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BRYMSTONE

Linked episodes set in and around the town of Brymstone with stats for AD&D and Runequest

THE BRYMSTONE CAMPAIGN

Devised by Robert Dale

For the Referee

Party Strength

Whichever system you are using, with a little ingenuity, parties of lower strength can be accommodated if the numbers appearing/statistics of the adversaries are adjusted accordingly.

It will only be detrimental to the adventure if the Games Master plods through the various episodes without adding extra detail in the form of improvised incidents. So get your thinking caps on, sketch out some original ideas and roll up some NPCs.

AD&D: The campaign should suit a group of 4th-7th level characters. The linked scenarios or episodes may tend to give the advantage to spellcasters. Thus spellcasters could be 4th level, while the fighters could be 6th level. Or as you see fit.

Runequest: Characters main weapon skill should be around the 35-45% mark at the outset, climbing hopefully to 60% or so (and POW 15+) for the grand finale. Some could have achieved Initiate status by the end, though I feel this is best decided on the basis of game-reality factors (social class, influential friends, status, achievements, etc) rather than on game-mechanics (CHA, skill-levels, etc). If any of the characters have something to bind a spirit in, you could reasonably insert the opportunity to get a spirit. Perhaps this could be arranged on Inis Manistir, or in the barrow in Adventure 3.

The Brollachan

From 'Edlym Whitebeard's Universe' preserved in the Minster/Temple library at Brymstone:

"Long ago, before the awakening of men's hearts to the True Faith, there was found in the

far north of this land a strange being left over from the parting of Death and Life. This Brollachan had no corporal form, save what it could seize from another.

It is said that the dark lord Achferinar took the creature for a servant and bestowed upon it the gift of sorcery, yet it was ever wilful and would not answer his call to the feast of the Breaking. Thus it survived the fate of the old gods. The men of the north country feared it and, at each new moon sacrificed the fruit of their land, believing the creature a god.

Kurnac Mac Dir, Lord of the North sent his heroes to seize the monster. He himself set the enchantment by which the Brollachan was bound and sunk beneath the seas. There it is said to chafe still, coveting the hills and vales of the north."

In recent years a sacerdotess of Krath, called Shaitan, sought out the mythical creature, hoping to restore its freedom and profit thereby. After many years of documentary research, he arrived in Brymstone. He took rooms and studied at the Minster/temple library. At length he hired a boat and went exploring among the islands close by the harbour mouth.

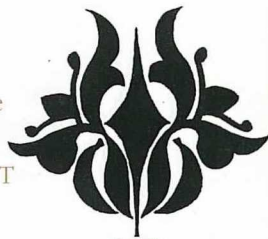
After a week's endeavour Shaitan disappeared, leaving only his boat, abandoned in a lonely cove some miles south of Brymstone. We may surmise that Shaitan released the Brollachan from its enchantment and that it repaid him by stealing his body.

THE BROLLACHAN (AD&D)

Dex Str Con Siz Int Wis Pow Cha

12 26 11 - 14 28 - 16

16th Level Fighter; Chaotic evil; AC1; HP80;



Attacks for 2-20 or can throw sword for 1-12; Special powers: Blow may drain 1,000-10,000 experience points; Gaze may HOLD victim; Regenerates 1HP per M/r; Can detect Lawful/Good alignment in person or place.

11th level Illusionist; Magic resistance 30%; Spells:

1st Level - Colour spray, Darkness, Hypnotism, Phantasmal force & Wall of fog.

2nd Level - Blindness, Blur, Fog cloud & Hypnotic pattern.

3rd Level - Continual darkness, Fear & Paralyzation.

4th Level - Confusion, Minor creation & Phantasmal killer.

5th Level - Chaos & Demi-shadow monsters.

THE BROLLACHAN (Runequest)

Dex Str Con Siz Int Wis Pow Cha

12 26 11 * 14 - 28 16

NB - Size varies. 8pt armour; 15HP; Sword (d10+3+d6), 120%, SR7; Thrown sword (d10+2+d3), 85%, SR3; Defense 20%; Skills - Combat 95%, Stealth 35%, Perception 60%; NOTE: Sword has permanent BLADESHARP 2, treat as iron bastard sword with 30HP; Chaos



powers - Blow may drain 1pt POW, Gaze may BEFUDDLE, regenerates 1HP per M/r in any body area, permanent DETECT ENEMIES.

Spells:

Binding, Darkwall, Shimmer 3, Repair, Healing 2, Detection blank 2 & Extinguish.

The Brollachan's natural form is a pyramid of oily, black smoke. It must take the form of other living creatures to function and thrive. A stolen body is gradually warped and stretched by the Brollachan's occupancy until it is useless. Thus the creature must find a new host every 2-8 weeks. The Brollachan can take the form of any creature, but to deploy all its abilities it prefers a human host.

The mind of a human host will be pillaged by the Brollachan for knowledge. It cannot possess any of the host's abilities, except language. To seize a host the Brollachan must defeat its victim in combat. Any unconscious or dying creature may be possessed. A dead body cannot be possessed, but a dying or wounded body will have all its lost hit points restored at the moment of possession.

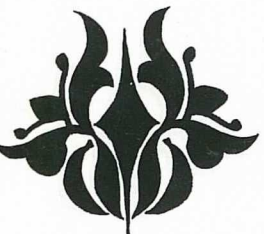
As a servitor of the demi-god Achferinar, the Brollachan obtained a number of abilities to supplement its natural powers. If it wounds an opponent it can drain his energy, and if it looks into a character's eyes it can sap his will. Both these powers require a successful magical attack (In AD&D the victim saves versus death magic). The Brollachan is also able to regenerate and has magical senses.

The Brollachan's jet-black armour and sword are only manifest when it takes a humanoid body. They have no existence beyond the Brollachan itself. The sword is magical and will return to the creature's hand when thrown.

The Brollachan can be driven from its host by immersion in running water, but the victim will always be dead. Characters possessed by the Brollachan can only be restored to life by Wish (AD&D) or Divine Intervention (RQ).

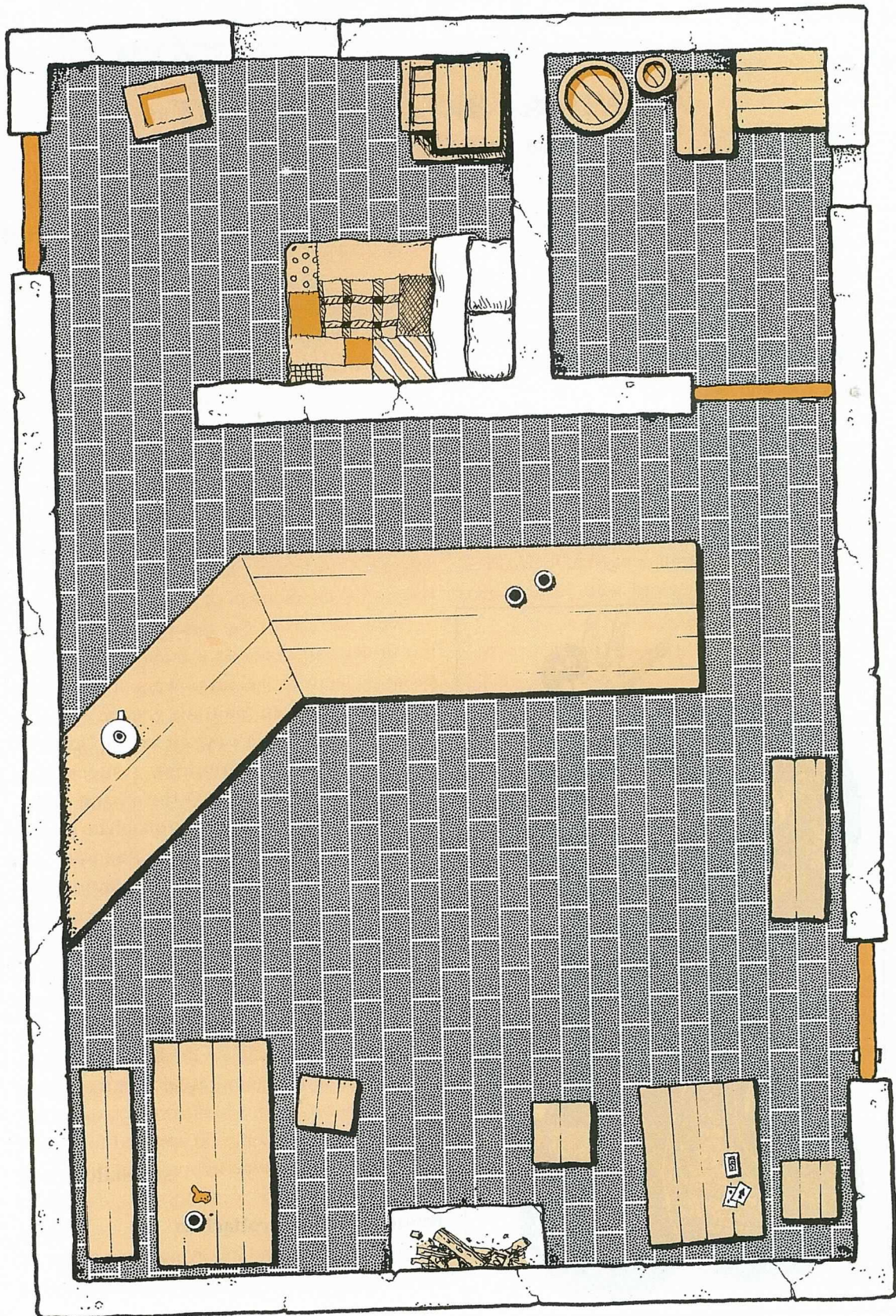
Rumours of the Brollachan

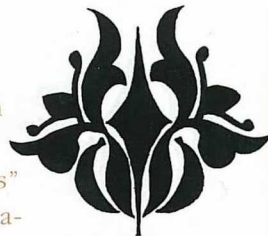
You might use the following suggestions as ways of introducing the presence of the



TAVERN FLOORPLAN

Use this 25mm scale Floorplan in the first adventure. All furniture is moveable. All doors are unlocked. The fire at the bottom of the page is alight.





Brollachan.

One night, as the need to acquire a new body approaches, the Brollachan possesses a horse and gallops madly across country. A lone pedlar sees this apparition and relates it (with some embellishment) to a cowherd who is then overheard (by the party) in a Betch house or inn on market day.

You should also allow the possibility that the party also overhear a farmer complaining that his horse has been stolen or another declaring that he found a horse 'all withered and twisted' on his land and burnt the horrid corpse.

If Rothcyl is kidnapped in episode 3, the party might overhear the following drunken reverie from a farmer a night or two later.

"I were dozin' behind this tree by the river see, avin' drunk more 'an I needed, when along comes a boat rowed by the little people. Well it comes to an 'alt a way along the bank and the little folk pulls out a trussed up something. It were a poor fellow they had hold of and he moaned something fearful.



Well, then this tall, thin feller turns up on the far bank and calls across to the little uns "Bring 'im here you knows I can't cross" Which sent the little people a-titterin' an a-gigglin'. Then the thin wight calls out again, only this time 'e's got a voice like a clap o' thunder! The goblins all went down in a tremblin' heap and wailed for mercy, then they got up, bundled the poor fellow back in the boat and went over to the thin wight.

The wight, 'e took the poor fella's head in his thin hands an' the next thing - an' I swear on me poor mother's grave, I were sober when I see'd it - he sort o' belched up all this black smoke into the poor fellow's face. I only 'eard a muffled scream, but I caught a 'orrible whiff o'brimstone right across the river. The thin fella, 'e falls down like a broken puppet, but the feller the goblins had, I thought he were a goner, but 'e sort o' breathes in the smoke an' then some'ow 'e's turned into the other fellow - the thin wight - even though 'e don't look no different. The goblins all start to grovel at his feet, but just then he sees me an' gives a great shout. Well, I don' need no tellin', but I'm off like a ferret in a hole, an' don' turn round till I'm 'ome an locked an' barred the door behind me."

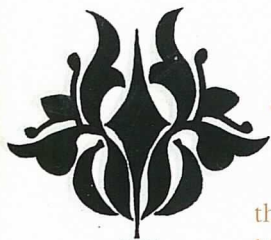
Bear in mind also that any rumours/stories/eyewitness accounts that do reach the characters' ears will not be well documented and organised. They will here varying snippets from different people, and probably not get a pristine version even if they find the instigator of the tale. They will also need to do some calendar-making if the want to try and make sense of everything, because the order in which events happen may not be the order in which they hear about them.

Episode 1 - Tavern tales

Shortly after the characters arrive in Brymstone one of them, selected at random, is approached by an apparently frail old man. The fellow, whose name is Bast, begins to tell the character about himself.

He begins with nostalgic and highly improbable boasts of how, as a young man, he used to kill wild beasts with his bare hands or





drink fifteen tankards of ale and still work well the following day.

"Once I was young like you. Always out on the rough was I. Fur-trappin'. It was a hard life, but a good one. A good 'un eh? Course, the wolves wanted our catch. I didn't begrudge 'em, but not 'till after we had the skins. One time I killed a great, grey loner with nothing but a rotten branch. I skinned him and he kept me snug all that winter. Bet you've seen your share of wolves, eh?"

Eventually his conversation becomes more intense as he rambles on about being cheated of his dues by 'youngsters'.

"Here, take this ale. Its full, I've not touched a drop. Good ale that. Once old Bast could sink fifteen in a night - aye and be up with the lark the morrow after. O' course I wasn't old Bast then. No I was young and eager like yourself. Now its different. Now them youngsters think they can cheat an old un who beat them fair and square. They should have crossed me thirty summers ago. I'd have shown them..."

When the character Bast has buttonholed begins to show real signs of irritation, the old man will suddenly come out of his senile reverie and offer twenty-five silvers for a job he wants done.

The 'job' involves assaulting a longshoreman called Marlo. Bast claims Marlo lost to him in a gambling game, but refuses to pay up. He points out a burly man, drinking alone in the corner as the intended victim.

"See this cash, I won it gaming. I may be feeble now, but my luck still holds. See, him over there in the corner drinking alone? His name is Marlo. I beat him fair and square the other night, but he won't pay up the forty silvers he owes."

"Now here's ten silvers and you can have the other fifteen when the jobs done, an' it must be done right here so the word goes around it doesn't pay to mess around with old Bast."

To cajole the character, Bast lays down a line of ten silver pieces. If the character wants confirmation have either a doxie, drinking at the bar, or the inn-keeper (if the location is

'seedy') confirm Bast's story.

"Aye, tis true. Old Bast won fair and square, but Marlo tossed him a penny and told him to whistle for the rest. Certain it is, there is no man round here who would chide Marlo. We call him 'the bear' on account of his great strength and bad temper."

In fact 'Bast' is a pseudonym of the pick-pocket Saphir the Stroke. He requires a commotion to pursue his trade. Under cover of the expected brawl he will relieve idle bystanders and wounded parties of their purses. He knows that, although Marlo chooses to drink alone, the other longshoremen will pitch into any fray involving one of their number. If the character accepts, Saphir will pick his pocket immediately after paying him (and before the brawl starts), so as to recover his investment.

Note: During any brawl, Saphir's purse-slitting attempts gain a 10%, non-cumulative, bonus since his victims' attention is on events rather than their person.





OLD BAST/SAPHIR THE STROKE (AD&D)

Dex Str Con Siz Int Wis Pow Cha
16 12 15 - 9 14 - 7

Thief. Neutral-evil; AC8; HP3; Picks pockets at 70%, otherwise 0th level human.

OLD BAST/SAPHIR THE STROKE (Runequest)

Dex Str Con Siz Int Wis Pow Cha
16 12 15 8 15 - 14 7

Thief. 13HP; Dagger (d4+2), 65%, SR7; Defence 10%; Skills - Pick pockets 80%, other Stealth 60%, Perception 55%.

Spells: Mobility, Co-ordination, Detection blank, Detect detection.

If the character shows signs of not rising to the bait. The doxie/inn-keeper can always provoke Marlo, eg the doxie might be his 'girl' but play up to the character or the inn-keeper might whisper to Marlo that the character thinks him a shambling oaf (or some such).

3-12 NPCs will become involved in any brawl. When the fight starts, align the NPCs into two or three groups fighting with either Marlo or the player-character(s). Cudgels, fists and feet will be the main weapons available to NPC's who are longshoremen or sailors. Consider these men un-armed combatants of 1-6th level (AD&D) or 10-40% (RQ). Marlo will concentrate on the player-character Bast set-up.

MARLO THE BEAR (AD&D)

Dex Str Con Siz Int Wis Pow Cha
12 16 8 - 9 13 - 11

Tradesman/brawler. Neutral; AC10; HP9; Cudgel (d4)

MARLO THE BEAR (Runequest)

Dex Str Con Siz Int Wis Pow Cha
12 15 13 13 8 - 16 11

Tradesman/brawler. 14HP; Cudgel (d6+d4), 80%, SR9; Skills - Perception 35%, Stealth 30%.

Spells: Befuddle, Protection 1, Healing 1.

The Ironshirts, city guard will arrive 1-6 turns after a brawl breaks out (at your discretion). As strangers, player-characters can expect short shrift from the Ironshirts, unless they project reasonable status, can use their CHA to advantage or have powerful friends. A bribe may oil the wheels of justice to the player-characters' advantage. 50 silver pieces seems appropriate. AD&D: Use the Dungeon Master's Guide to determine the Ironshirts' honesty. "Truthful" or lower will take a bribe. RQ: Roll equivalent to or less than the Ironshirt leader's combined INT+CHA for a bribe to be acceptable.

If knives have been used or serious injuries inflicted, the affair becomes more serious and the brawlers will be carted off to the magistrates.

IRONSHIRT OFFICER (AD&D)

Dex Str Con Siz Int Wis Pow Cha
12 11 12 - 11 9 - 14

Lawful good. Ringmail AC6; HP12; Staff (d6); Short sword (d6)

IRONSHIRT OFFICER (Runequest)

Dex Str Con Siz Int Wis Pow Cha
12 11 12 12 11 - 9 14

Mailshirt; HP12; Staff (d8), SR0; Short sword (d6+1), SR3

IRONSHIRT CONSTABLE (AD&D)

Dex Str Con Siz Int Wis Pow Cha
12 10 10 - 9 8 - 10

Neutral. Leather armour AC8; HP10; Staff (d6); Short sword (d6)



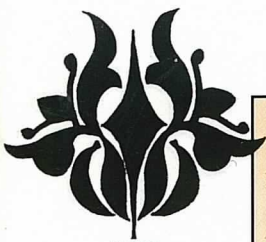


Table: Guilds day misdemeanours

Die roll

- 1 Nothing happens on patrol, but the characters are offered free ale at an inn. A fat merchant tells them his house is on fire. Two inconsolable lost children are foisted on the characters.
- 2 Each character has a percentage chance per hour of noticing a cut-purse at work. AD&D: the chance is $[INT + 2xLevel]\%$. RQ: The chance is $[INT + POW]\%$. The roll is made at the start of each hour and, if crime is indicated, it occurs at a random point in the next sixty minutes (in game not real terms). Immediately a crime is indicated roll D100, a result of 96-00 means the wrong man is seized.

- 3 Each character has a percentage chance of surprising a break-in during any two hour period (in game not real terms) AD&D: $[2D20]\%$, RQ: $[POW \times 2]\%$. This probability increases by 10% if the character is patrolling in a street away from the crowded main thoroughfares. There is a maximum of 3-6 attempted break-ins during Guilds day. Immediately a crime is indicated roll D100, a result of 96-00 means the wrong man is apprehended.

The characters come across a crowd who have apprehended a blood stained individual. The dead cart is also present with a fresh corpse. The crowd say the dead man picked a fight with the blood-stained man. A burly fellow says he is going to collect any bonus for a successful conviction.

- 4 Each character has a percentage chance equal to $[INT \times 2]\%$ of surprising illegal gamblers. This probability increases by 10% if he spends a large part of the patrol in taverns. It also decreases by 1% for each tankard of ale consumed.

The characters are involved in a hue and cry. As the party walks along the street, a scruffy youth bursts from a side turning, barges past the rearmost member of the party. He is followed by a stream of excited townspeople shouting 'Stop thief'. If the party joins the chase they may eventually apprehend the 'thief' only to find that no-one comes forward to accuse him of any misdemeanour. Later the party learn that a robbery took place (down the side street from which the youth emerged) while the owner was involved in a hue and cry.

- 5 Each character has a percentage chance of detecting an attempted mugging or arriving as it ends. AD&D: $[D20]\%$, RQ: $[POW]\%$. The probability increases (cumulatively) by 10% during darkness and an additional 10% on patrols away from crowded main thoroughfares. No more than 1-4 muggings will occur during Guilds day. Immediately an assault is indicated roll 1D100, a result of 96-00 means the wrong man is apprehended or the situation is not as it first appeared.

The characters come across a brawl in full swing, inside and outside a disreputable tavern in a seedy part of town.

- 6 Each character has a percentage chance of detecting an attempted murder or arriving as it ends. AD&D: $[D20]\%$, RQ: $[POW]\%$. The probability increases (cumulatively) by 10% during darkness and an additional 10% on patrols away from crowded main thoroughfares. No more than 1-3 murders will occur during Guilds day. Immediately a murder is indicated roll 1D100, a result of 96-00 means the wrong man is apprehended or the situation is not as it first appeared. The characters come across an argument between townspeople and a mountebank, who has sold them hair-restorer. The potion has turned the mens' pates bright yellow.

IRONSHIRT CONSTABLE (Runequest)

Dex Str Con Siz Int Wis Pow Cha

12 10 10 10 9 - 8 10

Leather cuirass; Staff (d8), SR0; Short sword (d6+1), SR3

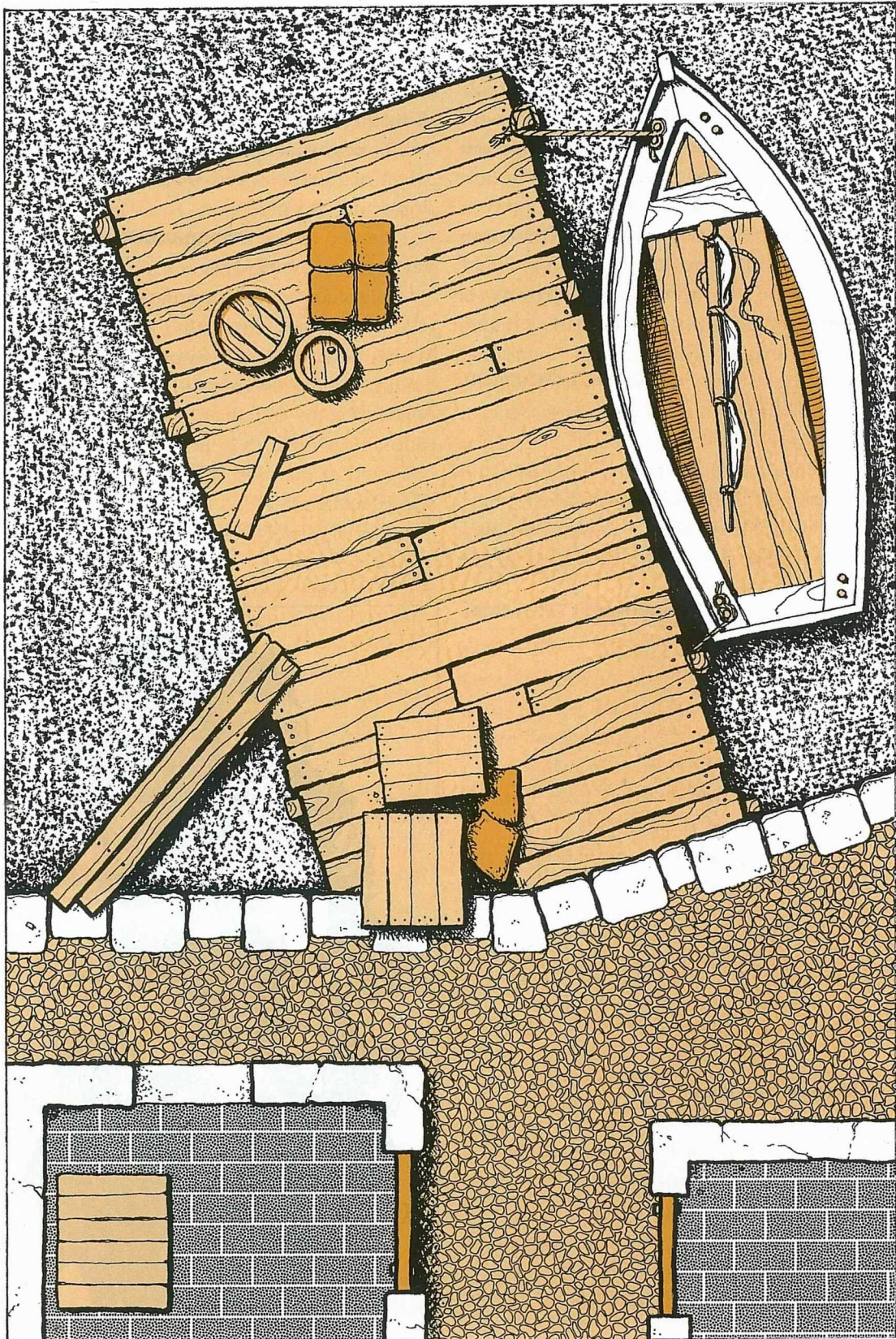
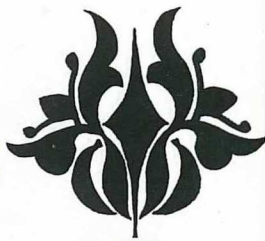
Episode 2 - Honest work for honest pay

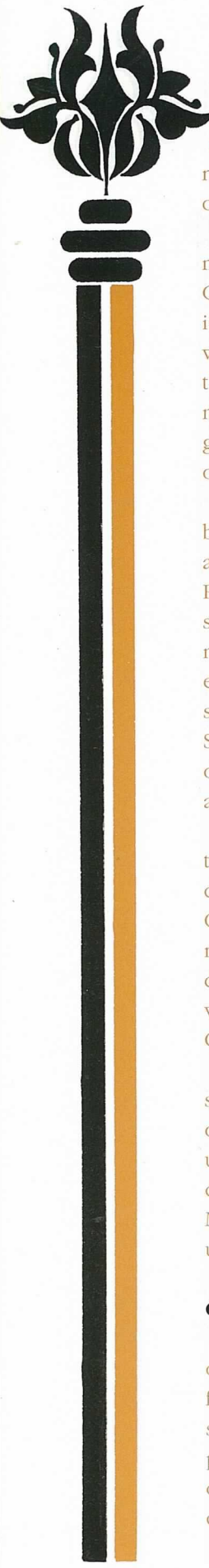
The week following the player-character's

arrival there is a public holiday. It is the annual election for Guild Council the governing body of Brymstone. The guildsmen vote for their representatives in market square at dawn. After these public elections the guildsmen file in procession to the Guildhall. Each guildsman is dressed in ceremonial robes and carries an emblem of his trade. The votes are tallied in

WHARF FLOORPLAN

This floor plan can be used both for the rescue of Rothcyl from the bodachs and for any Guilds Day public order problems. Burglars can be spotted breaking into the warehouses on the quay while pick-pockets can operate anywhere.





front of independent witnesses and read out in the market square. The apprentice boys then run with the result to the Guildhall, the new councillors are granted their badge of office and the feasting begins.

Guilds Day may be one of feasting and merriment, but public order can be a problem. Opportunities for thieving abound ; much ale is imbibed, and brawls can erupt without warning. The Guild Council thus augment their civic guard, the Ironshirts, with honest men hired for the day. The council's pay is good and there is a bonus for each conviction obtained (not arrest made).

The council's need for wardens is broadcast by the town crier in market square and on the main thoroughfares of Brymstone. Player-characters answering the call will be sworn in and told they will receive 12 silvers at midnight on Guilds day, plus 15 silvers for each successful conviction obtained at the special assizes to be held the following day. Special constables swear a morally binding oath. Breaching the terms of this oath means arrest and punishment.

"I swear by my father's name _____ that I, _____ of _____ will act as directed by Ironshirt officers or constables on Guilds day. I will take no bribes, participate in no fights save to stop them and escort wrong doers promptly to the nearest Ironshirt post. I will carry out this warden's duty from dawn on Guilds day to sunrise the day after."

Any player-character languishing in the stocks or jail as a result of episode 1, may be offered early release if he consents to act as an unpaid warden for the day. Of course it all depends on the severity of his crime. Murderers or other serious malfactors are unlikely to be released.

Guilds day wardens

The duties of a warden commence at dawn on Guilds day and finish at sunrise on the day following. Each warden's duty is split into two six hour periods on patrol and two six hour periods resting. There is the possibility of crimes being committed and (hopefully) detected, during the player-characters' patrols.

Roll 1D6 per patrol and consult the following table. (Note: It is best to pre-roll and flesh out the result before the episode is played)

There is a 5% chance of any felon arrested being a 'notorious' exponent of his art. A character who apprehends an especially notorious thief gains 1 point of CHA (AD&D or RQ). Conversely, a wrongful arrest can lead to ill feeling: the character in question (and his companions, whether responsible for the arrest or not) will be overcharged for food, drink and accomodation. He is also likely to be shunned by the townspeople in the locality where the arrest took place.

Guilds day wardens wounded in the course of duty will be treated free by Dr Aether at Market Square. He does not provide magical healing. Wardens are paid and given a free breakfast at the Guildhall, at sunrise on the day following Guilds day. Bonus money can be collected at dusk on the same day after the special assizes.

Even if player-characters do not wish to serve as wardens, the table above and the day's festivities should still provide some fun -





especially if some characters become wardens and others whoop it up on the streets. Also, don't forget that player-characters are just as likely as the next man to be the target of pick-pockets or muggers.

During the evening and night of Guilds day, the authorities main concern are drunken brawls and the settling of old scores. Such events are most likely to occur in seedy areas, taverns of the lower sort, the docks and the wagon parks beyond the walls.

Episode 3 - Kidnappers

You can use this episode either on Guilds day or as a later event. The Net & Oar or the Northern Cog taverns (13 & 22 on the Brymstone map) are the ideal settings and enable a link with the farmer's tale about the Brollachan (see above). If you use some other location for the attempted kidnap you will need to change detail to suit.

If the setting is the evening of Guilds day and the player-characters are wardens have them called to a disturbance at the Net and Oar or Northern Cog. If they aren't wardens dangle the possibility of suitable employment.

When the party arrives they notice a disturbance at the dockside, tell them:

"You can see a man struggling with five hunched, capering figures at the dockside. Its funny, but there is no noise even though the big fellow is lashing out left and right."

The man under attack is Rothcyl, a marine pilot. He was staggering back to his berth after a merry drinking bout when he was waylaid by the strange creatures. They are BODACHS, strange mortal servitors of the demon-lord Achferinar. Another gift given the Brollachan by Achferinar long ago, was the power to summon a group of these creatures to be its servants. The Brollachan can summon 2-20 Bodachs once a year on mid-winter's day. The Bodach party has been sent into town to kidnap a new host body.

When the player-characters get closer to the fracas, tell them:

"The creatures attacking the man are half bird, half men. They have leathery bird-like faces, black feathered bodies and clawed hands and feet. Two of the creatures have

pinnioned the man's legs and another is on his back, the others are dancing around him oblivious of your approach."

Rothcyl is so terrified he can do nothing to defend himself. He will simply cower on the dockside while the player-characters fight the Bodachs. If the Bodachs manage to haul Rothcyl into their rowing boat (which any two un-engaged Bodachs can do in 1-6 melee rounds) they will row off with him, cackling and abandoning their friends.

Note: In addition to the stats for Bodachs noted below, the creatures have a peripheral magic ability. Anyone they attack cannot be heard outside a 5m radius. The effect does not stop the victim yelling or casting magic if able.

BODACHS (AD&D)

Dex	Str	Con	Siz	Int	Wis	Pow	Cha
13	11	10	-	12	11	-	8

Neutral evil. AC6; HP 3d8+1; Short sword (d6) or Claws (d4+1). Attack once for 1-6 or twice for 1-3; Reflect 1st-3rd level spells back on the caster (except clerical magic)

BODACHS (Runequest)

Dex	Str	Con	Siz	Int	Wis	Pow	Cha
13	11	10	7	12	-	11	8

3pt armour. HP11; Short sword (d6+1), 40%, SR7 or Claws (d4+1), 55%, SR8; Defence 10%; Skills: Stealth 55%, Perception 55%, Jump/Climb 60%; Reflect 1pt battle magic spells back at caster.

Spells: 2 each from - Befuddle, Bladesharp 2, Countermagic 2, Demoralise, Disruption, Healing 2 or Repair.

The Bodachs will break off their attack and dive into the water if outnumbered. Those that dive in will be lost (they sink like stones). A Bodach captured and bound in iron chains will be compelled to truthfully answer three yes/no questions then die. The method of binding and interrogation will be suggested to the characters by Father Dorin the Minster/Temple's librarian. Non-human races are a suspicious novelty in Brymstone and will definitely attract a delegation of clerics, including Dorin, even if all the Bodachs escape.

To be continued.





NOT MUCH DRINKIN' BUT A WHOLE LOTTA FIGHTIN' GOIN' ON

**Our taproom
Correspondent
explains the player
characters' attraction
for hanging around
in bars**

The bar room brawl, whether it features in a John Wayne western or involves a Jedi knight leaving someone's arm on the floor, is a regularly occurring feature in role-playing games. A brawl can be a one-off or an event within a campaign. Whatever, its role it offers opportunities for both players and referee. From the referee's point of view a brawl pads out or adds spice to a play session. For players such an event does not strain their suspension of disbelief - role-players are 'culturally attuned' to expect brawls in bars. However, such a useful tool requires proper maintenance.

Let's look at bars first. Here I must proudly state I've been a martyr to my art, and spared neither time nor expense in researching the matter properly (this contributor is aged over 18 - Editor). First, what do you need to constitute a 'bar'? Believe me, not much. The most rudimentary bar I ever saw was in Leningrad, USSR, it consisted entirely of beer bottle dispensing machines that reposed elegantly along one wall of a concrete room. No neo-modernist mod cons, no staff and no seats either. Some atmosphere was provided by recumbent patrons, the worse for drink. As you can appreciate from this level of bar service the only way is up.

Why do bars exist? The answer is for someone to

make some money and for patrons to socialise - drink is just part of the attraction. There are bound to be other 'associated' activities, eg. bars can be recruiting places for volunteers or a hunting ground for press gangs. Quite apart from business, there will be some kind of atmosphere to draw in the punters, whether a mean sawdust, spittoon bar with the chance of a punch-up or a designer, hotel bar offering luxury.

Now, let's look at the facilities. The minimum is some form of intoxicant dispenser and protection from the elements, like the Leningrad bottle bank. Then we get the chrome: somewhere to sit, a degree of privacy, someone to tend bar and add an element of control, food, entertainment and, possibly, cleanliness.

The intoxicant dispenser can be a tapster filling a jug from a barrel; a barmaid pulling pints from a pump; a bottle/drinks dispenser or, perhaps, a high-tech drinks synthesiser that reconstitutes basic ingredients in the form of a myriad drinks held on its database. Dispenser points obviously have pride of place, usually down one wall, but you might care to consider an 'island' bar for a change. Drink is an intoxicant, that's stating the obvious, but often the bar is simply a place for 'the brawl' rather than an

interesting role-playing event in itself.

You do not need a vastly complicated intoxicant table to simulate the effect of alcohol. Simply rate the drinks on offer, before-hand, on a simple scale in terms of points or a percentage. Take note of the player-characters' current DEX, for example, and decrement this each time they have a drink. Of course you can warn them of the evils of drink in your referee-bartender guise:

"Yep! I call this one Marraig Troll-water. It looks like pitch but tastes like nectar. Sorry, I only sell it by the tumbler, a tankard is too much for any man. Oh, so you do want a tankard? well I suppose you are old enough to know your own mind."

Happily, few players take any notice of such warnings. Role-playing, like real-life is about wisdom gained from experience.

Remember, unless they just came in the door, the NPCs should, like the PCs, be 'down-rated' to some suitable level for when the 'brawl' erupts. A fiendish smile will flit across your face when the muscle-bound barbarian draws his sword/las-sword to take on a local braggart. Savour his confusion when he discovers his 95% skill rating has declined, during the evening, to an ignominious 20% fumble. At times like these role-playing improvisation is suddenly demanded of the players.

The bartender is going to hover close by the intoxicant dispenser, if only to collect the money, make sure no one is fiddling the system and to keep order in the queue. In law-abiding areas the bartender will be anyone (or anything) cheap, competent and polite. In rougher areas rougher types will find ready employment, like semi-reformed Uruks or Ogres. This principle is readily observable, even in our own culture.

The bar-person's life is made easier if seperated from the clientele by a bar, not too high, but nice and wide. Remember this is a barrier. The bar-person is almost certain to be armed with something to discourage or quell rowdy customers, the worse for drink. Publicans are used to 'trouble' and know how to handle it. This fact is often forgotten in bar room brawl scenarios. Also, apart from personal weaponry, the bartender is also likely to have some alarm device. In a fantasy setting the alarm may be raised by a tap-room boy sent running for the watch, in an SF setting it can be a direct comms-patch to the law enforcement agency. SF weapons are, um, devastating, so it is very likely that publicans will also have installed automatic, plasti-steel, pop-up shutters and a reinforced, concrete bar.

Now for the 'chrome'. The basic ingredients are seats and privacy, these make for ambiance and the possibility of plotting or business transactions. As someone in a bar in Glencoe once pointed out to me, and here I digress, the problem with seats is they encourage people to come in, but reduce the

number of customers the establishment can hold. Perhaps an establishment with a large and enthusiastic clientele, and no competition, could dispense with such frills.

However, assuming the publican is reasonably generous in pandering to his patrons' little whims, what about the seating? There has to be a balance in the number of seats and the patrons' need to move about, after all the publican does not want to discourage them from buying more bar items. The material used for the seats is also important. A publican used to trouble might secure chairs and tables to the floor (imagine the players' surprise) or make use of long, unwieldy benches. In an SF environment the bar's corporate owners might invest in seating which is just functional, ie disposable and of little offensive/defensive use in a brawl. Mucky bars have mucky furniture, luxury joints have decor to match.

The privacy issue comes next. Wherever you site the bar, player-characters will want to talk without being heard and, possibly, without being seen. Think about it, plotting to overthrow an empire, discussing business, seducing a potential lover or passing on 'dodgy' racing tips all require a degree of privacy (or the illusion of privacy). The symbols of privacy can be given in two ways: by alcoves or noise. An alcove can be a stone niche, a partitioned area, a flimsy curtain or a sophisticated field generator that prevents the outward transmission of light and sound from a table. Similarly, an open plan bar full of the babble of patrons or the drone of canned 'muzak' enables conversations to be held 'sotto voce' and makes eavesdroppers stand out from the crowd.

Finally, we have the gloss of food, entertainment and a degree of cleanliness. Food has its uses. It enables player-characters to recover an insignificant, but welcome number of hit points, gives them something to spend money on and the opportunity to contract food-poisoning. You can add immensely to everyone's enjoyment by providing a suitable menu and tariff that can be passed round the player-characters. Is the food described on offer? Is the party too late? Is the food wholesome but alien? What is the chance of food poisoning? This last should be low, but will alien food cause curious side effects?

Entertainment pulls a crowd (opportunities here for thieves) and leaves a substantial profit behind the bar. Maybe you can find a piece of early music at the library or futuristic music, like Kraftwerk (who?!) to play. Give them a dose of Monty Python or some other, currently in-vogue comedy. Or perhaps you can write a decent description of events. Whatever you do have, the player-characters roll against a suitable multiple of a suitable characteristic to see whether they are impressed, bored or elated. Tell 'em, the bored ones might start some foolish action.

Cleanliness is for whims, 'unless of course the

'bar' is a class joint in a chic part of town.

Now to the main event - ye brawl or high-tech disturbance. There are two types: brawls that erupt inside the bar, due to sources within the bar or brawls that have their roots outside, but choose the bar as venue. 'Mad dog' Jackson a character of mine from a Star Wars campaign, rubbed out Attico Darlian in a bar. He chose the venue partly because he could count on, at least, the acquiescence of the clientele. Secondly he could hope for some, actual, support from the bar staff. Finally, the bar was relatively easy to find and bars are the classic place for a showdown.

Brawls with their roots outside the bar may or may not involve the player-characters. If the player-characters are involved directly, maybe someone comes clubbing/gunning for them because of an earlier incident. Why has the NPC chosen the bar? Are the player-characters there a lot? If yes, then can they count on support from the other patrons/bar staff? Or is the bar the happy haunt of the NPC, in which case the club is, so to speak, in the other hand. Of course both NPC and player-characters could be strangers in which case sides may, or may not, be taken and other forces, eg the authorities, may be drawn in.

If the player-characters are not the focus for the brawl, they can be drawn in and a new dimension to an adventure cunningly introduced. One of the a-feudin' NPCs can ask the players' party for assistance, the party gets caught in the cross fire or one of the NPC brawlers ends in a heap under or on the players' table. Cue a piece of enticing evidence on the body or clutched in a still warm hand. This nearly always sparks a new twist to an adventure. Is the killer involved or was the feud unconnected?

Enough of 'external' brawls what about the nonsense, lets get cracking, bun-fight? There are two distinct kinds - the planned and the spontaneous.

The planned requires an agent-provocateur: the thief who encourages a rumpus so he can pick pockets, the big guy who picks a fight with a player-character because they don't look right, and so on. The player-characters may even decide to start their own fight as cover for some other activity, like checking out someone's room.

The spontaneous brawl simply requires too much drink, a cause for discontent and boredom. One classic brawling incident I recall happened in a one bar, Australian out-back town. In the bar were three groups: the sheep-shearers who were on strike, the sheep farmers and black-leg New Zealand sheep-shearers. The Australian sheep-shearers were in the bar because they were on strike, the farmers were there because it was raining (and drowning sheep weighed down by woollen overcoats), the New

Zealanders were there because you can't shear wet sheep. Finally, the atmosphere reached flash point. The fighting that followed engulfed the whole town, the three policemen barricaded themselves in the police station and waited for helicopter-borne reinforcements.

So, there you have some theory of bar rooms and brawls, now, how about some examples?

The mugging: Ideal for small parties of beginning role-players still experiencing the joys of hack and slay. The party enters the bar expecting trouble, but nothing happens. Once they have drinks and are wondering 'what do you do in a bar?' a thin, puny individual collides with the party's table. The drinks go flying (preferably over the player-characters) and the puny person offers an apology along the lines of

"Its always strangers, yobbish adventuring riff-raff like yourselves, who cause these incidents."

And so on. Ideally, the referee will be able to wind up someone enough to take a swing at the puny person. This is the signal for two large people to step forward, observing

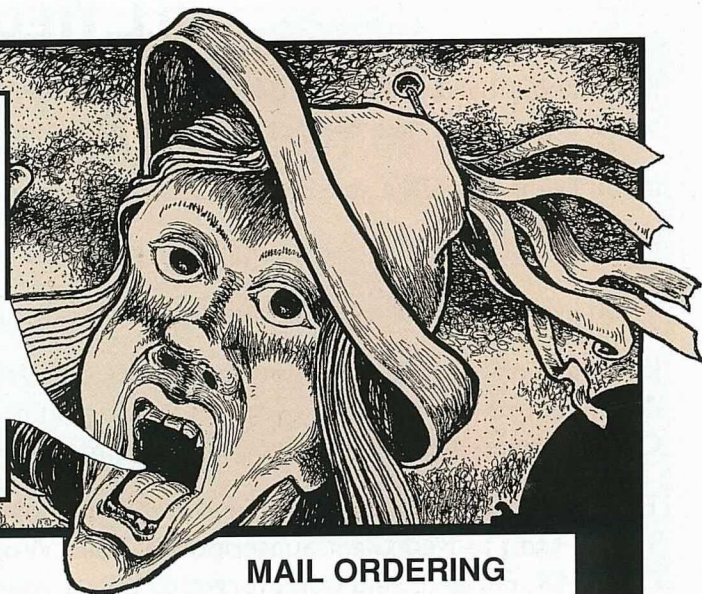
"You're the kind of scum who pick on little uns. Take that." etc.

The distraction: most useful if the party has become too rich (keep 'em poor is what I always say). The party staggers into the inn having parked their horses/transport in the stables/garage. They dump their belongings in their rooms and enter the bar for light refreshments. The party is immediately approached by an NPC who acts friendly and introduces a suitable bar room activity, like playing cards. A little while later another NPC enters the bar and insults the first NPC. The stranger throws some beer at the first NPC, who ducks. A player-character gets a beer shampoo. If this doesn't rile the party, a third NPC, angered by being splashed by drink pokes the nearest player-character and tells him to watch his manners. As the brawl develops, so a thief makes his way upstairs, rifles the players' belongings and makes off on one of their horses or in their transport.

The killing: The party witness a slaying. After the killer leaves, the bartender asks the players help in dragging the corpse(s) out back. Players being players will almost certainly loot the bodies or something intriguing will fall from a pocket. Cue a new hook to hang an adventure on.

So, with a little thought, every wayside inn can offer an added dimension to a campaign. Brawls can be engineered to be un-expected and more interesting things can happen in a social setting than serious fighting or serious drinking. I hope this article has given you a few ideas. Next time I will introduce you to my patented, self perpetuating bar the Piggan Wassail. Until then, where's my foaming tankard?

*Oi! We've got more
tackle than a troll's
trousers – and now you
can get it through your
letter box!*



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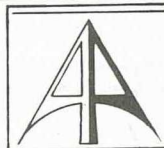
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BOO! HURRAH! SCRIBBLE, WHINGE.

Tom Sage reviews your letters

Last issue I wrote some editorial and asked for your comments, I'm pleased to report that it spurred a good crop of contributions (please send more and articles too!) and stimulating comment:

"May I take this instance to say how much I enjoyed the first issue of Red Giant. It is refreshing to read a magazine full of new ways of thinking, and free from 'in-house' bias."

No I didn't make this up and no I didn't pay **Chris Lambert of Doncaster** to write it. However, others saw the irony in my editorial compared with the rest of the magazine:

"I have read volume one from cover to cover (Eee, its turned out nice again!) and can only offer praise on the contents.

For me there is only one thing missing:

I would like to see more on miniatures, painted or otherwise, and would welcome features on solo wargaming."

Well, **A.D. Crockford**, elsewhere in this issue you will find an article on figure conversion and if anyone out there has anything on solo wargaming we would like to hear from you.

But, Mr Crockford continued:

"A lot of the editorial was devoted to a declaration of independence, and of giving the reader what they wanted to read, not what a manufacturer allows them to read. This is an attitude that I applaud greatly.

However, I am concerned that careful examination of your magazine reveals approximately 18% of the content devoted, in advertising or scenarios, to 'Fantasy Warlord'. Lo and behold Fantasy Warlord is brought to us by Folio Works who just happen to also be the publishers of Red Giant. Are you sure that the implied editorial policy of being alternative and independent is not a little hypocritical?"

I asked an Editor for a straight answer to this appraisal:

(An X-Editor:) "I must confess Mr Crockford that, until you pointed the link between Folio Works, Red Giant and Fantasy Warlord, I hadn't noticed it myself. Thank you for pointing it out. Ta for the congratulations, its something we deserve, having put in a lot of hard work on issue one. Fantasy Warlord really is a wonderful game isn't it? Not that I've ever seen a copy of it myself, but a friend of a friend whose next door neighbour's cousin knows Gary Chalk says it is so it must be true...." (Sound of muffled cries as the ex-Editor is carted off to an establishment for the terminally confused).

(Another Editor:) A new magazine need two things to prosper - the support of a publisher and the support of its readers. Its a simple relationship. I see no problem with advertisements from manufacturers. An advertisement is an advertisement. I also don't have any problem with editorial related to 'house' products or sponsored by a manufacturer, so long as the editorial is interesting/useful and doesn't take up the entire magazine. It is reasonable for me to make such statements because I do not work for Folio Works.

Finally, I think, while most of us have favourite games, we are involved in a hobby, not slavish adherence to one manufacturer. Folio Works recognise this and we should thank them for giving us a magazine we can all take part in. To that end I am interested in publishing scenarios for all kinds of role-playing games - provided the scenarios are well written and interesting.

So thanks for the praise, but where's the article or scenario?

Nick Walker of Huddersfield, began with congratulations but proceeded to a critical analysis of issue one:

"I have just finished reading RGI and wish to congratulate you. I hope that we will see many more issues to follow this one. But...

Why should I use Brymstone instead of one of the other cities that have been published? I don't know, unless you are going to set adventures in this city in each issue? It seems like a space filler to me.

Mummerset Revisited - interesting if not all that useful. Dreams and Role-playing - so what? A Game of Chess - mundane fiction with nothing outstanding to make it praiseworthy. Escape to Arnesdon - the best article in the magazine, even if I had to pay £1.95 for it. The Silver Moon - a bar room brawl for WFRP with incomplete AD&D stats added on as an afterthought. Clash of Champions - I cannot see a Roman Legion parting ranks to let heroes fight it out. Sunstroke - a reprint of an article in Challenge Magazine by Roger Hamlin not Rowena Bell. Why no acknowledgement of where this originally appeared or didn't you know?

All in all 7/10 you lose points for the reprint of Sunstroke, the bar room brawl and the weak fiction."

What!?? Well Editor what have you got to say for yourself???

(Editor, writhing:) Um, er, gulp. Well (rising to the bait) its like this see: Brymstone isn't obligatory and we will be publishing scenarios to use with it - but self-contained for the unfortunates who didn't get the first issue. As to Sunstroke, it is in fact the first UK publication of the article. Roger changed his name to Rowena Dell. The typesetters spelt Dell, as Bell on the contents page and left off the acknowledgement on the article, despite my ammended proof. I'll ignore the rest of the letter, except to say where is Nick Walker's article so we can all see how well he can do?

James Clay of Bleadon, Avon had a slightly different point of view:

"Mummerset Revisited has uses outside Call of Cthulhu, in such games as Space 1889 and I shall be using it in my Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay campaign, just don't ask me why and how.

John Treadaway, a bit of a gaming cynic in my view, actually came up with an extremely interesting article, which will prove useful again in my Warhammer campaign, as it is nearly what we have been doing anyway."

The mind boggles (especially when playing Call of Cthulhu). Is John Treadaway 'a bit of a gaming cynic'? Anyhow Mr Clay went on to say:

"Shouldn't Red Giant be for the readers? Shouldn't Tom Sage have said something along the lines of 'Red Giant should publish the articles that the majority of the readership want, but also provide some articles for the minorities as well?'"

Well exactly, but lets remember that while majorities may indicate what they would like to see, minorities have to get on and do. So instead of frothing over Red Giant or foaming at the mouth about an article that offends you GET ON AND WRITE SOMETHING.

Finally, James Clay added:

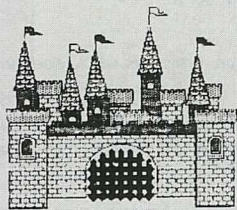
"By the way Tom Sage, what is wrong with publishing articles on how to create stunning effects with a paintbrush? I don't want to know how to paint figures badly."

Well exactly. What I meant was, if you have to paint up a couple of monsters, a gaggle of peasants and a gang of toughs for next week, competition techniques may not be the practical solution. Don't get me wrong, I am not against competition painting hints and tips, but I do think there is room for other points of view too. I asked the Editor to comment.

(An Editor:) I couldn't agree more. In fact, I recently commissioned a wonderful article called Dada Paint Techniques by Fritz Prhune. Its full of wonderfully different approaches to figure painting. My favourite would solve the problem of a mass of figures and short deadline. Simply dip the whole lot in gloss, any colour will do, but the darker the better. When dry, splodge on some silver (for weapons) and white with a hint of pink for the 'fleshy bits'. Mount the finished figures on penny pieces or twenty pence pieces if you want them to look 'neat'.

See what I mean? Its all 'Boys Own' stuff at Red Giant.

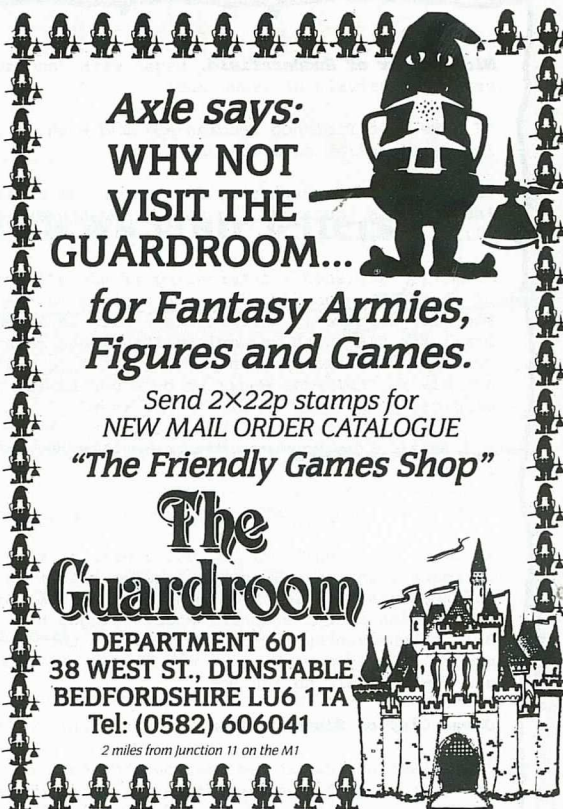
That's enough for now. Please send more Boos, hurrahs, scribbles and whinges to Red Gnat at the address given on the contents page. Also, if you think you can rite better than what the people can in this issue send in your artikill, specially if it is for a minority type rpg like Cyberpunk or Ars Magica or Starwars and stuff.



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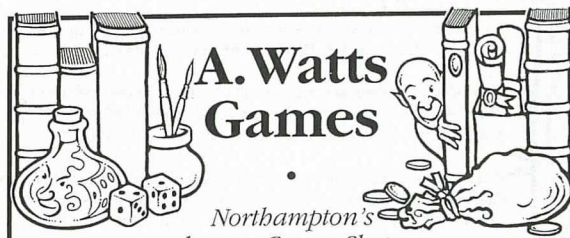
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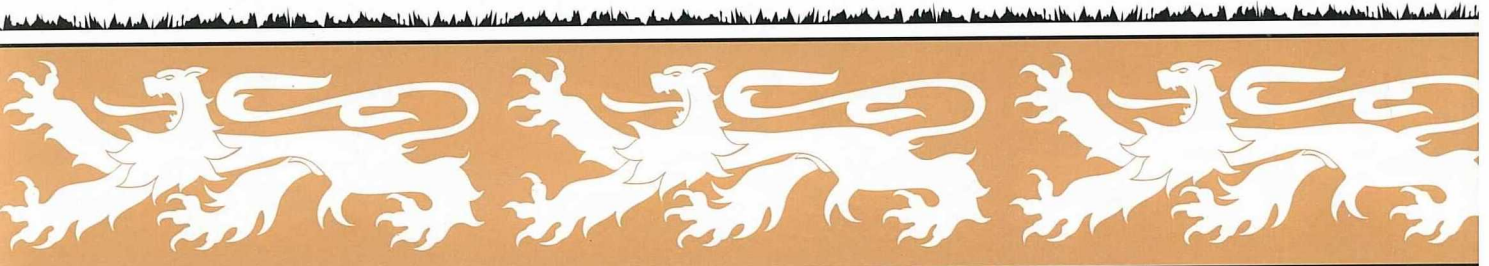
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The first in a series of articles considering mercenary soldiers in role-playing and table-top games. By D.C. Pedgrift

Mercenaries are mentioned in fantasy, SF and historical table-top rules as well as role-playing games. But, what is a mercenary, how are mercenaries different from ordinary soldiers and should they be treated differently in role-playing and table-top situations?

Mercenary Motivations

What is a mercenary? Clearly a conscripted soldier wouldn't be considered one. A professional soldier might be, but would probably tell us he wanted to *prevent*, not cause, aggression. Xenophon, wrote this description of the mercenary captain, Clearchus in the third century BC:

"He could have lived at peace but he chose to make war. He could have lived a life of ease but he preferred a hard life. He could have had money and security but he spent his wealth in pursuit of war. Indeed he liked spending money on war, just as other men prefer to spend it on pleasure. All this shows how Clearchus the Spartan was devoted to war.

Here is the mark of the mercenary - a devotion to war. The professional soldier is devoted to the status of his profession, the conscript, perhaps, to patriotism, but the mercenary lives by and for war. Xenophon, knew what he was talking about, after all he was a mercenary too and, after Clearchus was assassinated (a common fate of mercenary captains), led ten thousand greek mercenaries out of Persia. You can read their epic in Xenophon's 'Anabasis'.

From Xenophon's description of Clearchus we can work out the different motivations which make a soldier a mercenary as opposed to a patriot. What follows is written in terms of medieval/fantasy mercenary soldiering, however these motivations are true for later periods and, presumably, science fiction too.

Mercenary Traits

The following headings describe the various traits that distinguish mercenaries from other soldiers.

Each heading is sub-divided for role-playing (Characters & Generals) and table-top (Rank & File) mercenary soldiering.

1 A love of warfare

Characters & Generals: For Mercenary Captains love of war means a desire to hone their military prowess,



DOGS of WAR

organisational skills or talent for strategy or tactics. This aspect is, relatively, incompatible with role-playing adventure. On the table-top it means raising a mercenary company and developing its role and prowess over time.

Rank & File: Few rank and file mercenaries will share the higher motivations of their peers; theirs are the 'simple' desires of wonderlust, a full belly and the lure of booty. Mercenaries ought to make unreliable hirelings. However, wonderlust and the quest for booty are part and parcel of role-playing adventure.

2 Warfare as a profession

Most historical Mercenary Captains began their careers in the service of King or country, but until the age of standing armies, when wars ended so did employment.

Characters & Generals: If the Captain wants to fight, when it suits him, he has to become a Mercenary Captain. He has to move from employer to employer. On the table-top, forming a mercenary band offers the beginning player the opportunity to join, on equal terms, with others who have amassed more figures. Role-playing adventurers, while not necessarily mercenaries,

exhibit the trait of often moving from employer to employer.

Rank & File: Mercenary soldiers are usually presented with starker choices - starve, become bandits or join a mercenary company.

3 The pursuit of power

Characters & Generals: Mercenary bands usually begin by hiring themselves out to a higher authority, eg a lord, for the duration of a military campaign. However, if the band stays together for longer than a campaigning season, chances are the Mercenary Captain will want to graduate from hireling to master. This is a dangerous course which puts the Captain or character in competition with the established authority of the land.

On the table-top, mercenary bands should earn their prowess through *experience* of and *success* at combat (see 5 Improvisation). If you set up a campaign involving mercenaries, remember that free companies are a challenge to authority - the law of the land. How will the employer/ruler react to a successful mercenary band - with



rewards and new opportunities or jealousy and repression?

Rank & File: The mercenary soldiers are driven by simpler motivations, like wages and booty.

4 A free spirit

Characters & Generals: Mercenaries are outsiders. The Mercenary Captain serves himself alone. Being a law to oneself is the romance of the mercenaries. It also presents society with a moral quandary. Mercenary soldiering seems manly and exciting to the individual, but to the authorities it is anarchic and threatening. So beware, established powers will hire mercenaries to pursue their own quests for power, but mercenary bands not 'gainfully' employed are to be suppressed.

Rank & File: Mercenary soldiers serve only their Captains, when things go well. When fortune frowns desertion, insubordination or mutiny are the likely response.

In a table-top setting, mercenary tactical advantages should be balanced by a more volatile (and pragmatic) morale. Will the much vaunted mercenary band break and run when adversity strikes? Will they choose to plunder the enemies baggage rather than actively pursue?

Insubordination or mutiny are interesting, but difficult, ideas to introduce or allow in a role-playing adventure. Better to give an un-reformed, mercenary player-character specific goals which may or may not accord with those evolved by the rest of the party.

5 Improvisation

Mercenaries don't create revolutionary weapons of war, they simply use what is available. However, their's is a desperate trade and they may improvise tactics that confound conventional military doctrine.

The Swiss, for example, were effective because they altered other peoples' ideas of war. Their reputation for not giving quarter, to soldier or knight alike, had a powerful psychological effect on opponents used to desultory pursuits and the possibility of ransom. When peasant rabbles were supposed to cower behind their spear-points, the Swiss pike-phalanxes moved forward at the double and in an awesome, complete silence.

Characters & Generals: Improvisation is the very stuff of role-playing adventure, it presents difficulties for table-top generals interpreting rules - unless a referee is available. The best course is to allow the Mercenary Captain to alter, slightly, basic rules for his troop types, eg movement and offensive or defensive capability. However, any modifications should be balanced by more volatile morale.

Of course, every table-top general will want mercenaries and some will want to convert their entire army into a 'Free Company'. You should therefore bear in mind that, throughout history, it has been a very rare occurrence for mercenary forces to outnumber the manpower available to 'the authorities'. Also mercenary advantages should be earned on campaign or through a series of (successful) battles. After all Sir John Hawkwood's

White Company campaigned for three years before it became a force to be reckoned with.

6 Isolation

We have already noted that mercenaries are 'free spirits'. They are also isolated from the rest of the society they inhabit.

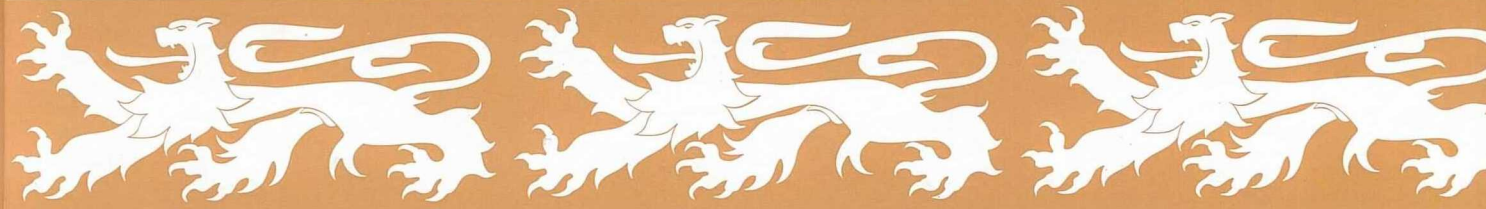
Characters & Generals: The Mercenary Captain serves only himself, partly from his own choosing, but also because he can trust few men. If he is isolated from his mercenaries he is easy prey for the authorities but, on the other hand, his own men may rebel, especially if things go badly. The mercenary character is likely to be a loner. He may be prepared to co-operate in a party, but he looks after himself first. He is also ruthless - he has to be in order to survive.

Rank & File: Mercenary soldiers serve for as long as their wages and booty offset the danger and rigours of warfare. A defeat will encourage desertion just as surely as a good haul of booty. Captured Mercenary Captains and soldiers may be dealt with fairly if they are fighting in a 'legal' war - on behalf of higher authority, but the penalty is death for those captured during 'independent' operations.

The White Company

You will find examples of these 'mercenary motivations' in the short history of the Free Companies below. The following example illustrates the operation of





mercenary motivations in the context of one, historic, Free Company.

The battle of Poitiers (1358) was the second formal battle of the Hundred Years War. Their defeat obliged the French to seek peace terms and the English disbanded their largely mercenary army. Various independent Free Companies were formed and these roamed France for two years, until the French arranged a diversion, enticing the mercenaries into northern Italy in 1361. The most successful Free Company in the Milanese campaign proved to be Sir John Hawkwood's White Company.

Hawkwood was a professional warrior, a contractor to the English crown during the Poitiers campaign. As a simple knight of the shires he was unlikely to gain social advancement in the King's service. Mercenary soldiering provided the basis for Hawkwood's personal pursuit of power.

On campaign the White Company improvised tactics that combined, both psychological and military factors. The knights polished their weapons and armour until they gleamed like mirrors (hence the 'White' Company), while their soldiers nurtured a reputation for ferociousness, unmatched by their usual, feudal opponents. The soldiers were armed with the English longbow, a new and alarming weapon for Italian nobles used to the inferior short bow or cumbersome crossbow. Hawkwood also employed the unchivalrous stratagems of ambushes, night attacks and, where possible, merciless pursuits to offset numerical disadvantage and conclude campaigns swiftly.

Politically, Hawkwood turned his 'mercenary isolation' to advantage. He was always loyal to whoever employed him and scrupulous, too. He fulfilled his part of a contract to the letter, was careful to serve amongst groups of allied states - Milan, Urbino and Florence - and never competed for political power himself.

Machiavelli, the Florentine political philosopher considered Hawkwood a failure because he never attempted to usurp political power for himself. However, not usurping the established order was the foundation of Hawkwood's success and survival. He managed to retain his power base, the White Company, and enjoy the spoils of victory. He married the Duke of Milan's illegitimate daughter amidst great pomp, grew extremely rich, lived to be an old man, died peacefully and was buried in the Duomo, at Florence, as a mark of respect. Let this be a lesson to role-playing mercenaries and table-top generals.

Mercenary Types

There are three kinds of mercenary soldier, individual soldiers of fortune, bodyguards and free companies.

When wars end or fortune frowns warriors may seek their livelihood in the service of a foreign power. Thus, after the battle of the Boyne, the catholic gentry fled Ireland to seek service in continental armies. The soldier of fortune is an individual and unable to mould his terms of service. He can be described as 'dependable'. In role-playing terms he is a 'loner'.

Absolute rulers have often enlisted small groups of

foreigners. Men who speak a different language, who are ignorant of the culture and immune to local intrigues. Such mercenaries are generally very dependable. Their allegiance arises from the pay and gifts bestowed by the ruler, as well as their isolation in the midst of an alien culture.

The Swiss guard, raised by the French king, Charles X, served his successors dilligently for nearly three hundred years. They enjoyed many privileges and were exempt from many of the duties of the French army. In 1789, on the eve of the revolution, the mob massacred the Swiss while other elements of the army stood by.

Finally, there is the mercenary band. It consists of a large body of soldiers commanded by a captain. This leader is also a contractor who seeks gainful employment for his men in the service of whoever will pay. The mercenary band may be dependable but it will also be unpredictable.

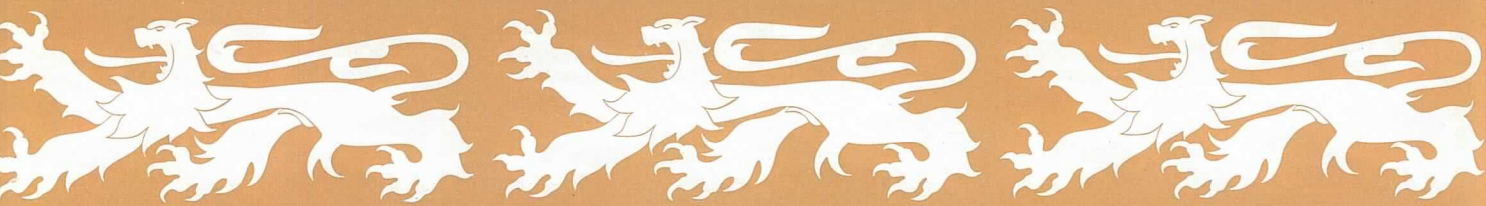
Mercenary bands have had the biggest impact in history, whether politically, militarily or in terms of notoriety. It is their story which concerns the rest of this article.

A short history of the Free Companies

Mercenaries have sold their services since the dawn of history. Their activities punctuate the civilisations of Egypt, Greece, Persia and Rome. In Europe they were active from the fourteenth century through to Napoleonic times and sporadically up to the present. For the purposes of this article we will consider the medieval period only, since it seems most apt to fantasy role-playing and table-top games.

The shortcomings of feudal arrangements for war created the conditions in which the mercenary system could flourish. Rulers found they could not assemble a large, competent force for long campaigns, especially those involving sieges. Harold Godwinson, lost the English crown in 1066 partly because he could not maintain a large, experienced army for the duration of a campaign fought at opposite ends of his domain (Stamford Bridge and Hastings). William the Conqueror, on the other hand, had the advantage of a well-balanced army of contracted companies. The captains of each company, nobles and lesser knights, were retained for the duration of the campaign by the lure of English lands and, with their backs to the sea, the impossibility of desertion.

In the centuries that followed the battle of Hastings, kings and nobles turned more and more to hired troops. Captains were contracted to recruit men who would fight for pay and the spoils of war, rather than for the feudal notion of service owed. During the Hundred Years War the English army was composed of contracted knights and men-at-arms of native stock, as well as Gascon, Breton, Navarrese and Burgundian mercenaries. Generally, such troops were triumphant over unwilling and ill-armed feudal hordes. Yet, when wars ended rigid feudal societies found it difficult to assimilate men who knew only war. Ex-



soldiers were faced with hard choices - starvation, banditry or military service abroad.

The term 'Free Company' originated in the fourteenth century. It described a body of soldiers free of the control imposed by a legal authority, like the King. The mercenaries were also 'free' in another sense, since they owed allegiance to no man save their captain, and the captain to no man but himself. Von Urslingen, the German mercenary captain wore a breastplate emblazoned with the slogan: "Lord of the Great Company, enemy of god, of pity and of mercy". No doubt, this statement was designed to strike terror into the enemy, but it also shows how the mercenary captains, at least, saw themselves 'free' of the bonds and obligations of medieval society.

The authorities recognised this freedom too, and the dangerous precedent it set in a rigidly structured society. Thus, we can understand why Mercenary captains, when separated from their mercenaries, could be tried for 'waging illicit war', ex-communicated and publicly executed. For Kings and nobles mercenaries were useful in the short run, but for officialdom mercenary 'freedoms' set a dangerous precedent.

The first and most successful Free Company began as a body of six thousand peasant light infantry. The men were recruited from Catalonia in the Spanish peninsula and led by a German, Roger von Blum. They were raised for a campaign in Sicily, but when peace came, Roger led the Catalans into the service of the Byzantine Emperor. In battle with the Turks, the Catalans proved highly successful. Roger gained the title of grand duke and his men became known as The Grand Catalan Company.

Unfortunately, like so many mercenary-captains, Roger von Blum became embroiled in politics, using his mercenaries as a power base. He was not successful at Byzantine intrigue and was assassinated by the Emperor's son. At the death of their captain, the Catalans might have been expected to disperse, instead they took bloody revenge on the Byzantines and de-camped into Greece, where they took service in the pay of the Duke of Athens. This association proved beneficial to Duke and mercenaries for a few years until, inevitably, the Duke tried to double cross his mercenaries. Both sides went on campaign, the Duke with a feudal host, and met at the battle of Cephissus in March 1311. The Grand Catalans dispersed the feudal rabble, killed the Duke, marched into Athens and declared their own Catalan duchy.

For sixty-three years the Catalans held power in Athens, a spectacular achievement for a band of men who had begun ill-shod and ill-armed in an age of armoured knights. No other mercenary band has ever equalled the Catalans. However, their reign, increasingly civilised, was ended by a Free Company of Navarrese. These usurpers only, clung to power for three years before feudal orthodoxy returned.

The Navarrese, who overthrew the Catalan Duchy of Athens, were the product of the French and Italian wars of the fourteenth century. The incredible wealth of the Italian city-states, their civilised desire to pursue diplomacy rather than war, and employ foreigners rather than citizens when

war became inevitable, provided fertile ground for mercenary bands. Spanish, German and Hungarian troops found their way to Italy, fought ferociously in brief campaigns, then dispersed to plunder the countryside.

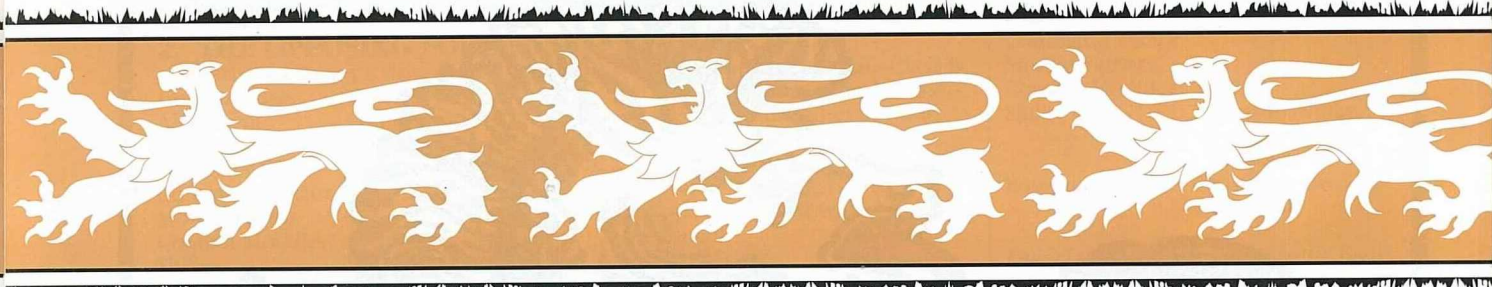
The first Free Company to emerge in Italy was Werner von Urslingen's Great Company. He campaigned in the backward feudal lands of southern Italy, a place of petty baronies and intrigue. The bulk of his mercenaries were light cavalry, able to ride down and overpower heavily armoured, but out-numbered knights. For a time von Urslingen pursued a lucrative line in ransom and short campaigns for the highest bidder, but ultimately he was doomed. A Neopolitan baron, by blandishments, separated von Urslingen from his power base, the Great Company, and assassinated him.

The captaincy passed into the hands of Fra Moriale, an altogether more subtle warrior. He was a Provençal and brother of the military order of St John. He turned the Great Company into a miniature and movable city-state. It was disciplined, carefully administered and exchanged ambassadors, on equal terms, with Italian states. Fra Moriale's strategy enabled him to graduate from ransom to political extortion. The Italian way of war involved complicated alliances and campaigns that were both political and military in nature. Thus the Great Company might be hired, secretly, by one state to menace another and then find itself 'bought off' by the victim whose borders were threatened.

Fra Moriale played his maverick, dangerous game for two years, until he fell victim to the complexities of Italian politics. His 'ally', the dictator of Rome, Cola di Rienzi, persuaded him to come into Rome for a council of war. Like von Urslingen before him, Fra Moriale was easily overcome once separated from the Great Company. Di Rienzi threw him into a dungeon and later beheaded him. The Great Company, leaderless suffered desertion and was reduced to simply another mercenary band for hire.

Meanwhile, in France, the English invaders had won the battle of Poitiers (1358), the second battle of the Hundred Years War. The French were obliged to seek terms and the resulting peace unleashed hordes of English soldiers and their, Gascon and Navarrese allies. Sir Robert Knollys, Sir Hugh Calvely, Sir John Hawkwood, Sir Bertrand du Guesclin and the Captal de Buch founded Free Companies and roamed central France. They hired themselves out to feudal lords and princes, grew rich on ransoms and began to dabble in political extortion on the lines of the Great Company in Italy, even the alternative Pope at Avignonon fell victim. Their power was made manifest when they joined in alliance and defeated the army of the King of France.

The French court and its neighbouring principalities were reduced to impotent rage. Whenever the authorities could separate mercenary captains from their Free Companies the full force of medieval law would be enacted. Mercenary captains were accused of waging 'illicit war', excommunicated and publicly executed. The leaderless mercenaries deserted to form bands of Routiers



(highwaymen) or joined other mercenary captains.

Rather than buy off the Free Companies, the French court connived with the Pope at Avignon to set up, a diversion. The Lord of Montferrat was persuaded to mount a campaign in northern Italy in pursuit of ancient and obscure dynastic claims. Thus, in the spring of 1361, the majority of the Free Companies crossed the Alps and descended upon Europe's wealthiest city, Milan.

The Free Companies made short work of the Great Company, serving the Visconti Duke of Milan. Fra Moriale's successor Count Landau was captured and stoned to death by the English. Despite this victory the campaign ended in stalemate. Italian politics proved more durable than their armies. The Free Companies dispersed across Italy in search of employers. Their 'professionalism' gave rise to the 'Condottieri' system of contracted mercenary forces in the service of Italian city-states.

The Condottieri system, proper, began in 1379 when, Alberigo da Barbiano founded an exclusively Italian mercenary band, the Company of St George. His aim was to rid Italy of Breton mercenary-bandits, an aim he achieved in April 1379 at the battle of Marino. Pope Urban VI, in bare feet as a mark of respect, welcomed da Barbiano back to Rome, created him a Knight of Christ and presented a white banner, consisting of the cross of St George inscribed: 'Italy liberated from the barbarians'. Mercenaries, at least Italian ones, had acquired a new status, that of patriots in the service of the state. Henceforth, the swarms of cut-throat foreigners were squeezed out by the 'professional' mercenaries, the Condottieri. This was the Italian solution to the mercenary problem.

The term Condottieri derives from Condotta, the Italian for the mercenary contract that regulated the obligations and rights of employer and mercenary captain. During the next one hundred years the Condottieri flourished and complimented the intricacies of Italian city-state politics. The Condottieri were professionals and carefully husbanded their resources. Strategic marches and counter-marches, punctuated by, perhaps bloody, skirmishes were the hallmark of Condottieri warfare. Pitched battles were avoided as too costly. A lone fortress seized by surprise, a friendly town relieved, the enemy out-manouvered, a noble seized, such was the nature of Italian warfare. The Mercenary captains who followed Sir John Hawkwood's example grew rich and powerful, like Francesco Sforza who became Duke of Milan.

In France the mercenary ideal took an altogether more aggressive stance. The Hundred Years war reduced the French crown to virtual impotence and inspired Dukedoms like Burgundy to challenge the King's authority. Mercenary forces became incorporated into French politics, but in a less civilised form than that found in Italy. In 1375, for example, Enguerrand de Courcy, at the head of forty thousand mercenaries, invaded Alsace and claimed the region as his own domain.

The French mercenary problem was inadvertently solved by Emperor Frederick III of the Holy Roman Empire. He hired unemployed Gascon troops to quell the Swiss.

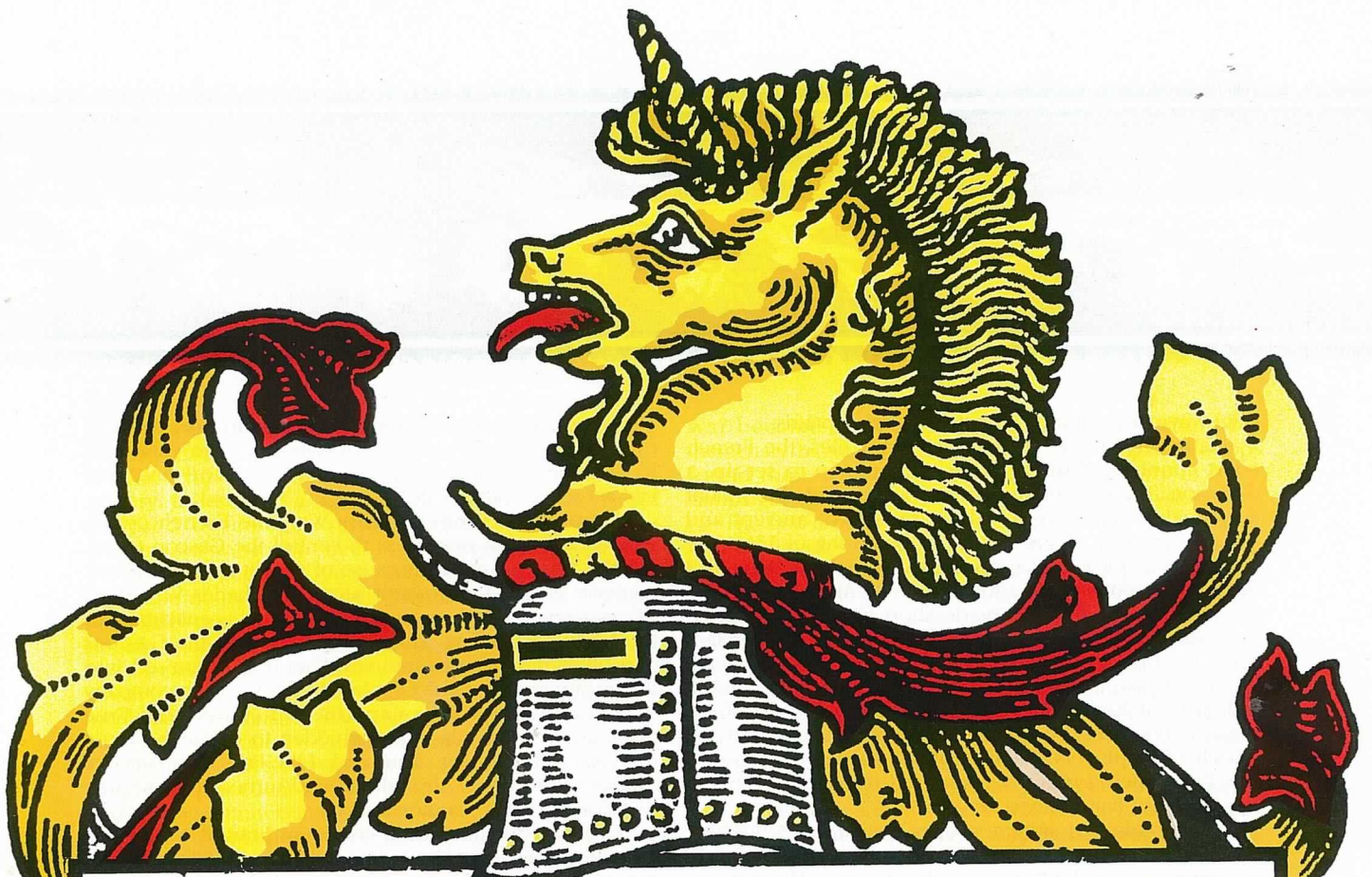
However, the Swiss, outnumbered twenty to one, defeated the 'professionals' at St Jacob-de-Birs. The Gascons, bloodied and without booty, poured back into France and laid waste the countryside.

During the Hundred Years War, the French crown would have been powerless to control the Gascon terror, but the war had ended because of a political and military recovery inspired by Joan of Arc. King Charles VII solved the mercenary problem, in early 1445, by his enactment of the Royal Ordnances. This new policy took the Gascons and other mercenaries into royal service, organised into fifteen companies each of six hundred men. Each company was commanded by a captain, but, unlike his Free Company forbears, he was forbidden to command more than his own company. Thus ended the Free Companies of France, mercenaries disciplined and turned into the first modern European standing army.

Charles VIII inherited a confident France, a standing army and eclipsed surrounding dukedoms. Unfettered, he turned his prodigious energy towards Italy and the French claims of dynastic and political power in the peninsula. In 1494, he invaded deploying his regular, former mercenary soldiers, firearms and cannon in abundance, plus swarms of ferocious Swiss and German mercenaries hired for the campaign. The small Condottieri forces were no match for the French and the city-states unable to stand in the face of cannon. In one campaign the whole of Italy was cowed and the Condottieri system swept away for good. Gone were the 'professional' mercenary captains, replaced by barbarous Swiss and German hirelings fighting for blood and booty, contemptuous of the possibility of political power.

Henceforth, the conduct of war lay in the hands of nation states. Their standing armies rendered the need for mercenaries obsolete. To found a Free Company became an act of rebellion, the great age of mercenary captains was at an end.





TREACHERY

1. BACKGROUND

Duke Renburgh is the overlord of the troubled north-western border provinces of Arvensheim. In an effort to secure his territory from raids and enforce his will on the local Marcher Lords, he hired a force of mercenaries known as L'Naiden's Company.

In a long summer campaign, L'Naiden's stalwarts proved more than effective at bringing the Marcher Lords into line, but they also imposed a heavy burden on the local barons, who with the onset of winter began to grumble over the expense of quartering and maintaining them. Having no more money to support the mercenaries himself, Duke Renburgh decided to dispense with their services. But the question was, how could he do this without either buying them off or risking L'Naiden attacking him?

At a secret meeting, it was decided the best way to ensure the dissolution of L'Naiden's force, was to capture its leader and incarcerate him in Baron Scalti's castle. The duke's

advisors generally agreed, that by removing the leader and threatening military action, L'Naiden's force would quickly dissolve. Even better, once the bulk of the mercenaries had gone, L'Naiden could be ransomed to his most loyal followers, to recoup some of the summer campaign's expenses!

Accordingly L'Naiden and his two closest lieutenants were invited to a celebration of the summer's victories at Duke Renburgh's castle. As they rode to the celebration, they were ambushed by Scalti's men and taken prisoner. However, Omrath Scarhand, one of L'Naiden's companions, escaped to warn his fellow mercenaries of Duke Renburgh's treachery. At first the mercenaries were undecided about how to react. Some believed it would be better to just disperse quietly, rather than risking everything in a single confrontation with the local barons: while others argued the company should act swiftly to rescue its leader.

In the end the company split, and Omrath Scarhand led a small force of diehards to try and rescue L'Naiden.

A Fantasy Warlord scenario

BY IAN BAILEY

2. THE OPPOSING FORCES

Omrath Scarhand's Rescuers

Commander: Omrath Scarband
Alignment: Equilibrium
Race: Human (Sartor)
Character Class: Major Warrior Hero
Command Factor: 3
Morale Factor: 4
Combat Modifier: +63%
Skills: Weapon Master, Jump, Bound and Strength.
Equipment: Ogre Doom Blade sword, mail and plate, shield, horse

Magic-User: *Seft the Sinister*
Alignment: Equilibrium
Race: Human (Starkell)
Character Class: Minor Magic-user
Command Factor: 1
Morale Factor: 1
Combat Modifier: +11%
Skills: Weapon Ward, Spears and Lances
Spells: Tanglefoot, Telepathy and Hope
Equipment: Leather armour, sword and dagger, horse.

Mercenary Captain 1: Goltan Fleetfoot
Alignment: Light
Race: Wood-elf
Character Class: Minor Warrior Hero
Command Factor: 2
Morale Factor: 3
Combat Modifier: +56%
Skills: Fast Runner, Master Bowman, Deflection
Equipment: Elfbow, chainmail, sword and dagger.

Mercenary Captain 2: Castan the Fen
Alignment: Equilibrium
Race: Human (Fenmark)
Character Class: Major Thief
Command Factor: 1
Morale Factor: 1
Combat Modifier: +28%
Skills: Assassin, expert with dagger, pick locks, leap, endurance.
Equipment: Cap of Invisibility, spear, dagger, chainmail and shield.

Troops

Omrath Scarband's Brigade

18 x Human pikemen. Morale Class B. Armed with pikes and swords. Equipped with mail and plate.

12 x Human sword and buckler men. Morale Class A. Armed with swords and shields. Equipped with chainmail.

10 x Human sword and buckler men. Morale Class B. Armed with swords and shields. Equipped with leather armour.

Goltan's Elves

10 x Wood elf archers. Morale Class B. Armed with elfbows and daggers. Equipped with leather armour.

10 x Wood elf spearmen. Morale Class B. Armed with spears and swords. Equipped with chainmail.

Castan's Second Sons

12 x Human spearmen. Morale Class B. Armed with spears and axes. Equipped with leather armour and shields.

Baron Scalti's Retinue

Commander: Baron Scalti
Alignment: Equilibrium
Race: Human
Character Class: Master Warrior Hero
Command Factor: 4
Morale Factor: 2
Combat Modifier: +54%
Skills: Expert Swordsman, Endurance, Formidable Appearance, Strong Swimmer, Bound.
Equipment: Orc and Goblin Doom Blade sword, Vambraces of Invulnerability, mail and plate, shield and horse.

Priest: Brother Melcant
Alignment: Equilibrium
Race: Human (Arvensheim)
Character Class: Minor Priest
Command Factor: 1
Morale Factor: 1
Combat Modifier: +14%
Skills: Blessed
Divine Spells: Cure Wound, Hammer of the Gods, Prayer for Resilience.
Equipment: Leather armour, club and shield.

Officer 1: Captain Halgen
Alignment: Light
Race: Human (Arvensheim)
Character Class: Major Warrior Hero
Command Factor: 3
Morale Factor: 4
Combat Modifier: +66%
Skills: Weapon Master, Strength, Strong Swimmer, Mighty Leap.
Equipment: Shield of Interception, sword, chainmail, horse.

Officer 2: Sergeant Osk
Alignment: Equilibrium
Race: Human (Arvensheim)
Character Class: Minor Warrior Hero

Command Factor: 2
Morale Factor: 2
Combat Modifier: +49%
Skills: Expert Bowman, Strength, Strong Swimmer
Equipment: Crossbow, sword, chainmail.

Dwarf Commander: Vatnir the Bear
Alignment: Equilibrium
Race: Dwarf (Vangad)
Character Class: Minor Warrior Hero
Command Factor: 2
Morale Factor: 3
Combat Modifier: +67%
Skills: Were Transformation, Expert Axeman, Bound.
Equipment: Double-handed axe, dagger, chainmail.

The Prisoner: L'Naiden
Alignment: Equilibrium
Race: Human (Pirricard)
Character Class: Master Warrior Hero
Command Factor: 5
Morale Factor: 3
Combat Modifier: +48%
Skills: Expert Spearman, Strength, Endurance, Animal Control (Eagles), Formidable Appearance
Equipment: Mail and plate. The following items are carried in the wagon and may be used by L'Naiden if he is rescued: Blade of Sharpness spear, a Belt of Strength, a shield and a sword.

Troops

Baron Scalti's Brigade

12 x Human halberdiers. Morale Class B. Polearms, chainmail and daggers.

12 x Human swordsmen. Morale Class B. Swords, shields and chainmail.

Captain Halgen's Brigade

12 x Human spearmen. Morale Class B. Spears, daggers, shields and chainmail.

12 x Human spearmen. Morale Class C. Spears, daggers, shields and leather armour.

Sergeant Osk's Command

12 x Human crossbowmen. Morale Class B. Crossbows, axes and chainmail.

Vatnir's Mercenaries

15 x Dwarf axemen. Morale Class B. Axes, shields and mail and plate.

Wagon Train

3 x Wagons. Brother Melcant is riding on one. One contains L'Naiden bound and gagged (his companion has been hung on Baron Scalti's orders and if Omrath Scarhand's men discover this fact they can treat the baron's men as Hated Foes). Another contains a pay chest for the garrison at Baron Scalti's castle and Vatnir's mercenaries. The third contains victuals. The Wagons move like a horse with a knight in full plate on it -1/2. They are unable to cross walls, hedges or fences.

3. Setting

Having consulted his commanders, Omrath decides his best bet will be to ambush Baron Scalti's forces as they march to Castle Skaber. With this in mind, he dispatches Goltan's elves supported by Castan's Second Sons to delay Baron Scalti's column as it crosses the high fells, while the rest of his troops march at the double to catch the column up.

4. Deployment

The map represents the area which Goltan chooses as the point of ambush. Players should note the ruins count as broken ground, and the road is only wide enough to take a column of three files.

Goltan's elves and the Second Sons may be deployed anywhere in the woods, ruins or behind the hills. If they are hidden from view, their positions should be recorded on a sketch map. The balance of Omrath Scarhand's forces will march onto the table from point C on turn two. The order of appearance of these units should be noted on a piece of paper, according to the deployment rules in Fantasy Warlord.

The commander of the baron's forces must march his troops on from point A, at normal speed, in column. He must note the order of march on a piece of paper and the position of the three wagons. He should also secretly note which wagon contains the prisoner, which the victuals and which the strongbox.

The commander of Omrath's mercenaries should remember that surprise attacks or moves from cover, need not be revealed until after all order counters have been placed. This ensures the enemy cannot change his orders in response to the surprise move, except as a result of a Reaction Test.

The game ends when one party achieves a decisive victory or on turn twelve.

5. Victory Conditions Omrath's Rescuers

Omrath's aim is to free L'Naiden and save him from being either tortured or ransomed. Unfortunately, the aim of

his men may be different if they discover the wagon with the pay chest. Any mercenary unit (apart from Vatnir's dwarfs) discovering or capturing the strongbox, must take an immediate Reaction Test to see if it decides to carry on or run off with the money. If the unit passes its test it will carry on. If it fails the test, it will immediately cease to accept any orders. Instead it will begin to move at normal speed to the nearest edge of the table and will fight any unit that gets in its way!

Decisive Victory: L'Naiden is freed and escapes alive from the battlefield to seek revenge another day.

Points Victory: Should either side fail to achieve a decisive victory the game will be decided on points. Omrath's men score points according to the following schedule:

Each enemy soldier slain:	1 point
Baron Scalti slain:	20 points
Captain Helgen slain:	8 points
Sergeant Osk slain:	5 points
Vatnir the Bear slain:	8 points
Brother Melcant slain:	5 points
Victual wagon captured:	5 points
Pay chest wagon captured:	10 points
L'Naiden slain:	10 points
Each surviving soldier on own side:	1 point

Baron Scalti's Retinue

Baron Scalti is under orders to deliver L'Naiden alive to his castle. Where the mercenary commander is to be held pending Duke Renburgh's decision to either ransom him or have him executed. To fulfil this task, the wagon carrying the prisoner must exit from the table anywhere along edge B, with an escort of at least five men.

Decisive Victory: L'Naiden is carried off the table, anywhere along edge B, alive and with an escort of at least five men.

Points Victory: Should either side fail to achieve a decisive victory the game will be decided on points. Scalti's men score points according to the following schedule:

Each enemy soldier slain:	1 point
L'Naiden slain:	5 points
Goltan Fleetfoot slain:	10 points
Castan the Fen slain:	5 points
Omrath Scarhand slain:	20 points
Seft the Sinister slain:	5 points
L'Naiden slain:	2 points
Each wagon saved:	5 points
Each surviving soldier on own side:	1 point

6. Added Confusion

The borders of Arvensheim and the Northern Marches are wild places where almost anything could happen. At the beginning of each turn, before

phase one, a D100 should be rolled. On a roll of 10% or less, consult the following table to see what happens:

Roll one D6

1. A unit of 20 orc soldiers (B class) clad in chainmail and armed with mixed weapons, enter the table at point D. They are led by Lugnad the Vile, a Major Ogre Warrior Hero: CF 3, MF 2, Combat Modifier + 68%. Skills: Endurance, Expert Axeman, Strength, Bound. Equipment: Human Doom Blade axe with bane of possession, dagger, mail and plate and shield.

The orcs will make straight for the nearest wagon in an attempt to capture it in the confusion of battle. They will charge any unit in their way. Uncommitted elven or dwarven units within 30 cms of the orcs will immediately turn to attack Lugnad's troops. If the orcs capture a wagon, they will try to escape with it off the table anywhere along edge D. Should they succeed, neither side will score any points for the wagon.

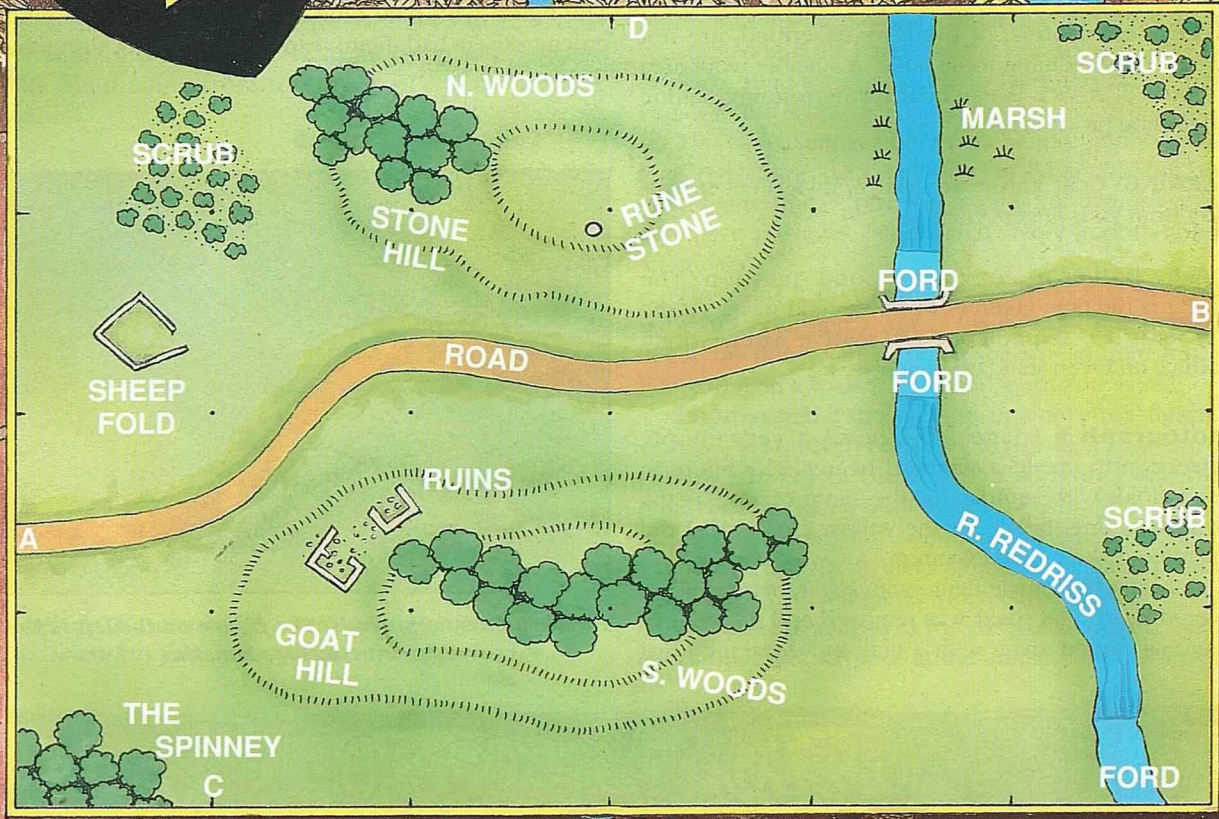
2. It starts to rain across the entire battlefield. The rain will last for one D6 turns. For its effect, see the spell Downpour. The mud road will turn to mire on the second turn of rain and remain that way for one turn after the rain stops.

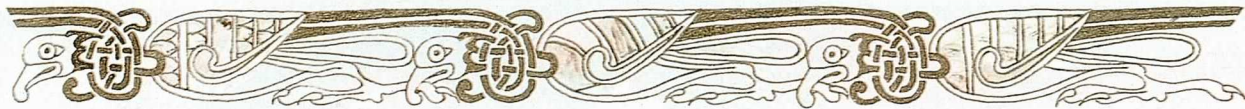
3. Duke Renburgh gallops to the rescue with ten cavalry from point A. Duke Renburgh is a Major Warrior Hero CF 5, MF 3, Combat Modifier + 49%. Skills: Expert Swordsman, Aura of Peace, Jump and Strength. Equipment: sword, dagger, Helm of Invulnerability, mail and plate armour, shield and barded horse. His cavalry are Morale Class A, equipped with swords, chainmail and shields.

4. Night will fall in one D6 turns. At that point the battle must stop and victory will be decided on points.

5. Lord Garrick of the Northern Marches, with two regiments of ten men armed with spears arrives at point D. Lord Garrick will immediately side with Omrath Scarhand, as he is the sworn enemy of Baron Scalti. Lord Garrick is a Minor Warrior Hero CF 3, MF 2, Combat Modifier + 58%. Skills: Weapon Master, Endurance and Bound. Equipment: Double-Handed sword, dagger, chainmail, shield and horse. Regiment one is Morale Class B, armed with spears and equipped with shields and leather armour. Regiment two is Morale Class C, armed with spears and equipped with shields and leather armour.

6. A Demi-Dragon flies over. All units must take an immediate Morale Test, as if they have been attacked by a Monster.





CELTIC CONVERSIONS

Practical tips on simple figure conversions by Mark Allen

Presented with forty of Alternative Armies superb Celtic Elves, or 'Sidhe', and a brief to produce an original article, the solution seemed to be a two-part description of how to create an Elven horde for use in mass fantasy combat.

This article is about converting standard castings into a variety of new poses. To follow in my footsteps you will need these tools:

1. A flat file and 'rat-tail' file
2. A sharp craft-knife (like a Stanley knife)
3. Florist's wire (from a florist)
4. A small pin hammer
5. Stationer's pins (a bit chunkier than dress-maker's pins)
6. Epoxy resin
7. A woodworker's or metalworker's vice
8. A hand-held drill and very fine drill bits
9. A piece of rag and a pair of pliers
10. A small, fine-toothed, hacksaw
11. Blue-tak or some similar material

NOTE: Conversions, of the type described, are not suitable for the dining room table. A suitable work area is required. A vice is essential for performing cutting and drilling procedures.

WARNING: Craft knives are sharp! Always cut strokes away from your fingers/body.

Why bother to convert? A good question. The answer is the time taken is worth the end result. At the very least it is expedient - Alternative Armies don't produce an Elven standard bearer.

Photograph 6 (page 23), shows a very simple conversion to create a standard bearer. The figure in green cloak with standard is the same casting as the sword-wielding 'heavy' in the yellow cloak. All I did was remove the original weapon.

Consider the female figure with spear, brandishing a severed head. The spear was removed and the original weapons carved away with a craft-knife (taking great

care not to damage other parts of the casting and my fingers). A hole was carefully drilled through the figure's hand to take a length of florist's wire. The wire or standard pole was cut to the required length and the end flattened with a couple of blows of a hammer. A 'spear-head' was fashioned by trimming the beaten tip with pliers. Finally, I glued the standard pole into place with epoxy-resin.

Relatively simple, eh? Note how the green-cloaked standard bearer, like a number of other figures in this article, has an arrow protruding from part of his anatomy? This effect is achieved very simply. First cut a piece of florist's wire to the desired length. Hammer the end flat or simply add a drop of epoxy-resin to represent the arrow's flights. To locate the 'arrow' drill a hole of the correct diameter and glue the shaft into position with epoxy resin.

Photograph 3 (page 32), shows five ordinary 'Sidhe' warriors. Two display simple weapon changes and one a slightly more complex conversion.

The spearman with red shield and the yellow-trousered swordsman are unaltered castings.

The figure with pale blue shield and the fellow with green trousers had their weapons exchanged, using the following process



Photo 1: Two Fomorians. The figure on the left is the basic unconverted casting





1. Cut the weapon bearing hands off at the wrist (making sure the cut is in the same place on both figures).
2. Secure the figures in a vice and drill a small hole (of the same diameter as a pin), about two millimetres, into the severed arms' core.
3. Cut a four millimetre length of pin and epoxy it into the arm. The pin acts as a dowel to secure the weapon hand. It should stick out proud of the arm by say two millimetres.
4. Allow the dowel to set.
5. Bring the severed hand/weapon to the dowel and gauge position. By pressing the piece against the protruding dowel, you get an idea of where to drill the securing socket.
6. Secure the severed arm/weapon in the vice and drill a socket 2 millimetres deep. Using a minimum of glue, push the hand onto the dowel.
7. While the resin sets, the hand can be kept in the required position with blue-tak or something similar.

The last conversion in picture 3 employed all the techniques described above. First I removed the figure's spear. Next a locating socket was drilled behind his shield and a new spear inserted there. The figure holds a severed head which is secured to a pin-diameter socket drilled into the hand. You can see I've added the embellishment of an arrow in the forehead: I formed the opinion that the unfortunate victim had been abusing a bowman he thought out of range. Naturally, I didn't buy a 'head' or decapitate a figure. The head came from the spear of a female Sidhe warrior.



Photo 2: Two unconverted Sidhe figures flank a casualty converted from a female warrior.

Photograph 5 (page 32), illustrates figures that combine various conversion methods.

The naked male warriors, armed with sword and shield are the same castings. They exhibit perhaps the simplest conversion method available to you: protect the chosen limb with a piece of rag and gently manipulate with a pair of pliers. Undertake this operation at room temperature and don't be over ambitious. If you bend too far the limb could well fall off. It is most likely to crumble/snap when the figure is cold. Perhaps its best to experiment on an unwanted casting first.

The third, naked male warrior has a hand conversion as described above.

The green clad, female warrior is an unaltered casting. Her companion's arms have been bent with rag/pliers into a more defensive posture. I've also added an arrow to her shield.

Photograph 4 (page 32), concentrates on more heavily armoured figures.

The female warrior with spear is the basic casting. She was the basis for the standard bearer in photograph 1 and the severed head trophy in photograph 2.

The axewoman is the same casting but with an axe substituted for the spear. I obtained the axe from one of the other figures in the same photograph. Next I cut off the spear shaft and point, flush with the figure's hand. However, I trimmed the bottom of the spear back to a short stub protruding from the figure's hand. This represents the base of the axe handle. Finally, a socket was drilled into the hand and the axe pinned and glued in place. Blue-tak enable me to keep the axe at right-angles to the fist.

The two axemen underwent simple plier-bends to their right arms. The method may be simple but, in a multi-figure unit, it provides a range of aggressive and defensive postures. I think that's very important with 'irregulars'.

The third 'heavy' shown sacrificed his axe to the lady and obtained a spear instead. Rather than just flatten the florist wire, I took a spear head from another figure, drilled a socket and glued it onto the wire.

Photograph 2 shows three, un-converted, figures.

The 'wounded' female warrior is based on the casting shown in photograph 4. First I carefully removed the casting from its base using a hacksaw, craft knife and file. Then the figures back was filed flat to help simulate a 'fallen' posture. The figure was then glued to a temporary base (using a dab of contact adhesive) for ease of handling. Next I cut through the left foot at the ankle, bent the leg and





From top to bottom, photos 3, 4 and 5. All these figures are from the Alternative Armies range of Celtic Elves.

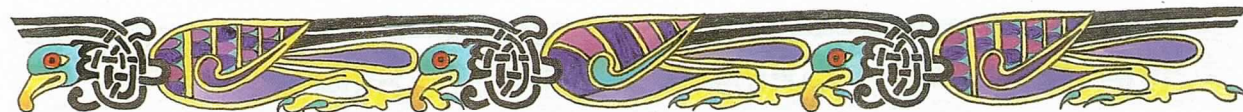




Photo 6: The Flags in the above photo, are made from paper. The banner designs are taken from original Celtic decoration. Try the local public library for reference books on Celtic art, if you are short of ideas.

repositioned the foot. A new leg was shaped by craft knife from the underside of the warrior's skirt. Finally a different shield was added and arrows positioned on the body.

Photograph 1 (page 30), illustrates conversions applied to larger figures. These are two Alternative Armies 'Fomorians'. The swordsman is the unaltered casting.

The Fomorian spearman was created by first removing the casting's sword and bending the hand forward. I next drilled a hole through the hand to locate the spear. Florist's wire provided the spear shaft. The spear point came complete with head from another casting. I pinned and glued more heads to the first, which made an ideal support for attaching

spear point to spear shaft.

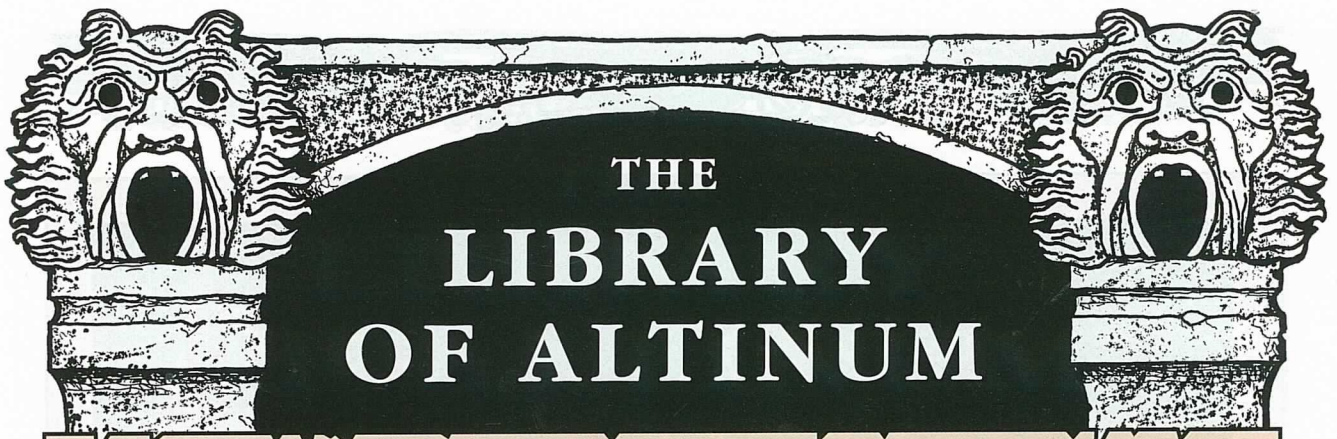
Finally, I drilled a hole through the Fomorian's left hand to accept a shield. The shield itself was cut from card and the centre drilled out. A suitable nail was cut down, such that the head provided a shield boss and the shaft a locator for the shield to the hand.

All the figures shown in the photographs have been converted using simple techniques. Anyone can master this craft, but you do need time and patience.

And remember craft knives are sharp.

The figures have been left on their original bases. Next issue I will demonstrate how to mount individual figures on multi-bases to create an elven horde suitable for table-top battles.





THE LIBRARY OF ALTINUM

An AD&D adventure for 3rd-6th level characters by Jon Chandler



This adventure is designed for 4 to 6 characters, of 3rd to 6th level, with a good mix of character classes. It can be played as an independent expedition, or as part of an overall campaign. The referee should gauge the strength of the party proposing to tackle the adventure and adjust things accordingly. The most obvious way is to reduce the number of monsters encountered at given locations.

INTRODUCTION FOR THE PLAYERS

The party has been hired by the guild council of the city of Wrak. The guildsmen want you to 'sort out' the trouble at their library close to the village of Altinum. This 'trouble' has been going on for almost a year, ever since the council attempted to replace the official librarian, Thadribble the Unctuous, with a crystal globe. The magic globe, which cost a fortune, was intended to run the library in a cheaper, more efficient way, than Thadribble. However, the old librarian was so enraged by his redundancy that he stole the globe. Study at the library ceased and strange stories began to circulate.

Some while ago the council hired the services of a noted magician to investigate. He has not been seen since, but his servant did return gibbering a grotesque story about an 'apparition' and 'horrid creatures'. The municipal patience is at an end, the council have decided to hire a party of desperadoes to locate the stolen globe and return it to its rightful place: a pedestal in the library's main hall. A fee will be paid to each member of the party upon successful completion of the task.

OUTLINE FOR THE REFEREE ONLY

The suggested fee is 1,000 gp per character surviving the task.

The adventure setting is the library of the legendary Mage, Marcus Doombringer, founded more than a century ago. It lies 2 days journey by horse from the city of Wrak.

Doombringer, was obsessed with the quest for knowledge and his spirit lingered about his creation, influencing the librarian's who followed.

When the council introduced its omnipotent globe, the spirit was so enraged it possessed old Thadribble and removed the hated object.

Doombringer possessed three curious magical books. The first bound in a living 'flesh', the second in leather and the third in clay. The books represent life, death and non-being. Reading a book opens a gateway from the Material plane into another dimension. Doombringer/

Thadribble, used these books to dispose of the globe. First, he placed the globe within one dimension, surrounded by an impenetrable magic sphere. The sphere can only be breached by a spell scroll taken from a box in another dimension. This box can only be opened with a key hidden within another dimension.

In order to gain access to the globe, the party must collect all three gateway books from the garden, crypt and bindery. A clue, as to which order to read the books is given by a rhyme written on the flyleaf of each book:

*“Life, death and non-being
The state of all things
The universal order which brings.”
Life, death and non-being”*

Life is represented by the book of flesh, death by leather and non-being by clay. The book of flesh opens the way to the key, leather gives access to the spell scroll and clay gives access to the globe. The books may be read at any time and in any order. Each book may only be read twice before disintegrating. An IDENTIFY spell cast on a book will only reveal the book provides access to another dimension (described later).

When the globe is recovered and returned to the pedestal the adventure is complete, order restored and the spirit of the Librarian laid to rest.

THE LIBRARIAN

The apparition is more chaotic than evil, jealously guarding its collection of books. It has little grip on the material world and constantly fades back to the Astral plane.

Whenever encountered the Librarian has a 15% chance (non-cumulative) per melee round of fading back to the Astral plane for one turn. He will also be driven from the material world, for one turn, by suffering 30pts of damage. For every extra 10pts of damage he suffers beyond 30pts, in the same round, he will be driven back to the Astral plane for an additional two melee rounds. When the Librarian returns it will be as if nothing has happened between him and the party, ie he will be non-aggressive – unless books or the fabric of the library are being destroyed.

The Librarian becomes aggressive in specific situations described below, or when the fabric of the library or its books are damaged. Normal melee combat does not provoke the apparition, but spells like FIREBALL do.

THE LIBRARIAN (7th level Mage; AC 8; MV10” Walks through walls and doors; Immune to holds, charms, turning; Only banished permanently when the globe is replaced on its pedestal)

He has a repertoire of spells, but they are cast at random using the following table:

- 1–3 Magic Missile
- 4 Shocking Grasp
- 5 Blindness
- 6–7 Ray of Enfeeblement
- 8 7D6 Lightning Bolt
- 9 Monster Summoning 1
- 10 Outiluke’s Resilient Sphere

A spell may be cast once only per day. Re-roll if the selected spell has already been cast for the day.

The Librarian communicates, but his speech is garbled. It can only be understood by a TONGUES or similar spell, or with the EAR TRUMPET from the Reading Room.

THE VILLAGE OF ALTINUM

The villagers’ only information is a brief history of the library and directions to its entrance. Henchmen may be hired, but at double the normal rate since people are afraid. All villagers are zero level.

THE LIBRARY

The entrance to the library is found set into an outcrop of granite a half mile up the valley from the village. It is a dark square opening 10ft wide. The large double doors have been wedged open by boulders. The legend ‘Library of Marcus Doombringer’ is carved on the lintel. A cool breeze issues from the passageway.

1 THE MAIN HALL

After walking down the entrance stairway, you enter a great hall with a high arched ceiling 30ft above. In the centre of the bare, flagstone floor is a stone pedestal 4ft high. The walls are completely lined with book shelves from floor to ceiling. There are thousands of musty, leather bound books of different sizes and types: obscure tomes, great atlases and thick journals. It is a truly impressive collection. The place is completely still and silent. Your torches cast flickering, eerie shadows on the walls. Six dark passageways lead from the hall.

After the party has spent 1 turn in the hall, the ghostly figure of the Librarian will appear. It looks like a man dressed in monkish garb, with a bald head and long, flowing beard. It materialises from the dark passage in the north wall and floats into the centre of the hall. When the Librarian has the party’s attention he utters eerie, incomprehensible words and gestures to the

book shelves. Finally, he gestures towards the southernmost passage on the eastern wall, then fades and disappears.

The Librarian appears every time someone enters the hall, performs the same actions and utters the same words. If the speech is translated it reads:

“Welcome to the great library of Marcus Doombringer. See, around you is a fabulous treasury of knowledge. If you wish to read please proceed to the reading room, yonder (pointing to the passageway).”

THE PEDESTAL

The pedestal is a plain stone column with a half spherical depression. An unfamiliar rune is carved into the bottom of the depression. This rune triggers the globe, which must be returned here to complete the adventure.

THE BOOKS

An examination, by literate members of the party, will reveal the books are organised into philosophical, theological, political and literary sections. However, by far the largest group is devoted to magical texts. Of course these are far more advanced than the current level of any of

the magic using members of the party.

THE PORTCULLIS (DOWN)

A 5ft square portcullis blocks further advance. Tell the party there is a vague, animal smell from beyond and a rusty winch on the wall. A successful bend bars will open the portcullis – the winch is useless. However, each attempt to force the portcullis carries a 30% chance of summoning the Librarian, in aggressive mood, to oppose the ‘vandals’. The portcullis leads to the dog pen (6).

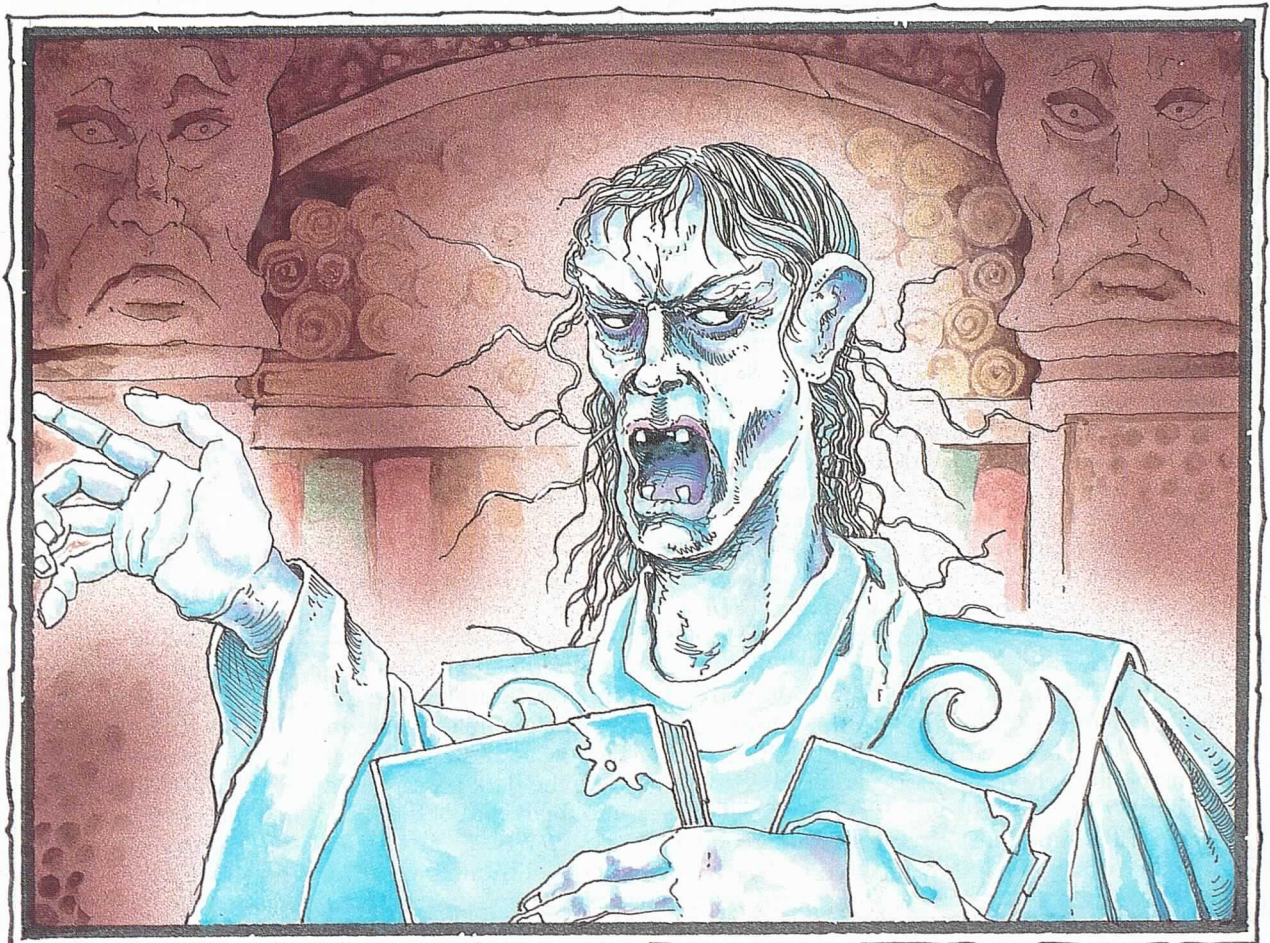
THE NORTHERN DOOR (unlocked)

There is a sign on the door. It declares: ‘Do not enter’. The door is not locked.

2 ANTECHAMBER TO READING ROOM (unlocked)

A flight of steps lead down into a small chamber. The floor is covered with a worn, elaborately patterned carpet. In one corner stands an unlit incense burner. On the north wall is a large, full length portrait of a scholarly looking man.

The painting is of Marcus Doombringer. It is 5ft tall by about 4ft wide. Doombringer is



depicted as an austere, gaunt figure in monkish garb. He is bald, has a long black beard, wild, dark eyes and appears to lean forward out of the frame. Behind him, as if in a mist are what appear to be three gateways. He clasps to his breast a book covered in some yellowish material. At his feet are two other books. One is dark brown, perhaps covered in leather, the other is covered with some grey, perhaps soft, material. The picture frame bears a small brass plaque. A literate member of the party might read:

"Marcus Doombringer, Librarian, knoweth the order of all things"

3 THE READING ROOM (unlocked)

The walls of this room are covered with shelves that extend 15ft from floor to ceiling. In the centre of the room is a long, heavy oak table and eight padded leather chairs. Three books lie on the table covered by a layer of dust. Poking out from beneath one of the books is a small object carved from bone. There is also a small step ladder, propped against a book shelf. The atmosphere in here is stuffy and sounds seem muffled.

Books on the north and east walls are historical and antiquarian. Here can be found old journals, creation myths and histories of the adventure world. If the players choose to spend at least 2 turns perusing these tomes they will come across 'Doombringer's discourse on the valuable past'. It is a dry book, but essentially expresses his view that libraries and museums provide 'gateways to past times'. Mention is made of his collection of magical tomes, reposing elsewhere in the library, which contain 'forbidden incantations'.

The books on the south wall are geographical and those on the west wall atlases. The three books lying on the table are of no interest, although one is an obscure work on languages. Beneath this book is the bone object – an EAR TRUMPET. Anyone placing the trumpet in his ear will be able to understand (but not speak) unfamiliar languages, including the Librarian's garbled speech.

4 THE BINDERY (unlocked)

The room is cluttered with equipment, piles of books and a workbench. Dried leather squares hang stiffly from the ceiling. An old man is seated at the bench busily working, without any light, on something you cannot quite see.

The workman is a WIGHT, the undead spirit of an old bookbinder. The creature senses the party's life force and, if anyone approaches close enough, will spring to the attack. The Wight will be joined by six SHADOWS (90% undetectable) which emerge from the sides of the room near the door. Roll to see if the party are surprised. These shadows were once apprentices to the bookbinder. While in the bindery, their lair, rolls for turning are made at -2.

WIGHT (AC5; MV12"; HD4 3; HP26; AT1; D 1-4; Plus drain 1 level; Only magic or silver weapons hit; AL LE; THACO 15)

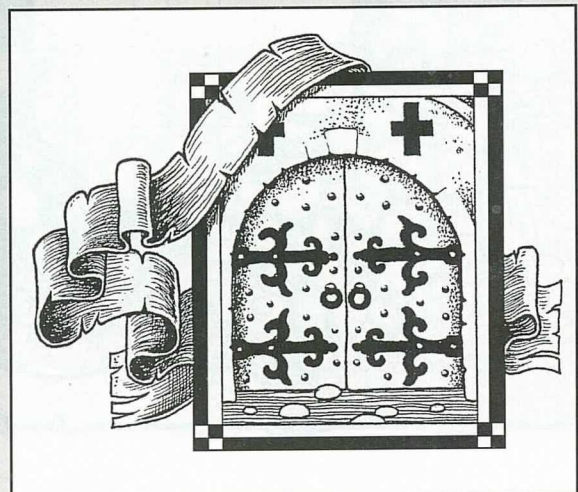
SHADOWS x6 (AC7; MV12"; HD 3 3; HP 16 each; AT1; D 2-5 plus strength drain; SD magic weapon to hit; THACO 16)

The only object of interest in the room is the book the WIGHT was 'working' on. The book's covers are grey and sticky. The stuff seems to be damp clay. This is the 3rd GATEWAY BOOK. If read it provides access to the 3rd DIMENSION – see later.

5 EAST CORRIDOR

You are in a long, carpeted corridor that extends eastwards about 90ft. At the end is an ornate brass statue reposing in a niche. Book shelves line the walls on either side, up to the ceiling 20ft above. About halfway down the corridor, in the north wall, is a solid iron door.

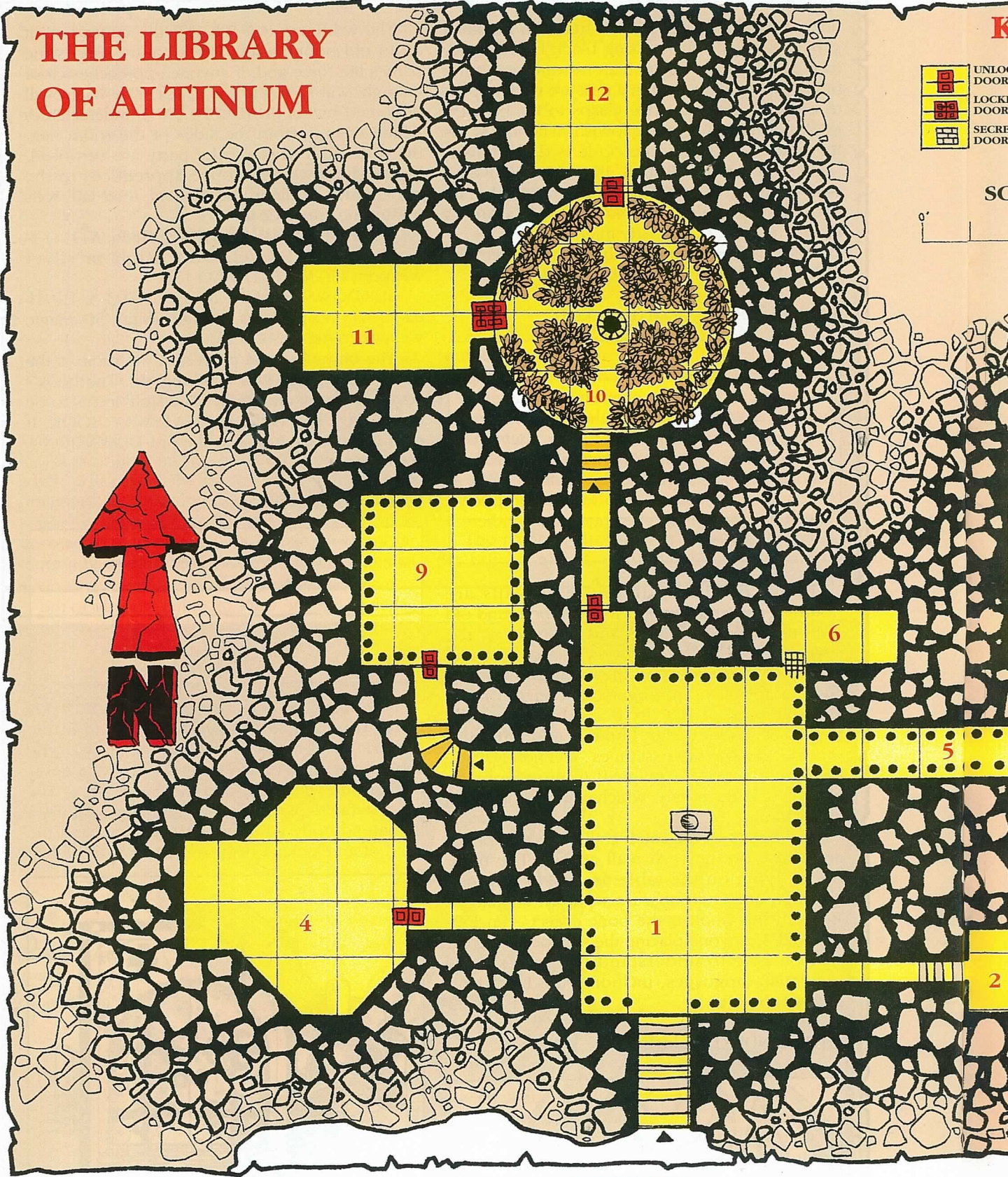
The iron door is locked shut with a WIZARD LOCK (the CHIME OF OPENING found in the Librarian's room will release the lock). The subject matter, of the books in the corridor, cover mathematics, geometry and esoteric subjects. The brass statue depicts an exotic god-like creature: a humanoid body adorned with six arms and the head of an elephant. Its posture seems to be that



THE LIBRARY OF ALTINUM

	UNLOCKED DOOR
	LOCKED DOOR
	SECRET DOOR

0'



ENTRANCE

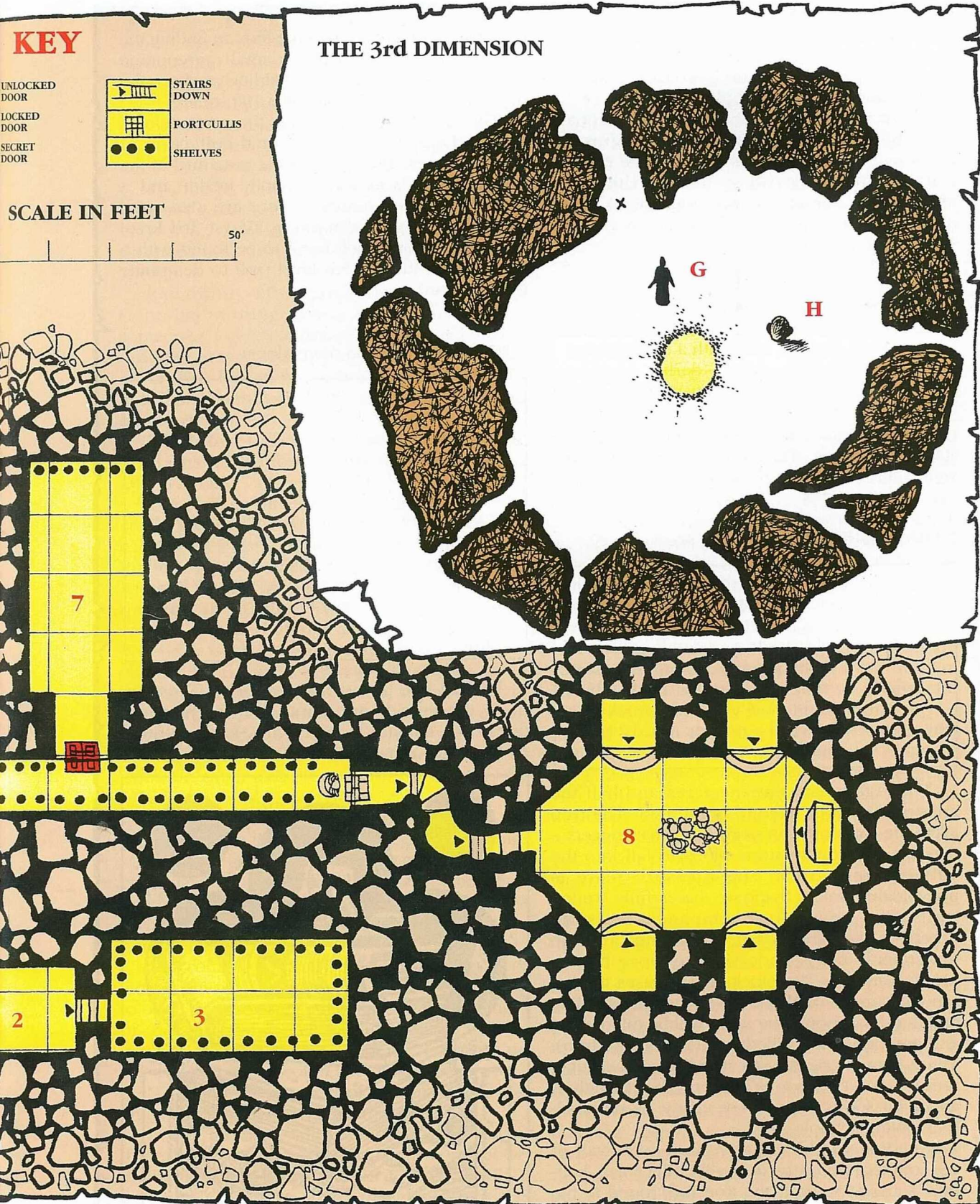
KEY

- UNLOCKED DOOR
- LOCKED DOOR
- SECRET DOOR
- STAIRS DOWN
- PORTCULLIS
- SHELVES

SCALE IN FEET

50'

THE 3rd DIMENSION



of either a fighting or dancing stance. Two hands are armed with swords, one with a flute and the other with a fan. The statue is worth 1200gp, but is heavy and requires 2 people to carry it.

There is a secret door behind the elephant god, but as soon as someone begins an examination the librarian will appear. He will drift down the corridor, behind the party mumbling to himself, disappearing after 1 melee round, if investigation of the statue stops. The secret door leads to the crypt (8).

6 THE DOG PEN (portcullis down)

This pokey room is thick with a sweet, sickly smell. There are two dark, humped somethings lying amongst dirty straw.

These are the corpses of two guard dogs that starved to death. They remain chained to the wall. There is nothing of use within the room.

7 THE MAGIC ROOM (locked – see 5 above)

You are standing on the threshold of a brightly lit room. The light source is a set of curious, glowing stones let into the ceiling. The floor is of polished wooden floorboards, but dulled by dust. The walls are wood panelled, except for the northern side which is covered with book shelves. The books are fabulously ornate, like nothing you have yet seen in the library.

The 10ft square entrance area and half the area of the room beyond is trapped. The trap takes the form of a pressure plate that triggers a massive 10ft square stone block to fall into the 10ft entrance area. The pressure plate is unavoidable unless flying or successfully scaling walls. The stone block completely seals the entrance to the room, crushing anyone underneath and is impossible to move by any physical means. The block also releases tons of sand to burst through the false wooden panelling and flood the room. The room will be full of sand and any occupants stifled in 10 minutes (1 turn). There is only one way to stop the sand deluge: remove any two books from the book shelves and a pit springs open beneath the stone block swallowing it whole.

Anyone searching the western-most wall of the southern doorway area will find a small, half-inch square socket. If the iron rod, found in the LIBRARY OFFICE is inserted the room's defenses will be de-activated. Thieves may NOT deactivate this trap with their find/remove traps chance, but

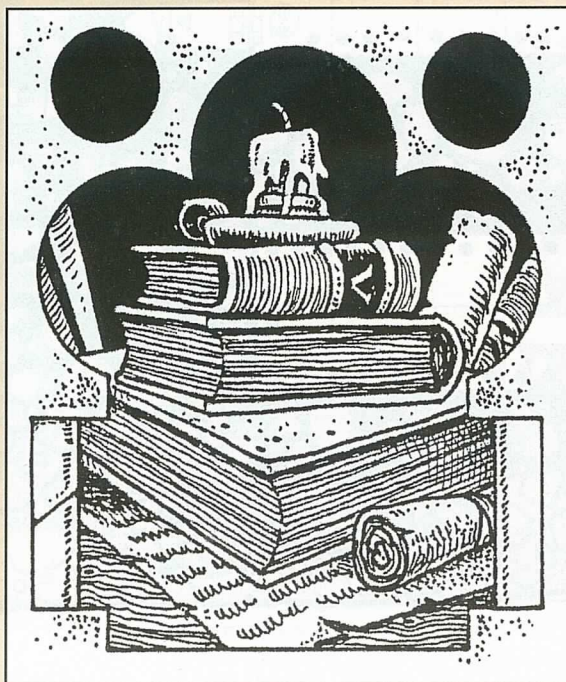
may detect the presence of the trap on finding the square socket. Also allow a small percentage chance of someone noticing hairline cracks in the floor or ceiling in the shape of a 10ft square.

The object of the trap was the protection of Marcus Doombringer's personal collection of magical tomes. The titles include 'a manual of the flesh golems', 'a manual of bodily health' and 'a book of exalted deeds'. There are also spell books for mages containing all 1st-3rd level spells. Allow one spell book to be found with a selection of 4th and 5th level (roll to determine the selection).

8 THE CRYPT (behind secret door)

Before you gapes the maw of a dank, flagstoned chamber. The place is cold and dark, save for the dim illumination from your torches. There seem to be two alcoves on the northern wall and two opposite on the southern wall. Each is reached by a short flight of steps. Opposite, in the middle of the chamber is a group of six, lifesize statues. They aren't in any discernable order, it's as if they were live people who were frozen where they stood. Beyond the statues seems to be a raised dais bearing a large stone coffin.

Each alcove face contains a niche. Those on the southern side are empty, but the northern ones each contain stone coffins. Each coffin is carved with a name. The inscriptions and the



contents are described below:, starting with the westernmost niche:

Rudic, Librarian follower of Doombringer. Contains a skeleton and a book. The book's pages will crumble to dust if handled.

Snoth, Librarian follower of Rudic. Contains three large gems worth 50gp each.

Thumbar, Librarian follower of Snoth. Contains a skeleton.

Dotric, Librarian follower of Thumbar. Contains a skeleton, a rotten leather bag and 1900gp.

Radzibble, Librarian follower of Dotric. Contains nothing save a large black bag. If someone succeeds in detecting magic, tell them it radiates magic and appears to be a BAG OF HOLDING. It is, in fact, a BAG OF DEVOURING, Radzibble's only valuable possession. It devoured his corpse too.

Wisebrow, Librarian follower of Radzibble. Contains a skeleton and a sword, a +2 LIFESTEALER.

The statues once stood before each of the coffin niches. If examined it will be seen that each bears a name matching one of the coffins. Rudic is a crook-backed figure holding a stick. Snoth is fat and haughty. Dotric peers at a book through spectacles. Radzibble is dressed in eastern garb and carries a great pile of books. Wisebrow is straight-backed and holds a book in one hand and a great sword in the other.

The large coffin on the dais at the eastern end of the crypt belongs to Marcus Doombringer. An inscription reads:

Doombringer, Founder of the Library at Altinum. Great was his search for truth. May his knowledge shine beyond death

On top of the coffin is a stone effigy of the great man. Like the painting (2) it depicts a figure in monkish garb gripping a great book to his chest. The man was bald, but a great beard flows down over the book to his waist. The book seems to have a cover of lizard-skin or some other horny leather.

The coffin completely defeats any magical or violent physical attempts to open it. The only way to open it is to move the lid. A combined strength of 30 is required to shift the stone lid. As soon as movement begins, a MAGIC MOUTH appears on the wall behind the coffin and declares:

"Doom to the disturber of Doombringer's rest and a curse upon all who aid the defiler".

In fact no harm will befall anyone. However, if the lid is moved further another, more subtle, enchantment is activated: an ENLARGEMENT spell will increase the size of the lid by 80% for 35 melee rounds. Thus the lid will require a combined strength of 54 or more to move.

Inside the coffin is the shrivelled, mummified

remains of Marcus Doombringer. At his side are a pair of gauntlets, a rod and a leather book (as shown in the painting - 2). These items are GUANTLETS OF DEXTERITY, a ROD OF SMITING (15 charges) and the 2ND GATEWAY BOOK enabling access to the 2nd DIMENSION. A SPEAK WITH THE DEAD spell will allow 1 question only from the mummy before it collapses and disintegrates into dust.

9 THE WEST WING (unlocked)

Before you is a half open door. An unbearable stench emanates from the room beyond.

(If the players' decide to open the door tell them:) The books and book shelves which once adorned this room have been cast down and piled into a low mound. Atop the mound is an unspeakable, purplish 'something' with a squat body from which twelve, thick tentacles sprout. Six of the tentacles have hold of three bloated, human corpses. The creature senses your presence and uses its free tentacles to propel itself forward down the mound towards you.

This creature is a Fungoid Shambler which strayed here from the third dimension while the Librarian was hiding the globe. Two of the corpses belong to villagers taken from Altinum and the third is the mage, sent to investigate events before the party were hired. If the corpses (AC10) are hit they burst and release a 20ft diameter spore cloud. This immediately causes 2-12pts of damage to those engulfed by the cloud and, unless a CURE DISEASE spell is applied within 1 week, the spores will sprout and kill the victim(s) in an unspeakable manner. The destruction of a corpse also releases 2 tentacles with which the Shambler can engage the party.

FUNGOID SHAMBLER: (AC4; MV6"; HD10; HP: Body=26pts, 12 x Tentacles=6hp each; AT6 (3); D 1-6pts/tentacle; SA on a natural "20" a tentacle will wrap around a victim, pinnion them as a HOLD SPELL and squeeze for an automatic 1-4pts of damage each round. A victim must be freed by someone else. The creature is immune to SLEEP or charms. LIGHTNING regenerates it point for point. COLD does double damage. INT semi; AL CN; Size L; THACO 10).

At start 6 tentacles are free and 6 tentacles hold the corpses, two per corpse. Each time a corpse is destroyed 2 tentacles are freed to fight the party. Each tentacle is 10ft long and all must be destroyed before anyone can get close enough to attack the body.

If the room is searched the party will only find obscure books and human bones.

10 THE GARDEN

You seem to be standing on the edge of an overgrown garden at the base of circular shaft 30ft deep. The vegetation is lush and full of the gentle hum of insect life. To left and right pathways lead off into the undergrowth. Straight ahead is another path and a few yards down a construction that might be a wellhead.

The garden is lush but heavily overgrown. Anyone with a skill in herbalism, eg Druids, will be able to identify a fungus that aids healing. There will be sufficient for 10 bites. Each bite heals 2-5pts. The pathways run north/south, east/west and round the perimeter.

The garden contains the following locations, remember each is partly obscured by vegetation:

A. An alcove containing 6 GIANT TICKS that will attack anyone who gets too close.

GIANT TICK x 6 (AC3; MV 3"; HD2; HP12 per Tick; AT 1; D 1-4 + blood drain for 1-6 pts with a 50% chance of fatal disease; Size-S; THACO 16).

B. An alcove containing a broken statue of Sod, the ancient god of the garden. On the pedestal is the legend "Eee, its turned out nice again."

C. An empty alcove.

D. An apparently empty alcove containing the remains of a knife. The intricate, carved ivory handle is intact but the blade appears to have been 'melted'. The alcove is the lair of a GREY OOZE. The creature has blended itself into the side of the alcove and will attempt to engulf anyone who comes within 5ft of the knife handle.

GREY OOZE (AC 8; MV 1"; HD 3+3; HP24; AT 1; D 2-16; SA Eats metal; SD Immune to spells, except lightning; THACO 16)

E. An alcove containing a book bound in living 'flesh'. The covering is an unwholesome yellow colour and continuously writhes. It seems to have crawled in here all by itself. This is the 1st GATEWAY BOOK that enables access to the 1st DIMENSION.

The Well. The well shaft is in the very middle of the garden. It is 20ft deep and provides fresh water. The sides are covered in moss and slippery (-30% on CLIMB WALLS). The well bucket and winding gear are sound and will accommodate one hobbit-sized humanoid. Unfortunately, the neglected well has attracted a WATER WEIRD. There is the equivalent of 12gp in the form of various coinage at the bottom of the well pool which is 4ft deep.

WATER WEIRD (AC4; MV 12"; HD 3+3; HP 15; SA attacks as 6HD, save vs paralysis or be dragged under the water; SD sharp weapons do 1pt of damage only. Immune to most spells; THACO 13).

11 THE OFFICE (locked)

The door to this room is ornately carved and contains numerous panes of glass. Peering inside you can see a commodious place of study. The door is locked.

(If the door is forced): The room is small and cosy. Facing the door is a large, bare desk and comfortable, leather-padded writing chair. The wall behind is covered with a rich tapestry depicting a great ship under sail. In the north-west corner is an intricately carved, ebony cabinet.

The door is locked but can be forced. The cabinet is not locked. It contains thick, leatherbound journals. Each bears a gold-leafed name as follows: Doombringer, Rudic, Snoth, Thumbar, Dotric, Radzibble and Wisebrow. An examination of 1 turn's duration will reveal the journals to be the diaries of successive librarians. 2 further turns examining any two diaries (but not Doombringer's) will reveal interesting, but disturbing facts: The successor librarians were afflicted by violent headaches and phrases like 'I am not alone' and 'he has been talking to me' abound.

Expending at least 2 turns examining Doombringer's diary reveals the following facts: He was obsessed by learning and claims to have read all the library books. Elsewhere he mentions his acquisition of three curious books that provide gateways to other dimensions and new worlds of knowledge. Where these books may be found and what they contain is not mentioned.

Part of the surface of the desk is scorched. The drawers are empty save for writing equipment and a three inch long iron rod with a half inch square socket at one end. The rod does not radiate magic, it is the device by which the trap in room 7 may be de-activated.

12 THE LIBRARIAN'S ROOM (unlocked)

(If the doorbell sounds): As you push the door open a small bell jingles. The room seems to be the personal quarters of someone. Thick rugs lie on the flagstones, there is a simple bed butted against the west wall, a table and chair in one corner and an empty fireplace. A dim light emanates from a stone hanging by cord from the ceiling. There is a faint smell of damp.

(If the doorbell is deactivated): The room seems to be the personal quarters of someone. Thick rugs lie on the flagstones, there is a simple bed butted against the west wall, a table and chair in one corner and an empty fireplace. A dim light emanates from a stone hanging by cord from the ceiling. There is a faint smell of damp.

Note – When the door is opened a small bell tinkles. It could be prior detected by a thief and removed. If not it summons the librarian in 1-3 +1 melee rounds. What he says will be garbled, unless translated to:

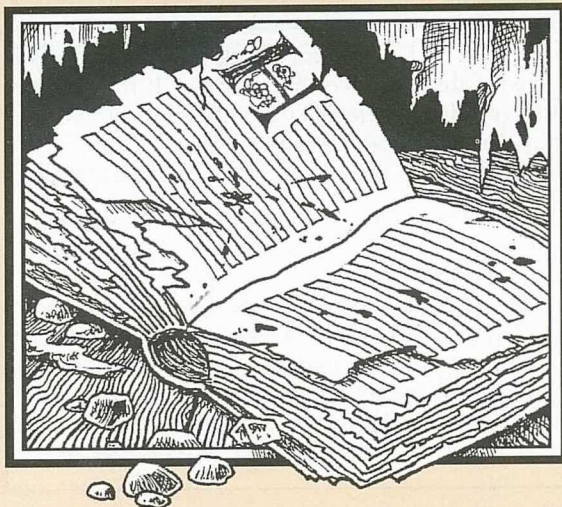
“No hawkers. No hawkers! If you aren’t tradesmen you should have made an appointment. These chambers are private, be off with you!”

If his command is not heeded the librarian will attack.

The room is permanently illuminated by a stone on which a continual LIGHT spell has been cast. Beneath the bed is a locked wooden chest containing the few personal belongings of Thadribble: a jar of KEOGHTON’S OINTMENT (5 applications), a book entitled ‘the study of variations in the fur of bears’, a woollen vest, three silk squares and a pouch containing 16gp.

In the northern wall is a latrine and next to this a closet door. The closet contains two cloaks, a walking stick, an old pair of leather boots and some baggy breeches.

A table is crammed into the north-east corner. On top is a journal and a dried up ink well. Anyone examining the journal for 1 turn will note it is the diary of Thadribble the librarian. A further 2 turns of examination will reveal that the entries for the past year are one continuous, rambling, incoherent text done in two radically different kinds of hand writing. Before the text begins



there are entries complaining of a persistent headache and the fact that the writer feels ‘he is close by’.

Beside the table, set into the north wall, is a fireplace. The chimney extends up through the rock 30ft to the surface. Cooking utensils are stacked to one side. Behind a secret panel at the back of the fireplace is a niche. It contains a CHIME OF OPENING (8 charges) and a pouch containing 3gps.

THE GATEWAYS

When a GATEWAY BOOK is casually examined it will be seen to contain curious runes. If the runes are studied for at least 1 turn they conjure a portal in the form of two stone columns and an iron gate. A shimmering, indeterminate white light can be seen beyond the portal. The gateway remains in the Material plane for 4 turns before disappearing. Each gateway may be summoned only TWICE before the book disintegrates. Anyone stepping through the portal will appear to be swallowed up by the light. No sounds whatsoever will reach anyone waiting by the portal. The sensation of being lost in a sea of light and of falling is exactly the same when returning to the Material plane. Obtaining the item hidden on any dimension will instantly return the players to the library and the exact spot where they read the gateway book, even if the portal has ceased to be on the Material plane.

THE FIRST DIMENSION (via the book of flesh)

The moment you step across the portal’s threshold you are lost in a sea of white light. You can see nothing around you and your body is sensed but not seen. For a moment you experience a sense of falling, then find yourself standing in front of the portal, beneath a great oak tree. All around you are trees and tangled undergrowth. A great, silent forest wilderness.

Any character who can fly or who climbs to the top of a tree, will be able to see the forest continuing endlessly in all directions. There are no hills, clearings or any discernable landmarks. Hacking through the forest is hard work. Movement is reduced to 2” per minute per person, and they must rest for 30 minutes after each period of 30 minutes spent cutting. The forest is actually a very advanced form of the 6th level mage spell PERMANENT ILLUSION. If anyone in the party suspects an illusion their attempt to disbelieve requires a save vs spell (you should roll this secretly). If the character is successful they can tell the other members of the party. The other members must also roll, in the

same way, to disbelieve but at the bonus of +4. A DISPEL MAGIC will also end the illusion.

If the forest illusion dissolves the characters will find themselves in a field of red poppies opposed by a fierce GREEN DRAGON.

The forest is gone, instead you are standing in a field surrounded by knee high red poppies. There is a great bellowing roar from behind, and you turn to see a Green Dragon moving purposefully towards you.

The Green Dragon is also an illusion – a PROGRAMMED ILLUSION – activated by the disappearance of the forest. The field of poppies is real but ends after 1 mile in any direction. Beyond is open savanna/grassland. Whichever direction the party takes they will find a crude wooden hut after walking several miles. The hut is deserted. It contains nothing but straw and a crude wooden table. On the table is a loaf of stale bread and a GOLD KEY. The key is the ONLY means of opening the box hidden in the 2nd DIMENSION. As soon as a character picks up the key the whole party is transported back to the place where the 1st GATEWAY BOOK was 'read'.

THE SECOND DIMENSION (via the book of leather)

The moment you step across the portal's threshold you are lost in a sea of white light. You can see nothing around you and your body is sensed but not seen. For a moment you experience a sense of falling then find yourself standing in front of the portal, beneath a black starless sky. A thin crescent moon casts a baleful light over a flat featureless landscape. You seem to be standing on the shingle beach of a slowly flowing river. On closer inspection the 'shingle' is revealed to be shards of bone. About fifty yards away, up river is a landing place with a boat. A dark, hooded figure stands beside the boat beckoning to you.

The plane of this dimension is infinite. If the party sets off in any direction, except towards the boatman, they will always find themselves back at the portal after having walked, apparently, several miles. When the party move towards the boatman give them the following information:

The boatman is cowed and cloaked, so you cannot see his features, but the hands that clasp the steering oar are skeletal. At your approach the boatman turns towards you and beckons you onto the landing stage.

"Greetings! Only one person may pass over the Styx at a time. Let the youngest be first and last."

If anyone steps into the boat give them, privately, the following information, as soon as the words are spoken the boat glides swiftly away from the landing.

(For the passenger's ear): "Traveller, do not touch the waters of Styx".

(For those who remain behind): The boat glides away from the landing and moves swiftly upstream. In a moment it is lost in a swirling mist.

The boat cannot be followed by anyone (even flying). Any character touching the water must save or die. A character who saves immediately falls into a coma from which they cannot be revived until they return to the Material world. (If no means can be found to revive the character, they recover by themselves after 1D6 turns).

(For the passenger's ear): The boat glides up river silently, save for the creak of the boatman's oar. Your limbs begin to feel heavy and you feel very tired.

The occupant will find his or herself ageing. By the time the boat arrives at the island (see below) they will have aged 20 years for every 10 years of their beginning age, ie a person aged 30 years at the start of the journey will be 90 years old at the end. A system shock roll must be made to see if they survive this process. If they do not survive tell the rest of the party the following (if they do survive see below):

(For those who remain behind): Out of the swirling mist returns the boat. As it bumps against the landing you see your companion lying dead in the bottom of the boat. At least you think it is your companion, the clothes are the same but his/her features are those of a very old man/woman.

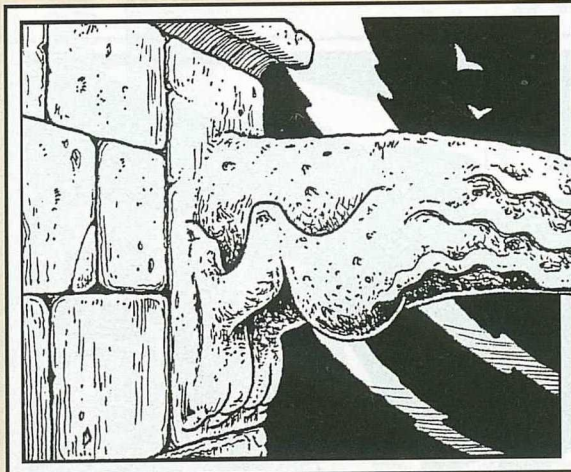
"Who else that is young and firm will brave the waters of Styx?" commands the boatman.

If the corpse is returned to the Material world the ageing process is seen to be an illusion and the character only comotose (recovery after 1D6 turns). The boatman has nothing to say about the journey or what happened to the character. If attacked he simply disappears and returns after 2 melee rounds. The boat will not move without the boatman.

(If the passenger survives ageing): At last the boat reaches another landing beside a dismal, stone island. All is gloom and silence. The boatman stands motionless behind you.

If the character decides to stay in the boat, it will begin the journey back down stream in 1 turn. Any ageing effect will be completely reversed by the time the boat docks at the starting place.

If the character decides to get out of the boat they will find the island small and featureless, except for an iron strong box set into the rock and beside it a simple wooden cup, inscribed 'Chalice of Youth'.



The box cannot be moved and will only open by means of the GOLD KEY brought from the 1st dimension. Inside will be found a spell scroll. This is the only means by which the wall on the 3rd dimension can be breached. The words written on the scroll declare:

"Oh parti-coloured sphere crack asunder."

The cup contains some dark liquid. If the character chooses to drink the cup is transformed into a fantastic golden chalice and the liquid into a gorgeous, effervescent elixir. The boatman will not leave the island if the character tries to remove the chalice. He will allow the scroll to be removed.

When a character, who did not drink from the

chalice, takes the scroll he/she and the rest of the party will be transported back to the place where the 2nd Gateway book was read. The character will have recovered his/her original age.

If a character drinks from the chalice the following effects occur on the return journey. The ageing process is reversed and the character reverts to their former age. However, the chalice liquid causes the character to grow younger. By the time the boat arrives at the starting place the character will be a baby. Once back through the portal the 'baby' will revert to his/her correct age in 2 turns.

THE THIRD DIMENSION (via the book of clay)

The moment you step across the portal's threshold you are lost in sea of white light. You can see nothing around you and your body is sensed but not seen. For a moment you experience a sense of falling, then find yourself standing in front of the portal, in a 10ft wide, rough hewn, stone passageway. To the north the passageway winds away into the darkness. To the south it opens out into what may be a cavern.

If the characters choose to go south read the following description. If the characters choose to go north they will walk for some time and arrive at one of the other cavern entrances, to the northeast or northwest (see map), at this point read the following description:

You are standing on the edge of a lofty cavern. It appears to be about 70ft across and there are other passageways around the perimeter. In the centre of the cavern a large, humanoid figure is silhouetted against a dome that emits a shimmering, multi-coloured light. The dome is 10ft in diameter. There also seems to be a black 4ft high stump, protruding from the cavern floor, close to the dome.

The 'stump' is a giant, bloated head protruding from the ground. The eyes are pure black and the face is contorted into a sour grimace. This head controls the humanoid figure, a CLAY GOLEM, by telepathy. If anyone enters the cavern the head turns towards them and commands:

"Do not enter the cavern! Return whence you came!"

The command acts (once per day) like a SUGGESTION SPELL (duration 6 hours). Anyone failing their save will wander away down the passageway, as if in a trance, and leave the dimension via the portal. The head can also cast a LIMITED MIRROR IMAGE (once per day) creating 2 mirror images of itself.

THE HEAD (AC10 (it is not regarded as prone); MV None; HD 8; HP50; AT1; D Bite for 1-10; AL CE; INT AV; THACO 12)

If characters persist in advancing into the cavern, the head will order the golem to attack. If the head is destroyed, providing the Golem has not gone berserk, the Golem will simply stop.

CLAY GOLEM (AC7; MV 7"; HD 50hps; AT 1 (2); D 3-30; SA Attacks as 11 hd + haste for 3m/r; SD Only magical blunt weapons hit; Immune to most spells; THACO 10)

There is a 1% cumulative chance per melee round of the Golem turning berserk. If this happens the Golem will attack the nearest object (character or the head). It will continue its attack until either it or its victim is destroyed. It will do so even if the head is destroyed during the

combat. If the victim is the head the Golem takes 3 melee rounds to destroy it.

The magic barrier that secures the globe, behaves in a similar way to a PRISMATIC SPHERE (except that the shimmering does not cause blindness). It can only be dispelled if the scroll from the 2nd Dimension is read aloud. As soon as the characters are able to lay hands on the globe the whole party, including any who perished, will be transported back to the place where the 3rd Gateway Book was read.

The globe must be returned to the pedestal in the centre of the main hall (1) within 1 turn or the Librarian will intervene casting any remaining spells for the day to defeat the party. As soon as the party can replace the globe it will activate and the Librarian will fade for good.

FINAL NOTE

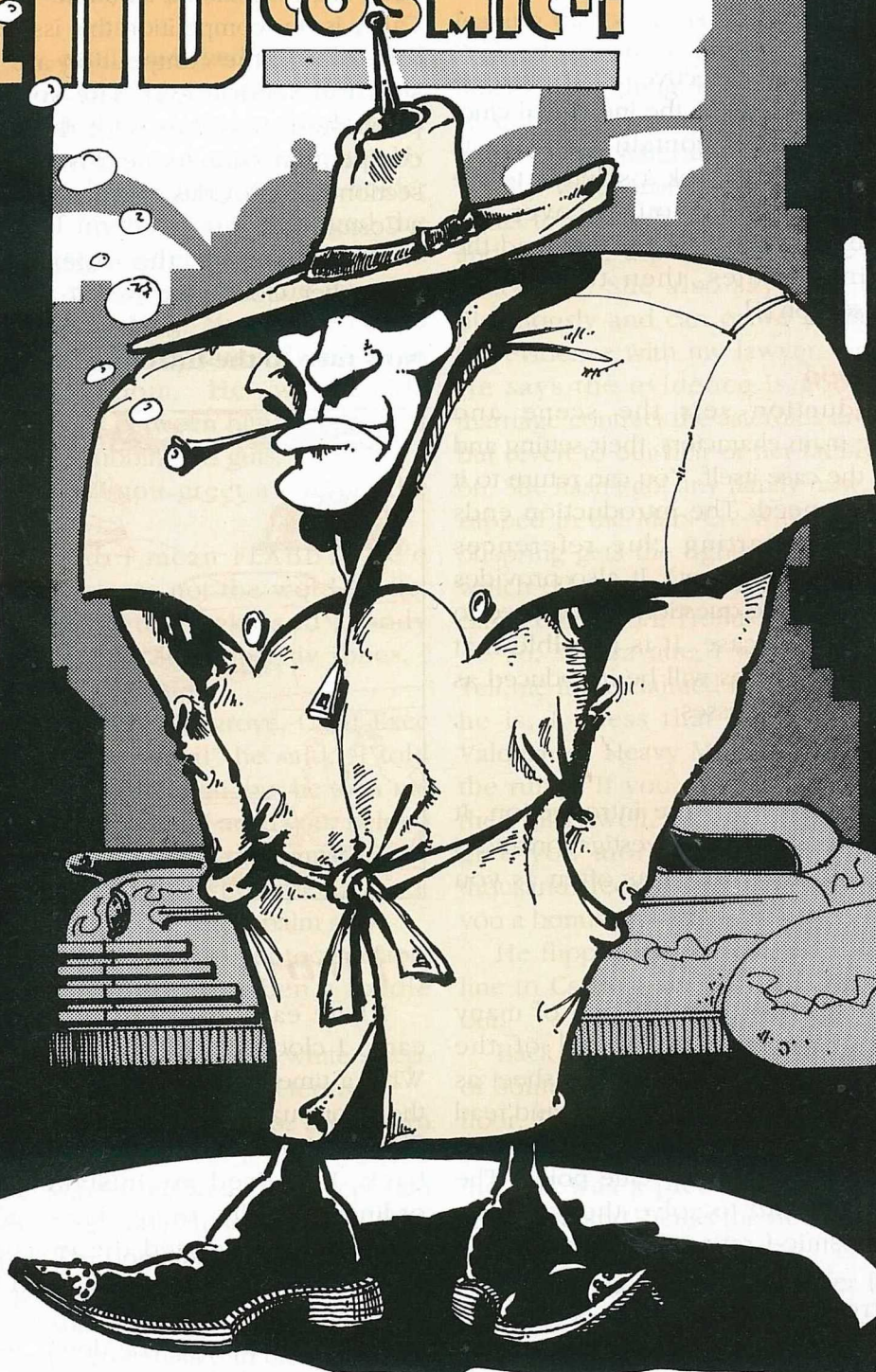
This adventure is designed to be a difficult task for the party, but the DM should gauge the strength of the party and adjust things accordingly, for example in the BINDERY there needn't be as many shadows as specified etc. Such adjustments should be made before the dungeon is started.



And now that you've completed the adventure –
don't forget to take your books back . . .

SERB

Cravatte
COSMIC-i



BRAND

THE ROCK SHARK CAPER

Introducing Serb Cravatte, Cosmic-I in a solve-it-yourself whodunnit?

This is a magazine about adventure games so, rather than give you 'another piece of fiction', we've decided to give you a mystery to investigate instead.

Read this first

You are the reader-detective. Your object is to solve the case by reading the individual clue-points. The clue-points contain all the facts required. Your aim is to seek a solution to the case that fits the facts you uncover. To investigate the Rock Shark Caper first read the following simple rules, then turn to the Introduction, section [1].

The Introduction

The introduction sets the scene and introduces the main characters, their setting and the nature of the case itself. You can return to it as often as you need. The introduction ends with a series of starting clue references (repeated on the case sheet). It also provides the 'case objective', the question(s) you need to answer to solve the case. It is possible that additional case objectives will be introduced as your investigation progresses.

The Case Sheet

The case sheet follows the introduction. It enables you to conduct your investigation and is self-explanatory. Return to it as often as you like.

The Clues

Clue references occur at the end of many clue points (just like at the end of the introduction). Note them on the case sheet as you find them. When you decide to go and read a particular clue, tick it as visited on the case sheet. Reading a clue costs 1 'clue point'. The fewer clues you read to solve the case, the better your Cosmic-I rating (see the solution below).

Clues introduce information for you to consider. Read them carefully, they may contain facts that will prove important to your

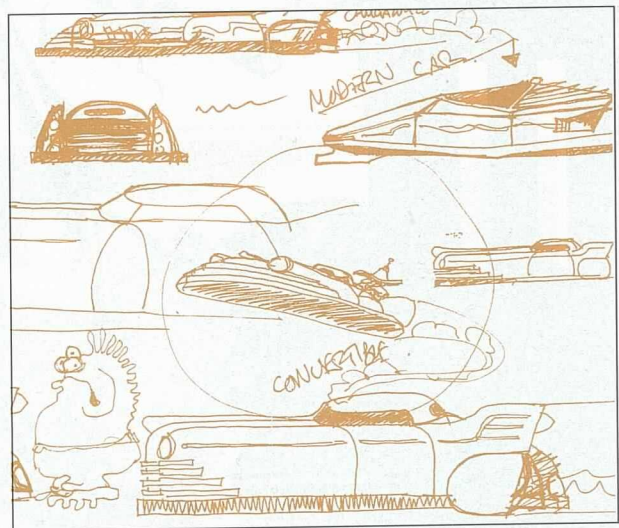
investigation. On the other hand they may contain information that is false or simply inaccurate. You are the investigator, so you decide what is fact and what is fiction.

The Solution

When you think you have discovered the facts, that answer the case objectives you have been set, formulate a solution. The Rock Shark Caper is our competition this issue. Instructions for entering the competition are given in the solution section [34]. The solution will be published, together with the names of the competition winners next issue. The solution section also provides a means to rate yourself as a Cosmic-I.

These are all the rules you need to remember. Good luck!

Now turn to the Introduction, section [1]



[1] Introduction

I hate early morning rising and this was early. I clocked the timer, zero-six-thirty. Zit! What a time to be woken by some joker riding the door buzzer. I staggered out to the hall and flipped the latch. The moment the door swished back, I realised my mistake. It wasn't no ordinary novelty, froggy kiss-o-gram, but, no sooner had I gogged the jovian toadie his tongue was round my waist and I was hooked and gobbled.

So there I was, upside down, in the toadie's gullet. It was dark, stifling and smelly. Anyone

else would have panicked, but not Serb Cravatte, Cosmic-I. No way, I simply turned catatonic.

Some time later, the toadie stopped waddling and gave a wretch. Without ceremony, I was dumped on a rock-hard floor. My catatonia made the right dummy, 'cos I heard some big-shot croak the toadie thus:

"Hey, Max! What you playin' at? This guy's dead."

That was my cue. I switched my psi out of DEAD and into ACTION! A quick kick to get me going connected with something squishy. I flipped back, half-rolled and sprang upright. My one shot special whizzed from its wrist-holder into the palm of my hand and I gogged the room. It was designer-deluxe. No plas-crud anyplace. Black marble floor, wide wooden desk and leather seating. Must have cost a zillion creds. The toadie, zip-gun in hand, faced me across the room. He was kinda inconvenienced, 'cos between him and me was this flab-humanoid rubbing his guts.

"Zit! Is this how you greet a client?" the flabby guy rasped.

When I say flab I mean FLABBY. He'd Odeed on cals. Big was not the word. Bullet head, chubby rouged cheeks and a body swathed in peach an' blue anti-grav robes. I clocked him for a jovian dude.

"My name's Torquil Valdegrove, Chief Exec of Valdegrove Heavy Metal" he said, "I told Max, my valet, to summon you, but he took me literal and brought you here. I need your help to sort a conflag. Now, what are your terms?"

I popped back my one shot special and, acting sociable, gave him a jovian palm slap.

"Sorry 'bout the rumble, I'm not too sociable in the morning – 'specially when a toadie swallows me."

Trying to look professional in a white sleep-suit tinged with toadie crud, I stated terms:

"200 Cs a day, plus expenses. Strictly in advance. Deal me info."

Valdegrove, waved me to a chair, activated his grav robes and glided behind his desk.

"Its like this, I'm originally from Jove City, I expect you guessed. Once I was just an ore trucker with a sub-light tug. I made a living, sure, but I was more interested in having a good time. I met this femme, she was big – like they

are on Jove – but mean. Her name was Lucretia Krentz. A few months after our marriage contract I found out she married me bigimously. I threw her out, she disappeared from view. That was twenty-five Sol ago."

"Well, since then, I've worked hard and built a big empire – alloys, fabrication, distribution – that kinda thing. I never did re-marry, got cloned instead. I came back here to retire, leaving the business in my son-clone's hands. When I decide to take the paradise tour he inherits everything. Leastways I thought he did. Now I find there is a slight problem. I guess you'd call it a paternity suit".

"My wife, from whom I got first mineral rights to a bunch of asteroids, has reappeared and with her a party whom, she claims, is our first-born. She also says she didn't marry bigamously and can prove it. She's deposited the evidence with my lawyer, Lincoln Lincoln. He says the evidence is good. Under our marriage contract the asteroids are mine for life, but revert to our heir or her family when I pass on. She hasn't got any family now, they were all zapped in the Mars-Civ-War, so when I go our offspring gets the rights. The question now is, which offspring – my son-clone Benito or this claimed first-born Troilus 'Valdegrove'?"

"So, Mr Cravatte, I want you to investigate. Tell me if the claimed first-born really is legit. If he is, I guess that tears the heart out of Valdegrove Heavy Metal, leaving my son-clone the rump. If you can prove he's an imposter then all is well. Go see Lincoln Lincoln, he'll give you more background. Here's three thousand creds to start and the right result earns you a bonus of another five."

He flipped me a credit card. I never pass a line to Cs, so I accepted the case and ducked out.

Back at my place I found a flat, square piece of some white substance waiting on the hall floor. Someone must have slipped it under the door. I fetched my magni-analyser which told me this was a piece of paper, not plas-pap substitute and, here's the novelty, someone had written on it:

"If you know what's good fer U" the magni-analyser translated the scribble, "droppe this case – else you might get rubbed out, signed A Frend."

I don't read or write, after all we live in an aural-visual culture, so it was a good job I had the mag-an. The note must have been written by some out-of-system dook.

Case Objective – Is Troilus Valdegrove the legitimate heir of Torquil Valdegrove, Chief-exec of Valdegrove Heavy Metal?

Starting Clues – Lincoln Lincoln [2]

Mrs Valdegrove [3]

Troilus Valdegrove [15]

Benito Valdegrove [17]

Case Sheet: The Rock Shark Caper

The investigation began with the introduction [1]. Starting case objective: Is Troilus Valdegrove the legitimate heir of Torquil Valdegrove, Chief-exec of Valdegrove Heavy Metal?

Clue references appear at the end of some sections. Note the reference number in the box [] and the clue name, they may not appear again. Make a mark inside the () when you decide to visit/read a clue, eg 3. [15] Troilus Valdegrove (x).

You may always return and re-read, at no extra clue point cost, a clue you visited earlier. You should not read clues for which you have found no reference. The fewer clues you visit, the better your detective rating. There are 32 clues in this case.

Clues

1. [2] Lincoln Lincoln ()
2. [3] Mrs Valdegrove ()
3. [4] C. Fax 179 ()
4. [5] L. Lincoln's Murder ()
5. [6] L. Lincoln's Maid ()
6. [7] Anything Missing ()
7. [8] L. Lincoln's Room ()
8. [9] The Conservatory ()
9. [10] The Grounds ()
10. [11] Nature Freaks ()
11. [12] Forensic ()
12. [13] Check Out Holo Disc ()
13. [14] Event Inquest ()
14. [15] Troilus Valdegrove 1 ()
15. [16] Troilus Valdegrove 2 ()
16. [17] Benito Valdegrove 1 ()
17. [18] Benito Valdegrove 2 ()
18. [19] Fix-U-Kwik ()
19. [20] CI – Central Database ()

20. [21] CI – Central Database ()
21. [22] CI – Central Database ()
22. [23] CI – Central Database ()
23. [24] CI – Central Database ()
24. [25] CI – Central Database ()
25. [26] CI – Central Database ()
26. [27] CI – Central Database ()
27. [28] CI – Central Database ()
28. [29] CI – Central Database ()
29. [30] CI – Central Database ()
30. [31] CI – Central Database ()
31. [32] CI – Central Database ()
32. [33] Sidney Stum ()

There are 32 clues on this case

Total clues visited = ()

Central Database Menu [20]

The database menu itself is NOT a clue, ie you can visit it as many times as you want at no penalty. However, it does provide references to clues which must be noted on your Case Sheet, if you intend visiting them.

[2] Lincoln Lincoln

Lincoln Lincoln was off-planet, but over the vid-view his droid-double invited me down town. It only took a few minutes on the pedway, but when I arrived I was too late.

As I stepped through the door, or what was left of it, the droid-double's head greeted me from the middle of the room. Its torso was splattered behind the desk. There was also a nasty charred hole in the wall where a stasis security box had been overloaded and forced. Malone from Robocide was examining the body.

"Serb, how you doin'? Check this." He addressed me as he spoke into his record-opad, "Aggravated entry, double blaster bot-cide. Pro-job. Neg-clues."

Robocide boys don't waste words.

Just then the real Lincoln Lincoln appeared on the desk vid-view.

"I'm off-planet. What's happened?"

Malone gave LL the run down, and asked him if he knew why someone would want to bust in and blast him, or rather his droid-double.

"Absolutely no idea, besides remote interrogation shows my security is ace, my property is untouched."

"You sure?" I butted in and relayed my interest.

“Positive.”

“That includes Mrs Valdegrove’s papers?”

“Certainly” replied LL “but they arn’t papers they’re holo-vids of witnesses alledgedly testifying Mrs Valdegrove didn’t marry bigamously.”

“So they’ll stand up in court?” I asked.

“Literally. They walk, they talk and they could ruin Valdegrove, if they are genuine. Presumably that’s why he hired you?”

“Presumably, but maybe I could see the holo-vids?” I wheedled.

“Nix, they belong to Mrs Valdegrove, professional ethics prohibit me from showing them to you without Mrs Valdegrove’s permission. Why not go ask her? I believe she is on Pleasuredrome.”

Mrs Valdegrove [3]



[3] Mrs Valdegrove’s account

Mrs Valdegrove was off planet on Pleasuredrome, the Mars-orbiting leisure station. It would take me too long to get there on a shuttle, so I went to Vidcom Central, got myself wired up and went as a holo projection. Pity ‘cos Pleasuredrome was a buzz.

First, two purple-skinned beauties from Alpha Centauri breezed straight through me, then I encountered a gaggle of Zig-Zag-9 ruminants chewing psychedellic Cud-cudbrite. If only I had really been there, but I wasn’t so I knuckled down to work.

How big was Mrs Valdegrove? As big as a whale I guess. If such things still existed which they don’t. Triple-X BIG, just like the girls are in Jove City. She was dressed in a filmy static robe and floated in the middle of her apartment on a zero-grav field. The static robe shimmered a pretty pink. It left everything to the imagination.

“Valdegrove is the worst. Soon as he got his fat paws on my high-yield rocks I was out. O-U-T. He had Lincoln Lincoln frame me for a bigamist. When I set out to prove my innocence I wound up on the SS Kno-OPE and got caught up in a jump-smash. I ended up on the otherside of space. That was way back in 0924. Its taken me twenty-five years to get back to Sol. But I’ve got the proof I need and now I’m going to claim what’s mine – for my son’s sake.”

By now her static robes were flashing a nasty shade of red.

“Lincoln Lincoln has possession of my evidence. He’s a slobberlotcher too, but he’s got a position to maintain. I figured the best parking spot for my evidence is right under Valdegrove’s nose – where he can’t tamper with it. I’ve got holo-vids of Ace Hunter, Sven Hedd and Jeremiah Castigani. Hunter, is the card-player who drilled my first husband when he cheated once too often at astro-craps. Sven Hedd is the physician who tended my husband before he died. Castiglani was governor of Mercee, the penal planet. He confirmed the date of the offence for which the poker-player was convicted. Finally, I’ve got conclusive evidence that Troilus is the offspring of Valdegrove and myself.”

“I’d like to see those vids.”

“Sure thing. We deposited them at Lincoln Lincoln’s country house outside Big City. I figured he’d look after them better in his own place than at his office. That’s psychology.”

“Anyhow, what all this is going to prove is that my first husband died in 0923 the year before I married Valdegrove. That means I didn’t marry bigamously. It also means my son, Troilus, is legitimate and the true heir to Valdegrove Heavy Metal.”

With that she cut the anti-grav field, hit the deck and bounced a couple of times.

Lincoln Lincoln [5]

[4] CFax 179

Snippet from The Mega Big Times – 10/0924
‘SS Kno-OPE II crash investigators cleared Uwe Prime and Torquil Valdegrove of scuttling their jump-shuttle. The joint owners can now collect on the insurance. Prime announced his retirement, while Valdegrove will use the payout to develop his Fecund-12 rocks.’

[5] Lincoln Lincoln's murder

I was sipping a tube of Double-fun-crud, when news broke of Lincoln Lincoln's sudden demise. A wayside newsboard flashed: "Big-wig law jock zapped!"

The lawyer had a smart country house, set in its own neatly manicured grounds. There was a cop glidecar parked out front and the door was open. Inside, I found Tynan Bachelly, my buddy from Homicide, bending over the deceased. An orange forensic-bot was also snooping the room.

"Looks like a case of aggravated burglary to me." observed Bachelly, gesturing to a wall mounted, de-activated stasis security box.

The room was a study. Small and neatly furnished with real-wood antiques. A rack of vid-books had been scattered over the floor and the desk was messed up too. In a corner of the room, slumped in an easy chair, lay Lincoln Lincoln with a hypo-dart stuck in his forehead. Terminal cross-eyes.

From behind me I heard a tinny, sobbing sound. It was Lincoln Lincoln's robo-maid.

Case Objective 2 – Who killed Lincoln Lincoln and why?

Robo-maid [6]

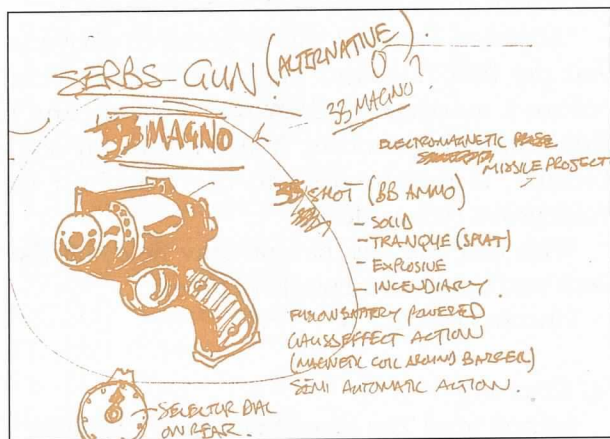
LL's room [8]

LL's inquest [14]

The conservatory [9]

The grounds [10]

Forensic [12]



[6] Lincoln Lincoln's maid

Lincoln Lincoln's robo-maid was near hysterical. Its bleepers bleeped and utility devices kept pinging out of its shiny body. Its difficult to comfort a machine, but I did my best.

"It was just awful – like a 3DTV cop show. Mr Lincoln, sent me to de-activate at twenty-fifty-eight. At twenty-one-seventeen the front door buzzed, but as Mr Lincoln had ordered de-activation I didn't answer. This morning, I re-activated at six thirty and sensed cadaverous material in the study. There was no human aura present so I alerted the police."

Anything missing? [7]

[7] Anything missing

When I asked if anything was missing from the study, the robo-maid paused for a moment and checked its inventory.

"There is nothing missing except a ten C credit card, a souvenir from Fecund-12, given to Mr Lincoln by Mr Torquil Valdegrove and the one-shot special Mr Lincoln kept in his desk."

"And nothing else?"

"Nothing else is missing from my inventory."

[8] Lincoln Lincoln's room

For future reference I used my record-o-pad.

"Am standing in the doorway from the hall looking into Lincoln Lincoln's study. The room is oblong. To my right is a blank wall, about five metres long. There was a rack for vid-books here, but it has been overturned and the contents are spread over the floor. Opposite me, double doors lead into a conservatory. The doors are open. To my left is another blank wall, about seven metres long, furnished with antique photographs and an open, de-activated stasis security box. The code card is still in the slot. Lincoln Lincoln's body is below the stasis box slumped in an easy chair. Finally, again to my left, there is the other wall. There is a picture window looking out over the grounds. Beneath the window is a large desk bearing an integrated comms pack and vid-screen. The desk's chair is turned away from the desk towards the easy chair."

"Lincoln Lincoln is slumped over one arm of the chair, away from the desk. A hypo-dart is sticking out of his forehead, dead centre."

"There is no sign of a forced entry. The contents of the stasis box seem intact or at least un-disturbed. They seem quite valuable: legal vid-discs, convertible credit cards of high denomination and share certificates."

[9] The Conservatory

My record-o-pad commentary ran thus:

“Am Standing on the threshold of the conservatory, my back to the study. I’m looking out over the grounds, through some lush Venusian Catstail succulents. The conservatory is about seven metres wide and three metres deep. There is a door opposite me. It’s ajar and the Venusian succulents are already suffering, their blue is tinged with yellow. The door must have been open for some time. There is no sign of it being forced.”

“In one corner, it must be the sunniest spot, is a round white table and pair of chairs. The rear leg of one of the chairs is badly warped.”

“I’ve moved the chair. There is a large, ceramic flowerpot behind it. The flowerpot is very warm.”

“I’ve moved the flowerpot. Underneath are four holo-vid disks arranged around a burnt out Fos-4 incendiary charge. Three of the holo-vids are buckled and melted, but one seems relatively OK.”

At that point I stopped the commentary, palmed the best disc and called Bachelly.

Check holo-vid [13]

[10] The Grounds

The grounds of Lincoln Lincoln’s house were real deluxe. You don’t see much grass, flowers or trees in my line of work . But I was’nt there to admire the view, what I wanted was evidence. I found it too – a trampled flower-bed and some footprints. They were made by someone light on their feet. One set pointed towards the house, the other towards the boundary wall.

I checked the wall out. It was old and crumbly and about twelve feet high. The lichen had been bruised on the house side and also on the outside. I figured whoever had visited LL must have come and gone by this route. In the distance across some scrub land I saw a couple of nature freaks tilling their organi-patch.

Nature freaks [11]

[11] Nature freaks

The nature freaks, Freddy and Freda Popsical, lived in a log cabin, exactly five minutes from Lincoln Lincoln’s front door. No synthetic nourishment for them, they grew all

their own produce. They didn’t take Age-nomor like the rest of us, so I was taken aback by people who acted their age.

“Yep, the wife and I was walkin’, yes walkin’, past the Lincoln place about twenty-one fifteen. We saw this big fellow up at the front entrance. Couldn’t miss him he was wearing a cameleon suit. Saw him again a few minutes later strolling past our place. He got in an electroglide and headed off towards Big City.”

The Popsical’s lectured me for some time on the values of plain living, so it was late when I left. I stopped off at Chi-Chi’s Diner to get some take-away eats, a Kaffe Nuite and some Spag-curry, then zoomed homeward in my ‘37 E-glide. As I jinked the glidecar onto the street where I live its headlights picked out three no-good characters. It would have been hard to miss them, they were dressed in full, gleaming reflec suits.

I flipped out my one shot special and regretted it wasn’t a repeater.

The heavies, las-guns zapping, lumbered towards me like tin men with haemorrhoids. Just as I suspected their volleys looked cool but were all wide of the mark – ME. I flipped the one shot’s selector from STUN to BLAST, pressed the window button, poked my arm and head out of the window, took careful aim and loosed the charge.

Bingo! The disintegrator pellet took the leading heavy full in the chest and knocked him backwards. The others immediately stopped firing. That was my cue. I flipped the glidecar to full power, zoomed over the fallen man and whacked his compadres aside.

The Kaffe Nuite and Spag-curry were, thankfully, still warm and I got home in time to catch “Strike it LUCKY” on 3DTV. Later, during the commercial break it occurred to me someone didn’t want me working this case.

[12] Forensic

I went down-town to Police Central, to wheedle some forensic analysis out of Bachelly.

“Well, I don’t know that I should.”

“Buy you a glo-juice and tapas.”

“That’s not a good trade” he grinned “but OK. Freno deal the man his aces.”

The day-glo orange, forensic-bot sphere had

been sitting inactive in the corner of Bachelly's office. At his command it whirred into life and hovered up to eye level. In a flat monotone it dished the facts.

"Autopsy and de-composition analysis shows subject Lincoln Lincoln terminated at approximately twenty one thirty two last night. Cause of death: an overdose of Heavy-zed tranquiliser."

"Gas spectrometer analysis of the scene of crime atmosphere showed the tranquiliser was delivered by a gas-powered tranq-gun. Such weapons are used for riot control, firing a gas cylinder. I speculate the murder weapon is a modified, illegal form, able to deliver either cylinder or hypo-dart. Such weapons are only available to authorised personnel off-planet, typically for quelling mutinous Gator-guards."

"Lincoln Lincoln's property showed no sign of forced entry. The only finger prints in evidence belonged to Lincoln Lincoln himself. There were however smudged prints on the framework of a vid-book rack, the arm of the desk chair, on the wall by the stasis box, on a chair in the conservatory and on the inside of the conservatory door. I speculate prints made by a person wearing gloves. Black fibres, not matched by other clothing in-house suggest the assailant wore dark clothing.

LL's Inquest [14]

[13] Check out the holo-disc

An electro-peddy-cab took me to the residential zone.

At Bellevue Heights I took the up tube to the 78th floor and paged 781. My tame hacker, Marvin Mistlethwaite, opened up blinking through pebble-lens peepers. His apartment was crammed with kit, empty drink tubes and dubious leftover eats. When I flipped him the charred holo-vid from Lincoln Lincoln's conservatory he drooled like a computer starved of bytes.

"Gosh, Mr Cravatte, this is pretty chewed up. It will be a pleasure to restore, but could take all night. I'll give you the output tomorrow if I may?"

He was true to his word. I'd just sat down in Harry's Diner to stir a coffe-free Kaffe Nuite when my pager peeped.

"Ah. Marvin here. I just wanted to tell you I've got the output on the holo-vid you gave me."

I skipped Kaffe Nuite and peddy-cabbed to Marvin's place. He'd cleared a space in the middle of his work area. The holo-vid was lying on the floor projecting the back of a seated human male. I walked round the projection. It flipped off. I walked on round and the holo-vid flipped back on. I was still looking at the back of a seated man.

"Its only the back, Marvin."

"I know, I'm sorry Mr Cravatte, but the disc was too badly scorched to restore any more data. The back is all there is" he smiled nervously, "but I also managed to recover some voice data".

He activated a computer which synthesised some gobblydegook.

"This-the-mony-of-Sven-Hedd-med-tioner-res-rtimax-I-nard's-St..."

"Sounds like the voice track got melted too?"

"Um, yes, exactly, but I tried out my etymological probability program and came up with a possible reconstruction."

"Which is?"

"This is the testimony of Sven Hedd, a medical practitioner, resident on Vortimax II, Barnard's Star. I attended Tor Harrop in 0923 after an astro-craps quarrel at Hoskins Taurus. Tor Harrop died from a blaster charge and I signed his death certificate."

"And there is another thing, Mr Cravatte. In restoring the disc I analysed its composition and can tell you it is of the Write-Once/Read-Many variety and carries a sub-atomic manufacture code dated 0947."

[14] Event Inquest

Anyone who was anyone in Big City was in court, but it was an open and shut case. The coroner ruled Lincoln Lincoln was the victim of willful murder by a person or persons unknown. No evidence was presented and no witnesses called.

As soon as the coroner withdrew, Troilus Valdegrove played straight to the vid-crews.

"My mother's evidence of her legitimate marriage to Torquil Valdegrove is missing from Lincoln Lincoln's study. I accuse Benito Valdegrove of removing our evidence. The caper went wrong and Lincoln Lincoln got rubbed out."

With that the news jockeys were up and

away, partly to file the coroner's ruling and partly to dish this juicy info to the masses.

Deputy Commissioner Steering, with Bachelly in tow, waved me over. The Deputy Commissioner was sweating silicon.

"You hear that? It's bad news for your employer. Valdegrove is a big-shot on the police committee. He's hard on law and order. A story like that is going to cause a scandal."

"Do you really think so?" I asked casually.

The Deputy Commissioner looked at me boggle eyed. A blast of vapour vented from his ears. Droids can't take irony.

"I don't think so, I know so! Torquil Valdegrove says a couple of nature-freaks can pin Benito to the scene of the crime at the right time."

"So why don't you arrest him?"

Steering mopped a sweaty brow and swallowed. "Because the department suspects Sidney Stum of perpetrating the crime. He has, we believe, been blackmailing Lincoln Lincoln for some time."

Benito Valdegrove [18]

Troilus Valdegrove [16]

[15] Troilus Valdegrove 1

Troilus Valdegrove wasn't as big as his mother and he did look suspiciously like Torquil Valdegrove. He was lean, mean and an ugly mug. Still looks can deceive.

"Its quite simple Mr Cravatte, I am the result of the union between Torquil and Lucretia Valdegrove. We can change or counterfeit a great many things, but you can't – thank the creator – counterfeit DNA. Check that out. I am undoubtedly legitimate. It is only a matter of time before my mother and I prove our case and I inherit what is rightfully mine."

As usual my magni-analyser came in useful and I took a gene-reading of Troilus' DNA structure. I then pulled a few strings down at Big City Credit Checking Corp and compared it with Torquil Valdegrove. Troilus was right he possessed a fifty percent match with Torquil Valdegrove. And fifty percent is good enough for me.

[16] Troilus Valdegrove 2 (after inquest)

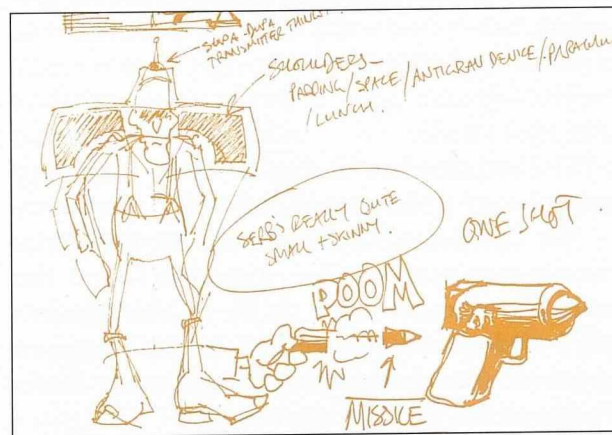
I found Troilus Valdegrove in his hotel room. He was unapologetic about his court room utterances.

"Of course I haven't any evidence for my allegation, but isn't it obvious? My father and that bumbling joke of a clone are in it together. Not content with dis-inheriting my mother, Valdegrove plotted to destroy our meagre but conclusive evidence. Benito did the deed, panicked and shot Lincoln Lincoln. Were you aware that he is an excellent shot?"

"Ok" I told him "so you've vid-gazed the problem and come up with a viable solution. Now where were you when Lincoln Lincoln was rubbed out?"

"Here in my hotel room of course, watching 3DTV. The hotel can verify that."

Troilus Valdegrove was right, the hotel could verify his story.



[17] Benito Valdegrove 1

Benito Valdegrove's office at Valdegrove Heavy Metal was big and decorated in black throughout. Just like Benito himself. As I entered the room he was pacing the floor shouting into a hovering Comms-bot.

"What d'ya mean won't sell? Tell them to sell at 180, a good price, or I'll cut the G and leave them for floaters!"

To emphasise the point he sent the Comms-bot slamming across the room to smash into the wall. I didn't like Benito Valdegrove on sight. he was a robophobe and I hate robophobes. Still what do you expect from a replicant?

"I've nothing to say to you" he told me "I'm the legitimate heir to VHM. Mrs 'Vladegrove' is a bigamist and Troilus 'Valdegrove' completely unrelated to Torquil Valdegrove my clone master. It shouldn't be too difficult for you to prove that hypothesis. Now scoot I've got a deal to close."

[18] Benito Valdegrove 2 (after inquest)

“Nothing has changed. The imposter Troilus ‘Valdegrove’ is simply being malicious. He knows his mother has no evidence to pursue her claims against Torquil Valdegrove my clone master.

The fact is I did go to Lincoln Lincoln’s place on the night of the murder. So what? A little after twenty-one hundred my glidecar broke down on the highway, close to LL’s. I called out Fix-U-Kwik the breakdown bots and, while I waited for the vehicle to be fixed, I went over to Lincoln Lincoln, simply to say hello. I got no answer so went back to the glidecar. It had been fixed so I drove back to the city.”

“I’ve discussed the situation with my clone master and we authorise you to offer Troilus and his mother two million Cs to leave Sol-system.”

Fix-U-Kwik [19]

[19] Fix-U-Kwik

The Admin-bot at Fix-U-Kwik was very helpful, very polite. It told me:

“Mr B. Valdegrove summoned Fix-U-Kwik at twenty-one eleven. Our operative found the main power cable loose on Mr B. Valdegrove’s grav-glider and secured it. Mr Valdegrove approved the repair at twenty-one twenty-three. That is all the data I have available.”

[20] CI-CENTRAL DATABASE MENU

Castigliani, Jeremiah [30]

Harrop, Tor [28]

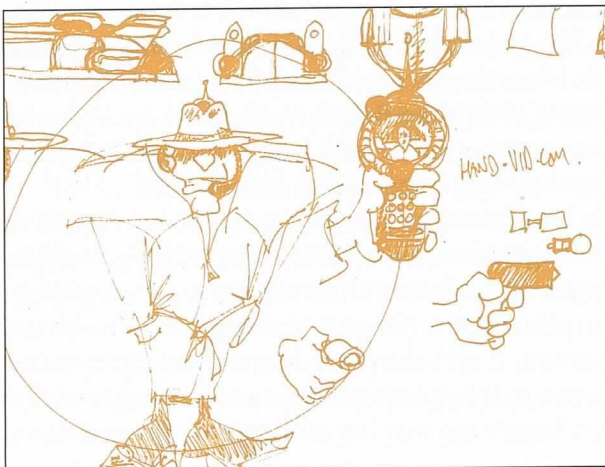
Hedd, Sven [29]

Hunter, Ace [31]

Lincoln, Lincoln [23]

Prest, Johannes [24]

SS Kno-OPEII [32]



Stum, Sidney [25]

Valdegrove, Benito [22]

Valdegrove, Lucretia [26]

Valdegrove, Torquil [21]

Valdegrove, Troilus [27]

[21] CI-Central Database – Valdegrove, Torquil b.0892 Chief Executive Valdegrove Heavy Metal, Ganymede. m.Lucretia Harrop 0923. Extracts ore from five sectors of the asteroid belt, including Fecund 12, the high yield zone. Implicated in SS Kno-OPE II jump-smash but cleared. Retired to earth. Chairman of Big City law and order committee.

[22] CI-Central Database – Valdegrove, Benito b.0925 Only clone-son of Torquil Valdegrove. Heir to Valdegrove Heavy Metal, Jove City, Ganymede. Unremarkable lifestyle to date. Winner Jove City Las-gun rock shoot competition three successive Sol.

[23] CI-Central Database – Lincoln, Lincoln b.0893 Lawyer advising Valdegrove Heavy Metal and Valdegrove family. Defended Torquil Valdegrove in SS Kno-OPE II jump-smash investigation. Solar Space Authority suspect implicated in rock-rustling scams in the asteroid belt – nothing proved. Subject of attempted assassination attempt by Johannes Prest a deranged proletarian.

[24] CI-Central Database – Prest, Johannes d.0947

[25] CI-Central Database – Stum, Sidney, alias Renthall, Marlon, alias Renthall, Sidney. b.0899, origin Hoskin’s Torus. Convicted rock rustler, blackmailer and confidence trickster. Suspected of involvement in Vortimax II mercenary coup 0947. Currently resident Earth, Big City.

Sidney Stum [33]

[26] CI-Central Database – Valdegrove, Lucretia b.0898. m.Tor Harrop 0921. m.Torquil Valdegrove 0924. b.Lucretia Krentz, sole heir to Sector 12, asteroid belt. 0924 Valdegrove claimed Tor Harrop marriage not dissolved, therefore his marriage bigamous. V declared marriage nul but retained Sector 19. LV disputed his assertion but was lost in SS Kno-OPEII jump crash 0924.

[27] CI-Central Database – Valdegrove, Troilus, alias Valdes, Tor, alias Grovenor, Troy. b.0925 Claimed first born, legal son of Torquil Valdegrove by his marriage to Lucretia Harrop. Biological evidence suggests Troilus is result of union Torquil Valdegrove/Lucretia Harrop. Suspected of involvement in the Vortimax mercenary coup 0947.

[28] CI-Central Database – Harrop, Tor. b.Ganymede 0880. No data.

[29] CI-Central Database – Hedd, Sven. b.0905 d.0947. Executed for participation in Vortimax II mercenary coup.

[30] CI-Central Database – Castigliani, Jeremiah. b.0888 d.0948 former Governor of Mercee, penal planet.

[31] CI-Central Database – Hunter, Ace. No match for this name.

[32] CI-Central Database – SS Kno-OPE II. System transit shuttle. Lost in terminal jump-smash 0924 while passing from Sol-system to Eurydice. Four hundred passengers and crew lost. (See entry CFax 179)

UPDATE. Mrs Lucretia Valdegrove, a passenger on SS Kno-OPE II, returned to Sol-system 0949. The jump-smash did not destroy the ship, but projected it into the Nestor region. The stricken vessel found help on the low-tech mining world Wair-RWE. Planet is off jump route (three light years from Barnard's star) and therefore without stellar connectivity communications.

CFax 179 [4]

[33] Sidney Stum

Sidney Stum lived in a cheap joint on the lower, upper east-side. When I arrived it was dark and the hall light was out. I groped my way upstairs to Stum's apartment and found the door open. Lucky I always carry a pair of Dr Zimmer's Lo-lite specs. I slipped the image intensifiers on with my left hand as my one shot special flipped into the palm of my right.

The apartment, if you could call it that, smelt of stale sweat and cig-smog – and there was a

body draped across a couch in the living room. It was not a pretty sight. Unrecognisable in the visage department. It looked like the work of a one-shot special on full blaster setting.

When I reached inside the blood-stained jacket, the corpse was cold and stiff. My search revealed a half used ten C credit card, a glidecar licence in the name of Marlon Renthall, a small lump of rock mountd on a plastic base, inscribed 'Fecund-12 stock' and a piece of plas-pap.

My magni-analyser told me:

"Substance similar to plas-pap is genuine vegetable based paper. There are symbols inscribed on the surface which translate to 'TG. Vx4 2KCs'. That is all."

I made a quick search of the place. The one shot special lay on the floor below the corpse. There was no sign of Sidney Stum, but I did find another piece of paper. The magni-analyser translated for me again.

"Paper stock inscribed with the following statement: 'I know I done wrong, but the guy who made me do all this is.' That is all."

[34] Solution

Determining your status as a Cosmic-I. To check your status total the number of clues you visited in formulating your solution, then examine the chart below:

Clues Visited

1–5 = Zoot! You could be the big cheese of the Cosmic-I society.

6–10 = Brother, I might just offer you a partnership.

11–15 = A gifted amateur cosmic snoop.

16–20 = Ever considered joining the Big City police?

21–25 = Elementary. Good job there was no shootin'.

26–32 = Have you ever considered being a holo-vid librarian?

The actual solution will be published next issue. Right now you can enter your solution in our reader competition for this issue. First prize is a cheque for £25 + a signed copy of Fantasy Warlord table-top rules. Three runners-up each to receive signed copies of Fantasy Warlord.

Simply answer the two questions printed on the coupon opposite and return your entry to

READER COMPETITION

SOLVE SERB CRAVATTE'S ROCK SHARK CAPER AND WIN £25 + A COPY OF FANTASY WARLORD!

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Simply answer the two questions printed on the coupon below, then complete your name and address and return your entry to the address given before 31st January 1991.

Rules & Conditions of entry.

1. Answer the two questions.
2. Complete the entry form.
3. Names and addresses of competition entrants will be held on computer and may be used, from time to time, to mail adventure game product information.
4. The closing date for entries is 31st January 1991.
5. The draw will take place on or before 7th February 1991.
6. The winner and three runners-up will be notified by post and their names published in a future issue.
7. The first correct entry drawn will receive a cheque for £25 plus a signed copy of Fantasy Warlord. The next three correct entries drawn will each receive a signed copy of Fantasy Warlord.

Results of Red Giant 1 Reader Competition

First: D.A. Garnham, Ipswich. Runners up: Rupert Burton, Cardiff; C.J. Payne, Exeter; J.R. Garnett, Hitchin.

Red Giant 2 Competition Entry. Please photocopy and fill in:

A. Answer both questions:

1. Is Troilus Valdegrove the legitimate heir of Torquil Valdegrove, Chief-exec of Valdegrove Heavy Metal? (tick a box:)

Yes No Maybe

2. Who killed Lincoln Lincoln and why? (tick boxes:)

Torquil Valdegrove Benito Valdegrove
 Lucretia Valdegrove Troilus Valdegrove
 Lincoln Lincoln Sidney Stum

Why?

B. Complete the following information (block capitals only):

Name:

Address:

Post code:

Mail to - Red Giant Competition No. 2, 5 Everglades, 43 Shortlands Road, Bromley BR2 OXW.

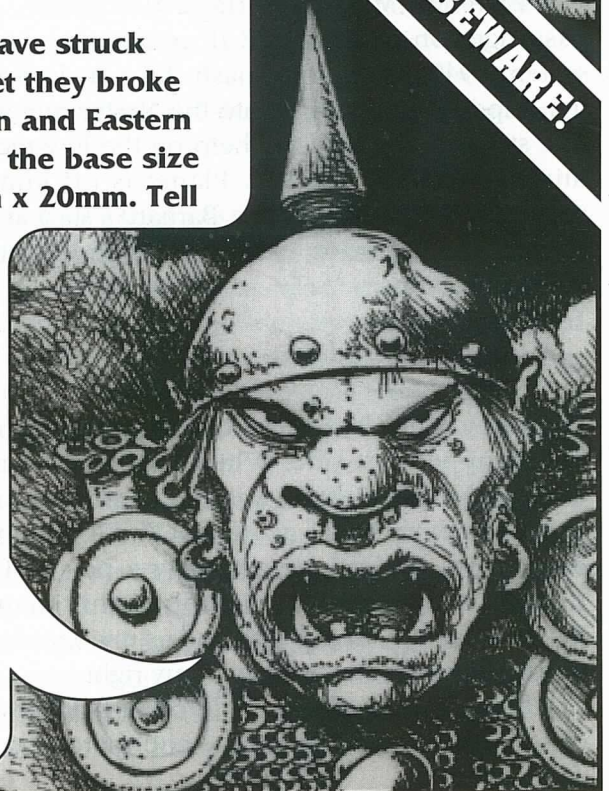
Don't let your orc put his foot in it!

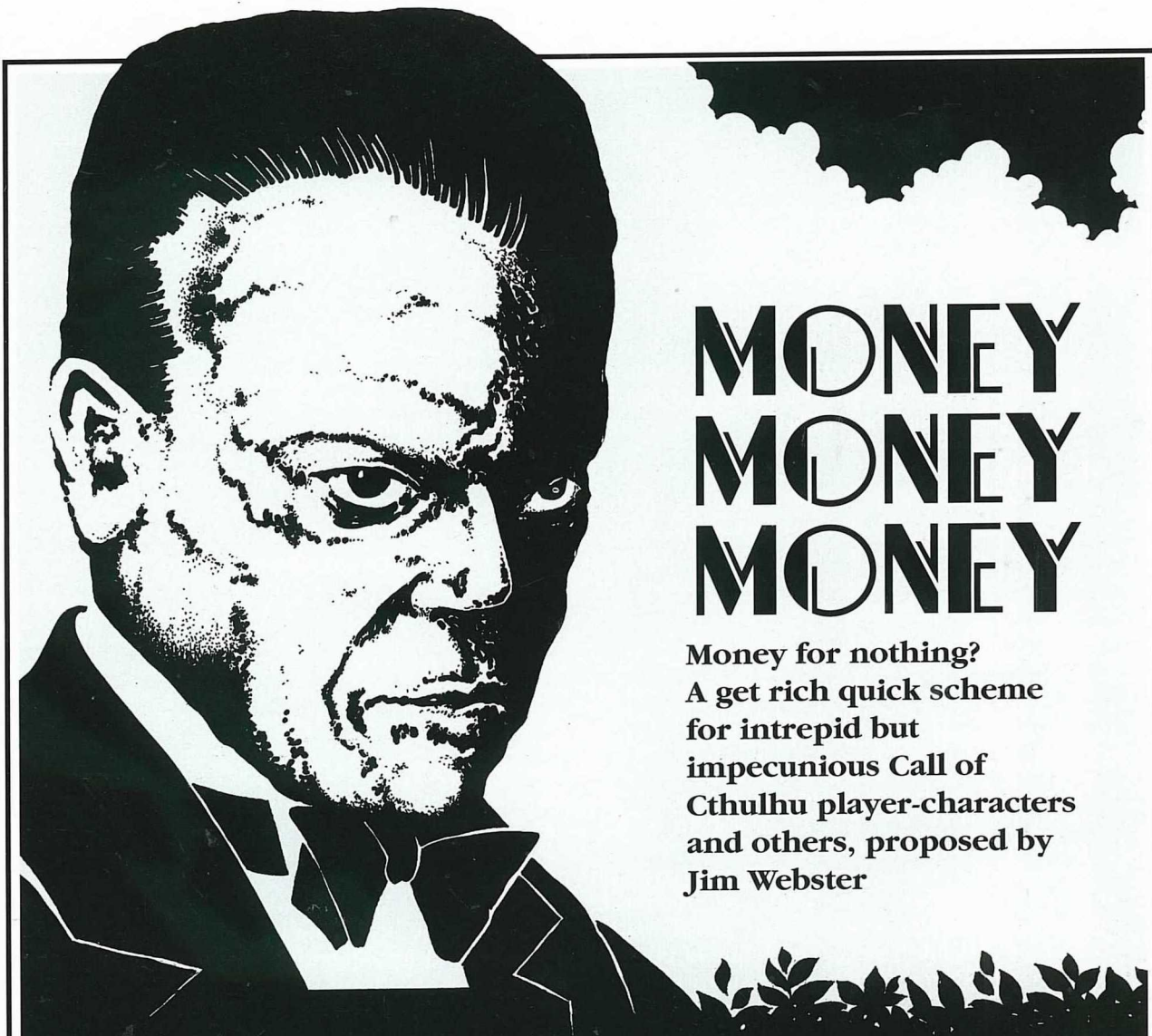
That scum Strigash and his filthy goblins have struck again. While Fantasy Warlord was being set they broke into the type room and altered the Western and Eastern Orc Profile Sheets. All players should note the base size for an orc is 25mm x 25mm and not 20mm x 20mm. Tell your friends now and may Kernabog spit on Strigash and barbecue all his goblins for this insult!

On page 26, the Magic Users' Experience Level and Skills should read:

Die Roll	Level	Skills Attributes	Spell Energy
1-60%	Minor (Novice)	1	15
61-85%	Major (Adept)	2	30
86-100%	Master (Arcane Master)	3	50

ORCS BEWARE!





MONEY MONEY MONEY

**Money for nothing?
A get rich quick scheme
for intrepid but
impecunious Call of
Cthulhu player-characters
and others, proposed by
Jim Webster**

This template adventurette is something I developed for use with Call of Cthulhu, however with the minimum of effort you can convert it for use in fantasy, or possibly even SF, role-play.

As a career, investigating the shadowy world of the Cthulhu mythos must rank alongside performing Wagner in Israel or selling copies of Militant in Moscow, ie it is not a money spinner. After all who, in their right mind, would be willing to hand over hard-earned cash to a bunch of misfits, eager to uncover that-which-is-best-left-hidden? Obviously, some sponsors can be found or contrived to finance adventure or exploit the investigators. However, I prefer to make my players 'work' for their money. The following plot can be slipped into a campaign when you feel the investigators are strapped for cash. And they will have to be financially desperate to try this one session episode.

Sooner or later, in any campaign, the investigators are bound to create or stumble across the mangled remains of a mis-guided cultist. The cultist should in some way be

identifiable with a particular district/location as this will help the investigators track down the object of the clue. If your players are like mine they will immediately loot, sorry, search the body and discover the clue. If they don't you will just have to think of some other way of introducing the clue (perhaps it is wrapped around a piece of rock that 'brains' one of the team as he window shops a busy street - or perhaps not).

The clue

Among the cultist's belongings is a fat roll of banknotes held together with a rubberband. At the centre of the roll is a scrap of paper on which is written the following (NB change any of the text to suit your Investigators' circumstances):

"Look by the jetty where we always played. Where moonlight shows the mud a little darker, there is what you seek and what I owe. A watcher is set over our little treasure."

If you want to give the investigators a little more help you can provide the following,

additional paragraph:

"You will need a pinch of dust from consecrated ground dissolved in one pint of alcohol. Stir into this punch three drops of blood. On the night of the full moon seek the guardian, chanting 'Eib moz din, Guan culte ghoulas, Veritas caltosu Catharis', then cast the solution over the creature, binding it to your will".

If you need to employ the above and a player makes a successful CTHULHU MYTHOS roll, you will need to admit that the solution is simply embellishment, but the chant is probably efficacious in binding a zombie.

The jetty

If you allow more than one jetty in the location associated with the dead cultist make them obviously different. Hence, one could be a huge steel erection, constantly busy, while the other should be barely accessible - ideal for nefarious deeds.

The out-of-the-way jetty should be at the end of a long winding track. Its not sign-posted as impassable to motor vehicles, but should prove to be. The party is bound to enjoy themselves retrieving their jalopy. The track becomes more and more overgrown and boggy, until it degenerates into a single file foot path which emerges onto a decrepit jetty.

The jetty structure consists of two parallel lines of heavy timber posts driven into the mud, pointing out into the river. These look reasonably sound. Bolted to each line of posts is a heavy timber beam which supports the walkway. The slats of the walkway are rotting and unsafe. The first half of the jetty is over deep mud, the last half is over water. The shore is a thin sward of muddy beach behind which is thick scrub. The jetty cannot be seen except from across the river.

If the investigators make a SPOT HIDDEN or similar roll, they can deduce from slime on the jetty's piles and drift wood on the beach, that the river level rises and falls by about a foot with the tides. The jetty is fifty feet long. At its end the water is twelve to thirteen feet deep, in the middle six to seven feet deep. The water is rich with silt, but, in the shallows, shapes can be seen within it: water-logged twigs, cardboard, bits of packing cases and other industrial flotsam.

Naturally nothing can be seen by daylight. However, by moonlight the object of their search is revealed. Ten feet down stream from the jetty and about three feet out into the river (where the water is about fifteen inches deep) the investigators will be able to see a dark 'patch' perhaps two feet by one foot.

Any investigator probing this area will find a hard surface about three inches down into the silt of the river bed. Obviously the intrepid

investigator will have to kneel in the water to get a grip on 'a large box'. If the party has brought an artificial light source it will be to no avail, even minor antics cause clouds of silt to muddy the water. The whole operation of recovery must be conducted by touch. You can tell the player(s) the following:

"You can feel a flat metallic surface and, when you find the edge, you can feel the object is about two feet long by one foot wide. Pushing your fingers down through the silt at one end of the box you discover a carrying handle. Struggling upright you bend your legs, grip the handle with both hands and heave with all your might. The object shifts a little but remains fast, held, no doubt, by the suction of the mud."

Let the investigator(s) match their strength versus 'the object's' strength for a turn, then tell them:

"The box is coming free! There is a loud 'sluk-ching' sound and the box shoots from the water, knocking you backwards into the shallows. The box is in front, between you and a dark, stinking, massy, humanoid something slowly rising out of the water."

The thing is, of course, a rather ripe corpse-thing and worth a SAN roll for everyone viewing the event. Those failing lose, say, 1 pt SAN if on the bank and 1d3 if they actually participated in raising the box.

The corpse just sits there for a moment as if released by the box being lifted, but, as soon as your intrepid investigators are over the initial shock have the thing jerk into life and lurch towards the nearest character. When the corpse is revealed to be a ZOMBIE the investigators will need another SAN roll. Those failing lose 1d8 SAN.

If you allowed the investigators the BIND ZOMBIE incantation with the clue, or they are suitably armed with some other charm or devastating physical weapons they will, no doubt, be able to dispose of the creature.

The box is securely locked with a rusted padlock and body lock. The investigators will need to employ some ingenuity to open it. Inside is a silver, filigree tiara, a pearl necklace, a cameo brooch and some gold coins. The investigators should have some, unexpected, difficulties in disposing of the jewellery and the coins. The cameo apparently depicts a person in profile, with flowing locks of hair. Closer inspection reveals rather horrid associations (you choose). The coins are Spanish doubloons. Whatever the problems the haul should generate, say, \$5000.

Also, if you are feeling particularly generous and the investigators defeated the Zombie let them have 1d8 SAN back. If they carried off the affair with panache allow them 2d6.

A Review of Fantasy Warlord

by Gary Ellison

Profile:

Format:	Paperback Book
Subject:	Fantasy Mass Combat
Price:	£13.95
Publisher:	Folio Works Limited
Rating:	10 out of 10

First Impressions

Fantasy Warlord is well produced and presented. In fact, I would say it is the best looking set of rules available today. The rules are laid out in a clear, precise manner. There is no index, but there is a comprehensive contents listing. The book is well illustrated, primarily with Gary Chalk's excellent artwork. Full colour photographs and pictures appear through out and better still, the photographs are actually in focus and well reproduced – unlike those in some other products I could name.

The rules are comprehensive (though they lack information on siege warfare, chariots and war engines – which will apparently be covered in a future book called *Besieged*). Part two of *Fantasy Warlord* contains the most comprehensive and detailed background I have ever encountered in a new, original game system. The setting is *the World of Vortimax*. Two full colour maps are provided and some fifty-three different races, nations and regions are described in detail. Even better, the background information is actually interesting. It is obvious a lot of thought went into creating Vortimax, as there are plenty of good reasons to go to war and a lot of interesting nations to choose from. Vortimax would also make a fantastic setting to role play in.

The Game

The *Fantasy Warlord* system contains a number of unique features. First of all, nearly all you need to play the game is featured on pull out Profile Sheets at the back of the book. One Profile Sheet is included for each race. Those races are: Dwarfs, High Elves, Wood Elves, Eastern Goblins, Western Goblins, Giants, Humans, Ogres, Hill Trolls, Angels and Demons (yes in this game you get the goodies as well as the baddies), and a selection of Ground Monsters, Flying Monsters, Pack Animals and Flying Animals. Sheets for Ground and Flying Swarms, Cave Trolls and Hobgoblins are noticeable by their absence, but I have been told they will be appearing in the *Fantasy Warlord Command Pack*, due out in February 1991. What about a sheet for Dark Elves as well?

The only thing the Profile Sheets do not cover, is

the Magic Spell lists. So players who forget to note down all the pertinent information about the spells they choose, will still have to refer to the rules while playing the game.

One thing I detest about most wargames is having to write orders. *Fantasy Warlord* has overcome this problem by introducing Order Counters. These are featured on a sheet you have to photocopy four or five times and then mount on card. (I am told the Command Pack will contain proper counters). Each turn, players select order counters for each of their units and place them face down beside them. Once a counter is placed, it cannot be removed (so careless commanders can end up issuing units with the wrong orders!). When each side has placed its orders, the counters are turned over simultaneously and the mayhem begins. Please note the word simultaneously, because in *Fantasy Warlord* all orders, movement, firing and combat is conducted simultaneously – no crummy alternate moves here!

There is also a Reaction Test, that allows troops who are surprised by an unexpected enemy charge, to adopt a formation more suited to the danger, counter-charge or just change their orders. This test gives the whole system a lot of flexibility.

Fantasy Warlord contains a large section on Character Generation. The character classes are: Warrior Heroes, Priests, Warrior Priests, Magic-users, Thieves and just for orcs and goblins, Discipline Masters. Each class has its own skills and abilities. For instance, only Warrior Heroes have a chance of possessing the attribute Were Transformation, while only Priests and Warrior Priests can use Miracles, Wonders or Curses. The Characters in *Fantasy Warlord* are developed to such a degree, you could play Skirmish games with them or even use them for role-playing! Another nice touch is that they are not so super-human they can win a battle single-handedly. In *Fantasy Warlord*, characters are tough but not so tough you can risk pitting them alone against an entire enemy regiment!

The characters are essential for command control. If a unit is not in Direct or Brigade Control of a character, it will not automatically obey orders and may even start making moves of its own accord! Because of the neat command control rules, as a battle progresses and brigades break up, you lose more and more control over your troops. As a result, characters really come into their own, as they can be used to assume command of important units through Direct Control, and lead them in charges that really can turn the tide of battle in your favour.

There are no stupid animosity or ridiculous chaos rules in *Fantasy Warlord*. Troops have allegiance to either the Light, Equilibrium or Darkness, and this allegiance does not dictate how they must act, but

instead dictates what types of magic spells, weapons and artifacts they can use, and who they can cooperate with. Dark magic weapons and artifacts are more potent than the Light equivalents, but if you own one, you run the risk of the weapon possessing a bane quality that at times can make you regret your choice!

Speaking of Magic, the Magic system in *Fantasy Warlord* is excellent and fun to use (or should I say systems – because Priests use different magic to Magic-users). We played three games, and the magic did not unbalance any of them. In fact, it added to our enjoyment. Magic can be cast at any time, but is never certain to succeed. If a Magic-user fails to cast a spell, he must roll on the Failed Magic Table. Then anything can happen from a pile of fish falling out of the sky, to the appearance of a whirlwind that wreaks havoc across the battlefield. In the worst cases of failure, your Magic-user can be vaporised or turned into a frog – so you quickly learn to be careful with your spells! Priests fair a little better, though they can still be killed by the gods or have their feet set on fire! As a nice touch, the gods of Light are far more beneficent to their followers than the gods of Darkness.

Fantasy Warlord's movement system is fast and with the special double move, you do not waste any time marching into battle. Also with double movement, on a large play area, outflanking manoeuvres are a real possibility. The whole movement system is geared to tactics. Which means players must not only make sure their units are in the correct formation before they charge, but also that it is worth manoeuvring to hit an enemy unit in the flank or rear. The flying rules are both easy to use and effective.

Combat is also fast and effective. Both missile fire and hand to hand are based on percentile systems. That means you kill one enemy figure for every 100% you score and you only roll a D100 for any odds left over in each round of combat – not a bucket full of D6s. Basically, each troop type has a Basic Combat Percentage according to its race, the weapons it is using and the armour class of its opponent. This percentage is then modified by various events, such as whether you charged into combat, or if your troops are attacking a hated foe and the final percentage is multiplied by the number of troops you have fighting in the unit. The result is the number of enemy troops you kill. So if you get 430%, four enemy soldiers are killed immediately and you have a 30% chance of killing a fifth one. The system is fast to use once you get used to the modifiers list, and means you can get eight to ten moves into an evening even with armies of 800 figures or more on each side! With small armies I should think you could easily get one game in, in an evening!

Missile Fire is extremely effective. The Wood Elves are the most dangerous archers, though Eastern Orcs and Goblins are not that bad either! The effects of Missile Fire are influenced by the formation the target has adopted. So you quickly learn not to march on enemy missile troops in column! Magic can also be useful here, to reduce the effectiveness of enemy fire.

Combat is quick and reasonably bloody. Luck has been reduced to a minimum (though it is still present) and the game system rewards the player who manoeuvres his troops into the best position. As melees occur, the pushback system means they tend to move round the battlefield, so the astute player can hold back units to charge his opponents flanks as they become exposed. You can only break away from combat if your troops get a retire result during the morale phase, or if the enemy routs. I have been told this rule reflects the fact that in battle it is difficult to disengage from the enemy, if they do not want to let you go.

The Morale system is reasonably efficient, though it can be unbalanced if you field too many characters. On the whole, it reflects the different abilities of the various races quite well.

Part one of *Fantasy Warlord* ends with a section on terrain generation and tactics. The tactical hints are useful but I would have liked to see more of them. The terrain generation system is competent but I have never understood why anyone would want one, except perhaps for competition play. By the way, competition players will be pleased to hear the rules contain a points system that actually seems to work, and Army Guides that help to ensure each side fields a balanced army and you get a good game. There are also rules for deployment and scouting.

Part Two of *Fantasy Warlord* provides detailed background information on the World of Vortimax, as well as two very nice full colour maps (when do we get the posters?). All the key races are described, their military organisation is discussed and you are even told the name of the gods they worship. In many cases, but not all, you are told what flags different nations use. If only a full list had been included. But I have been told the various banners will be printed in future *Fantasy Warlord* publications and possibly even in *Red Giant*.

Summary

Overall these rules are excellent. *Folio Works* deserves ten out of ten, especially considering this is the first game they have published! At last we have a company that can produce games that not only look good – but play well too. If you want a fantasy wargame or just want a world to role play in, buy *Fantasy Warlord* today – there is nothing better on the market!

Red Giant Reader Survey

Name: Mr, Ms

Address:

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Post Town:

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4. Would you like to see scenarios/articles devoted to any of the following?

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- Pendragon
- Runequest
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- Warhammer Role Play

The information recorded above will be stored in a computer and used, from time to time, to keep you informed of developments at Red Giant and in the hobby as a whole.

5. Would you like to see scenarios/articles devoted to any of the following?

- Bladestorm
- Grim Reaper
- Fantasy Warlord
- Laserburn
- Warhammer
- Warhammer 40K

Tick box only if you do NOT wish to receive future communications

The following information will not be stored on computer.

6. If we have missed a role-playing or table-top system you would like covered tell us here:

.....

Please help us to provide the magazine you would like to read. Simply answer the following questions and add your own comments (which you can enclose with the survey). On completion detach the survey and fold as indicated to create a postage-paid envelope.

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- How to be a better referee Yes No
- How to enjoy role-play as a player Yes No
- How to prepare, paint or convert figures Yes No
- How to build scenary Yes No
- How to construct buildings/fortifications Yes No
- How to design scenarios Yes No
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1. How old are you? (tick one box)
 Under 11 11-15 16-18 19-22 23+

If we have missed a subject you would like covered tell us about it here:

.....

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