limited amounts, dependant on ability and experience, without incurring any untoward physical penalties. Should they try to exceed their allotted power handling capacity however, spells may misdirect or miscast, and possibly affect the spellcaster (at DM's discretion). Likewise the inexperienced (spell user or other) may be tempted to try to cast spells, with similar tragic results. This power is the energy which also causes magical artifacts to cast their charges or take effect, and is available for manipulation by ALL characters and classes. But, it is only effectively usable for spell casting by the clerical/necromantic fraternity, through experience, training, and mental ability. It is dependent to a small extent on race, and experience increases are reliant on class. By this latter method, the system attempts to alleviate some of the advantages accrued by class (in particular multi- or dual) ability and race, but yet allowing the classes reliant on magic, a greater scope and usage of their craft.

### Determination of Base Power Handling Levels

As aforementioned, all characters have a basic handling capacity. This level is calculated from initial ability scores, by allotting 2 points each, for every point of intelligence and wisdom, to a maximum of 19 & 18 (38 & 36 for power) respectively, and 2 points for each point of constitution below 20, i.e. a constitution of 19 scores 2 points and the minimum of 1 point scores 38 points. It is unlikely that characters will appear with the maximum levels, and still be non-spell using classed, as the higher scoring abilities help to determine choice of class, and, in addition, within this system, low constitution is an advantage to spell users. So in the initial ability/class fixing stage of character creation, this system may assist in determining or channeling personalities, by racial/ability limitations, and base power calculation, toward appropriate class. Also, in those initial stages of a character's existence, this system will allow the best in each class, the greatest use of their craft, and those of lower ability minimal or lesser use, again discouraging the less suitable.

### Experience Level Development Scoring

As each magic using class using magic advances in experience, so through the normal means of prayer or meditation, and training, they are able to develop their ability and increase the power levels they are capable of wielding. Each class is capable of developing and achieving this power handling capacity, but at differing rates; magic-users/illusionists for example, being more reliant on, and spending a greater proportion of time in research and development of this skill, gain in power usage levels more quickly than other classes. Thus the resulting power level gain per experience level is:

| Magic user | — | 40 pts per level |
|---|---|---|
| Illusionist | — | 30 pts per level |
| Druid | — | 15 pts per level |
| Cleric | — | 10 pts per level |
| Ranger | — | 6 pts per level |
| Bard | — | 5 pts per level |
| Paladin | — | 4 pts per level |

### Spell Casting Cost

The basic idea behind this system is to allow the spell caster the opportunity of casting the same spell on more than one occasion in a campaign, within a short space of time, without resorting to rest and spell recovery. This is achieved by "spell costing" i.e. to cast any spell, not only must it be known, and the material components be available (where necessary), but it will also require the release of a certain amount of energy. Thus the spells are given an energy cost rating applicable to class as shown in the chart (note: D.M.'s may cost permanent effect spells at double the normal level). These spell costs have been calculated from the maximum power score available to each class, at each level, to enable 3 castings, within a short period, of the maximum level spell available; e.g., a 6th level Druid with maximum power handling capability, will be able safely, to cast a 4th level spell 3 times (or lesser ones more often).

base power + level score = 102 + (6 x 15) = 102 + 90 = 192

4th level spell cost = 60 thus 3 spells cost 180

However this may be adjusted (as may be the whole system), to any point scoring base (e.g. 1pt, 2pt, 3pt upward . . .), that will suit the individual D.M.'s requirements.

#### Spell "Cost" per Class

| SPELL LEVEL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CLASS | | | | | | | | | |
| Magic User | 45 | 70 | 100 | 125 | 150 | 190 | 220 | 245 | 270 |
| Illusionist | 40 | 60 | 80 | 110 | 130 | 150 | 170 | 90* | 90* |
| Druid | 35 | 40 | 45 | 60 | 75 | 85 | 90 | NIL | NIL |
| Cleric | 35 | 40 | 50 | 55 | 60 | 70 | 85 | NIL | NIL |
| Paladin | 35 | 40 | 50 | 55 | NIL | NIL | NIL | NIL | NIL |
| Bard | 30 | 35 | 40 | 45 | 50 | NIL | NIL | NIL | NIL |
| Ranger | | | | | | | | | |
| Magic User | 45 | 70 | NIL | NIL | NIL | NIL | NIL | NIL | NIL |
| Druid | 35 | 40 | 45 | NIL | NIL | NIL | NIL | NIL | NIL |

*1st level Magic user spells at double "cost".

*Examples:*

a). Human Illusionist 1st level    Base level = 92
   Int. 17 Wisd. 14 Const. 5    Exp. level = 30   = 122pts
   Spell "cost" = 40 thus this character may cast 3 spells in any period (or one spell 3 times) without resorting to spell recovery, or losing any one spell on one casting.

b). Elf Cleric 1st level    Base level = 82
   Int. 13 Wisd. 15 Const. 12    Exp. level = 10   = 92pts
   Spell "cost" = 35 thus 2 x 1st level spells.

c). Human Ranger 9th level    Base level = 74
   Int. 17 Wisd. 15 Const. 15    Exp. level = 54   = 128pts
   Spell "cost" = 45 Magic user thus 2 x 1st level spells.
   Spell "cost" = 35 Druid    thus 3 x 1st level spells.

d). Halfling Druid 9th level    Base level = 82
   Int. 14 Wisd. 17 Const. 10    Exp. level = 135   = 217pts
   Spell "cost" = 75 (5th level) thus 2 x 5th level spells or more at a lower level.

e). ½ Elf Cleric/Magic-User 1st level    Base level = 70
   Int. 18 Wisd. 13 Const. 16    Exp. level = 25   = 95pts
   Spell "cost" = 45 or 35 thus 2 x 1st level spells of either class.

f). Elf Fighter/Magic-User 1st level    Base level = 74
   Int. 17 Wisd. 15 Const. 15    Exp. level = 20   = 94pts
   Spell "cost" = 45 thus 2 x 1st level spells.

Other examples may be worked out in a similar manner including base scores for non-spellusing classes.

### Power Recovery

Although the powers detailed in this article come from agencies external to the spell caster, some time must be spent in rest and prayer/meditation, to restore the power handling levels of the spell caster. As with the current *AD&D* spell recovery procedure, these levels may be restored in a similar manner, depending on class. In addition to this means (i.e. rest/prayer/meditation), it is possible to recover energy over a longer period of time, without rest, in the normal course of study at the rates shown until the current maximum level is reached.

| | per hour in rest | per day |
|---|---|---|
| Magic user | 25 pts | 5 pts |
| Illusionist | 20 pts | 4 pts |
| Druid | 12 pts | 2 pts |
| Cleric/Ranger/Paladin | 10 pts | 2 pts |
| Bard | 8 pts | 1 pts |

### Multi and Dual Class Characters

Where a character opts to include a spell casing role in a multi- or dual class, only the experience level calculation will be affected.

When a multi-class character has a dual spell casting role, e.g. cleric/magic-user, experience level points are gained at the rate of half the combined class total; thus, for the previous stated case it is at the rate of 25 pts per level (½[10 + 40] = 25.) If the class includes only one spell casting role, e.g. a fighter/magic-user then the experience level gain is at the rate of half the single class score. The calculation of base rates and the cost of spells remain the same for each class.

In the case of human dual class characters, the role being played after the changeover determines the experience level gain. If the previously stated cleric/magic-user case becomes a human dual class, then the character is played as a cleric to the required level at 10 pts per level, and then as a magic-user at 40 pts per experience level. At the changeover, only the base power level is retained, all experience level gains for the cleric will be disregarded when operating as a magic-user. However, if it is wished that the player operate as a cleric, then the experience level power gained as that class may be utilised up to the level reached. (Note: the base power level will be the same in both classes.) At no time may either class use any experience level energy gained within the other class. This will prevent the possible occurence of, for instance, a high level magic-user employing that class's high power handling capacity, to operate as a lower level cleric, thus gaining the ability to cast numerous low level clerical spells without resorting to power restoration.

In conclusion, I feel that this system (being somewhat similar to psionics, which may also be adapted to fit), will allow the spell casting fraternity a greater flexibility than the current system, without allowing the game to degenerate into one of magical spell battling ad infinitum! It achieves this by limiting the highest level spells available at each level of experience, to be cast only 3 times without power restoration and by causing greater thought to be given to energy expending, due to the length of time taken to restore power handling abilities. For example, a 5th level spell user (dependant slightly on class), will regain the equivalent of one 5th level spell in 6 hours, and two in 12 hours. Under the current *AD&D* rules it would take 8 hours to regain as many spells at that level as he/she is entitled to know. This spell system allows greater spell usage but longer renewal.

In developing this system I have tried to calculate levels and scoring to allow each class optimum spell use, taking into account factors such as spell level to experience level rating, additional means of attack/defence, class spell type, and the basic premises of spell use put forward in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, whilst trying not to leave the game open to unlimited spell use. I have yet to incorporate the use of magical artifacts into this system.

As might be gathered, my sympathies lean more towards sorcery than swords. I'm also fond of Dragons! ■

# STAR PATROL...

## Scout Service in Traveller by Andy Slack

*"How do you tell a youngster raised on the 3V serials that you're still alive only because you ran away with less provocation than the other five guys — and you're rich because you've got their shares as well?"*
Shel Meldol, ITSS (Retd.)

### BACKGROUND

The Scout Service of the Imperium has many tasks; probably the most widely known is its survey function. *Traveller Book 1* provides a character generation system for general adventurer characters; this article presents an expanded procedure for more experienced Scouts of the Survey Arm.

The Scout Service Survey Arm performs astronomical and planetological surveys of unexplored subsectors. If Lost Colonies or alien life-forms are discovered in the course of these surveys, the Service makes recommendations as to the advisability of contact, exploitation, and trade. Suitable planets are recommended for colonisation, in which case the Service provides liaison personnel to advise and protect new colonists. Due to their intimate knowledge of certain systems and superior sensor equipment, Scout personnel are often seconded to the Navy as pathfinders, guides, or interpreters; particularly if aliens or ecology-disrupting modes of assault are to be involved.

Retired Scouts are much in demand by the smaller governments and larger corporations of the Galaxy for their own exploration/exploitation projects. Such projects tend to be less fastidious than the Imperium about possible effects on local ecologies and populations.

### NOTE ON SKILLS

To conserve space, definitions of the skills acquired have not been included; therefore, persons using this article will need:
1) *Traveller, Book 1*
2) *Mercenary, Traveller Book 4*
3) *High Guard, Traveller Book 5*
4) *Citizens of the Imperium, Supplement 4*

If *Mercenary* and *High Guard* are not used in your campaign, this article will probably give Scout characters too great an advantage over other classes.

#### Weapon Combat

This skill may be taken as *Blade Combat*, *Gun Combat*, or *Brawling* at the player's discretion.

### ENLISTMENT

A throw of 7+ on 2d6 is required to enlist in the Scout Service. A DM of +1 is allowed for Intelligence 6+, and a DM of +2 is allowed for Strength 8+. These DMs are cumulative.

### ACQUIRING SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

Upon enlistment, a character embarks on a term of service lasting four years. This is divided into four one-year assignments. Characters determine their assignment each year, then resolve all actions pertaining to it. Upon completing the fourth assignment, the character has concluded one four year term, and may attempt to re-enlist (a throw of 3+ on 2d6 is required) or elect to muster out.

#### Specialities

When first enlisting, a character determines in what capacity he will serve the Scouts by rolling 1d6 and consulting the *Speciality Selection* table below. DMs: +2 if Intelligence 10+, —2 if Intelligence 5—. A further DM of +2 is allowed at the character's option if his Education is 11+.

The six Specialities of the Survey Arm are *Security*, *Support*, *Flight*, *Geology*, *Ecology*, and *Contact*.

### SPECIALITY SELECTION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | Security | *Security Specialists* are charged with protecting the personnel of the other five groups from hostile life-forms and other hazards; *Support Specialists* ensure the continued functioning of the many and varied items of high-technology equipment used by the Service; *Flight Specialists* |
| 1 | Security | |
| 2 | Support | |
| 3 | Support | |
| 4 | Flight | |
| 5 | Geology | |
| 6 | Ecology | |
| 7 | Contact | |

have the responsibility of delivering the other groups to their destination intact. The first three groups are therefore concerned with enabling the personnel of *Geology*, *Ecology* and *Contact* to perform their tasks free from distraction; these tasks are respectively mineral resources surveys, surveys of current and potential flora and fauna, and liaison with local cultures.

*Flight Specialists* are also concerned with Remote Sensing of systems and the construction of astrogation charts.

Once a Speciality has been selected, a character may only change it by cross-training in the Speciality he wishes to transfer to, then re-enlisting in that speciality at the beginning of a new four year term.

#### Basic and Advanced Training

This occupies the first assignment of the first term. The character rolls for two skills on his Speciality Skills Table.

### ASSIGNMENTS

Each assignment is resolved separately. This is a three-stage process: first, the character determines if he has been placed in command of a Scout team. Roll 2d6; if the result is less than or equal to the character's current Grade, he has been placed in a command position. Second, the character rolls 2d6 on the *Specific Assignments* table to determine his assignment for that year; and lastly, the assignment is resolved. Four rolls (each on 2d6) on the appropriate *Assignment Resolution* table are required:

1. *Survival:* To survive an assignment, the character must roll the indicated number or higher on 2d6. Since duty in the Scouts is particularly hazardous, if exactly the number stated is thrown, the character has received some crippling injury in the line of duty. One of his physical characteristics is reduced by one point (roll 1d6: 1,2 = Strength, 3,4 = Dexterity, 5,6 = Endurance) and his next assignment is automatically to a Base Hospital, where he spends the year recovering. However, since the Service does not believe in wasting manpower, roll 4+ on 1d6 to receive a level of expertise in each of the following skills: *Admin, Computer, Instruction*.

Optionally, characters failing to make their survival roll are allowed a saving throw against death. If a character rolls his Endurance or less on 2d6, he is considered not to have been killed, but instead to be so severely maimed that he is granted an honourable discharge on medical grounds. He musters out immediately, without completing any remaining assignments of that term; he does not dice for Bonuses, Promotion, or Skills for that assignment, and Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, and Intelligence are reduced by one point each.

2. *Bonuses:* Characters may receive Bonuses for ingenuity. If the indicated number or higher is rolled, a *Science Bonus* is awarded. The character is allowed a DM of +1 on the next roll for promotion. If the number rolled is at least three higher than the indicated number, a *Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Science* is received. This allows a DM of +2 on the next promotion roll. If the number rolled is at least six higher than the number stated, a *First Contact Bonus* is received. The winner of a *First Contact Bonus* immediately receives +1 Social Standing, is allowed a DM of +3 on the next promotion roll, and may choose his next assignment.

A character who has consistently been awarded at least one Bonus per term of Service receives a DM of +1 when rolling for benefits upon mustering out.

3. *Promotion:* There are no actual ranks in the Scout Service; a fluid structure assigns individuals on a basis of ability. However, an individual's Pay Grade increases with experience and reponsibility. The Pay Grades used in this article are exactly parallel to the Enlisted ranks in *Mercenary* and *High Guard;*

they range from G1 to G9. Promotion may be gained as often as once per assignment; and by long-standing tradition, any Scout (except *Security Specialists*) returning from a *Survey* mission is automatically promoted one Grade.

A roll on 2d6 at least equal to the stated number indicates that the character has been promoted one Grade; on a roll of exactly 2 or 3, however, the insubordination for which Scouts are justly famous has caused the character to be reduced one Grade as a disciplinary action. A Scout reduced in Grade to G0 musters out immediately, and loses one point of social standing.

4. *Skills:* A character may receive skills if he rolls the indicated number or higher. Which *Skill* table is to be consulted depends on the current assignment and the character's Speciality.

Any character may opt to roll on the *Scout Life* table or his *Speciality Skills* table regardless of current assignment. If the character was placed in a command position, he may roll on the *Command Skills* table. If the assignment on which the skill was gained was *Battle, Pathfinder,* or *Colony Protection* the *Combat Skills* table may be used; if the assignment was *Covert Survey, Colony Assessment, Colony Protection* or *Training* the *Hole Life* table may be used; the *Ship Life* table, if the assignment was *Battle, Pathfinder, Recon* or *Survey.*

## DEFINITION OF ASSIGNMENT TYPES

### Battle
The character has become involved in a naval or ground battle as a "military adviser".

### Covert Survey
The character has infiltrated a society which is as yet uncontacted in order to assess its likely interaction with the Imperium. He may recommend Interdiction.

### Pathfinder
The character, because of his intimate knowledge of local space, has been selected to spearhead a planetary assault, guiding in the first wave of troops dropped.

### Recon
The character has been ordered to make a deep penetration data-gathering sweep through hostile or potentially hostile space.

### Colony Assessment
Following reports by a Survey team, the character has been picked to assess the suitability of a potentially useful planet for colonisation or exploitation.

### Colony Protection
The character has been detailed to protect and instruct the personnel of a new colony.

### Training
The character has been recalled to Base for advanced training in his Speciality.

### Survey
The character has been assigned to a mission which will map a new subsector, and search it for useful planets.

### Special Duty
Roll 1d6 to determine the type of Special Duty:

1: *Recruiting:* The character has been assigned to Recruiting Duty, and Receives one level of *Recruiting* expertise. In addition, on a roll of 4+ on 1d6, a level of *Admin* expertise is gained.

2: *Cross-Training:* The character rolls once on the *Skills* table of any Speciality except his own. He notes the fact of cross-training in that Speciality, and may opt to re-enlist in it at the beginning of his next four year term.

3: *Covert Survey School:* Ostensibly a school training Scouts for *Covert Survey* assignments, it is rumoured that this school has other uses for its graduates; this is, however, officially denied. Up to eight skills may be received; roll 5+ on 1d6 for each of the following skills: *Forgery, Bribery, Interrogation, Streetwise, Admin, Weapon Cbt, Recon, Combat Engineering.*

Note that a Scout learning *Weapon Cbt* in this school may elect to take one level of expertise in *Bow Cbt.* This is the only way in which a Scout may acquire *Bow Cbt.* (Defined in *Citizens of the Imperium).*

4: *Colony School:* This school teaches skills useful on *Colony Protection* or *Colony Assessment* assignments. Roll 4+ on 1d6 for each of the following skills: *Survival, Instruction, Hunting, Prospecting.*

5: *Synergy School:* The character has been selected to receive instruction in a generalised, systems approach to heuristic problem-solving. One level of *Jack-of-Trades* expertise is received automatically.

6: *Contact School:* The character has been selected for training in the art of contacting other cultures. Roll 4+ on 1d6 for each of the following: *Liaison, Carousing, Streetwise.*

### Multiple School Assignments
If a character is assigned to a school and already has a skill level of 3+ in one of the skills offered there, the assignment is instead to the school as an instructor; instead of dicing for the stated skills, the character receives one level of *Instruction* expertise automatically. Characters may be assigned to a school any number of times.

### RE-ENLISTMENT AND MUSTERING OUT
After completing four one-year assignments, a character has concluded a four year term, and may elect to muster out or attempt to re-enlist. Re-enlistment is allowed on a throw of 3+ on 2d6. If the dice roll a natural 12, the character must re-enlist.
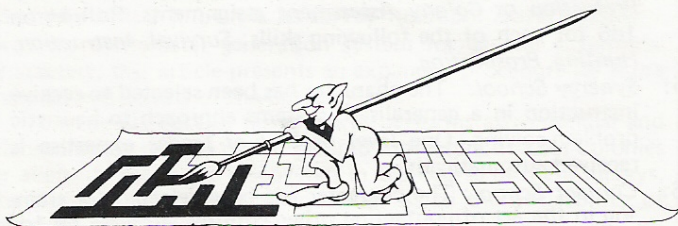
Mustering out, aging and retirement are conducted in accordance with *Traveller, Book 1.* A character choosing this generation system is not eligible for term skills as detailed in *Traveller, Book 1.*

### SERVICE ADVENTURES
An alternative to the standard *Traveller* adventure format is to start a character from scratch, and "live out" his terms of Service as adventures; in this case, just dice up an assignment each game year and play through the important parts. ■

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### SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS

| Die Roll | Assignment | Die Roll | Assignment |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Battle | 8 | Training |
| 3 | Covert Survey | 9 | Survey |
| 4 | Pathfinder | 10 | Survey |
| 5 | Recon | 11 | Survey |
| 6 | Colony Assessment | 12 | Special Duty |
| 7 | Colony Protection | | |

### Abbreviations
| | |
|---|---|
| Wpn Cbt | = Weapon Combat; may be taken as Gun Cbt, Blade Cbt or Brawling. |
| Zero-G | = Zero-G Cbt. (Mercenary, Traveller Book 4). |
| Hvy Wpn | = Heavy Weapons (Mercenary, Traveller Book 4) |
| Veh | = Vehicle; may be taken as any vehicle-skill except Pilot or Ship's Boat (High Guard, Traveller Book 5) |
| B.Dress | = Battle Dress (Mercenary, Traveller Book 4) |
| Comp | = Computer |
| J-O-T | = Jack-of-Trades |
| Mech | = Mechanical |
| Elec | = Electronics |
| Grav | = Gravitics (High Guard, Traveller Book 5) |
| Prosp | = Prospecting (Citizens of the Imperium, Supplement 4) |
| Vacc | = Vacc Suit |
| Sh Bt | = Ship's Boat |
| Nav | = Navigation |
| Engnrng | = Engineering |
| Cmb Eng | = Combat Engineering (Mercenary, Traveller Book 4) |

*Hunting* is defined in *Citizens of the Imperium; Commo, Demo, Recon, Recruiting* and *Interrogation* in *Mercenary; Liaison, Carousing, Ship Tactics* and *Fleet Tactics* in *High Guard.* All other skills are as defined in *Book 1.*

### ASSIGNMENT RESOLUTION

Security:

| | Battle | Covert Survey | Pathfinder | Recon | Col Ass | Col Prot | Training | Survey |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Survival | 7+ | 5+ | 8+ | 5+ | 5+ | 6+ | 3+ | 3+ |
| Bonus | 12+ | 10+ | 11+ | 11+ | 10+ | 11+ | None | 9+ |
| Promotion | 6+ | 8+ | 5+ | 8+ | 8+ | 7+ | 8+ | 9+ |
| Skill | 6+ | 7+ | 5+ | 7+ | 7+ | 7+ | 6+ | 9+ |

DMs: Survival -- +1 if Endurance 9+; +1 if any weapon skill level 2+.

Support, Flight:

| | Battle | Covert Survey | Pathfinder | Recon | Col Ass | Col Prot | Training | Survey |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Survival | 6+ | 4+ | 7+ | 4+ | 4+ | 5+ | 3+ | 3+ |
| Bonus | 12+ | 12+ | 11+ | 11+ | 9+ | 11+ | 12+ | 8+ |
| Promotion | 8+ | 5+ | 5+ | 8+ | 8+ | 7+ | 8+ | Auto |
| Skill | 6+ | 7+ | 5+ | 7+ | 7+ | 7+ | 5+ | 7+ |

DMs: Survival — +1 if Endurance 9+; +1 if any Specialist skill level 2+

Geo, Eco, Contact:

| | Battle | Covert Survey | Pathfinder | Recon | Col Ass | Col Prot | Training | Survey |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Survival | 5+ | 3+ | 6+ | 3+ | 3+ | 4+ | Auto | 3+ |
| Bonus | 12+ | 9+ | 12+ | 12+ | 8+ | 10+ | 12+ | 8+ |
| Promotion | 10+ | 7+ | 10+ | 9+ | Auto | 9+ | Auto | |
| Skill | 9+ | 6+ | 9+ | 9+ | 5+ | 6+ | 5+ | 6+ |

DMs: Survival -- +1 if Endurance 9+; +1 if Survival -- 2 or better.
Bonus -- +1 if Intelligence 10+; +1 if Education 12+.

### SPECIALITY SKILLS

| | Security | Support | Flight | Geology | Ecology | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Wpn Cbt | Admin | Vacc | Prosp | Hunting | Admin |
| 2 | Wpn Cbt | Admin | Vacc | Prosp | Hunting | Admin |
| 3 | Zero-G | Mech | Admin | Veh | Survival | Street |
| 4 | Hvy Wpn | Elec | Commo | Engnrng | Veh | Veh |
| 5 | Hvy Wpn | Comp | Sh Bt | Prosp | Comp | Comp |
| 6 | Veh | Grav | Engnrng | Mech | Medic | Liaison |
| 7 | B.Dress | Medic | Nav | Elec | Hunting | Liaison |
| 8 | Tactics | J-O-T | Pilot | Comp | J-O-T | J-O-T |

DMs: +1 if Intelligence 9+; +2 if Grade G4+

### OTHER SKILLS

| | Scout Life | Ship Life | Hole Life | Combat Skills | Command Skills |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Wpn Cbt | Vacc | Wpn Cbt | Fwd Obsv | Veh |
| 2 | +1 Str | Gambling | Wpn Cbt | Wpn Cbt | +1 End |
| 3 | Carousing | Mech | Wpn Cbt | Demo | Wpn Cbt |
| 4 | Gambling | Sh Bt | Survival | Recon | Survival |
| 5 | Survival | Elec | Cmb Eng | Cmb Eng | Admin |
| 6 | +1 Dex | Zero-G | Hunting | Medic | Liaison |
| 7 | +1 End | Commo | Prosp | Veh | Carousing |
| 8 | +1 Intel | Engnrng | Gambling | Wpn Cbt | Ship Tactics |
| 9 | +1 Educ | Nav | Carousing | Pilot | Fleet Tactics |
| 10 | J-O-T | Pilot | Leader | J-O-T | Leader |

DMs: +4 if Grade G6+

# THE DUNGEON ARCHITECT Part I THE INTERESTING DUNGEON



Have you ever wondered how to design a boring dungeon? It's easy. First, take some graph paper and a ruler, and rule out a grid of intersecting corridors, dividing up the spaces left in between into rooms. Put in some doors (at least one per room), number the rooms, and start rolling dice. According to die rolls, put either monsters or treasure or both in some of the rooms. Continue doing this until you have decided the contents of each room, and then hang out a sign saying "open for business".

What happens when adventurers go down a dungeon of this sort usually goes something like this:

"We go down steps."

"You see 50' corridor; door on right, then door on left, then door on right."

"Go up to first door, listen and open."

"You see an empty room."

"Boring. Close door. Go up to second door, listen and open."

"You see two trolls."

"Anything else in the room?"

"No."

"We ignore the trolls. Close door. Go up to next door. Listen and open."

"You see an ogre."

"Anything else in the room?"

"A chest."

"We attack the ogre." (They attack the ogre.) "We open the chest."

"Treasure."

"We take the treasure and go back out."

This repeats itself with minor variations over and over again, until the players begin to lose interest. At this point, two things can happen. One, the players give up *D&D*. Two, the DM will spice things up by adding huge treasures with lots of magic items; a bribe to re-awaken players' interest. From here the game runs on borrowed adrenalin; and though tackling forty-eight white dragons single-handed and winning may give a thrill at first, pretty soon forty-eight white dragons seem as tame as forty-eight kobolds, or even four kobolds. At this point, nothing can save the game.

There are several morals to be drawn from the above. First, putting 100,000 gp in each room is no substitute for good design. You don't need to point out that your dungeon isn't a bit like the one I have just described; I know it isn't, but I know some dungeons that are, and I expect you do too.

Secondly, since disillusionment will take a couple of years to reach its final stages, it is a tribute to the strength of *D&D* as a game, that players stick with it that long. Name me a wargame that people play every week for two years. There are few of them around.

Thirdly, the fact that the bribe works at all is quite interesting. It leads to the question of why players want treasure, magic, experience points, etc. There is the obvious answer, but there is also another, which is related to the paradox that *D&D* is a game with no ending and no winners. A game has a winner virtually by definition, and I suspect that sometimes players are off-balance because though they appear to be playing a game, they have no prospects of winning, since there is no victory. Therefore they define for themselves a sort of "winning", which is going up experience levels as quickly as possible. In a dungeon where this is easy, they feel themselves to be "winning" more than they do in a dungeon where progress is slower. This is missing out on the potential of *D&D*, which is better thought of as a pastime than a game. It can be likened to fishing, in which there is again no winner. The object of fishing is to catch fish, just as the object of *D&D* is to gain treasure, but the main

purpose of a fishing trip is to have a pleasant time whether fish are caught or not. Similarly, one can have a very entertaining *D&D* session without finding masses of treasure. It's nice if you do find a haul, of course, but that should be incidental.

For a satisfying campaign along these lines, some effort is required. The players must play imaginatively; the DM must provide scope for them to do so. This means creative dungeon design; ruler and dice alone are not enough.

Now, there is an excellent game called *Sorcerer's Cave* in which the entire point is to drag up treasure, and you win by doing so. It's great fun, and a good way to spend the odd half-hour. However, it is not Fantasy Role-Playing (FRP hereafter). The merit of FRP is that it goes beyond *Sorcerer's Cave*, and it is a shame to reduce *D&D* (and to me *D&D* and FRP are synonymous) to such a level. In FRP you actually have a chance to step outside dull urban existence and into the fantasy novel of your choice. Sheer escapism, but what's wrong with that? The better the escape, the more enjoyment to be obtained from it.

We now arrive at point one: it would be a dull novel that consisted entirely of identical money-grubbing expeditions which conformed to the pattern of fight-loot, ad nauseum. If an FRP game is going to get anywhere, there must be provision for more than fighting and looting.

But hark, I hear point two approaching. In novels characters don't go dungeoneering if they can help it; indeed, catacombs stocked with goodies and every monster under the sun tend not to appear. This is true, but it is necessary to strike a balance. It is possible to have FRP without a dungeon; *Chivalry & Sorcery* is that, more or less. The trouble is, the more "realistic" your fantasy world is, the more demanding the game becomes to play, in terms of time, imagination, and acting ability needed. In the perfect world there would be professional gamesmasters, and those who wished could become professional players. Alas, most of us have to earn a living in other ways, and that reduces the time available for creating whole countries in minute detail. The advantage of dungeon-bashing is that it provides structure while allowing freedom for development. In some FRP games, there can be a feeling of "what do we do now?" at times. Sometimes the gamesmaster will come up with some new idea, but sometimes his imagination will let him down. One can get up to all sorts of adventures, but if this falls down, there is always the staple to fall back on — the dungeon.

The argument so far, then is that *D&D* in its highest form allows players the fun of actually taking part in a fantasy "novel", but not at such a high level as to demand that each player should be Sir John Gielgud.

(To digress, I believe that the restrictions on some character classes, though they might be viewed as disadvantages, are more the reverse. Restrictions make it easier to play "in character" by dictating necessary attitudes. A paladin should be noted by his largesse and flamboyant acts of charity; these make him more interesting than a stereotyped fighting-man.)

What are the ingredients that the DM should provide to make his dungeon interesting? If the game is to generate the same interest as a novel, it must have the same ingredients: characters and plot.

It is not necessary to construct the entire dungeon from the outset, but it is necessary to plan it. This planning includes the creation of a cast of non-player characters. The characters generate plots, into which the players may step. The characters and plots together generate the contents of the dungeon.

I must emphasise the importance of a strong cast of NPCs in any dungeon that is intended to be used continually over a period of time. It is possible to make a dungeon interesting without them, but this requires immense efforts of imagination to keep up the players' involvement. Even then, one is missing out on some things. A con-type character is hard to play in a dungeon campaign when there are no NPCs to con, to give but one example.

It should also be emphasised that NPCs should be a lot more than just an abundance of the regulation "Little Old Men". These can provide light relief, but they are a passive figure, little more than talking wall-paper. The true NPC should be as active as player-characters. If NPCs are to appear credible, they ought to be doing something, unless they have good reasons for their inactivity. And it is when the plans and activities of NPCs and those of the player-characters interact that the best games of *D&D* result.

Before building your dungeon, then, draw up your main cast list. Others can be added to it as time goes by, but you need some grasp of what is going on from the beginning. NPCs can be fitted into one of four main categories: dungeon dignitaries, dungeon denizens, overground dignitaries, and dungeon raiders. These can be subdivided into those who are still alive, and those who are purely historical, but still cast long shadows in the shape of artifacts, legends, etc. There are also those who are believed to be historical but are actually still around if the players but knew it. Let us take them in order:

## Dungeon Dignitaries

There is one question you cannot escape — why is your dungeon there? The answer may be improbable, but must exist. There are two sorts of dungeon, the accidental and the deliberate. The deliberate sort was actually created by someone, and that gives us character number one, the chief. There are lots of things you need to know about him. Is he still around? Why did he build such a curious construction anyway? Was it: as an assault course for the local college of magic; because his father and grandfather before him were in the dungeon-building trade; for some other reason? (By the way, I'm not suggesting that you should tell the players the answer; you can give them clues occasionally, but they should

have to piece together the story themselves from what they find.)

The more information you have, the better feeling for the campaign you will have. Start off with something simple, and keep asking yourself questions, yes or no ones if possible. Each answer should trigger off more questions, and eventually all sorts of things get built up.

I'll show you what I mean. Let us suppose we are starting a dungeon. It was deliberately created by one man; let us call him Abram Frunze, a notorious wizard. Why did he build it? The first reason will do. Is he alive? Yes. Is the dungeon still used in its original capacity? No. Why not? (Think of an answer — any answer.) Frunze and the director of the college had a tiff. Who is the director? He's called Zoltan, and he's got blue skin (why not?). Are Zoltan and Frunze still enemies? Yes. Are they actively hostile? Yes. Has Frunze any allies? Yes. Good or evil? Evil. Has Zoltan got Good allies, then? Yes. The local monarch? Yes. Is he very helpful, this monarch? No. Why not? He's racialist. Does Zoltan send parties to raid the dungeon and attack Frunze? No. Why not? It's too strongly defended. What is Frunze up to at the moment? Lacing the dungeon with treasure to tempt magicians from the college into the traps. Is the plan working? No. What is Zoltan doing? Trying to hire foreigners (the players, perhaps) to attack Frunze. And so on. Already the picture is beginning to build up of a conflict between the two sides which the players will gradually uncover, and then join in on one side or the other. Or perhaps they will find a third side to the dispute, or remain out of it, exploiting it. The scenario has taken no longer to make up than it has to type, yet it suggests themes for dungeon construction — there will be features which are relics of its old use as an assault course for magicians, and others which reflect its new use as a fortification.

With the accidental dungeon, use a similar method, but this time assume the dungeon grew up accidentally, rather than being designed by a NPC. For instance, we might have a system of caves that were taken over by Orcs as a lair. One of the Orcs was a bungling magician, who, playing around with a powerful artifact he had found, accidentally released a number of extra-dimensional monsters from other planes, which then dispersed around the cave system. Continue from here.

In the case of Frunze's dungeon, we can assume that he makes some effort to maintain the dungeon. Traps sprung may be re-set. Areas looted may be re-populated. Damaged features may be repaired. To do all this, he may require some help. So, besides the chief, the deliberate dungeon, being large, has a full-scale works department to keep it in order; the personnel involved are sometimes encountered by players as they go about their business.

In the accidental dungeon, there is no central organisation to repair damage, and traps sprung may go unset. There may still be some loose authority over parts of the dungeon. In the example cited, the Orc leader and his lieutenants might count as dignitaries over at least the upper levels, and character profiles can be drawn up for them in the same fashion as for Frunze and Zoltan.

### Dungeon Denizens
Here we come to the folk who live down the dungeon, though they have no other involvement in it. They include those who have been invited in by chief, and others who have wandered in for other reasons. I have known player-characters take to dungeon living, thus becoming subject to the necessities of beating off NPC adventurers, a curious turn-around. It does at least prove that living down a dungeon is not a totally stupid thing for a NPC to do.

With each NPC, ask yourself who are they, why are they there, where did they come from and what are they going to do next? Plus any other questions suggested by the answers to any of those. When you know who is going to be down the dungeon, you can tailor the dungeon to their needs when it comes to construction. This goes for prominent non-human occupants as well as for humans.

Another thing to remember is the Golden Rule of *D&D*, which is, what goes for player characters goes for NPCs as well. Ergo, you can't put a 4th level magician on his own into a room and imagine that he will continue to live there happily. The mortality rate for unaccompanied 4th level magicians is very high. Anyone living down a dungeon should be provided with sufficient defence to stay alive.

There is another rule, which is that characters generate items generate plots. Suppose that Abram Frunze needed help conjuring up demons, and so invited in a lich, name of Heinrich Focalgarters, and gave him a complex on the 6th level. Now Focalgarters had a bodyguard called Samson Spidersoul, a powerful fighter who met an untimely end when a cloud giant decided to use him as a toothpick. But the bodyguard of a high-level magician will have had some useful magic weapons and armour made for him. And they will still be around, perhaps in the dungeon. We have the beginnings of a "collect-the-set" plot, where players hunt for all the associated magic items, either to use them, or destroy them. And all sorts of things start suggesting themselves. Perhaps someone else is trying to collect the set; perhaps for a different reason. It may be that something special will happen once the various items of the set are re-united. Perhaps the other searchers know this, and the players don't. And what about that name "Spidersoul"? It was just the first thing that came into my head, but suppose that Samson were a man with the soul of a spider? Supposing the items connected with him have some power relating to spiders; attracting them, for example? Perhaps if a number of them are collected by one individual, the Spidersoul will come back and take over. You tell me. Random associations are a great help in stimulating the imagination.

### Overground Dignitaries
Here we find all the important NPCs who live outside the dungeon,

Zoltan among them. First, we need more information about the dungeon; where is it, what sort of country, how far from town, and so on. Who are the important figures in the town? There is some sort of governor; what's he like? What's his name? Dizzy Gillespie. Come now! All right, Gizzy Dillespy. That'll do. What is he planning? To rid the town of magicians. Ah, so he's no friend of Zoltan? No. The plot thickens — the college of magic will have to go underground at least metaphorically. Why is he against magicians? His daughter was abducted by one. Aha, we scent another plot. Perhaps the players will find clues to the whereabouts of Dillespy's daughter. Perhaps they will try and sell him the information. Perhaps he won't believe them. Over to you.

You can build up biographies about some other local personalities: a resident alchemist, perhaps; a baron in the vicinity; the local priest (what's the local religion like? Cults? Counter-cults?) and so on. You might like a few secret societies as well just to make things more complicated. The more the players have to involve themselves with the better, and the more things you put down the dungeon. For instance, the local secret cult of the god Praxitiles had a sacred statue stolen, and the thief, finding it rather too hot to handle, hid it down the dungeon. The secret cult would like it back, but on the other hand, it is one of their rules that any non-cult member who sets eyes on it must be put to death. The players don't know this, unless one of them joins the cult, but that could cause further complications. And what the Priest of Praxitiles thinks of Frunze, or Zoltan, or Dillespy even, is another matter . . .

### Dungeon Raiders
These are probably the least important group; deal with them when you see fit. They are adventurers attracted to the dungeon like flies to a pot of honey, rivals of the players in the search for treasure.

Once again, remember that sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. The successful party is the balanced party; magicians and fighters need one another like musket needs pike. Therefore, you are not likely to find a party consisting solely of one class, unless they are very well-equipped. If players meet other adventurers, they are going to form a mixed party like that of the players, unless the encounter is with a fragment of a larger party which split up after heavy fighting. In which case the fragment might be only too delighted with a safe escort out of the dungeon.

Some may be uninteresting, and not worth spending much time on, but some can be more imaginative. As an example of this, I can do no better than quote M. Gascoigne's two paladins in *White Dwarf 19*. These two furnish a superb example of the sort of mini-plot that players can get involved in. Basically, you have two paladins, one of whom is young and successful, the other being old, out-of-luck and down-at-heel. Number two is getting decidedly envious of number one, and is in danger of losing his paladinhood as a result. If these two fell in with the players, the more mischievous amongst them might well be tempted to give number two a helping hand a little further down the slippery slope, while the clerics would want to try and bolster his confidence by arranging encounters where he could seem to triumph (with a little discreet help) — though these good intentions might be thwarted by those in the party of more questionable alignment.

One way of handling these rival parties is to keep a couple of spots on your wandering monster tables labelled "adventurers", and then pick one randomly from your list of parties in the area when necessary. This list can be updated from time to time as you see fit.

The most successful characters are those that develop the most complete personae. And this development is not anything that can occur just through fighting and looting, but is dependent on elaborate involvements between the character and his environment. The measure of the successful dungeon is not how many high-level characters it has, but how many *interesting* characters; random treasure tables are not enough — you must plan, and you must plot.

You don't have to, indeed, should not, unload the whole background onto the players at once. Let them find out a bit at a time; and the more they piece together themselves the more fun it will be. Some of the sub-plots may never arise in the course of play; but equally, you don't have to decide absolutely everything well in advance; extra ideas can be incorporated as play proceeds. A statue put in purely for decoration might reveal itself as a focus for some story, and can have a history and a magic power tacked onto it.

In the second part of this article I shall deal with the physical design of the dungeon, and populating the rooms. Architecture and room contents will be suggested by the plan of the campaign, as I have demonstrated. But this will only account for so much. Not every corridor will have some important item with a story of its own; not every room will contain notable denizens or treasures with a history. So even when you have the feel of what plots are brewing, there is still the task of putting in the routine stuff — the curves of every corridor and the contents of every room. So these will be out next objects of discussion, in parts II and III. ■
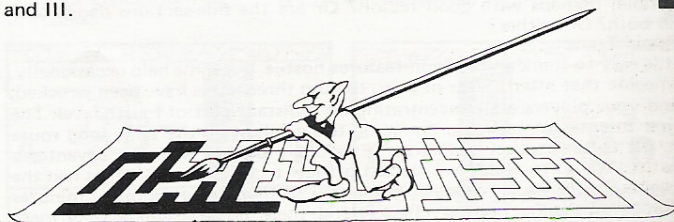
# Part 2
# THE CONSTRUCTED DUNGEON

## by Roger Musson

Being a Dungeon-Master isn't all cakes and ale. There's lots of fun in running a dungeon, but a lot of drudgery in creating it. This task has three stages: First, planning the overall campaign, which I discussed in Part I. This isn't drudgery; one gets the fun of writing fantasy without having to worry about structure, dialogue, or grammar. Stage two (drawing the maps up) isn't too onerous, and is our topic in this part of the article. Populating the rooms is the real chore; we'll leave that to Part III. So let us address ourselves to rooms, corridors, and traps.

To the beginner, the first response to the immense task of preparing a dungeon may be to buy a ready-made module. This has several disadvantages, not the least being that it is harder to run someone else's dungeons than one which you designed and are intimately familiar with.

So there you are, with graph paper and pen, ready to start drawing. The first problem is size. If a dungeon is to stand up to repeated expeditions, how large should each level be? I prefer to err on the side of too large than too small, for two reasons. Firstly, there is a danger of levels becoming exhausted of treasure before parties become strong enough to move down. Secondly, it's more fun getting people lost in large levels. The disadvantage of big levels is that they take longer to populate. 200 rooms a level is a good number, less below fourth. If you do make a level too small, design an extension to the main level which is connected via a secret door. If the party doesn't detect secret doors very well, their attention can subtly be drawn to it by having a wandering monster enter or exit that way.

## ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

### Verticals
You have three dimensions at your disposal, not two; don't stint on number three. A simple symbol code will take care of difficulties. Staircases between levels, yes, everyone has those, but there is scope for corridors that go up and down by steps, slopes and ladders, or sheer drops while staying on the one level. If we assume a vertical difference of 40' between dungeon levels, that still gives you easily 20' to play around with, without overlaps. Rooms can have tiers, galleries or pits, sloping floors. Thieves have climbing abilities which are wasted if everything is at floor level. Have high-up nooks with no easy access. Have passages that start just below the ceiling of a room, leading to a monster lair which only those who can climb up to the passage will be able to attack. Extend things downwards as well. Trapdoors leading to secret passages are great fun; these can run underneath the level to otherwise inaccessible rooms. Some may be burrows that connect up different levesl; they may also be inhabited by whatever creature made them.

Have large features that link up several levels; a huge circular hall, the floor of which is at fourth level, but whose ceiling goes through third to second level. Galleries will go round the walls at third and second level, and a staircase might spiral down the walls connecting all three levels. Think big — don't make all your rooms square broom cupboards.

Use of the vertical can make players suspicious and therefore jumpy. If players reach a corridor junction at which the ceiling gives way to a shaft ascending up into blackness, they may well be wary of things dropping down from the unseen heights. Or imagine a corridor 15' wide where the 5' section either side ascends by steps to run 10' higher than the central section. Might not players be leery about walking down the middle, perhaps with good reason? Or are the side-sections dangerous? Or both? Or neither?

### Rapid Transit
It is easy to think all dungeon features hostile, but some help occasionally. Imagine that after a year of play, the top three levels have been wrecked, and your players are concentrating on a distant part of fourth level. The first minutes of each trip are going to be following the same long route to get to the section of interest. Eventually players will start adventures with: "We go to where we started off last trip — that room that had the wights in. Do we get there?" You either sit there for a couple of minutes doing wandering monster checks, and then describe where they meet

something, if they do, ("Well, in that case we hide until it goes away and then continue.") or you insist that they repeat the route before you grant that they have arrive. The latter is petty. Build in a teleport system that circumvents the whole issue, one terminal just inside the entrance, and others interspersed evenly about the dungeon, say, four to a level. This allows the players to get quickly to where the action is. And back, for that matter.

This encourages good play, as it aids planned adventuring. One of the most effective forms works as follows: the party first makes a trip, taking defensive spells, avoiding combat wherever possible, to note down potential targets in detail. When a promising target has been found, the party leaves, and plans a course of action. Then, laden with appropriate offensive spells, the party moves in directly to the target, hits it hard, and whisks the treasure out via the teleport.

Of course, even the best-made teleport system fail at times.

### Special Areas
These can be temporary or permanent, marked or unmarked, as you prefer — things like zones of magical sterility, zones of silence or darkness; areas subject to queer noises, gusts of wind, or what have you. Take care what you put in special areas — a creature only vulnerable to magic in a zone of magical sterility is awkward indeed.

## VINDICTIVE FEATURES

### Traps
I mean by "trap" an automatic device designed to harm. These most often occur in rooms, and in rooms anything goes; anyone who walks up to an unguarded chest without taking any precautions deserves what's coming to him. But traps can liven up corridors as well, though traps in corridors should be relatively harmless, or look suspicious. Rather than a pit trap that sends characters down into boiling acid, have a pit trap that sends people down merely into an empty pit, causing no more than bruises.

The rest of this section is devoted to the fine art of getting players lost; a neglected aspect, but great fun. So often have I seen this proved: one or two people doing most of the talking, some at the back drifting off to sleep. Then come the anguished tones of the map-maker: "I don't know where we are."; suddenly the heads go up, muscles tense and every ear is cocked.

It is worthwhile considering ways to get people lost.

### Geometry
The most satisfying way is to let players get themselves lost. This can be encouraged by designing the dungeon so that it is hard to map accurately. Hence I cite geometry as my second vindictive feature.

Simple rectangular grids are the easiest to map. You should not bank on being able to lose players by chasing them with a wandering monster; they will just take every right turn that presents itself, with the aim of coming a complete circle, retracing footsteps from memory, and throwing the pursuer off the trail by taking as many turns as possible.

### Variety
This is an obvious point. It makes things more interesting if your dungeon is not so constructed that any one section closely resembles any other. Some parts might have predominantly narrow passages, others, wide passages. Some might be rectilinear, others a tangle of curving passages. Sections might have heavy concentrations of any architectural feature, for instance, redundant stairways that go up 10' and then down again. These constructional areas might be dominated by one sort of creature, as well. There are two reactions that players may have, depending on circumstances. Curiosity may be evoked on first encountering a distinctive area. Or if a lost party chances upon part of a section they have been in before, they may recognise that they are near familiar ground. (Of course, it may be a section that duplicates one they know.)

Sublevels are an interesting way of providing variety: small, virtually self-contained sections either between levels, or beyond the edge of a main level. These can make a convenient adventure; after a recce trip a party may decide to clear out a sublevel. One idea is to put a sublevel at considerable distance from the parent dungeon; make it accessible only from a single featureless corridor, say, half a mile long. By the time the players get to it, they will fear having descended a level, even if the passage doesn't slope. But they will get to it, for curiosity as to what might be at the other end.

### Corridors
There's no reason why corridors shouldn't be made interesting as well as rooms. They might have alcoves with statues in, bits of interesting junk, or even be a chest or two as well. Certain corridor walls may have patches of slime on. Corridors can be decorated. They may broaden into squares, they may enter squares under decorative arches. Organised beasties may take possession of corridors near their lair, barricade them, and man the barricades as well. One shouldn't think corridors are purely a means of getting from one room to another.

### Windows
One small feature is the use of windows, which allow a party to look into a room from the corridor, or from another room. For instance, the party may spot a small, heavily barred window in a passage wall. Looking through, they see an empty room with gold and gems scattered on the floor. However, there is no door in the wall, so to get in they have to search for the way in round the other side. They they find that the only way in is through another room guarded by owlbears. Of course, if the party find a way of getting the gems out through the window grill, then good luck to them.

### Water
Water is another feature that can add character. Small pools are common, but streams or canals can be used in various ways. Some rooms might

only be accessible from waterways that replace corridors in the wetter parts of the dungeon. There are lots of different water monsters, and water-related magic; make sure there's opportunity to use it. However, it would be a brave party that trusted a boat that floated downstream with the current, down tunnels. Apart from the risk of waterfalls, a grille across the tunnel that blocked passage would be dangerous if the party had no means of propelling the boat back against the current.

Lakes are another way of introducing water; an island in a subterranean lake makes a good lair for some villain. Furthermore, if no boat is provided, only members of the party with flying, water-walking, or swimming ability will be able to reach the island.

Crooked and wiggly passages are better for confusing players, but are not effective on their own. A network of wiggly passageways which forms a series of roughly rectangular blocks between every four crossroads, is fairly easy to map taking one block at a time.

Junctions at angles other than 90% and 45% can be effective. A hexagonal lattice is difficult to map if players do not realize the passages are tracing out hexagons. A long corridor that branches off at an angle just less than 90%, but which could be taken for 90%, may also cause confusion. Another device is to take a distinctive arrangement of passages and repeat it, reflect it, rotate it, in different parts of the level.

Finally, long passages that are arcs of circles with constant gentle curvature, are easy to draw with compasses, but the very devil to map properly.

## Trapdoors

And here I mean ones that plunge the party not into a pit of spikes, but down a level or two. Then they have to find their way up from an unfamiliar and dangerous level. This can be made harder by putting staircases behind doors. Then the lost party will not find those vital stairs just wandering the corridors; they will have to open doors.

Consider the fact that you are unlikely to get the whole party in one go. If one or two characters fall, what will the rest do? The first reaction may well be to lower a rope and pull the fellow back up to safety. It is no bad idea to build in something to stop this. Failing that, there should be some interesting crises of conscience as to whether to jump in after the victim to help him find his way out.

A nice trick is to put a trap door at the top of an imperceptibly upwards-sloping passage; characters falling through think they have descended, but are still on the same level. This can be made more effective by designing your corridors so that those near the upward end of the trap do not connect directly with those near the downward end.

## One-Way Doors

These can appear as normal or secret doors but they allow passage in one direction only. If you use one-way doors, you should design a series of areas which only connect at a few points, some of which should be one-way doors located in such a way that they will ensure that the party is forced to explore for some time before finding a way back to familiar ground.

Portcullis traps work in a similar way, and can be thought of as one-way corridors. (Raised portcullisses are very good for making players nervous.)

I hope Don Turnbull will not mind me revealing that in the Greenlands Dungeon all one-way doors are supplied by the Acme One-Way Door Co., which places its trademark on the back of all its produce. This is a kind way of informing players that they are trapped and of enabling them to distinguish the wrong side of a one-way door from a locked door.

There is another use for one-way doors which I call the "room suite" trap. Players open a door and see a room (with one other door) containing two goblins and a chest. So they barge in, kill the goblins, open the chest and find treasure. They now find that the door they came in by was a one-way door, and that the only way out is through the other door, which leads to another room containing sabre-tooth tigers, umber hulks, and other nasties of a vile description. This is a reversal of the usual sequence of monster-then-treasure. It is extremely dangerous; the party, being cornered, has no option but to fight a creature that it may be neither prepared nor equipped to fight. However, they do have time to work out an effective plan utilising whatever materials they have to hand; there might be something useful in the treasure. This trap provides the DM with a way of forcing players to fight a new monster that they might otherwise run away from.

## Vindictive Teleports

These are the uncontrollable sort, that I label as above to distinguish them from functional teleports. (Of course, until players learn how to use functional teleports, these too may act in a vindictive manner.) The usual way of planting one is to make a room a teleport trap, with some illusory treasure in it. The party rushes in to take the treasure, and when it vanishes, they realise they have been conned. The door out now looks on some quite different bit of corridor.

The alternative is teleport doors; these are doors that have teleportative affinities with other doors about the dungeon. Teleport corridors are very similar.

As an example, see the diagram. Teleport doors come into three different groups: First we have the "there-but-not-back" variety. In the diagram, door A/B is the teleport door, C/D the receiving door. The party enters on side A, but the door reveals the vista looking from D to C. The party goes through the door and is now at C. When they return to go home, they open door C/D expecting to see A but find instead D. So they have to find the long way back. Should they reach B, the teleport door, when approached from this side, acts as a normal door. However, there also exists the 'back-but-not-there' sort of door, which is the first type rotated 180%. The party crosses from A to B without trouble, but on the way back via B, the door opens on D. The party must therefore find a way round the door.

The thing is, there is no way for the party to distinguish the two types.
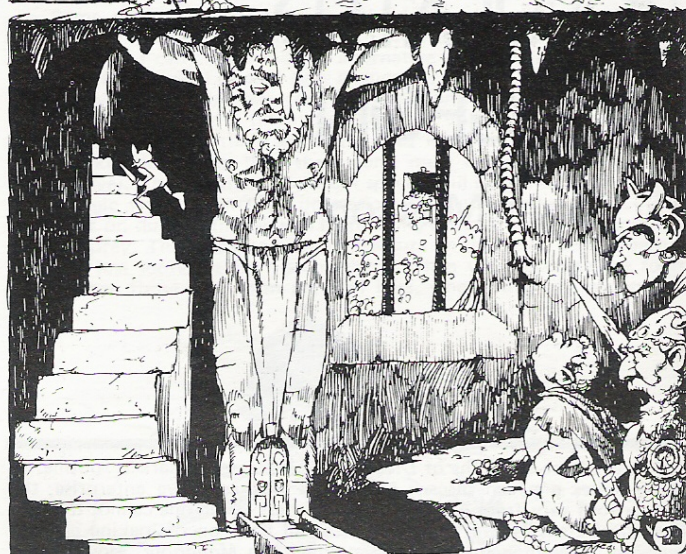


When a door does not open on the prospect they expect, they have no idea whether they were teleported the first time through, and are at C, deep within the dungeon, or whether they are at B, and quite near the exit if they can only find a way round the door.

The third type works in both directions, and will teleport to C, D, or elsewhere when approached from A or B.

Vindictive teleports may send players down levels. There is a trick you can play if your dungeon is in the right situation: This is to build a sublevel *above* first level, and teleport parties up to it. Suspecting they have been sent down a level, the party will search anxiously for staircases up, but find only stairs down, which they will be reluctant to take!

## Eppur si Muove . . .

The really heavy vindictive features move whole chunks of the dungeon around. The simplest is the turntable, which gives a crossroads a random spin whenever people go over it. This is good fun until the players twig to what is going on. Then they walk across, check that they've come out in the right place, they haven't; walk back again, check again . . . until they find the corridor they want. Let them find the control that operates the turntable; then they can switch it off. Much the same goes for sliding blocks. Good fun at first, but make sure they can be avoided eventually. If they occupy a strategic position, they become a nuisance.

I am not enamoured of sliding blocks, and I think space-distortions are over-rated. Players are usually so cavalier with scale on their maps that it doesn't matter what length you tell them a corridor is; if they think it joins up, they'll join it up. Another nasty I haven't mentioned is the illusory staircase, which looks as if it goes up but goes down, or vice versa. Usually they are only potent if trapped as well. As for the other sort of illusory staircase, which looks like stairs down, but is really an empty stairwell, comments vis a vis trapdoors apply.

Going back to the sliding blocks, one that never gave too much trouble was in a square with four exits, one on each side. In the middle was a large pillar. If a party entered the square, the pillar would move to block off the opening they had come in by. So they couldn't retrace their steps. After the party had left by one of the other exits, the pillar would move to block that off, instead, so they couldn't even get back to the square. After a couple of hours, the pillar would re-set itself.

Finally, the grand revolving dungeon. Why be parsimonious? Have the whole thing rotate! If you make each level basically circular, with exits at regular intervals and all connections between levels planned so that they always match up, then you can spin whole levels independently of one another, to the intense frustration of your players, especially if any of them happen to be engineers.

That concludes Part II. Part III will be concerned with the contents of rooms. ∎
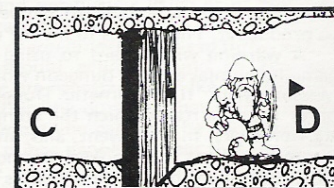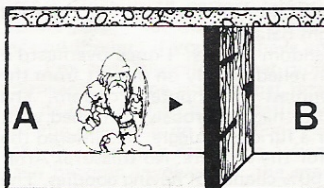
# Part 3
# THE POPULATED DUNGEON

## by Roger Musson

It is one of the strengths of *D&D* that it possesses a marked routine. In most games one can discern routine as well as active enterprise; the proportions vary from game to game. In chess, when one cannot think of any special plan there is a routine to fall back on of making general-purpose developing moves. In something like *Monopoly*, most play is routine: throw the dice, move the right number of spaces and so on; one's course of action is prescribed by the game system. The greater the element of routine, the easier the game is to play.

With role-playing games, the position is different. The rules explain how to generate characters, how to resolve combat, and so on, but not how to play the game. That onus is thrown squarely on the games master's shoulders, and it is he who is responsible for thinking up sufficient interesting happenings to keep the game going. So with, say, *Traveller;* for any gaming session a particular adventure must be devised in advance, and over a long period this is a considerable strain on the games master's ingenuity. If his imagination takes a holiday one week, so does the game.

*D&D* is different. Though the success of any campaign will depend on the special missions and adventures, there is a routine to fall back on; to wit, dungeon-bashing. Given that you have a large dungeon set in a wilderness with further potential for escapades, you have large sections of dungeon levels containing a motley assortment of treasures and monsters to which the players can resort at any time when no special adventure presents itself. This has several advantages. Firstly, it's easy. There is never the question 'what do we do now?', since there is a simple routine to follow of reconnaissance, mapping, target identification and looting. Secondly, it's productive. Characters gain experience, go up levels, gain magic items, and become better prepared for the special adventures when they do occur. Thirdly, in the course of such routine exploration characters may find leads to prepared adventures, and may therefore choose themselves which quest they will pursue rather than be told by the games master 'this is the set-up for today, folks'. Fourthly, it can be enjoyable in its own right. The one negative point is that such activity is also absurd. However, it makes the game work, and this is sufficient justification.

One big labour is required of the dungeon master; filling up all those rooms. Once that is done, he has considerable potential playing time in dungeon-wrecking expeditions to fall back on when he or the players can't think of anything special. But if a fair whack of playing time is going to be spent just charging around wrecking the place, then it is as well to make a good job of even the routine areas.

So there you are, with six hundred empty rooms to populate. What do you do next?

## THE CYBERNETIC DUNGEON

The first question is, how random are you going to make it? Do you dice up everything with complete fidelity to the results, fiddle the throws now and then when you want more or less treasure, or do *you* make most of the decisions? I have experimented with every degree of randomness, from using totally random computer printout of room contents, to drafting everything deliberately, down to the last gold piece. The results are not unexpected; one cannot expect things randomly determined to be as interesting as things drafted intelligently, with interest specifically in mind; but there is a trade-off between quality of result and work needed to produce it. The trick is to hit the right balance.

A warning with regard to using random results: I once overheard a game being played in a dungeon which relied heavily on output from the Musson Mark II Cybernetic Dungeonmaster Computer Program. The party found a room which the computer had generously furnished with six werebears. In they went, and, after a furious struggle, slaughtered the werebears. They then looked around for the treasure. No treasure! After all, the program only gave monsters a 50% chance of having goodies. The

players were furious. 'All those werebears and no treasure?' they cried. 'It's not my fault,' complained the DM, 'Roger's computer listing says there's no treasure.' Point one: any DM is responsible for what he says a room contains. Point two: there are plenty of pertinent replies available, amongst which 'serves you right for not casing the joint first' deserves a high place. One might also consider 'these werebears just happen to be impoverished', or 'all their treasure is actually lodged with the nearest building society'. Point three: never feel obliged to uphold a random determination. If you don't care for the idea of six impoverished werebears, give them some treasure, or cut down their numbers.

There is also a warning to be given regarding doing everything yourself: the hardest bit is getting the balance of treasure right. If you are stingy, you may continually postpone putting in any big treasure, with the result that the dungeon plays slowly. On the other hand, it is easy to be far too free with the wands and rings, with opposite results.

The best procedure works as follows. First, decide what proportion of rooms you want to be inhabited, inhabited with treasure, uninhabited with treasure, etc. Now compare these figures with the numbers of rooms in the level. If a third of the room are to be inhabited, and you have one hundred and fifty rooms, fifty rooms will have occupants. Good; roll up fifty monsters. Now work out how many treasures you're going to need, and roll up that number. Now you start the allocation process — non-randomly. This way you make sure (a) that monsters and their treasures are well-matched, (b) that interestingly-placed rooms are not empty just as a result of a die-roll, (c) that the occupants of a level are evenly spaced out, and not concentrated to leave huge empty boring areas. You also keep the right balance of force and riches.

## THE IMPROVISED DUNGEON

There is one problem which will crop up eventually, so be prepared to deal with it in advance. Sooner or later, players reach part of the dungeon which you haven't got round to populating yet. When they saunter down that corridor to unpopulated rooms, what do you do? What you do not do is say 'Please don't go that way, I haven't done it yet. This is a quick way to burst the bubble of imagination, and reduce any feeling of involvement the players might have with the flow of action. There are several better alternatives.

The first of these is the quick heavy approach. You say 'Twenty feet ahead of you, you see fifteen ogres holding an impromptu union meeting in the middle of the corridor.' Exit players rapidly. The draw-back is that they may think those ogres live down that way, and shun the corridor in future for fear of them.

For the second tactic, credit should go to Peter Roberts; this is the innocuous clean-up crew or dungeon master's friend approach. This takes two forms; the first is the purple jelly. This creature resembles an ochre jelly, but is purple, and much bigger; big enough to seal off a corridor. The purple jelly is absolutely invulnerable to any form of attack whatsoever, magical or otherwise; it is also quite harmless. The party start heading a way you don't want to go, a purple jelly comes slurping up. If the area you want to keep the players out of is not easily sealed off, then orange door-mould comes into its own. This is an indestructable fungus which lodges in dungeon doors. A door so infested is anchored to its frame immovably. It won't open, no matter how hard you try. The fungus is completely magic-resistant as well, so *knock* spells are no good. This stuff often affects areas of a dungeon that have been devastated by recent attacks and not repopulated. You can thus guide a party through an area which has been picked clean by previous groups, and so stop them wasting a lot of time.

The third tactic is to make up the dungeon as you go along. This is not as difficult as it might sound, providing you are prepared to think quickly. The only problem is keeping a record, so it is not a good idea to improvise important parts of the dungeon. I had a sub-level that I never got round to building at all, so it was always improvised. It was always different as a consequence. It is not a good idea to switch to improvising if the players are going to suspect.

But assuming that you have the corridors and rooms already mapped, there is a very good alternative to improvisation; the Emergency Room Register, also known as ERR. For each level, prepare a list of contents of twenty rooms or so: monsters, treasures, decoration, etc. Number each room 1-20. If players move into an area that you haven't populated, and open a room, select a room randomly from the appropriate list in the Emergency Room Register. If you roll 11, then the contents of ERR room 11 are what the players find. Scribble down somewhere that room 73 on level 2 is equal to ERR room 2/11, and then later on you can copy the contents across at your leisure. The advantages with this system is that the players find fully finished rooms, and what they find is permanent. It is true that if they had opened the door three down on the right instead of the door they were at, it would have made no difference to what they would have found, but as long as they don't know that, it won't hurt them.

## THE SILLY DUNGEON

The place of humour in *D&D* is a matter of debate. Merely treating the conventions within the game mechanics in a totally deadpan way can be quite amusing, as injured NPCs moan to one another about how many hit points they've lost. However, there are limits, which is not to say that these limits cannot be transcended. There is the possibility of populating one's dungeon entirely with humour in mind. The result is the Silly Dungeon. This place is inhabited mostly by fetishistic thieves (in black leather armour), pink homosexual kobolds, tribbles, demon teddy bears and the absolutely obligatory giant SS killer penguin. Most of the treasure turns out to be gold pieces which are chocolate when you peel the shiny

paper away. Magic items include the celebrated *Ring of Earth Walking*, which allows you to walk on solid earth as if it was . . . solid earth. The corridors, when accurately mapped, spell out rude words, and credit for the whole place is frequently given to a wizard by the name of Prang.

There's no disputing about tastes, and if this appeals to you, you might like to try your hand at designing a Silly Dungeon. Two caveats, though. Firstly, it helps if you are, in fact, above averagely witty (be honest); once the jokes start to pall with repitition the Silly Dungeon loses its raison d'etre. Secondly, once the illusion of romance and adventure has been pierced by Monty Pythonisms, it may be hard to regain. *D&D* can stand up to a lot of joking, providing there is an underlying current of seriousness to carry it through. A serious dungeon in which amusing things happen will be a more lasting source of amusement than a dungeon in which every vaudeville prop is thrown at the players in quick succession.

### THE REWARDING DUNGEON
Dungeons have treasure. Players like finding treasure. Therefore we should put lots of treasure in our dungeon rooms, yes? At the outset of this series we discussed the disadvantages of putting lots of treasure in dungeon rooms for the above reason, but then it was tacitly assumed that treasure meant gold. We shouldn't be narrow-minded about this. There are other sorts of 'treasure' which are interesting to find, yet do not carry with them any dangers of over-balancing the game. We can divide these into three categories.

#### Maps
In the original *D&D* books, maps were the treasure maps of popular fiction, and therefore valuable finds indeed. Once you discovered that ancient map, there was nothing to stop you from finding the stricken oak, taking ten paces west and digging down to the goodies. As DM, you don't want too many of these things around, for obvious reasons. But minor maps are something rather different. These are little maps of bits of levels, or bits of several levels, which might show corridors and rooms only, or note details of some of the inhabitants and contents of rooms. The degree of detail is up to you. Rationalisation of these is easy; previous parties of adventurers made maps of parts of the dungeon in just the way the present players do, and when they got killed, their maps remained floating round as part of the general dungeon contents. For standards of illegibility, see whatever your players produce themselves, and do likewise. I have even confiscated maps made by members of one party when they were killed off, and using the same maps as minor treasure to be found in the same area by members of some other party. This can be amusing if the handwriting is recognised — 'Hmm, looks like hobbit Bland's scrawl — so that's where they got to, is it?'. Maps can be found torn up into little pieces, or stained with blood (cochineal?). Even if they don't mark treasure on them, they may still be useful in increasing the players' knowledge of the local dungeon geography. Of course, some may be bogus, showing non-existent parts of the dungeon, or including misleading details about room contents (these can be superb if they are entirely misleading without being in any way untrue); they may lead players straight into a trap, or mark non-existent secret doors in places where searching for them might be dangerous.

#### Documents
These can be of various different kinds. One is simply the map-in-prose. 'I hid the sword "Widowmaker" in the oval room past the Hall of Wights.' This isn't much help until you can find where the Hall of Wights is. Some may be clues which could lead to wilderness adventures if followed up, and cast in the form of intercepted correspondance, military despatches, fragments from sagas, riddles, drawings, proclamations, whatever you like. Some may be genuinely helpful, others less so, others none at all. Some may be entertaining in their own right. The past master of the latter was Nick Best, whose dungeon was laced with application forms for such exotic things as removal of mistletoe from the knees.

#### Magic
Powerful magic items must be distributed with care, but shallower levels of the dungeon can be spiced up with items of limited usefulness. My own favourite is Peter Robert's *Badge of Orc Impressing*. This is a little badge which you wear; if you meet a group of orcs, 1-6 of them will be impressed and give due consideration to anything you say, whatever due consideration is to an orc.

A couple of general notes: I used to keep a goodies bag of unlocated odds and ends, which I would dip into in two sorts of circumstance: one, if players were having such a sad time of it that I actually felt sorry for them; two, if a player searched in a hiding place which was so clever that I wished I'd thought of it myself. Should you follow this practice, never admit it. Now that I've admitted it, I shall abandon it. In *D&D* it isn't necessary to play by the book, but it is essential that the players shall always think you are.

The other piece of advice is don't overdo it. As with other things, if you deluge your players with curious antique scrolls the thrill will wear off too soon.

### THE VAGRANT DUNGEON
My final theme is this: think about what is going on inside your dungeon as you populate it. Think about it from the inside instead of from the players' point of view. A dungeon that has internal consistency is more interesting than one which doesn't. Have as many inter-weavings of relationship as possible within the dungeon.

I cherish a cartoon that appeared in *Underworld Oracle*, showing the interior of a pub full of various monsters drinking and chatting. Prominent are two trolls, one of whom is saying, '. . . so I turned to this adventurer and said to him, "Well, what do you think we do when we're waiting for a six on the wandering monster roll?" . . .'. Seriously though, what do they do? Is the whole dungeon frozen into stasis except for anything within fifty feet of a party of adventurers? If the party peep into a room and see an ogre torturing a kobold, and if they leave and return two weeks later, will the same ogre be torturing the same kobold in the same room still?

Some degree of constancy is desirable, to give players a chance to make reconnaissance and then return with a plan, but how much is a moot point. I can conceive of an alternative way of running a dungeon, which is as follows. For each type of monster in your dungeon, decide on a lair (which may be one room, several contiguous rooms, or several dispersed rooms) and a population total. If you decide on , say, thirty orcs, then that's it, there are thirty orcs in your dungeon, and if the players kill thirty orcs then they won't meet any more (unless visiting orcs arrive). The lair of an intelligent species will be guarded intelligently; and magic weapons in their possession will be used if possible. Those orcs not on duty in the lair will be roaming the rest of the dungeon looking for prey. They may be carrying treasure on their own behalf; perhaps they've just looted it from somewhere. When you populate the rooms other than those that form parts of lairs, when using this system, you



need only indicate the decor and any hidden treasures that are permanently there but add carried treasure as per rooms. Suppose you roll up orcs. Are there any orcs left? If the orc population is so depredated that only a small guard is left on the lair, then no encounter will take place far from the lair. If the players discover orcs in a room away from the lair area, and leave them, and then return, the chances of those orcs still being there will depend on how long they've been left alone.

Non-intelligent and non-gregarious creatures will behave in a more conventional fashion — occupy any old room on a more or less permanent basis and eat anything that pokes its nose round the door. However, if this is how such creatures behave, they are less likely to be met with as wanderers. And if a giant snake does come sliding up the corridor, it must have left its nest somewhere — so if it is killed in the corridor, that's one more unguarded treasure lying around somewhere. Unless the orcs get it, of course. Exactly how to organise the details I leave up to you; I only suggest the idea.

### THE ECOLOGICAL DUNGEON
And here is a curious idea to finish with — have you ever considered that little-studied field, dungeon ecology? If your dungeon is awake even when there are no players within fifty feet, there must be quite a bit of in-fighting amongst the inhabitants, unless there is someone to stop it. It becomes possible to think of the dungeon as an ecosystem, with different creatures competing for treasure rather than food. If you were a miserly ogre mage, and there was a kobold living next door who had a nice collection of jewellery, wouldn't you flatten him and take it? Therefore one expects a hierarchy where the strongest monsters inhabit the best places (the lowest levels) and have the best treasures — which is what one finds — or is it? The interesting thing is that monsters are rated in terms of how dangerous they are to players, not to other monsters. For instance, most players would rather tackle a gargoyle than a giant, but in a fight between the two, the gargoyle would come off an easy winner, since most giants don't have magic weapons, the only means of damaging a gargoyle. Some DMs rule any monster to strike as a magic weapon, but I remain suspicious of this. Does one grant the same privilege to elves and dwarves, for instance?

And magic or no magic, I can tell you one monster which could cream most others with perfect safety, and yet players laugh at it. Who? The ochre jelly — for how many monsters have flasks of oil to throw at it? A useful thought if you ever have any *charm monster* spells to throw around.

I'm not suggesting that you should actually build an ecological dungeon — some sins against reason are necessary to make the game play at its best. But to have conflict within the dungeon that is independent of the players is no bad thing. The more you can give the impression that the dungeon is a real place, where things happen, things that the players can become involved in, the more interesting the dungeon becomes — and it needn't have thousands of gold pieces in every room at all. ∎

# THE BEST OF STARBASE
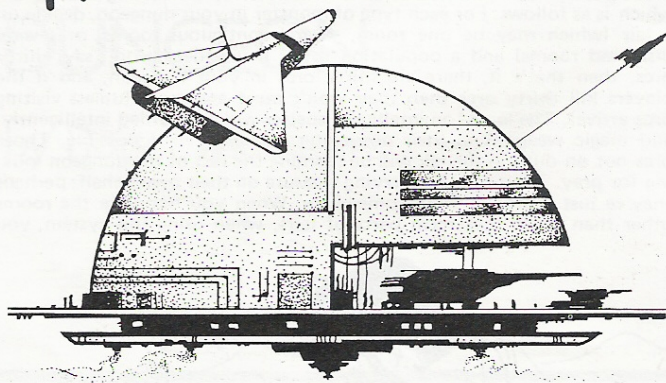
# THE SHIP'S LIBRARY

This being the first anniversary of *Starbase*, it would seem an opportune moment to take a look at a few *Traveller* related subjects not normally covered in this column by answering a few of the most frequent questions asked of me — and also to thank those readers who have submitted contributions to *Starbase* or who have commented favourably on it.

Both *GDW* and *Games Workshop* are continuing to devote considerable resources to *Traveller*. Having seen *GDW*'s advance schedule of *Traveller* material, you are in for some interesting times over the next year or so. As for *Games Workshop*, with any luck the *IISS Ship Files (Vol. 1)* will be in the shops soon after you read this — I hope you have as much fun using the six vessels described therein as I did designing them. Several other *Traveller* projects are in the design and planning stages, which will be announced as they come to fruition. When you take into account the work of other publishers — *Judges Guild, Paranoia Press, Group One,* and so on, the position is healthy indeed.

Apart from the question of how to set up a *Traveller* adventure or campaign (which subject has been covered in *White Dwarf 19*, *Starbase*, and last issue by Andy Slack in *Backdrop of Stars*), one of the most frequent queries is on the best science fiction novels from a *Traveller* viewpoint. Below I have given a very short list of novels or short story collections, chosen not on literary merit but on interesting adventure situations, background detail or ingenious characters and places. I stress that it is a personal choice — other people will have other favourites; also some of them may be out of print or difficult to get (only a US printing, for example). In this case try one of the specialist science fiction bookshops that advertise in *White Dwarf*:

Robert Asprin (*The Bug Wars* — for bug-eyed monsters);
Ben Bova (*Colony* — for satellite colonies);
C. J. Cherryh (*Brothers of Earth, Hunter of Worlds, Serpent's Reach* — for possible Aslan background/situations);
Frank Herbert (*Dune Trilogy, The Dosadi Experiment, The Jesus Incident* — for good plots and background, though difficult to translate into adventures);

Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle (*The Mote in God's Eye* — one of the better 'man meets alien' stories);
Frederick Pohl (*Gateway* and *Jem* — good solid SF);
Jerry Pournelle (*Future History* — mercenary-type situations);
Brian Stapleford (*The Hooded Swan* series and the *Daedalus* series — for adventure situations).

Almost anything by:
Poul Anderson (especially the *Van Rijn/Polesotechnic League* stories and the *Flandry* series);
Gordon Dickson (*Dorsai Trilogy* and others);
Joe Haldeman (especially *The Forever War*);
Harry Harrison (*Deathworld Trilogy, Stainless Steel Rat* series and others);
Jack Vance (*Demon Princes* series, *Alastor* series and many others).

Finally to preserve a balanced viewpoint:
Douglas Adams (*The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*);
Most books by Ron Goulart.

Once beyond the idea-forming stage, another phase of the referee's job that I get many queries on is in producing a detailed scene — often blithely glossed over in supplements and articles with the words 'the referee should make a map of the area/plan of the buildings to a suitable level of detail'. My advice is to use every short-cut you can find. I am fortunate in that at work there is a technical library dealing mainly with architecture and engineering, but many of the periodicals should be available in public libraries. In the UK, the *Architect's Journal* (*AJ*) and *Architectural Review* (*AR*) usually contain several building plans of everything from housing to schools and offices. Searching through back issues might turn up just the building you are looking for. Atlases and more detailed maps (in the UK, the Ordnance Survey — I've had everyone from vikings to Imperial marines fight over the one-inch *Tourist Map of the Lake District*!) for area plans, of course.

Use lateral thinking — a lot of D&D and other games' play aids can be used for *Traveller*, if only for the plans. As an example, *The Halls of Tizun Thane* (see The *Best of White Dwarf, Scenarios*) could have all the monsters and stuff cleared out and used as the residence of a petty noble that the players may have been asked to burgle, assassinate or whatever. Indeed, many of the room descriptions may need little or no change. I have even drawn a plan of the office that I work in to use in a *Traveller* incident — as long as the players are unfamiliar with it, it doesn't matter what source you use — a tracing of a town centre map with the names of the roads changed becomes down town Mos Eisley or whatever; an Ordnance Survey map of the Scottish Highlands similarly treated becomes guerilla country on Efate/Regina — the possibilities are endless.

Lastly, I should like to remind readers that general correspondence on *Traveller* matters is always welcome, as well as contributions to *Starbase*. Only by making known your comments and opinions can we know how good or bad our treatment of *Traveller* is. And remember, we have a direct X-Boat link to Normal, Illinois — any relevant comments are passed on to *GDW* to let them know too. ■

# THE BEST OF TREASURE CHEST

## SPELLS
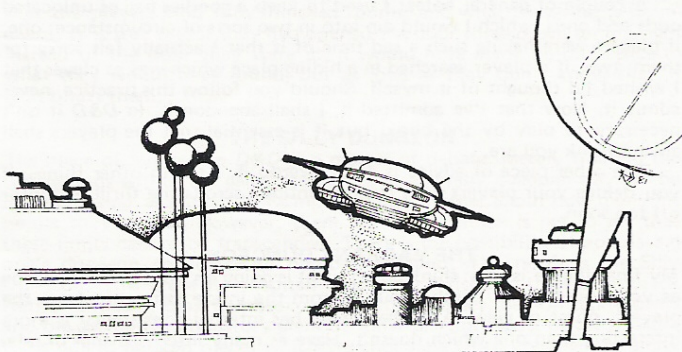
### NEZABAR'S OLFACTORY DELIGHT
(Illusion/Phantasm)
**by Roger E. Moore**

Usable by: *2*  
Level: *2*  
Range: *6″ +1″ /level*  
Duration: *Permanent*  
Area of Effect: *3″ radius sphere*  
Components: *V, S, M*  
Casting Time: *4 segments*  
Saving Throw: *Special*

When cast upon a creature or area, this spell creates an invisible globe of aromatic gases that will be pleasing to all humans, humanoids, and demi-humans. Creatures with 4 hit dice or levels or less receive no saving throw against this spell; those with more than 4 hit dice or levels may save vs magic, and if they save will not notice the smell. If this spell is cast upon a living being (such as a giant skunk or otyugh) then the creature is entitled to a saving throw, and if it saves the spell's area of effect is transferred to the ground upon which the being is standing (leaving the being free to walk away out of the spell's range). *Nezebar's Olfactory Delight* is frequently cast on latrines and upon victims of a skunk or wolverine attack until such time as the musk wears off. This spell will completely negate the effects of any non-magical aroma in its area of effect. The material components are a few rose petal or spearmint plant leaves.

### RESIST ELECTRICITY (Alteration)
**by Steve Matthews**

Usable by: *Cleric*  
Level: *3*  
Range: *Touch*  
Duration: *1 turn/level*  
Area of Effect: *Creature touched*  
Components: *V, S, M*  
Casting Time: *4 segments*  
Saving Throw: *None*

Similar to *resist cold* and *resist fire,* this spell gives protection from electrical attacks. It affords complete immunity to electricity received by touch (eg *shocking grasp*) and allows a +3′ bonus on saves vs *lightning bolts* or blue dragon breath, and halving the damage taken (½ damage if save fails, ¼ if save made). The material component for this spell is a short copper rod.

### CHAMELEON (Alteration/Illusion)
**by Tony Parry and Jeremy Vaughn**

Usable by: *Magic-User, Illusionist*  
Level: *1*  
Range: *0*  
Duration: *1 turn + 1 round/ level*  
Area of Effect: *Spell caster*  
Components: *S, M*  
Casting Time: *1 segment*  
Saving Throw: *None*

When this spell is cast the caster is able to blend into any background desired. The chance of the caster being noticed is equal to that of a halfling thief of the same level. The material component of this spell is a small lizard which must be swallowed during casting.

### TANGLEFOOT (Command)
**by Stuart Rabson**

Usable by: *Cleric, Druid or Magic-User*  
Level: *2*  
Range: *1″ /level*  
Duration: *3 rounds + 1/level*  
Area of Effect: *One creature/ level*  
Components: *V, S, M*  
Casting Time: *1 round*  
Saving Throw: *Neg*

All those affected by this spell have difficulty in moving about; any attempt to move faster than a slow shuffle will result in the victims' being tripped up by their own legs. This affects dodging in combat, and so all attacks are +2 to hit the victims of the spell. The spell only affects legs, all other means of locomotion are unaffected. The material components are a small ball of wool which has been tangled by a kitten, and three spiders (live if the caster is a Druid). In addition, Clerics require a Holy symbol and Druids require mistletoe.

### THUNDERCLAP (Conjuration/Summoning)
**by Roger E Moore**

Usable by: *Magic-user*  
Level: *9*  
Range: *0*  
Duration: *Special*  
Area of Effect: *6″ radius*  
Components: *V, S*  
Casting Time: *3 segments*  
Saving Throw: *None*

When the final words of the incantation are spoken, the mage brings his hands together in a clapping motion. He is unaffected by the spell, but all other creatures within 60′ are subjected to an enormous blast of pressure and sound as if from a monstrous explosion. Beings smaller than man-size are knocked down, blown 0-30′ and take 2-8 damage each. Larger beings withstand the blast.

In addition, all beings with less than 90 hit points will be stunned as if by a *power word: stun;* further, all beings in the area of effect are deafened for 3-18 rounds, during which they attack at –2 to hit.

### DRAW (Alteration)
**by T. S. Warren**

Usable by: *Magic-User*  
Level: *2*  
Range: *6″*  
Duration: *4 rounds*  
Area of Effect: *One pocket*  
Components: *S, M*  
Casting Time: *10 segments*  
Saving Throw: *None — but see below*

This spell incorporates limited *levitation* and *telekinesis.* The caster points at the pocket he desires to affect, casts the spell, and one item selected at random from the contents of the pocket is drawn towards the Magic-User at up to 10′ per 3 segments. A pouch, pack sack etc. may be specified as the target instead of a pocket. The chance of this action being detected is equal to that of the victim detecting a Thief of the same level as the caster attempting to Pick Pockets.

### SPELL OF AWAKENING (Enchantment)
**by Mark Ray**

Usable by: *Magic-user*  
Level: *1*  
Range: *Touch*  
Duration: *4 hours/level of caster*  
Area of Effect: *1 person*  
Components: *V, S*  
Casting Time: *1 segment*  
Saving Throw: *None*

When this spell is cast upon a person before he falls asleep, then while he is asleep any movement within 20′ of him will waken him immediately. He will not know the nature of the moving object or its location, but the spell can be 'tuned' to ignore rats, cockroaches, etc. The enchantment is dispelled when the recipient first wakes, or at the end of the spell's duration, whichever occurs first.

# How to Lose Hit Points...
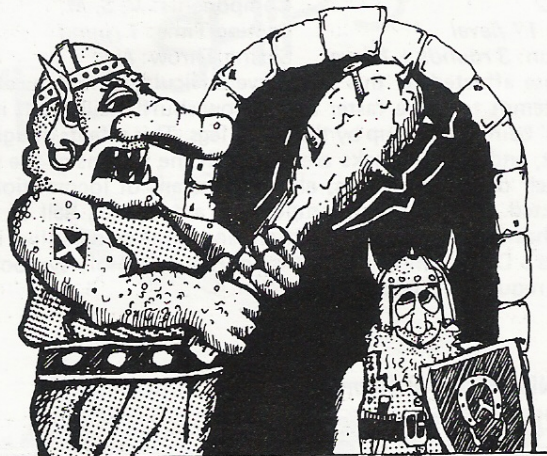


# ...and Survive
## by Roger Musson

Here's a problem for you; what have the following two grouses got in common? The first is my own; that little business of the strange fact that a dragon breathing 30 points of damage at a helpless low-level magician and ditto high-level fighter frazzles the one but fails to kill the other. In *White Dwarf* 6 I queried whether gaining experience ought really to have this asbestosising effect. The second complaint comes from no less a person than Gary Gygax himself. His objection (expressed in *White Dwarf* 7) refers to the widespread and unrealistic practice of selling more than one *D&D* campaign with a ''Ye Olde Magick Shoppe'' in it where parties may stock up with scrolls and potions for very reasonable rates, and this, as Gary Gygax very rightly points out, is neither credible nor desirable.

The answer: dissimilar as they seem, these two objections stem ultimately from the same source, as this article will show. Let's deal with the magic problem first. One question that has yet to be asked is this — why does such a proliferation of magic items arise? Is it just a lot of ego-tripping, comparable to souping the game up with ''vibro-blades''? No; much of it occurs because given the *D&D* game system at present, a large amount of magic is necessary to make a campaign work properly. Look at it this way; suppose you have a moderately strong party interested in hauling some decent treasure out of fifth level. The first problem is getting the treasure; few DMs are going to let a party trick a monster out of its goodies, so that means a fight. And assuming the party is not well-equipped with fireball wands and the like, a fight means losing hit points, and plenty of them. So after a tough battle, the party have got the treasure. Now they have to meet the second problem — getting it out. And getting back up all those stairs without meeting a wandering monster is not going to be easy. In most dungeons the chances of meeting a really dangerous wanderer are high, and in many dungeons monsters attack automatically. If a party is already badly damaged from the first fight, they are in extreme danger.

There are two ways round this problem for the party. One is this — they must have scrolls. Not just any scrolls that they might have found, but the right scrolls. *Sleep, web, protection from evil 10' radius* and *fireball* are the usual ones. With these, a low-level magician or magic-reading sword can stave off at least one encounter. The other solution is to have potions. Again, not just any potions that the DM has rolled randomly, but particular potions: *healing* and *extra-healing*. With these a party can get back sufficient hit points to withstand another fight. Agreed,

having a high-level magician and cleric in the party will have much the same effect, but in my experience these characters are hard to come by unless they can be safely escorted to low levels in the first place so that they can find sufficent treasure to progress from adept to something more respectable. Clerics don't gain experience very rapidly as long as a party sticks to roughing up kobolds.

So if a party are going to have a chance of (a) doing well, while (b) surviving, they usually need to be able to select the magic items they need for a dangerous expedition. But the problem wouldn't arise if it were possible for a normal party (without heavy artillery support) to battle powerful monsters without getting hacked limbless each time. After all, would you pick a fight with a minotaur if you knew that you could not escape getting wounded? The root of the matter is this business of hit points. The *Advanced D&D Player's Handbook* clearly states that hit points do not exclusively reflect physical damage, but also energy, combat ability, etc. And this is the crux of the problem, for such a definition just doesn't work. It tries to sum up two totally different things under one concept, and that is like trying to mix oil and water. They don't go. The party fighting minotaurs loses ''abstract'' hit points, but recovers them at the rate for healing wounds, while the fighter chained up in the dragon's cave loses ''physical'' hit points and survives because he has so many ''abstract'' hit points to lose. There lies the connection between the two complaints.

Now, in my article *Combat & Armour Class* in *White Dwarf 6* I suggested that one way to improve the combat system in *D&D* without overly complicating it would be to keep hit points at a relatively stable figure of around ten, while improving armour classes as characters go up levels. This involved a tacit redefinition of hit points as referring exclusively to physical damage. After some experimentation and discussion since that article was published, I now rather feel that any redefinition must be made more explicit, and also that a straight increase of one AC per experience level is probably not the best answer.

But before introducing my proposals for a new combat system to eliminate these difficulties, there is another term to define, and a ghost to lay. How often have you heard this old chestnut? ''Armour doesn't make you harder to hit — it makes you easier to hit but it absorbs the damage.'' This is often voiced by exponents of *Tunnels & Trolls,* I understand. The basis of this complaint is simply a misunderstanding of the use of the word ''hit''. In *D&D* a hit is not a blow which makes contact — a hit is a blow which makes contact and hurts. Here is a breakdown of the results of a goblin hitting a man in plate mail. (I'm using the old AC 9—2 table rather than the new 10—2 one chiefly because I can't see what earthly good introducing studded armour does, aside from mucking up everybody's nice neat charts.) A score of less than 10 indicates a complete miss (swinging at empty air). A score of 10 to 16 inclusive indicates that the goblin's blow has made contact, but that the armour has absorbed the damage. A score of 17 and up shows that the blow has pierced the armour, or hit an exposed area, thus doing real damage. With that out of the way, let me introduce my suggested revisions.

## Definitions

*(i) Hit points:* these refer to energy and combat resources at a character's disposal, and not to physical damage. They are calculated for each character in the usual way. They are lost when a character has to exert himself to avoid injury, or when a character suffers some form of shock. This happens in normal combat, whenever an opponent scores a hit against a character in the usual way. Hits in combat are usually deemed to be blows coming sufficently close to require evasive action, rather than actually striking and wounding.

*(ii) Wounds:* when a character actually does suffer physical damage, he is wounded. The amount of wounding he can take is limited by his constitution points, which are assessed for each character in the usual way. Constitution points are lost whenever a blow is sufficently powerful to penetrate all a character's defences. When a character is wounded, the number of constitution points lost is equal to the normal damage roll for the attack, and at least the same number of hit points are lost at the same time (see below).

### Restoring Hit Points and Constitution.

Constitution point losses are healed at the normal rate for healing wounds, i.e. 1 point per day after the first day. Hit points, on the other hand, are regained much more quickly. All the character need do is rest. After the first turn's rest, he regains hit points at the rate of five per turn rested. Therefore a character who has been reduced to no hit points in a fight will be able to bestir himself again (with one hit point) after 12 melee rounds of resting. Healing potions and spells restore both constitution and hit points simultaneously by the same amount.

### Striking Wounds in Combat.

In hand-to-hand combat, a hit usually reduces a character's hit points only (just as usual). However, a wound is struck if the score to hit exceeds the minimum needed to hit by 5. Thus a goblin would not be able to wound a man in plate in hand-to-hand combat. A minotaur could on a roll of 17 (12 to hit AC2 + 5 = 17). This figure 5 is modified, however, whenever a character goes up in level sufficent to put him in a higher bracket on the *Men Attacking* combat table. The rule is that the plus he gains on hitting is added to the wound level. Thus, a 4th level fighter or 5th level cleric in plate could only be wounded by a minotaur on a roll of 19 (12 + 5 + 2). The breakdown of the combat score of a minotaur attacking a 5th level cleric in plate mail is as follows: 1—4, misses completely; 5—11, armour absorbs all damage; 12—18, accurate blow which the cleric has to dodge or parry, thus tiring himself (cleric loses hit points); 19—20, blow gets past defences and actually wounds the cleric (loss of constitution and hit points). Since wounds are struck so much less often, it now becomes much more practicable (should one want to) to use a hit location table to see where people are wounded; when only hit points are lost, this will not, of course, be used.

### Striking Automatic Wounds

The general rule here is that if a creature has either no knowledge of an attack on it, or no possible way to take defensive action, all hits automatically wound. This goes for attacks from the rear, dropping stones on people from above, missiles that cannot be dodged or deflected in any way, and all attacks upon the helpless. Thus a goblin archer firing with surprise on a magic user would need a roll of 10+ to inflict a wound of 1—6 constitution points.

### Effects of Loss of Hit Points

If a character is reduced to zero hit points, he is deemed to be incapable of further action, is exhausted, has certainly dropped anything he might have been holding, and generally has his back to the wall, either metaphorically or literally. Excess hit point damage (e.g. in the case of a man with 1h.p. receiving six points of damage) can be deducted from constitution as wounds at the discretion of the attacker. If the attacker merely wishes to subdue his opponent he need not inflict wounds. A monster reduced to zero hit points may be taken as subdued if the characters so wish it, but obviously the degree of co-operation they will get from it when it gets its wind back will vary with the monster concerned. If a creature is down to zero hit points and is still being attacked, the attacker will not only hit at +4, but can deem any hit actually struck to be critical at his discretion. (In other words, he can go for the vital spots.) But note that he does have to administer the coup de grace; no-one dies just through having no hit points.

### Effect of Loss of Constitution Points

A character reduced to zero constitution points through wounding is dead. In addition, special things happen when he loses points to the extent that he has ¾, ½ or ¼ of his constitution points remaining. Firstly, whenever a character loses constitution points, he loses the same number of hit points (minimum). But when he passes the ¾ level, he can possess a maximum of ¾ of his hit points until his constitution is restored. Also, he will fight at −1 on hits, damage and defence, and there is a 5% chance that he is mortally wounded. (Example: a fighter has 20 hit points and a constitution of 12. He is wounded, and takes 5 points of damage. His constitution goes down to 7, and his hit points to 15. Having passed the ¾ level he cannot have more than 15 h.p. but since his loss of 5 h.p. has already brought him to that level, no further h.p. are deducted. Had the damage been 3 points, his h.p. would have been adjusted first to 17, then to 15 to take the ¾ mark into account.) When the halfway mark is passed, hit points are, at the maximum, half their normal total, the character fights at −2, and there is a 10% chance of a mortal wound. (If the fighter had taken a 6 point constitution loss, his hit points would have gone down to 10.) At the ¼ level, hit points are down to ¼ of their normal maximum, the combat handicap is −3, and the chance of fatality 15%. If two critical levels are passed simultaneously, count only the lower one. In the case of awkward fractions, round all fractions down.

### Mortal Wounds

If a percentage check shows a character to be mortally wounded. he will die in one turn + 1d12 melee rounds if he keeps perfectly still and rests. If he exerts himself moderately, he will die in 1d12 melee rounds, if strenuously (e.g. fighting) then 1d4 melee rounds. However, a mortal wound may be cured by a *cure serious wounds* spell, or equivalent.

### Fireballs, Poison and Similar Nastiness

In the case of magical missile attacks, such as fireballs, and including dragon breath, the first question to ask is, is there any possible defensive action? This could be diving out of the way, hiding behind a shield, or whatever. If the answer is no, as in the case of the victims chained up in the dragon's lair, then full damage must be administered to the constitution (and 30 points worth will char anyone). If some form of evasive action is possible, then make a saving throw as usual. If the throw is successful, it indicates the character has managed to avoid serious damage, and takes half damage in hit points (this is the cost in energy of the defensive action, plus a certain amount of shock). If the saving throw is not succesfully made, this shows that the defence was partially ineffectual; the character takes full damage from his hit points, plus half damage in constitution points (but no losses under the excess damage rule). The saving throw procedure works in the same way for poison; there is no chance of "evading" poison from a bite, but nor does poison wound in the same way as weapons. The saving throw thus simulates partly actions such as trying to suck the poison out, and partly the natural resistance of the body to poison.

### Monsters

When applying the system to monsters, the general rule is that sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Monsters suffer the same checks and advantages as player characters. This does entail rolling a monster's constitution. This is determined by the size and build of the monster, taking into account the ease with which vital organs can be reached. The following table gives a guideline:

| Monster size | Example | Constitution |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Very small | Spider | 1 |
| Small | Kobold | 1d6 |
| Sub-human | Wolf | 2d6 |
| Human | Man-types | 3d6 |
| Superhuman | Ogre | 3d6+2 |
| Large | Hill Giant | 4d6 |

As you can see, I have tended to extrapolate down rather than up. I don't think the very large size of monsters such as dragons should be counted too much for their benefit, since they usually still have vital spots (especially the head) to reach. Some monsters are exceptional, for instance the giant slug, which has no vital spots to speak of — also the redefined hit point does not really relate to it, since no giant slug ever parried anything in its life. In such cases, treat the specified hit points as the constitution, and all hits as wounds. Common sense will usually suggest the best solution to any individual difficulty. With regard to the increase in wound level with increase in fighting ability (additions to the constant 5) this should be applied to monsters sparingly. It is only really appropriate where the monster is likely to fight well as a result of skill rather than brute force — a high-level orc or bugbear are examples; these ▶

▶ creatures might reasonably adept at avoiding being wounded, whereas an umber hulk is just an out-and-out slogger.

### Spells and Fatigue (Optional)

Since hit points are strongly related to fatigue in this system, they can very easily double-up for a spell point or fatigue factor system. I would suggest that casting a magic user spell costs 2 hit points per spell level, while a clerical spell would cost half that amount. The magician who casts a spell costing more hit points than he has ruptures himself with the strain! In fairness, first level magic users should be given 1d4+1 for hit points.

The two implications of this, that wounded magic users are impaired in their casting ability, and that the strain of casting spells has a deleterious effect on fighting ability, both, I think, stand up to scrutiny. Other fatiguing activities (pushing boulders aside, etc.) can be reckoned similarly in terms of hit point loss according to taste. However, be warned that to use this sort of hit-point/spell-point system is tough on magic users who have no other line of defence besides their spells, and the system will fit in better with some campaigns than others. Also it is a matter of taste whether reading a spell from a scroll should count as equally fatiguing to casting it from memory. I favour the ruling that it should, and at the same time to do away with the *read magic* spell in favour of treating the reading of magic as an ability which all magic users receive in their training.

### General Remarks

That concludes the basic system; a few remarks of a quasi-general kind will do to finish off with.

Firstly, one of the crucial parameters of the system is the figure 5 used as the base in the calculating of which hits wound. This can be altered to taste, according to the effect desired. The given value is appropriate to my own dungeon, which is pretty lenient as dungeons go, with really nasty monsters confined strictly to very low levels, and few of those suicide squads that attack parties on sight. For heavier dungeons, increasing the figure may achieve a better balance for that particular dungeon. Monsters that deal out heavy damage at high hit probability are really dangerous (and so they should be) — if a stone golem lands a good blow it will stove anyone's head in.

Secondly, if any problems crop up, as in any aspect of D&D, common sense should be the final arbiter, with the DM's idea of common sense having the last word. Obviously, peculiar cases will crop up occasionally, especially when really weird monsters appear (nilbogs?). It should be possible for the average DM to play any particular instance by ear; if anything really horrendous occurs you could in desperation write to me c/o *White Dwarf* (if I've overlooked some vital flaw I wouldn't mind knowing about it, anyway).

Thirdly, please note that I don't believe in universal truth (as opposed to Universal Truth). There's no need to take all the above personally if you don't agree with the principles behind it; if you are contented with things as they are, good for you.

Lastly, the effects of the above system are pretty wide-ranging, but I think most of them are to the players' advantage. For instance, take the matter of the coup de grace. Suppose three adventurers are fighting a troll, and one loses all his hit points at one swipe from the troll. Normally, he would be just dead, but under this system he is lying on the ground with his head in his hands muttering "what hit me?". The troll could despatch him then and there, but it would mean taking his eyes off his other two assailants, and he is unlikely to do that. And if they rout the troll, they can rescue their companion, who will be much recovered after a short rest. Result: less fatalities but with no loss of excitement. Dishing out mortal wounds rather than critical hits is a touch which allows remedial healing, but also (for those with a morbid humour) opportunities for uttering famous last words. There is an increase in complexity, but I think it is relatively slight in proportion to the gains in detail and credibility. Any minor section which players find too bothersome can, of course, be changed or discarded to taste. And if the desired effect of reducing the need for players to gain access to magic in order to survive is attained, then perhaps even Gary Gygax won't object too strenuously. ■

A party of ninth and tenth level magic-users, clerics, and fighters hunts for a lich. Among them is an eighth level "Guardian" character, a class devised by the DM and used by the players. They come to a door. The guardian listens — he hears something. Then he looks through the door with his X-ray vision. Telling the others it's too dangerous for them in there, he turns ethereal and walks through the door. Five minutes later he opens it. "It's OK now. It was just 10 mind flayers, and when they attacked me psionically my mental boomerang defence scrambled their brains." The party shake their heads and look for spoils.

The guardian dominates this game, despite the powerful party. Whatever the requirements are for rolling a guardian, the class is too powerful. The other characters watch while the guardian deals with whatever arises. This is not good fantasy role-playing. New character classes add variety to *AD&D* and permit players to try things they would otherwise never attempt. But many of the classes published are unrestrained combinations of two or three classes, or wild interpretations of classes from novels or movies, which unbalance the game. My purpose is to explain what makes one character class a welcome addition, while another is a nightmare. First I'll give guidelines for developing a character class, and then pointers for classes derived from fiction.

The advantages of each class must be balanced by disadvantages. Players should play the class because it is different, not because it is more powerful than one of the basic *AD&D* classes. From ninth level upwards no character class should be as powerful as the magic-user class. *D&D* is a game of magic, and the magic-users are the strongest class at high levels.

It is easier to keep the number of advantages small than to devise many disadvantages. Remember, magic items neutralize disadvantages as the character lives his life. The least effective disadvantage of all is high ability requirements. No matter how high you set the requirements, some people are going to roll them. And for people who actually use the class, the ability requirements are no disadvantage at all. Ability requirements only reduce the numbers of a class, not their power. Our guardian example was too powerful if six 18s were required. A poor armour class is a favourite disadvantage given to many classes, such as the thief and magic-user. But it is often impossible to say why the character can't use better armour. You're better off choosing some other disadvantage. The third common disadvantage is high experience point requirements to rise in level. What counts is the character's power at a given experience point total, not his experience level. Experience levels are a convenient signpost; a third level "X" class is not necessarily equal to a third level "Y" class — compare experience points, not levels. The fourth disadvantage is to give the class "small" hit dice.

Don't combine the best aspects of two or more classes into a single new class. It will be difficult to devise disadvantages commensurate with the advantages of this combination. Multi-class characters already exist, with built-in disadvantages. But even if they did not, combo-characters are hard to control, and what's worse, they are likely to make the single-class characters envious.

Create a character class you could believe if you read about it in a good fantasy novel. The explanations for the existence of many classes are ridiculous. Jesters and idiots are two infamous examples which were published in *TSR's* own magazine several years ago — unfortunately not everyone treated them as jokes. It is best to base a new character either on fantasy traditions or on a class from a particular novel or fictional series.

The creation of the class will take a long time, with several drafts written at intervals of many months so that playing experience and comments can be obtained. Perhaps one or two out of four classes you devise will prove good enough to retain in the campaign. Begin by giving the class powers at the high or "name" levels, say tenth or eleventh, equal to those you see in the tradition or story on which you base the class. Find some evidence of how the character fared against creatures or dangers already defined in *AD&D*. Say the character fought a bear — did he have much trouble? Even if the eleventh level Eldar or whatever killed the bear in two rounds in the story, a first level

# What Makes A Good AD&D Character Class



## by Lewis Pulsipher

won't necessarily do as well! A first level character should not be more powerful than a first level ranger or paladin. So many designers give all the known powers to low levels and then devise even greater powers for higher levels that I must emphasize this point. Don't make the character more powerful at "name" level than he is in the source; and then don't make the higher levels *significantly* more powerful.

Don't be afraid to change the rules as you gain experience with the character. If another DM or player tells you that the class is too powerful, listen to his reasoning. Don't pay much attention to those who suggest increases to the character's abilities; the average player is biased, so his advice is likely to be intended, consciously or subconsciously, to increase the power of the class. By the same token, you should not play your class until you have finished it, to avoid bias. Use the class as a monster to playtest the higher levels.

When you model a class after a group or character from a particular story, there are several things to keep in mind. First, it is not necessary for the character to do everything the hero of the novel could do. Some abilities won't fit properly into the milieu, others will be too powerful to introduce to the group of abilities belonging to an existing class irrelevant. For example, a character who can move ethereally — which makes him invisible and silent — will make thieves useless.

Second, read your source carefully; don't rely on impressions that so-and-so could do something like X. Find the actual passage which says he could do X, and under what conditions.

Third, work from actual capabilities, not from relative strength. There are many people who think Gandalf must have been a 20th level wizard just because he was the most powerful spell-user in Middle-earth, excepting Sauron. But if you look at the spells he actually used in the stories, and remember that he wore one of the Three Rings, it is evident that he was no more capable than, say an eighth level *AD&D* cleric. This sounds weak, but in a world virtually devoid of magic such a character, with

a magic *Ring of Fire,* is indeed incredibly powerful. Find analogous *D&D* spells or abilities for each ability of your model personality; don't rely on relative strengths or impressions of strength.

Fourth, remember that protagonists of epic fantasy are "born lucky". They roll 19s and 20s for saving throws, and stumble into good positions. Take this into account; luck should not be "built in". The character class should be *able* to reproduce the greatest feats of the model only when the character gets lucky, not as a standard action.

After you've created the first draft of your class, and after each successive draft, you should look at it in three ways. Compare it with tradition or with the story it is derived from, compare it with the strengths and weaknesses of existing classes, and then look at the effect of the class on the game — is it balanced, does it satisfy a need, is it fun?

I have discussed above the comparison of class to fiction. For the second comparison, is your class much stronger than other classes, particularly similar ones? For example, don't create a "weapon master" class which is significantly better than a fighter in almost every way at comparable experience point totals. In that case the players who have fighters will be envious, if not disgusted. If the character is as strong as a magic-user at high experience totals you should weaken it.

How does the character affect the game? A "jester" or "idiot" would only harm the campaign, making it a travesty of fantasy. An overpowerful character would dominate the adventure, as did our friend the guardian. A character who can do too many things will make the other players envious, listless; they may lose interest when they see how well another player can do merely by virtue of having had good die rolls. You'll almost certainly have to increase the experience point requirements for the character at some point, though this is not the panacea for every fault. Most of all, new classes should add variety to the game.
∎

# The Self-Made Traveller

## Optional Skill Acquisition for Travellers

### by Trevor Graver

In this article, I propose a system whereby players may choose skills, rather than acquiring them by random die rolls. The system revolves around the idea of skill points; these are earned as the character progresses through his or her service career.

Skill points are earned according to the character generation system in use. Table 1 is used for basic *Traveller, Supplement 4,* and other careers using the Book 1 system; Table 2 is used for expanded character generation systems such as *Mercenary, High Guard, Criminals (White Dwarf 19), Star Patrol (White Dwarf 20), Merchants & Merchandise,* etc. In these expanded systems, there are certain limits on the first skills acquired; these are as stated in the appropriate system, eg the first skill acquired by a *Mercenary* character must be a Gun Combat skill.

---

### Table 1. Basic Characters

| | |
|---|---|
| Per four-year term | 25 skill points |
| For a commission | 15 skill points |
| Per promotion | 15 skill points |

---

### Table 2. Expanded Characters

| | |
|---|---|
| Basic training | 20 skill points |
| Per promotion (E ranks) | 3 skill points |
| Per promotion (O ranks) | 10 skill points |
| Per successful Skill roll | 10 skill points |
| Per one-year assignment | 3 skill points |

---

Characters are run through their service careers normally, except that skills are not determined. Add up the skill points acquired by the character from the tables above; when enough skill points are accumulated, a skill can be purchased from Table 3, Skill Groups and Costs; alternatively a characteristic can be increased, see Table 4. Note that a character may only choose a skill if it is one which he could acquire in the normal way, ie it must be

available in his career to someone of his education. Skills and characteristic increases are purchased at the end of each four-year term, and any residual skill points after this purchase are dropped, the character starting over from scratch in accumulating them.

### Table 3. Skill Groups and Costs

*Type A Skills (Cost 10 skill points per level)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Air/Raft | FA Gunner | Steward |
| Air Craft | Forward Observer | Vehicle |
| ATV | Gunnery | Water Craft |
| Carousing | Interrogation | Hunting |
| Combat Eng | Lockpick | Vacc Suit Maint |
| Commo | Recon | Security |
| Demolition | Survival | Low Berth Maint |

*Type B Skills (Cost 10 skill points per level up to level 3, 15 per level thereafter)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Admin | Mechanical | Zero G Cbt |
| Battle Dress | Medical | Jump Drive |
| Disguise | Prospecting | Legal |
| Electronics | Recruiting | Navigation |
| Engnrng | Ships Boat | Weapon Skills |
| Gravitics | Ship Tactics | Trade & Speculation |
| Leader | Vacc Suit | Tactics |

*Type C Skills (Cost 10 points to level 1, 15 per level thereafter)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Computer | Pilot | Bribery |
| Forgery | Unarmed Cbt | Gambling |
| Instruction | Streetwise | |

*Type D Skills (Cost 15 skill points to level 1, 20 per level thereafter)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Jack-of-Trades | Liaison | Life Support |

### Table 4. Characteristic Increases

(Figures in the table are skill points required to raise the characteristic shown by +1 if the desired value is in the range shown.)

| Characteristic | 1–4 | 5–8 | 9–A | B+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strength | 12 | 10 | 12 | 15 |
| Dexterity | 11 | 10 | 13 | 16 |
| Endurance | 12 | 10 | 15 | 15 |
| Intelligence | 13 | 10 | 13 | 20 |
| Education | 10 | 10 | 12 | 15 |
| Social Standing | 10 | 12 | 15 | 20 |

### SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

Special assignments are listed below, together with the number of skill points gained by attendance. Skill points thus gained may only be spent on skills available at the appropriate school; if a character knows at least half the available skills, and has at least one at a skill level of 3+, he may acquire Instruction skill.

### Mercenary

| | |
|---|---|
| Cross Training | 10 skill points |
| Specialist School | 10 (15 if Intel and Educ both 9+) |
| Commando School | 2d6 x 4 skill points |
| Protected Forces | 2d6 x 3 |
| Recruiting | Automatic Recruiting—1; 50% chance of Admin—1 |
| OCS | 30 |
| Intelligence School | 2d6 x 3 |
| Command College | 2d6 x 2 |
| Staff College | 2d6 x 2 |
| Attache/Aide | None (but see description) |

### High Guard

(Unless otherwise stated, results are as in *Mercenary* table above)

| | |
|---|---|
| Gunnery School | 2d6 x 3 |
| Engnrng School | 2d6 x 3 |
| Command College | 2d6 x 3 |
| Staff College | 2d6 x 3 |

### Merchants & Merchandise

| | |
|---|---|
| Physical Development | 2d6 x 3 |
| Cross Training | See description |
| Specialist School | 2d6 x 2 |
| Ship Security | 2d6 x 4 |
| Survival School | Survival—1 plus 2d6 x 3 |
| Merch Serv Academy | 10 plus points for promotion |
| Trade Expansion | 2d6 (x 4 with interest) |
| Intelligence School | 2d6 x 3 |
| Command College | 2d6 x 3 |
| Staff College | 2d6 x 3 |
| Div Tech School | 2d6 x 2 |
| Merch Serv Liaison | Liaison—1 plus 10 points |

### Star Patrol

| | |
|---|---|
| Recruiting | See description |
| Cross-Training | See description |
| Covert Survey School | 2d6 x 5 |
| Colony School | 2d6 x 3 |
| Synergy School | Jack-of-Trades—1 |
| Contact School | 2d6 x 3 |

# THE BEST OF
# THE FIEND FACTORY
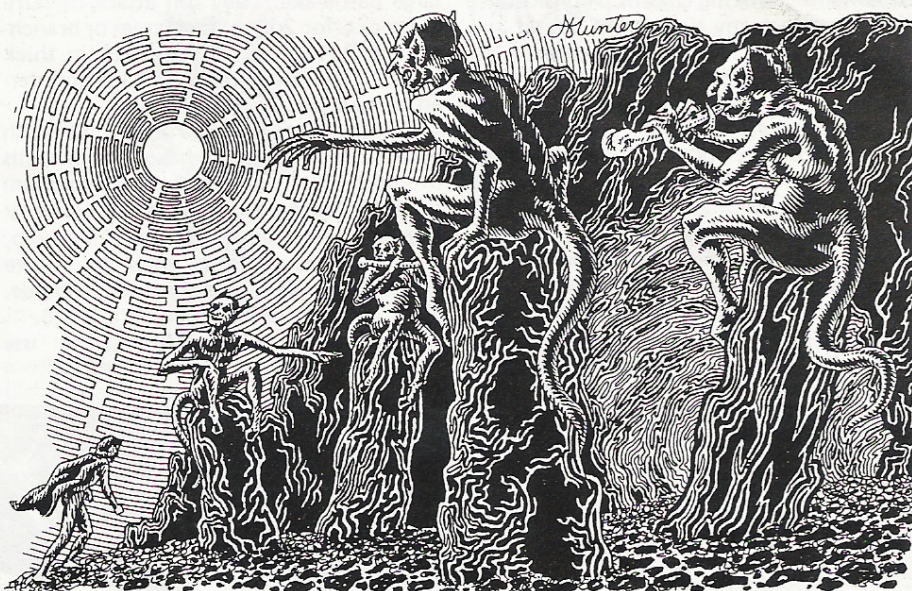


The Fiend Factory first appeared in White Dwarf 6, and sprang from an earlier series entitled Monsters Mild and Malign. It was originally edited by Don Turnbull, and was taken over by Albie Fiore in issue 18. The series has remained a constant favourite with readers and has featured well over 200 readers' monsters at the time of this publication. In White Dwarf 29, the result of the second Fiend Factory poll was published. Readers had been asked to vote for the best monsters to have been published in White Dwarf up to the December '81 issue. The resultant Top Ten monsters are listed below. (The details of five are currently available in other publications as indicated. The remainder are reprinted here.):

## FIEND FACTORY TOP TEN

1: Shadow Goblins (WD26) by Barney Sloane
2: Dream Demon (WD25) by Phil Masters (available in The Black Manse: Best of White Dwarf Scenarios, 2)
3: Mandrake People (WD18) by Glenn Godard
4: Cyclops (WD21) by Albie Fiore (available in One-Eye Canyon: Best of White Dwarf Scenarios, 2)
5: Incubus (WD25) by Roger E Moore (available in The Black Manse: Best of White Dwarf Scenarios, 2)
6: Russian Doll Monster (WD15) by Mike Ferguson (available in Best of Fiend Factory: Best of White Dwarf Articles, 1)
7: Forest Giant (WD26) by M Newton and D Healey
8: Svart (WD9) by Cricky Hitchcock (available in The Lichway: Best of White Dwarf Scenarios, 1 and Best of Fiend Factory: Best of White Dwarf Articles, 1)
9: Phung (WD18) by Simon Tilbrook
10: Winter Kobold (WD26) by Jonathan Hardwick

## SHADOW GOBLINS

### by Barney Sloane

No. Appearing: 4 — 24 (10 — 100)
Armour Class: 7+
Movement: 14"
Hit Dice: 1d4 + 1 (and better)
Treasure: I, X — individuals: J, K
Attack: By weapon type + spells
Alignment: Chaotic evil
Intelligence: High to genius
Monstermark: 2.43+ (level I in 12 levels)
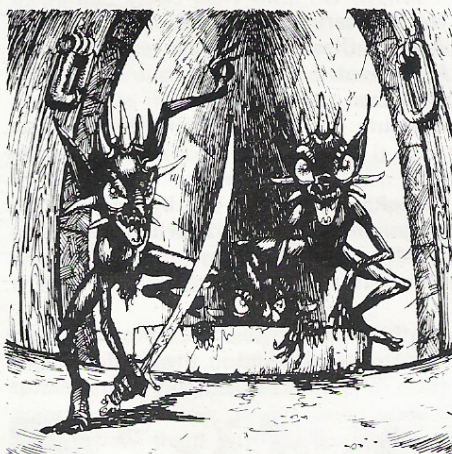


Shadow goblins are rare, three-foot tall impish creatures with small horns of varying numbers on their heads, black skin and a reptilian countenance. It has been suggested that they are the result of crosses between drow and kobolds, though this is only speculation.

Their usual weapon is a scimitar, but they often make use of slings, darts, nets and daggers when necessary. Many use shields in open confrontation.

They have very well developed sorcerous powers, similar to illusionists. Their power increases with their level:

|  |  |  |  | Hide in | Spells: |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lvl | Hit Dice | Dex | Shads | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | ½ + 1 | 14 | 30% | 2 | — | — | — | — |
| 2 | 1 + 2 | 15 | 45% | 2 | 1 | — | — | — |
| 3 | 2 + 3 | 16 | 60% | 3 | 2 | 1 | — | — |
| 4 | 3 + 4 | 17 | 80% | 3 | 2 | 2 | — | — |
| 5 | 4 + 5 | 18 | 100% | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | — |
| 6 | 5 + 6 | 18 | 100% | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| max |  |  | 01-50 |  |  |  |  |  |

SPELLS:

Level 1
Audible glamer
Change self
Dancing lights
Darkness
Detect illusion
Hypnotism
Phantasmal force
Wall of fog

Level 2
Blindness
Blur
Fog cloud
Hypnotic pattern
Improved phantasmal forces
Invisibility
Magic mouth
Mirror image
Misdirection

Level 3
Continual darkness
Dispel illusion
Fear
Hallucinatory terrain
Invisibility 10' radius
Non-detection
Rope trick
Spectral forces
Suggestion

Level 4
Confusion
Emotion
Improved invisibility
Minor creation
Phantasmal killer
Shadow monsters
Web

Level 5
Chaos
Demi-shadow monsters
Maze (!)
Projected image
Shadow door
Summon shadow
Shadow magic

All shadow goblins have 1gp quartzes without which they cannot cast any spells.

They are also very accomplished miners, being able to disguise their work as natural 80% of the time. They can disguise pits as sink-holes, make secret doors, and dig ▶

▶ authentic looking chasms. A typical lair will contain many such items, secret and one-way doors, dead ends and mazes of tunnels interconnected by many of their own tiny passages (as well as 85% of the tribe!).

They possess 100' infravision, and are resistant to all illusions cast by anyone their own level or lower. They sometimes work with jermlaine to cause the maximum of confusion to any intruders by stealing, tripping, charming, misleading, breaking or wounding. With prisoners, they show their chaotic nature and rarely kill; instead they usually strip, beat and eject them blind-folded out of the complex.

When a group is encountered, there will be some higher level types accompanying them, in addition to the number rolled, as indicated here:

| Number Appearing | Higher Levels Accompanying: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th | 6th |
| 4 – 8 | 1 | | | | |
| 9 – 13 | 2 | 1 | | | |
| 14 – 18 | 4 | 2 | 1 | | |
| 19 – 24 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1 | |
| 25 – 30 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | |
| 31 – 50 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 1 | |
| 51 – 75 | 12 | 8 | 5 | 2 | |
| 76 – 90 | 15 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| 91 – 100 | 20 | 15 | 10 | 4 | 1 |

The line separates the 'war-band' figures from the 'lair' figures. Thus a war-band of 17 shadow goblins would be accompanied by 4 2nd level lieutenants, 2 3rd level commanders, and 1 4th level captain.

Shadow goblins have often been reported to have used giant rats and spiders to increase the effectiveness of their attacks, and in these instances victims may be killed as food for their steeds/guardians.

Dead shadow goblin lords, etc, are buried in secret and trapped catacombs near the lairs, with much treasure sacrificed to them.

# FOREST GIANT
## by M Newton & D Healey

| | Sentinel | Rancorous | Eschel |
|---|---|---|---|
| No Appearing: | 1 – 6 | 1 – 6 | 1 – 8 |
| Armour Class: | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Movement: | 15'' | 15'' | 15'' |
| Hit Dice: | 7d8 + 7 | 7d8 + 1 | 6d8 + 5 |
| Treasure: | | Individuals: Mx50; E in lair | |
| Attack: | 3 – 18 | 3 – 17 | 2 – 16 |
| Alignment: | Neutral good | Neutral evil | Neutral |
| Intelligence: | Exceptional | High | Average |
| Monstermark: | 269.5 | 264 | 159 |
| | (Level VIII in 12 levels) | | (Level VII) |

There are three types of forest giant: the rancorous and eschel (the female) are rare while the sentinel is very rarely encountered. All have wood-brown skin, but range in hair colour from sandy-brown to a golden colour for the sentinel, black for the rancorous and reddy-brown for the eschel.

All can use a large shield which would increase their armour class by 1; but do this rarely as their preferred weapon is a large battle-axe. They can attack by hurling rocks, for 2d8, or dead trees or branches, for 2d12 — at –2 for 1d12 in thick forest. They are seldom (20%) encountered in their lair.

Forest giants have a strong affinity with their surroundings and have certain spells of which they can use up to a maximum of 4 per day: *pass without trace; purify water; locate animals; animal friendship; detect snares & pits; entangle; locate plants; warp wood; plant growth;* and *tree.* They can only be surprised on a 1 in 6.

Rancorous occasionally (51%) use wyverns as steeds.



# WINTER KOBOLDS
## by Jonathan Hardwick

**No. Appearing:** 20 – 100
**Armour Class:** 7 (6)
**Movement:** 6''
**Hit Dice:** 1d4 + 1
**Treasure:** Individuals: K; P in lair plus 15% chance of maps or magic
**Attack:** 1 – 4 or by weapon type
**Alignment:** Neutral evil
**Intelligence:** Average
**Monstermark:** 2 (Level I in 12 levels)

In the northern regions, homesteads are sometimes attacked in the dead of night, their inhabitants killed and their treasure



stolen. The raiders are winter kobolds. They are more powerful than the normal kobold and originate in the northern wastes. They are not affected by any sort of cold-based spells and can move normally in all but the deepest snows. They favour a kind of studded leather armour, and sometimes use wickerwork shields. Typical weapons are:

| | |
|---|---|
| axe — 30% | crossbow — 15% |
| club — 20% | spear — 15% |
| sword — 20% | |

Leaders have 5 hit points, use two weapons and attack as 1 – 1 hit dice monsters. When encountered, they will often (70%) be accompanied by their form of magic-user who can use: *frost fingers, resist heat, darkness* and *chill metal* (opposite of *heat metal*).

They fight equally well in bright sunlight or pitch dark. They favour caves and high places as bases, which will often (70%) have either 2 — 8 giant lynxes or 1 — 4 dire wolves as guards. These beasts are also used as steeds, but only on very rare occasions.

To protect themselves against the intense cold of the regions they inhabit, winter kobolds have evolved a thin coat of hollow shafted hairs. As an added benefit, the hairs can be fluffed out in combat, presenting a large attacking profile consisting solely of inflated hairs. Thus opponents with an intelligence of 'low' or under have to strike at an armour class 2 higher than normal, eg, 5 instead of 7.

Winter kobolds hate all other humanoid life, particularly elves and gnomes who they will attack on sight. They speak their own, their alignment and often (80%) normal kobold tongues.

They live for up to 140 years.

# MANDRAKE PEOPLE
## by Glen Godard

**No. Appearing:** See below
**Armour Class:** 5
**Movement:** 12''
**Hit Dice:** 1d8 + 1
**Treasure:** See below
**Attack:** 2 fists (1-4 each), or stone mace, plus special
**Alignment:** Unlawful neutral
**Intelligence:** Low

A mandrake resembles an extremely thin humanoid with very large genitalia and bark-like skin the colour of a beech trunk. Little of his skin actually shows through the great masses of dark green hair-like rootlets that cover his body. Red eyes glow from deep hollows above a hair-lip mouth with triangular teeth, similar to those of a shark.

The mandrake people are creatures of the forest. Their tie with the woodlands is so great that a mandrake will go to great lengths to avoid destroying living plants. They use coal or dung for their fires and

stone or tin for their utensils. Their warrens are usually rocky catacombs with dead grass or straw as beds.

Mandrakes are generally nocturnal and have infravision to 60'. When encountered, they are (50%) in a hunting party (1 to 10 appearing), or (35%) in a warren (4 to 20 appearing), or (15%) in ambush (4 to 20 appearing). In all cases the number appearing depends on the size of the group.

The relationship between mandrakes and humans is a tragic one. Mandarke females give birth to a *bantling*, an acorn-like seed, which must gestate under mistletoe in an oak or ash tree. If the *bantling* is discovered (thier rootlets grow above ground and sprout purple bell-shaped flowers) prior to birth, it can be cut up and used as an extremely powerful aphrodisiac. *Mandrake root*, as humans call it, will cure any impotency (including that which is magically induced) and will cause in females an extreme desire for sex. Due to these properties a three-pound *bantling* will sell for 1,000 to 3,000 g.p. Houris especially prize mandrake root, and will either pay one-and-a-half times normal value or, lacking money, will use their powers to steal the root.

The mandrake people, quite justifiably, view this practice as genocide. Therefore, mandrakes are hostile to all humans except druids. Being carnivorous, mandrakes will occasionally eat solitary humans who are caught in the forests. This, and the occasional raids into villages for livestock, will cause self-righteous humans (i.e. paladins), woodsmen, foresters, and peasants to attack the mandrakes whenever within reason.

Druids and treants understand the mandrake people's plight and are extremely sympathetic. Both will intervene, usually peacefully, on the mandrakes' side in a conflict. Druids and treants will either attack immediately or extract revenge later when they witness or hear of a *bantling* being up-rooted. Mandrakes revere the druids and if they encounter a druid, they will usually perform any one non-violent act of assistance they can, within reason. (Mandrakes often have a stock of fresh mistletoe, 1 to 4 days old, in their warrens as a gift.)

The mandrake's favourite mode of attack is to overwhelm their opponents with superior numbers. They will avoid encounters in which they are outnumbered unless there is a *bantling* involved, in which case the mandrakes attack to the death with +2 to hit and damage.

Mandrakes attack with their fists or with stone cidgels which hit as maces. However, if a mandrake is hurt, he will scream in such a way as to cause all unprotected ears within a twenty-foot radius to save versus magic or sustain 1d4 - 1 damage. In extreme pain, such as death by blade, or the unearthing of a *bantling*, all creatures within twenty feet must save versus magic or die. creatures with sensitive ears (elves, dogs, horses, etc) save at -2. Those with protected ears and those that successfully save must still
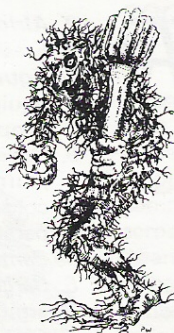


muffle the sound of the scream (by the blowing of a low-toned horn, for example) or take 1d10 damage. This scream also runs the danger (20% chance) of attracting other mandrakes or wandering monsters.

The Holy Symbol for mandrakes is the cross and they can be persuaded from attacking by gifts of small iron crosses. The only treasure a warren will have is a number of gem and jewelled crosses (treat as Type A gems and jewellery only). Because of this worship of the cross, clerics and rangers will not fight them unless forced to defend themselves or their charges.

The final aspect of the mandrakes is that their young (from birth to five years of age) females can 'pass' as humans. Mandrakes, noting that life is easier for humans, will attempt to trade human babies for their own. These are sometimes viewed as faerie 'changelings', which, depending on the area culture, can be a sign of extremely good or extremely poor fortune. The female mandrake, to preserve her human form, must consume an ounce of human blood daily until her twentieth year in human life. The mandrake-vampires are able to draw the blood straight through the skin pores, through processes as innocent as breast-feeding or simple kisses. Done with care this will rarely (5%) affect the victim. (if it does, the result is blood-poisoning.) Even after her twentieth year in human life, the changeling can be detected by her bones, which are porous and dark-brown rather than solid and ivory-white.

*Comments:* This monster is rare in that it would provide a conflict of alignments within a party (hence the *Unlawful*). Wise forest-types (elves, druids and rangers) would view them with compassion and sympathy, and even if they don't aid them, almost certainly wouldn't harm them. Other woodsmen, foresters and peasants would view their prescence as a battle for survival. Paladins, repelled by the fact that they eat humans would hunt them down. Lawful good clerics would be caught in a dilemma of conscience — they are not evil, worship a god, but eat people. A thief wouldn't give a toot, but would seek out the root. A well drawn monster that virtually cries out for its own scenario, it comes from Thomas Burnett Swann's story *Manor of Roses* in *The Dolphin and the Deep*, which developed them from the mandrake of folklore.

# PHUNG
## by Simon Tilbrook

**No. Appearing:** 1
**Armour Class:** 9 (–4 for Dexterity)
**Movement:** 15''
**Hit Dice:** 3 or 4d8
**Treasure:** M, N and Q
**Attack:** By weapon type
**Alignment:** Chaotic neutral
**Intelligence:** Average (exceptional cunning

The phung could, from a distance, be mistaken for a tall, gaunt human, for individuals of the race dress in human garb. However, the head of a phung is that of a giant mantis, with the mouth in constant motion. They are, by human standards, insane.



Phung have only ever been encountered individually, though it is assumed that they have villages or strongholds in secret places. Each individual has a dexterity of 18 and functions as a thief or monk of level 3 times the phung's hit dice.

As afr as is known, phung do not use magic; nor, although adept, do they occupy themselves with the plebeian skills of physical combat unless necessary. Nothing gives a phung greater pleasure than to terrify its prey. There are countless cases of 'fun-loving' phung passing over an easy kill in order to track their victims for hours to wring every last drop of sweat from them. Their tactics are subtle — they prefer to rely on the imagination and fears of their victims, presenting them with 'unknowns' and 'unseens'. They rarely close in for the kill, preferring to leave their prey in a state of abject terror.

*Comments:* Not every DM's monster, but a cert for those who enjoy an opportunity to terrify their adventurers without killing them off. Incidentally don't forget to roll for the morale of hirelings, especially if they start disappearing one by one. The phung is from *City of the Chasch* by Jack Vance. Some of Vance's other books that you may find interesting from a *D&D* standpoint are *Showboat World*, an enthralling though monsterless wilderness adventure, and *The Dying Earth*, the book that was originally rumoured to be the inspiration for the *D&D* magic system. ∎

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# THE MUDSKIPPER

## A MULTI-TERRAIN VEHICLE
### by Dryden Badenoch

### Construction

The original design for the 100-ton Multi-Terrain Vehicle was produced by CN Dubaric, the Commercial Transport division of Monark Transtel. The first model was sold in 827 and, though production ceased in 863, Mudskippers remain in service throughout the Imperium to this day. Several inferior models have since been produced by pirate manufacturers in the outlying regions.

### Specifications

The standard Transtel Mudskipper has a crew of three (pilot, co-pilot and technician), with a passenger capacity of seventy and a cargo capacity of twenty tons. On most journeys, four stewards are also carried. The mudskipper is capable of three modes of travel: aquatic (sub-sea and surface), cross-country and arctic. If weaponry is required, hardpoints for two autocannon are fitted as standard, though these may be adapted for RAM auto-launchers for subsea use. The hull is fully airtight, and may be used in vacuum or at sea depths of up to 250m due to the strength of the hull armour.

### Performance

The fusion reactor gives a Mudskipper almost unlimited endurance, but standard operational range is set at 10,000km, and onboard facilities in their basic form are not designed to cope with a journey of more than 12 hours, there being only limited facilities for the preparation of meals. The reliability of the Hunslett 2.7ves reactor is almost legendary, so the Mudskipper can operate on the minimum of maintenance (throw 11+ for a breakdown to occur, DMs –1 if the technician has Engineering-2 or Mechanical –2 (cumulative) and +1 per month without a maintenance period. Throw monthly for Transtel models, and weekly for others).

The cruising velocity of the Mudskipper in each mode over various terrains is shown below:
Crawler: 50kmph Road; 30kmph Rough; 20kmph Cross-country.
Floater: 25kmph Surface; 30kmph Submerged.
Skimmer: 75kmph Ice; 25kmph Snow.
NB Skimmer and Crawler modes require the deployment of skis and tracks respectively. These are contained in the outboard pods and in the lower hull, controlled from the cockpit.
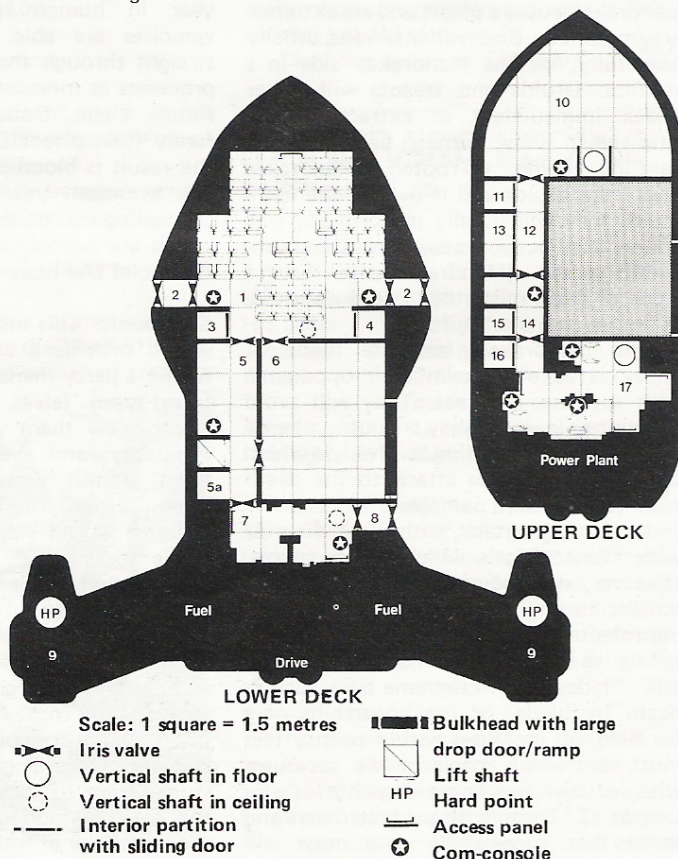
### Suggestions for Use

Base price for the Mudskipper is MCr10 at TL9, so it is unlikely that any Traveller player should wish to own one, unless he has at his disposal a ship large enough to transport the craft from world to world. The standard Mudskipper is obviously a replacement for an airliner on worlds where, for one reason or another (lack of air, fluctuating gravitational and magnetic fields, etc) flight is impractical. Variations on the standard design include a cargo carrier, where the second-class section has been removed to enlarge the cargo bay, and a long-range version in which the seating is replaced by staterooms.
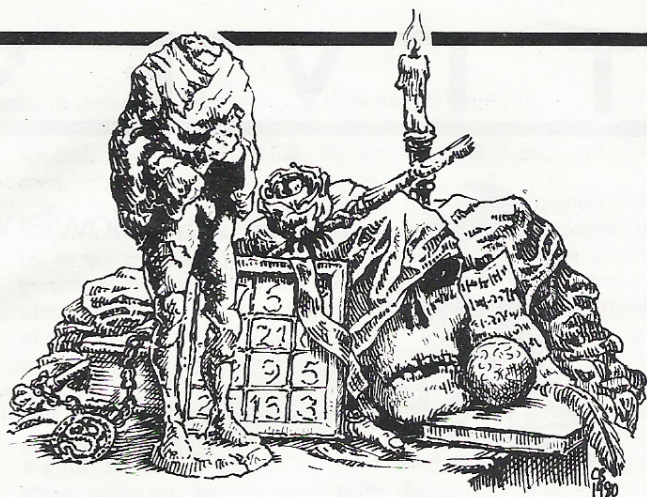
Due to their low TL, Mudskippers will be encountered mostly on frontier worlds as explorers and transports, though planet-bound mercenaries or armies may invest in the vehicles as command bases. The possibilities are endless, but remember to use commonsense: a Mudskipper will rarely be found in situations where a standard vehicle would be less expensive, faster and/or more suited to the task.

### Interior Details

1. *Second Class Passenger Seating.* Cramped seating for fifty passengers; seats incorporate video screens and com-consoles for use during the journey. Relevant survival apparatus under each seat.

2. *Airlock.* Standard starship fitting.
3. *Fresher.*
4. *Equipment Locker.* Tools, medical supplies and survival equipment relevant to the planet on which the Mudskipper is operating.
5. *Galley.* Designed to cater for the passengers during long journeys (over two hours), the galley consists mainly of a cold store and a series of microwave cookers for the preparation of freeze-packed meals. Lift to upper deck.
5a. *Pantry.* Storage for foodstuffs and utensils.
6. *Cargo Bay.* Twenty tons of cargo space, accessible by an armoured cargo door.
7. *Lower Drive Access.* Contains systems monitors and access to the fusion reactor, and controls for refuelling the ten-ton capacity fuel tanks.
8. *Airlock.* Standard starship fitting.
9. *Outboard Pod.* A stabiliser/float for the ship when in floater mode, incorporating ballast tanks and aqua-jets for use in submarine operations. Also contained are remotely deployable skis and crawl-tracks, and remote firing systems for the auto-cannon turrets.
10. *First-class Lounge.* A luxury lounge area seating twenty, with a bar and other comforts for first-class passengers only.
11. *Fresher.*
12. *Circulation Space.*
13. *Supply Store.* General storage area for maintenance equipment and spare parts.
14. *Circulation Space.* Lift to lower deck.
15. *Store.* Cleaning and miscellaneous equipment.
16. *Fresher.*
17. *Cockpit.* Control consoles for the pilot, co-pilot and engineer. The pilot console is on a raised dais to allow a view through the plasteel cupola, which can be covered in seconds with an armoured shield. The vessel may be piloted by remote cameras and instrumentation instead. The area includes the onboard computer, which is equivalent to a Model/3 for programming and combat purposes. It provides complete autopilot facilities, as well as a library service for the passengers. In practice, most commercial journeys are made on automatic, the crew taking manual control only in the event of emergencies. ∎



UPPER DECK

LOWER DECK

Scale: 1 square = 1.5 metres
▷◄ Iris valve
○ Vertical shaft in floor
◌ Vertical shaft in ceiling
- - - Interior partition with sliding door

▬▬▬ Bulkhead with large drop door/ramp
◹ Lift shaft
HP Hard point
═ Access panel
✪ Com-console

# THE BEST OF TREASURE CHEST
# Magic Items

## STAFF OF EARTHQUAKES
### by Phil Masters

This magical staff, only usable by clerics, has one minor power, which drains no charges, and one major power, which uses one charge each time it is used. The staff can be recharged.

The minor power is that, so long as the user holds the staff with its butt firmly grounded, he or she is totally immune to all effects of earthquakes, either natural or magical. Even falling rubble will be deflected away.

The major power is released when the user smites the ground firmly with it while speaking a command word. Instantly, an *earthquake* spell of 20″ range and 24th level power is cast; such release requires but one segment, and because of the staff's minor power, the user may safely be within the area of effect of the spell.

The staff normally gains no bonuses when used as a weapon; however, if a hit is scored with it on a clay golem, two charges are expended and the monster automatically disintegrates.

## FAKE TORTURE ITEMS
### by Roger E. Moore

This is a small kit, weighing between 5 and 10 lbs, consisting of a variety of needles, cords, iron rods, rusty knife blades, bottles of unidentifiable liquids, etc. It can be carried and used by parties that have an orientation more neutral than evil, and is used to encourage prisoners to become more verbal with regards to where their treasures are, what or who is guarding it, location of the home lair, etc. First, when the party has finished trying to question an orc, goblin, or whatnot which was taken prisoner recently, they all go off into a huddled discussion in view of the prisoner but some distance away. One or two party members should suddenly look utterly horrified and ask the rest of the group not to go through with a certain plan. The rest of the party vehemently disagrees ("You can't deal with orcs any other way!") and orders the objecting member(s) to leave. While the other adventurers start unpacking the fake torture kit, laughing in a maniacal and sadistic manner, the member who objected to the plan goes to the prisoner and begs him/her/it to talk, as there is nothing that can be done to stop the other adventurers. "Please talk! I can't bear to hear you screaming for hours and hours like the last one . . ." In the background, the adventurers can be heard making bets on how long the prisoner will last before . . .(at this point they all laugh again).

Any real use of the fake torture kit as a *real* torture kit will mean alignment shifts to evil for all contributing party members, and all the negative consequences thereof. Using the kit in the above manner should produce at least one morale check on the part of the captive, and possibly several if the would-be torturers look gruesome and mean enough. If it doesn't work, well, at least you tried.

## BOOTS OF ADHESION
### by Roger E Moore

These magical boots are enchanted to grip any surface firmly, even slick and frictionless ones, to permit normal movement. At a special word of command, these boots will automatically lock in place to prevent the wearer from falling. A second word of command allows the wearer to walk up the sides of walls and across ceilings without falling off. The boots obey only the wearer's commands, so an enemy cannot command a character's *Boots of Adhesion* to lock in place and prevent the character's escape. The boots will not stick to any living material.

## PERIAPT OF BALANCING
### by Roger E. Moore

This device appears to be a circular shield, concave, of about 3′ periapts, amulets, etc. When worn, it confers an extremely acute and precise sense of physical balance upon the wearer. This will make it 99% certain that he or she will not slip or fall on frictionless surfaces though the wearer will have no ability to grip such a surface. Skating along frictionless floors is quite easy using this periapt. Wearers may also walk ledges and tightropes with 99% surety, even under moderately strong winds or vibrating rope. Because the wearer is intimately aware of his or her weight distribution, only half-damage will be taken from falls and the wearer can regain his/her footing quickly thereafter.

## ATHENA'S TONIC
### by James Meek

Drinking this oily fluid will bestow the following powers upon the drinker; a *haste* spell; restoration or addition of 2—16 hit points and +1 to dexterity and constitution. These effects last for six hours after which the drinker must rest for 12 hours. Any delay in resting will have the following effects: the 7th hour after drinking — the loss of all bestowed abilities plus *slow;* during the 8th — loss of 2—16 hit points; during the 9th — a loss of —1 on constitution and dexterity; 10th hour — total collapse (if constitution 10+ then sleep for a week, otherwise death).

Furthermore, if the tonic is thoroughly rubbed on any *sleeping, paralysed, petrified, turned to ice,* or otherwise suspended creature, it will restore that creature to normal in 1—6 turns.

## DAGGER OF THE DUNEDAIN
### by Matthew Williams

These daggers were forged many years ago by the men of Arnor during their war against the Witch-King of Angmar. They are made of a strange metal — light, strong and untouched by time — and elaborately wrought, leaf-shaped with serpentine decorations.

These daggers radiate magic if that is detected for. They can only be used by persons of Good alignment. True neutrals will suffer 2d8 damage on grasping the dagger, and must then drop it, never again touching it. Evil persons will sense the powerful Good nature of the dagger and stay well away.

These daggers attack at +2 to hit and damage, and confer a bonus of +1 to all saving throws against attacks on the wielder. They will never attack Good creatures or persons, but attack Evil ones at an additional +1 to hit and damage.

Any undead creature hit by a *Dagger of the Dunedain* is slain, and will crumble into dust. However, if the target had 10 or more hit dice, the dagger then withers and disappears. It has no effect on demons, devils, or other undead of 13 or more hit dice.

A minor type of *Dagger of the Dunedain* exists, which withers after destroying an undead creature of 5 or more hit dice, and cannot affect undead of 10 or more hit dice. Some few powerful *Swords of the Dunedain* were also forged, which in addition to their other magical powers could slay any undead being of 15 or fewer hit dice, and any demon or devil of 10 or fewer hit dice. These have no effect on more powerful creatures, and may only perform these functions in the hands of a Lawful Good. ■

# DETECTIVES

### by Marcus L Rowland

The detective is a new *AD&D* character class whose functions are the solving of mysteries and the restoration of Law. Detectives may be human, half-elven or elven, and must be of Lawful-Neutral alignment. Since detective spells are quasi-clerical in origin any change of alignment may result in their loss. Detectives cannot be multi-classed.

The skills of a detective are similar to those of thieves and assassins plus limited spell use at fourth and subsequent levels. The spells used are quasi-clerical and restored by the passage of time.

Detectives fight as thieves of the same level, can use any weapon except spears, lances, oil and poison, and may use leather or light chain armour and small shields. Some of their thievish abilities (marked * below) cannot be performed in metal armour or while carrying shields. Detectives gain a 5% bonus on their hit probability in weaponless combat, as a result of special training they receive before commencing their adventures. This training also gives +1 hit probability when striking to subdue.

The minimum prime requisites for detectives are strength 14, intelligence 14, wisdom 10, constitution 10, dexterity 12, charisma 7. No bonuses are gained for high prime requisites.

Detectives can use those magical items usable by thieves plus chain mail and shields. They cannot make spell scrolls, but can use spell scrolls in the same way as a thief.

| Level | Experience Points | Hit Dice (d6) | Spells 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Title |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0-2000 | 1 | - | - | - | - | Snoop |
| 2 | 2001-4000 | 2 | - | - | - | - | Ferret |
| 3 | 4001-8000 | 3 | - | - | - | - | Bloodhound |
| 4 | 8001-15001 | 4 | 1 | - | - | - | Shamus |
| 5 | 15001-30000 | 5 | 2 | - | - | - | Gumshoe |
| 6 | 30001-60000 | 6 | 3 | - | - | - | Eye |
| 7 | 60001-120000 | 7 | 3 | 1 | - | - | Dick |
| 8 | 120001-250000 | 8 | 4 | 1 | - | - | Sleuth |
| 9 | 250001-500000 | 9 | 4 | 2 | - | - | Investigator |
| 10 | 500001-1000000 | 10 | 5 | 2 | - | - | Judge |
| 11 | 1000001-1500000 | 10+1 | 5 | 3 | 1 | - | Detective |
| 12 | 1500001-2000000 | 10+2 | 6 | 3 | 1 | - | Detective II |
| 13 | 2000001-2500000 | 10+3 | 6 | 4 | 1 | - | Detective III |
| 14 | 2500001-3000000 | 10+4 | 6 | 4 | 2 | - | Detective IV |
| 15 | 3000001-3500000 | 10+5 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 1 | Detective V |
| 16 | 3500001-4000000 | 10+6 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 | Detective VI |
| 17 | 4000001-4500000 | 10+7 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 1 | Detective VII |
| 18 | 4500001-5000000 | 10+8 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 2 | Detective VIII |
| 19 | 5000001-5500000 | 10+9 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 | Master Detective |
| 20 | 5500001+ | 10+10 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 3 | Great Detective |

At eighth level the detective must acquire a headquarters in a large town and advertise his services for hire. The detective must not refuse to aid any Lawful cause of his clients.

At tenth level the detective will attract 1–6 loyal followers (who will not necessarily be of the detective's alignment). If there is a single follower it will be a detective of level 2–5, otherwise the followers will be randomly chosen fighters, thieves or magic-users of levels 1–2.

By twelfth level the detective's constant search for information will have given him an accumulation of knowledge similar to that of a sage. This knowledge will be general knowledge of a broad area (e.g. botany) plus special knowledge of a topic within that area (e.g. orchids). For a full list of the topics studied by sages see the *AD&D DM's Guide*, or DM's may like to pick their own topics. For each additional subtopic of the main area of information the detective must gain two levels and spend as much time studying as he would learning a language.

### DETECTIVE'S THIEF AND ASSASSIN SKILLS

| | |
|---|---|
| Pick Pockets | As Thief less 15% |
| Open Locks | As Thief less 10% |
| Find/Remove Traps | As Thief less 10% |
| Move Silently* | As Thief less 5% |
| Hide in Shadows* | As Thief less 5% |
| Hear Noise | As Thief |
| Climb Walls* | As Thief less 10% |
| Read Languages | As Thief |
| Disguise Self | As Assassin less 10% |

Detectives have an extra 10% chance of noticing disguised assassins, and consequently many Assassins' Guilds declare vendetta against detectives entering their area of operation.

Detectives may also track in a manner similar to rangers, but underground and in urban environments the detective must have observed the quarry within one turn (10 minutes) of commencing tracking, while outdoors the base chance is only 50% minus 10% for each twelve hours elapsed before tracking, minus 35% for each intervening hour of rain, and plus 1% for each additional creature.

There can only be one great detective in a city, and if another enters the two will either engage in non-lethal combat with the loser being downgraded to master detective and leaving the area, or enter an agreement where one specialises in consultancy work and never leaves his home while the other undertakes only active cases. This involves sharing fees and magical equipment, and the followers of the detectives must each decide if they wish to co-operate. If such an agreement is reached the detectives may set up a detective agency, which will attract 2–5 additional detectives of levels 1–4 and up to 12 (roll 1d12) other followers. Lower level detectives may also set up agencies but these will not attract followers; all staff will be hirelings.

## DETECTIVE SPELLS

### Level 1

*Comprehend languages:* Identical to the 1st level magic-user spell.

*Date:* Range 1", duration special, area of effect ¼" level, components V, S, M. casting time 3 rounds, no save.

This spell establishes the elapsed time since a specific event with accuracy of 20% improving by + 1% per level. The spell is cast on evidence such as footprints, broken swords and the like using a mixture of powdered silver and graphite (minimum value 20 gp).

*Detect evil/good:* Range 6", duration ½ round/level, area of effect ½" path, casting time 1 round, save negates.

This spell is a weaker form of the clerical *detect evil* and will only detect strong sources. The detective must select whether he wishes to detect evil or good, and must cast separate spells for each. Material component is a reusable willow wand.

*Detect lie:* Range 1", duration ½ round/level, affects one person components V, S, M, casting time 5 segments, save negates.

By using this spell the detective can tell if the subject is telling a deliberate lie but cannot detect half-truths or evasions. The subject is under no compulsion to tell the truth. The material component is a reusable silver rod, value 25gp.

*Detect secret door:* Range 3", duration 1 round/level, area of effect 1 Level, components V, S, M, casting time 1 round, no save.

This spell outlines secret or concealed doors in the area of wall or floor tested, provided that they are not protected by spells such as *guards and wards.* The spell's material component is a bag of flour or soot which is hurled at the area tested and a reusable wooden rod cut from a doorframe.

*Detect undead:* Range 3", duration ½ round/level, area of effect ¼" path, components V. S, M, casting time 3 segments, no save.

This spell informs the detective if there are undead along a narrow path provided they are not shielded in some way

from detection. Material component is a bone rod.

*Grade metals:* Range object touched, duration special, area special, components V, S, M, casting time 7 segments, no save.

This spell identifies the metals in an object provided they are also present in the material component, a ring alloyed of up to six metals. The spell also indicates which metal is most common in the object but will not indicate if there are un-identified metals present, even if they are most of the metal in the object studied.

## Level 2

*Detect chaos:* This spell is a modification of the *detect good/ evil* spell and reveals strongly chaotic beings provided they are not protected against it, and fail to save. The spell's duration, range etc. are the same as for *detect good/evil.*

*Detect evasions:* This spell is a modification of *detect lie* and its range, duration, etc. are the same. The spell will not detect outright lies. If the detective is 11th level or higher the two can be cast as a single 3rd level spell giving tripled range and duration.

*Detect specific metal:* Range 2" +½"/level, duration 5 segments/ level, area of effect ½" path, components V, S, M, casting time 5 segments, no save.

By use of this spell the detective can detect specific metals provided he holds the right material component, a rod of the metal he wishes to detect. Only one metal can be detected on each casting. The rods can be reused.

*Escapology 1:* Range 1 person, duration special, components V, M, casting time 5 segments, no save.

This spell causes ropes and simple bindings to fall from the detective or another person he touches, provided that he can pronounce a single polysyllabic word. The material component for this spell is a string made from the detective's hair then knotted, unknotted, and kept in contact with the detective's skin until the spell is used. Once the spell has been used a new string must be prepared. If the word of the spell is inter-rupted the spell will not work and the string will be of no further use.

*Read codes:* Range special, duration 1 round/level, area special, components V, S, M, casting time 4 segments, no save.

This spell allows the reading of any message seen or heard provided that the message has been coded from a language the detective can read. The material component is a piece of paper covered in runes which must be burnt as the spell is pronounced. This spell can be cast with the 1st level *com-prehend languages* spell to give a 3rd level spell of double duration incorporating translation from unknown languages.

*Reflect the past:* Range special, duration 1 round + ½ round/ level, area special, components V, S, M, casting time 3 rounds plus duration of effect, no save.

This spell produces an image of a past event in a basalt mirror (cost 50 gp), provided that the place observed is visible in the mirror before the spell is cast. The detective can see back 1 hour per level, but must know to within 10% how long has passed since the event to be studied occurred. If it was dark at that time the detective must have infravision in order to produce an infravisual image. Since the detective must con-centrate on casting and maintaining the spell a second person must look at the mirror. The material components of the spell are the mirror (which shatters at the end of the spell) a gold wand (150 gp, reusable) and herbs and incense consumed in the casting. The efforts involved in casting this spell will leave the detective unable to fight for a number of melee rounds equal to 20 minus his constitution. Magical protection against observation may block this spell, and some of the more powerful Gods, Demigods, Devils, and Demons may notice and react to observation by this spell.

*Speak with animals:* This spell is identical to the 2nd level cler-ical spell.

## Level 3

*Detect invisibility:* This spell is identical to the 2nd level magic-user's spell.

*Detect metals and kind:* An improved form of *detect specific metals* using a wand of mixed alloy rather than the pure metals used in that spell. The spell has the same range, duration, and limitations to its analytic powers as *grade metals.*

*Escapology 2:* This spell is similar to *escapology 1* but causes locks on fetters and chains to open. The spell's material com-ponent is a small working silver padlock which must be locked then picked open by the detective and kept by his skin. The padlock can be reused but must be locked and repicked after each casting of the spell.

*Know alignment:* Identical to the 2nd level clerical spell.

*Locate object:* Identical to the 2nd level magic user spell.

*Read hidden message:* An improved form of *read codes* which makes messages in invisible ink, braille, knotted string and the like understandable. The spell's other specifications are identical to that spell and it can be combined with *comprehend languages* to give a 4th level spell of double duration.

*Speak with plants:* Identical to the 4th level clerical spell.

*Truth:* Range person touched, duration 1 round/level, area special, components V, S, M, casting time 1 round, save negates.

This spell compells its victim to give truthful but literal answers to all questions asked, but the victim will not vol-unteer information and can still attempt to escape or fight.

*Vision of the past:* Range special, duration 4 rounds + 1 round/ level, area of effect 4"+1"/Level, components V, S, M, casting time 10 rounds plus duration of effect, no save.

This spell produces a three-dimensional image of an event that occurred in the area on which the spell is cast, provided it is known within 10% how long ago it occurred. The reach of this spell is 1 day at 11th level, doubling for each subsequent level. The area treated must be dusted with fine crushed lode-stone, ringed with crushed ruby (minimum value 200 gp), and the air above must be filled with fine incense smoke lit from one side by a lantern or similar strong directional light source. If no visible light was present at the original event an image will still form but it will be grey and ill-defined. The spells caster cannot observe the result due to the concentration the spell requires. The spell has the same hazards as the spell *reflect the past* and is also blocked by spells against observation.

## Level 4

*Blink:* As the magic-user spell.

*Escapology 3:* An improved version of *escapology 2* breaking welded and riveted chains.

The material component is a metal fetter which must be welded, riveted, and hammered closed then forced open by the detective by non-magical means. The detective must then keep the fetter, still open, against his flesh until it is used for the spell. A new fetter must then be prepared before the spell can be cast again.

*Feign death:* As the magic-user spell.

*Improved metal detection:* This spell extends *detect metals and kind* to detection of any of the common metals, not just those in the rod used. The detective will be able to detect any metal he has knowledge of, know its concentration in the object detected and know if any unknown metals are present. This spell has double the range and duration of the 3rd level spell.

*Improved vision of the past:* This spell gives a longer duration (10 rounds + 2/Level) and a far greater penetration into the past, one year for each level above 14th of the detective. The spells casting and components are otherwise identical, as are its hazards and limitations.

*Polymorph self:* As magic-user spell.

*Ungag:* All specifications special, casting time 4 rounds, no com-ponents, no save.

This spell gives a detective a chance of escape if bound or chained and gagged. By shaping a precise mental pattern and thinking a series of polysyllabic words the detective causes gags to fall from his mouth, thus letting him cast one or other of the *escapology* spells. The base chance of this spell work-ing is 10% plus the detective's level.

*Water breathing:* As the magic-user spell.   ∎