

contasted
ground studios



version 2
A | STATE
LITE

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Welcome to *a/statelite V2*, the playable preview of *a/state*, the role-playing game of gothic horror SF. Within these pages, you'll find all you need to get a flavour of The City, its inhabitants, power groups and technology. A simple but detailed game system allows you to generate interesting characters for hundreds of hours of fascinating gaming in The City.

a/statelite V2 is divided into six chapters, as follows:

The Precepts

An introduction to the City, its past, its present and possible future. You'll find essays, lectures and stories giving information on many aspects of city life, from the stinking canals to sports and entertainment.

The Place

6 areas of The City described in detail, with highlighted locations and important local personalities. However, the full version of *a/state* contains 33 detailed areas of The City, with more to come in the upcoming supplement 'Avenues & Alleyways'.

The Power

Who controls life in The City? Macrocorporations, religions, criminal syndicates and many others all try to influence the lives of the citizens. Presented here are 6 of the 21 organisations presented in the full version of *a/state*.

The Procedure

The basic rules system for play in the world of The City. Covering task resolution and man to man combat. The full *a/state* book will feature rules on poisons, vehicle combat and all the hazards of life in The City.

The Players

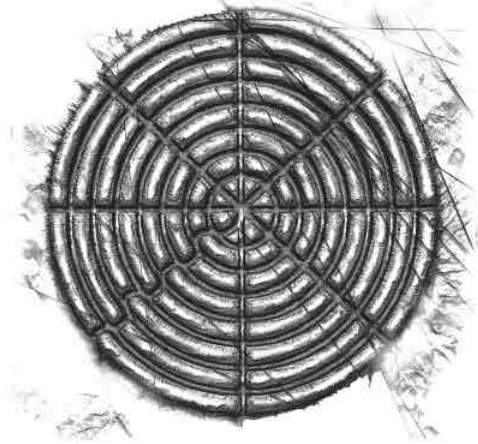
The people who make the game really live. Presented here are rules for creating unique characters for play in *a/statelite*. The full *a/state* book will contain an expanded character generation system, with advantages, disadvantages, pre-generated characters and much more.

The Product

From clunky, primitive sparklock pistols to tiny nanoscale dingins, all the variety of technology available is featured here. In the *a/state* main rule book, you'll find a substantial expanded selection of weapons, equipment and vehicles.

The full *a/state* book also contains two additional chapters: The Preface (which contains introductory fiction set in The City) and The Prescription (which contains a full sample adventure and 8 adventure nuggets).





"I tell you one thing, there's something not right about this place. I've seen things, done things and turned my back on things that, well, I forget. But, there's something deep, something really, really wrong with The City. I don't care for all these academics and speculators who study The Shifted and mutter on endlessly about lost science. There's something out there that we're not getting told. Someone is hiding something, something really big. Why do we all accept that we can't leave this place? Because we're told we can't. Who tells us? Rumour, folklore, stories. Old wives tales. Something's happening, something bad."

Nina Locke, Stringer, Sideband Media.

the precepts



Tales of the City

Centuries of industry and human activity have created a pall that hangs over The City. Some pilots say they have seen the stars. Eight giant mercantile structures dominate The City. Yet in many ways, they fail abjectly in their goals. So numerous are the inhabitants, so fractured the layout of this giant sprawl, that domination is impossible. Yet they fight, and scheme and plot and affect the lives of millions. The citizens struggle to get by. Fear and desperation are the defining attributes of society. Some sell their souls to the corporate monoliths, others get by on their own, and others seek solace in the blissful ignorance of religion, whilst the unfortunate are driven beyond the edge of insanity.

The unremittingly heavy nature of The City crushes even the most hardened soul. The oppressive presence of the millions of gargoyles, spires, arches, buttresses and walls would drain the life out of the most optimistic of people. Stone, brick and concrete are the bones of The City. The Canals are the blood. The corrupted, unfathomably complex network which makes up the Dataflow the nervous system. Despair, madness and suicide are commonplace, just normal facets of life in the crushing urban maze. A good night's sleep is a luxury enjoyed by only the rich or the dead. The Sound is everywhere, the constant hum of traffic, of industry and of all human activity. Silence must be bought, and then only at the highest of prices.

The variety of technology is remarkable. Some live in claustrophobic brick built tenements, lit by gas piped in from ancient landfills, flickering blue flames in the dark. Others repose in utter luxury atop a granite spire, served by armies of semi-aware drones or fully aware slaves. The greatest division of technology can be seen in that defining icon of The City: the gun. Backstreet gangers, guffers and underworlders kill each other with oily cartridge pistols and smoking sparklocks while the macrocorporate security shoot back with magnetic repeaters. Some men's wealth can be judged by how hitech a firearm they carry. A sad and inescapable fact.

Nearly one thousand years ago, as far as anyone can tell, two legends came in to being. Why and how these cataclysmic events happened remains unknown. But learned men are sure they happened, and since then things have been different in The City. Philosophers, scientists and poets argue that The City once had a name. In the present it is simply called The City, for there is nowhere else other than the blasted Outlands.

One event came to be known as The Shift, rumoured to be a change so great that the very fabric of The City was changed forever. Places and people were altered, new beings sprang, fully formed, into existence. Then, so the tellers of tales would have it, The City was subjected to a rain of fire: The Bombardment. Infernos fell from the sky and laid waste to whole tracts of land. More important than the destruction of the physical was the destruction of knowledge that The Bombardment caused. Datacores were wiped, libraries reduced to ashes and the memories of the survivors scarred. Few remnants of life before The Shift and The Bombardment remain. A few structures of vast size and strength remain to remind the inhabitants of the past. For centuries people have lived in limbo, the only history that of the past hundred decades. The people also discovered that invisible forces prevented them from leaving their wasted home. Survivors trying to reach the Outlands disappeared in a storm of vapour and a titanic thunderclap. To the present day, no one leaves The City.

Folklore has it that the Outlands were once fertile and green, now they are a blasted land of desert, rock and desiccated forests. The City itself is a place of dark alleys, ponderous architecture and stinking canals. In the centuries following The Shift and The Bombardment, the survivors sought to band together and make some sort of life for themselves. Not only did they have to deal with the destruction of their technology; they had to deal with the creatures which became known as The Shifted: beings which seemed to have come from nowhere. It appears these entities are just as angry and confused by The Shift as the human inhabitants of The City. In the thousand years since The Shift, something of an equilibrium has been reached. The Shifted and humans go about their affairs, mostly co-existing in a rough semblance of order. Some do not. Some on both sides seek to inflict pain on the rest of the population. Alliances between humankind and The Shifted are made and broken every day. Humans stumble on areas affected by The Shift and descend into abject madness.

The struggles of the first century gave rise to organisations which still exist today. The macrocorps all grew from the ashes, each with their own unique story of war, decimation and survival. Over the coming centuries, The City and its inhabitants would reach a twisted equilibrium with their situation. Society grew and expanded, the population stuttered, fell and then grew again. Sciences and technologies were rediscovered, yet even today, many live in poverty and grindingly primitive conditions. The rediscovered technologies were harnessed by those who had the power and resources to utilise them. The macrocorps evolved into bastions of knowledge, hoarding their precious discoveries, only to find them ripped away by unceasing war and the more subtle calamities of espionage and treachery.



Now, in the present day, The City is a study in contrasts. The majority of the population live in tenements and towers built of brick, stone and concrete. Their dwellings are lit by gas piped in from huge rubbish heaps or by flickering electric lamps, their clothes made from crude fibres and their property that of a society barely reaching the industrial age. In the domains of the macrocorps, things are very different. The corporate citizens have access to the finest food, to unlimited power, to shining vehicles and well made clothes. The soldiers who guard them ward off the unruly, clamouring mobs.

In the slums of Mire End, Dreamingspires and Fogwarren, life is a daily toil, earning enough to buy some food as best you can. The middle classes fear the slums, seeing them encroaching upon their own moderately comfortable lives. In the corporate bastions of Luminosity Tower, Konkret and The Forbidden City, the macrocorporates look down upon the teeming millions: their workforce and their potential downfall.

Through the backstreets and alleys, The Shifted Ubel stalk, ripping and tearing those who come too close, leaving only a cooling corpse as an echo of their passing. Simils made of iron and brass, surmounted with a human head, clank their way through the streets or lay down their existences in the hell of the Contested Grounds. Lugner spread rumour, fear and suspicion through their whispers and fleeting dreams. Some seek to stand up to the despair and hopelessness. Losfinders investigate the miserable dealings of the common populace for little or no reward while Stringers piece together fragments of information to feed into the hungry newswires and memory cores of the Dataflow. The Provosts of the Three Canals Metropolitan Area Authority (TCMAA) try to enforce some form of law and order in their chaotic collection of burghs, holding on to the belief that theirs is the one place in The City where life is that little bit better. Others believe that the unknown forces which prevent anyone leaving this place are corroding, that soon they will be able to leave this place for a better life above the smog.

Perhaps the clouds will one-day part, and then, the people of The City will once again have that rarest and most precious of commodities: hope.

the shortest distance: transport and travel

Getting around The City is a problem that can tax even the most cunning, intelligent and streetwise of citizens. The massive complexity and interconnectivity of The City makes navigation an extremely difficult proposition. That having been said, there are three main ways which allow you to get about: the canals, the railways and the streets.

lifeblood: the canals

The floating wharves and loitering skiffs rocked violently as the ekranoplan rushed by in a howl of props and a wall of spray. Traders were pitched overboard and stock sank into the impenetrable depths.

"Bastard!" screamed Innes. "Utter, utter, utter bastard!"

"I wouldn't worry, pal. Someone'll get the gadgie." uttered a dripping, brown figure standing unsteadily on a small plastic skiff.

"Fuck that, I've jist lost all me stock."

"Ach, never mind, you'll get more."

"Get more? Fuck you, ya dick. It took me weeks of raking about underground to get that lot. Good scrap it was, too. Don't you blether to me about getting more."

"Steady, man. Didn't mean to cause any offence. Just commenting, like."

"Oh, jist piss off, OK."

The dripping figure scrunched his fists up in his pockets and made to start the engine of his skiff. He turned.

"Hey, pal!"

Innes looked up from what remained of his stock, ready to tell that annoying idiot exactly where to go.

"What the fu..." He found himself looking down the barrel of a massive sparklock.

"Stitch this, ye miserable sod."

The roar of the gun was lost as another ekranoplan roared past, rocking the boats.

If the Dataflow is the nervous system of The City, then the canals are its lifeblood. From the majesty of the Grand Canal to the stinking Capillary Streams, the canals provide transport, food, water and even entertainment. Dominating the canal network are the eight major Lateral Canals. The Laterals are connected by the Concentrics, rings of water spreading out from the centre of the city. At the very heart of the system is Basin, a deep, dark pool of water a thousand yards across. This perfect black circle is home to no drifters, no markets float on its surface. Rumour and superstition abound about Basin. Some say that monsters inhabit the depths, other state with authority that it is a bottomless pit. Whatever the real story, Basin is another one of the mysteries of The City, a mystery no one is in a hurry to investigate.

the grand canal

Largest and most impressive of all the main canals, the Grand (or 'Big Blue' as it is known locally) is walled by sheets of incredibly tough, grey metal which seems impervious to any known force (short of an atom weapon, which no one has tried yet). Completely different in construction to any of the



other canals, the Grand is by far the biggest, at a constant one hundred yards wide for its entire length. Ancient and ill-understood pump mechanisms ensure that water flows (at a very slow rate) around the canal, preventing stagnation. However, many of the mechanisms have broken down and the Grand has become choked with rubbish at several points along its length. The largest event of the year on the Grand Canal is the GC:2000, the biggest and most impressive ekranoplan race of the season. Teams from all classes and from all over The City line up to make two hundred sprints up and down a ten mile section of the Grand. Hundreds of thousands of spectators line the banks and millions more watch on TV or from the buildings overlooking the canal, all hoping to catch sight of the most impressive crash or spectacular mechanical failure.



Nonetheless, the Red is a massively busy waterway, constantly thronged with rowboats, barges, steamers and hovercraft. Many areas of the bank have been cut away over hundreds of years to provide good stone for building and now resemble vast flights of steps.

the NOTHING

The Nothing is deep. Not just deep like the other canals, but really deep. A slab sided trench extending one hundred metres into the ground. Why the Nothing was built like this, nobody is sure and any records of its creation were lost long ago.

the GREEN CANAL

For most of its length, the Green Canal is covered with a thick carpet of hardy waterplants. Traffic along the Green is sorely impeded by the tough, fibrous growths which emit highly toxic compounds when slashed or

cut. They also seem almost immune to any form of toxin or parasite, fuelling the theory that they originated from genetically modified stock, created for some forgotten purpose.

the LEAST CANAL

Narrowest of the main lateral canals, the Least is, at points, totally clogged with waste and rubbish. Indeed, at some points along the canal, settlements have grown up on the solid ground formed by the rubbish blockages. This has created large stagnant ponds fed by sewers and runoff from the streets. Disease is common around these pools, hence the fact that some of the worst slums in The City can found along the banks of the Least.

the BLACK CANAL

Poisoned by slurry and toxic waste from the mining zones, which straddle the canal, and by toxic waste from rustbelts and landfills to its north, the Black Canal has been closed off at its eastern end to prevent contamination leaking in to the main canal system. All of the concentric and capillary canals leading into Black have also been blocked off.

the RED CANAL

The Red Canal takes its name not from the colour of the water, which is the usual blackish brown, but from the smooth red stone which makes up its banks and bed. Theorists speculate that the Red Canal is the oldest of the main canals (apart from the Serpentine, whose origin may be natural).

the SERPENTINE CANAL

Winding its lazy way through the western reaches of The City, the Serpentine Canal is an oddity amongst the sharp regularity of the canals. Some topologists speculate that at some point in the distant past, the Serpentine was a river on which the ancient ancestor of The City stood. Now, the Serpentine is enclosed by concrete banks and brick walls, a naturally shaped feature in an unnaturally twisted environment.

the TRENCH

Cutting through what must have once been an upland area, The Trench has steep rock walls, sometimes as much as two hundred metres high. The walls are now riddled with dwellings, factories, malls, sewers, traintubes and roadways. The Trench is seldom used as a means of transport and is, for most of its length, ill supplied with turnoffs and tributaries. However, the canal itself is criss-crossed with a latticework of walkways, traintubes, bridges, conduits and pipelines. On occasion the lattice becomes so thick that it is impossible to view the canal from above.



the concentric canals

Slashing across the main lateral canals are the eight Concentric Canals. Unlike the Laterals, the Concentrics are bereft of romantic names, being referred to as Ring One through Eight. They are uniformly sixty metres wide and are often thronged with watercraft and speeding ekranoplans (in some sections, there are dedicated ekranoplan lanes for safety purposes). Certain parts of the Concentrics are blocked off, especially all of those connecting with the Black Canal. This can sometimes prove a hindrance to traffic, but back canals and capillary waterways usually provide an alternative route.

the minor canals and capillaries

Connecting up the Laterals and the Concentrics are hundreds upon hundreds of minor canals, some no more than a couple of metres wide, water alleys through the heart of The City. In some places they are hemmed in by buildings, only accessible through tight, narrow lanes, sewage outfalls and watergates at their edge. Others have walkways, paths and streets by their sides whilst gangways, bridges, pipes, ropes and cables create a latticework over the canals, often making high speed travel a distinctly dangerous prospect.

tracks: the railways

An analysis of the rail network prepared for presentation to the 2nd Level Disbursements Committee, Nakamura Yebisu Group.

"While the canals dominate the mercantile life of our city, the extensive railway network operated by the Ancient and Honourable Guild of Fulgurators and the Transit Militia provides a useful adjunct to waterborne transport. Please do not be mistaken that the railway system is anything like our own railtracks used to bring resources in from the Outlands. Our tracks are wonders of engineering. With the city network, one wonders how the engineering holds up.

The tracks spread through the city like a parasitic plant, some times aping the spread of the canals, sometimes following their own routes. At times they are held aloft on brick arches,

iron trestles and concrete skyways. In other sections they dive deep underground, threading through ancient tunnels and passageways, but at no time do the railways run at what we would call 'ground level', i.e.: the level of the canals. They are always either elevated or subterranean.

Power for the railways is provided by the ancient, failing systems of the Guild. We have always denied them aid, as have the other seven, in accordance with our agreements. The Guild maintains rusting, decrepit power production systems at various locations around The City, patching, tending and caring for these decaying mechanisms as best they can. Power outages and flow failures are becoming more and more common in some areas as they fight to maintain a working supply.

The power is routed to the railways through massive overhead power lines, dangerous, deadly systems that have killed more than one wandering unfortunate. Pantographs on the tops of the engines hauling the trains draw power from these lines, sparking and arcing in a most alarming manner. The engines and trains are impressive things to behold. The engine itself is essentially one huge electric motor driving eight or more wheels. They are ornate constructions of black iron and brass, impressive in a primitive sort of way. The coaches are variable in the extreme, no two exactly alike. The trains rumble and crackle along the tracks, the blue sparks from their engines mingling with the orange sparks of the iron brakes. The train drivers are all members of the Guild, clad from head to toe in heavy, insulated suits to protect themselves from the ever-present danger of electrocution.

The engines are jealously guarded, precious things. We hold a strong suspicion, as do other intelligence organisations, that the Guild no longer has the capability or the funds to produce more engines. We feel this is evidenced by the increasing number of engines being stripped for parts in the yards and sidings. It is therefore not unsurprising that the engines are guarded with some vigour by the Transit Militia. Gaining access to one is impossible within the precincts of a station or yard. The Militia are somewhat trigger-happy and will gladly shoot anyone they suspect of interfering with the engines. I personally experienced this while gathering intelligence in CrossBar Terminus, but gladly, I escaped unscathed.

You will note from the map behind me that stations are numerous and widely scattered. Each parish, burgh or area has at least one station, many of the larger areas having several within their boundaries. Stations are very variable in their construction and facilities, but none are kept in particularly good repair. The Militia guards at all stations I visited are, however, highly motivated and devoted to their duty. Any transgression of rail law is punished very swiftly, as I witnessed on several occasions.

The locus of all rail activity in The City is CrossBar Terminus. You will see on the map that all lines converge here. A massive, rambling place, it is the bastion of power for both the



Guild and the Militia. I have a firm belief that the Guild maintains its most important power production facilities under the terminus, although I was, sadly, unable to find their location or even to confirm their very existence.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, I would say that our current course of action, i.e.: doing nothing, should be continued. It is my strong belief that the railways are on a downward course and will expire without any excessive outside influence from ourselves.

I do sincerely hope you found this short exposition useful and I thank you for your time."

COMPLEXITY: THE STREETS

For sheer diversity, complexity and maddening resistance to order, only one network comes close to The Dataflow: the streets, alleys, boulevards, thoroughfares and sidewalks of The City. An ancient tangle, riddled with secrets, with hidden byways and centuries old paths. No one person can claim to have knowledge of the millions of interstices and nodes which make up the street network of The City. However, few need to make such a claim, as only a small percentage of the population ever travels more than a mile or so from the place of their birth.

In most areas of The City, traffic on the streets is primarily on foot. Porters sell their backs for the carriage of heavy burdens, entire families draw small wagons of goods, ground vehicles are rare and treated with a semi-mystical awe. The occasional clanking, stuttering electric wagon owned by a haulage company can be seen making its unsteady way down the wider streets. Only in the more prosperous area, mainly those controlled by the macrocorps, does ground traffic become increasingly vehicular. Vehicles that cost more than the average citizen could hope to earn in their lifetime are used for short trips, for promenading or for terrorising those of a lesser social status. Armed gangs of well-to-do youngsters stream out of their protected areas to cause chaos on the streets. Many never return, ripped apart by real gangs who have lived their entire lives through vio-

lence and chaos, their expensive powerbikes destroyed or sold for a fraction of their real value.



Some areas offer alternative methods of transport, such as cablecars, funiculars and trams. In the Three Canals Metropolitan area, the Authority lays on a ramshackle, irregular and somewhat dangerous tram service. These rickety constructions, drawing their power from uninsulated overhead lines, rattle down the streets according to a timetable which is never published. Other parts of The City, such as Burningfell, are criss-crossed by funiculars, carrying goods and people up and down the steep sides of the fell. Some areas, in an effort to reduce the chances of their citizens being preyed upon by criminal elements, have even set up cable cars which swing above the streets, carrying passengers between stations perched on top of tenements and clinging to the sides of towerblocks.

However, the most important thing to remember about the streets is that the vast majority of people walk. And that includes the vast majority of people who have designs on the money, property or lives of their fellow citizens. Only a few streets are well lit, wide and easy to stroll down, the vast majority being small and cramped, with dwellings reaching high above on either side. Stalls and ramshackle accommodations make them even more crowded, forcing walkers to press past each other in a constant, flowing mass of bodies. The streets are home to cutpurses, pickpockets, jackers and thieves of all sorts. Wise people keep one hand on their money and another hand on a stout cosh.

The best advice, if you have to travel, is to avoid areas with which you are not familiar. There is a very real chance that wandering through unknown alleys and lanes, you will emerge into places with which you are desperately unfamiliar. Many who, by accident or design, take a stroll into Bankside, Mire End or Fogwarren are never seen again: lost, murdered, eaten or taken into slavery.

Be warned: The streets take no prisoners.



Overhead: air

The air above The City is choked with pollution, a permanent brown haze hanging over the buildings. Through this haze comes the occasional thrumming cargo aerostat, screeching mikefighter or wallowing dirigible. Air travel is almost exclusively the preserve of those organisations wealthy enough and powerful enough to be able to afford the massive costs involved in building, buying and maintaining aircraft. Outside of the macrocorps, hardly anyone maintains substantial fleets of aircraft, with most of those outside of macrocorp service being ancient, decrepit, patched up and generally time-worn.

The most common form of aircraft in the skies over The City is the aerostat. Flat, disc or oval shaped craft, they use massive arrays of fans to lift their bulky bodies into the air and further arrays of jets or fans to propel them forward. While not particularly fast, they can carry heavy loads and have the advantage of being able to land almost anywhere. Huge circular cargo aerostats carry heavy loads of resource

materials from the outer edges of The City into the factories nearer the centre. Most of the really big aerostats are manufactured by Gorunna Logistics, who have something of a monopoly in the design and building of such craft. Smaller aerostats serve a wide variety of different functions, from gunships to one man personal transports.

Buzzing between tower blocks and flitting across the rooftops are the mikefighters, tiny warplanes optimised for combat in The City. Barely big enough to hold a pilot, an engine and some weapons, they come in a staggering variety of designs, from pure fighters to warcrawl-busters and bombers.

A few centuries ago when the mikefighters first started appearing, they were much larger and heavier than they are now. Then a bright spark working for one of the macrocorps had the idea that by reducing the space needed for the pilot, and the systems which support him or her, the overall size of the craft could be reduced. Fast forward to the present era and the current situation, with that single idea long ago taken to its logical conclusion: mikefighters are piloted by children. Kids as young as five are drafted into macrocorp training academies and instructed to become pilots. Most start their careers aged eight or nine, careers which are over by the time they hit puberty. Very few now question the use of child soldiers in this way, it has become just another part of life in The City. The rate of attrition amongst rookie mikefighter pilots is terrible, with crashes, equipment failures and death in combat all being contributing factors. The majority of mikefighters are either vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) craft or short take-off and landing (STOL) craft. Some users, how-

ever, do make use of some rather interesting methods for the rapid launch of their aircraft. Trilhoeven are known to maintain launch and landing areas on top of some of their larger buildings, using magnetic catapults to accelerate mikefighters up to speed before launching them off the side of the building. Others simply drop them from the sides of the tallest buildings, sending them plummeting to the ground before their engines take hold and curve them skyward.

Compared to the mikefighters and aerostats, dirigibles (or airships) are slow, ponderous and unwieldy and a relative rarity in The City. They are all homemade, patchwork constructions of dubious reliability, floating under bags of explosive hydrogen. Many areas will not allow dirigibles to pass overhead, due to the risk of fire and explosion, and so they are mostly confined to the outer areas of The City where aerostats are rare. Powered by chugging, inefficient alcohol burning engines, they plough through the skies, sometimes coming to a virtual halt when the headwind becomes too great.

Nervous System: computing and communication

The Dataflow has often been likened to the nervous system of The City, twisting through its gargantuan body, sending, receiving and processing information. However, The Dataflow should not be thought of as one consistent, contiguous whole; like The City itself, it is a phenomenally complex agglomeration which has built up over time into a frighteningly convoluted network. Every communications and computer system constitutes a part of The Dataflow. Telegraphs, cablenets, microwave relays and laser comms provide the transfer capacity, while datacores, dingins and electronic computers provide the storage and processing capacity. An important note is that radio systems are unused in The City. Something prevents radio being used, nobody even bothers trying any more, it's just an accepted part of life.

Computing

By far the most common form of computer in The City is the mechanical computer, or dingin as it's more commonly known. They range in size from the massive assemblies of cogs, gears and rods of macroscale engines, down to the tiny nanoscale dingin processor blocks produced by macrocorporate manufacturers. Between these two ends of the spectrum, there are the microscale engines, where the mechanisms are too small to be seen with the naked eye (sometimes only just) but can be easily viewed with a microscope. Some of these are produced on vast automated production facili-



ties, while others are painstakingly constructed by hand by the most skilled of artisans. No matter what scale of dingin is used, there must be a means of programming it so that it will carry out its functions. Macroscale engines are most commonly programmed by sequences of punched cards or slotted tapes which the dingin reads and translates into machine code. Microscale engines use a variation on the tape idea, using tiny spools of coded metallic tape run at vast speed to program the engine. Nanoscale engines are the most complex of all, using strings of individual molecules as the 'tape'.

Dingins have become so prevalent in The City because of the high level of background radiation and the constant threat of viruses. The virus threat comes in many forms: so many have been used over the centuries that many of the viruses have evolved and changed, becoming predators in The Dataflow. However, they cannot attack dingin systems without having some means to physically insert their programming. Also, dingins are far more resistant to radiation and extremes of temperature, making them ideal for life in The City. Most weapons systems with integrated computing modules use dingins for this very reason.

Other forms of computer system are found in The City, but none are so widespread as the dingin. Optical computers are utilised by macrocorporate and corporate organisations, but they are most often separated from the main body of The Dataflow by firewalls and banks of dingin safeguards. These optical computers most often use DNA cores for information storage purposes, giving massive amounts of storage capacity. The DNA systems use crystalline vats containing DNA material suspended in a storage medium. Variable frequency lasers read the information stored on the DNA chains while information is added and removed through chemical enzyme activity. Some of the macrocorps are known to use such things as quantum gate computers on a limited basis for ultra-high level encryption purposes. However, only one of the macrocorps (Hirplakker) is known to have created Artificial Intelligences.

COMMUNICATION

Like The City itself, The Dataflow is almost incomprehensibly complex, multi layered and incredibly variable in its level of technology. The Dataflow encompasses telegraph lines, phone lines, cablenets, microwave relays, laser comms and many other, esoteric, forms of communication. Something as simple as telephoning one of your friends can be a nightmarish operation, depending on the kind of access you have, where you are in The City and quite often, who you are. In many of the poorer areas, communications are non-existent, or extend only to a battered public telephone kiosk standing on a street corner or by a canal. Wealthier areas usually have contracts with telecomms companies or the macrocorps to provide communications services. These can range from

simple telephone systems to full visual conferencing and information access systems. As an example of the complexity, someone calling from Bankside to a friend in Burningfell may have to wander down to a public kiosk and dial the number that they think the individual might be on (these can change with alarming frequency).

This will then be rout-

ed to the nearest exchange (if the exchange is still working). The exchange will then have to see what systems it can access in order to patch a call through to Burningfell. This might involve linking into a macrocorporate comms network, routing the call through a series of microwave relays to a main processing exchange. This bigger exchange would then prioritise the call and route it through the most appropriate and available network. The call could then be shunted onto a local cablenet and fired towards Burningfell. Luckily, Burningfell has stumped up for local cable access. Then, the call gets routed to the local server system and finally, maybe, reaches the intended destination. As can be seen, this is a ridiculously complex system and it can often take an age to actually get a call patched through to the person you want.

The most comprehensive (indeed, the only) citywide integrated comms network is provided by Barrage Balloon Communications, a subsidiary of Sideband Media. BBC



maintains a network of massive gas balloons floating at heights between 4,000 and 8,000 feet above The City. Below these balloons are clusters of microwave downlinks and relays. Subscribers to the service can send a message, a phone call or conduct video conferencing at reasonable speed and with relative security. Messages are routed into the network through an extensive series of uplink/downlink stations and sent to the nearest downlink to the target point via the network of balloon relays. This avoids the vast, complex body of The Dataflow as whole. Users still need a means of access to the ground stations and most use the hardwired cablenets provided by BBC. Corporate users are most common, although private individuals can buy into this expensive system. The largest non-corporate users are the TCMAA Provosts who use the network to route most of their inter-unit comms traffic.

Now, the above is just on the level of actually talking to someone. When it comes to exploring The Dataflow or accessing information, this process becomes even trickier. If you have the right system and access, then entering an information database is relatively simple. Searching the entire Dataflow for information is a much more worrying task due to the different technology levels, connections and processing speeds and means of data transfer, it can often take days to track down the particular bit of information you're looking for. Specialist software companies such as Firefinger have established a reputation for building dingin programs designed explicitly for information search and retrieval. Even with these specialist programs, it's never easy. The bit of info you might be looking for could be stored on a centuries old macroscale dingin with a ridiculously low retrieval and transfer speed. So, while finding the information might not be so complex, actually retrieving and downloading it would be the time consuming part of the process. Data retrieval specialists (or flowghosts as they are more commonly known) have developed unparalleled skills for get information from The Dataflow, cracking secure databases and sneaking off with information that they really shouldn't have.

Sedate the masses: entertainment

With such a huge, factionalised, unstable population, The City could easily explode into mass violence at any moment. One of the few things that keeps the population stable is (relatively) easy access to a vast range of entertainment. From the ridiculously expensive night-clubs of Brightlights to the parasite infested brothels surrounding the Contested Grounds, entertainment comes in many forms.

television

Easily the most widespread entertainment medium in The City, low-grade television is supplied to hundreds of thousands of homes by Sideband Media and other, smaller companies. Many years ago, it was Sideband who took the decision to provide free television to any part of The City that requested it. Hence, even the most impoverished homes will have a television, albeit a battered and scarred one, sitting somewhere in the room. Sideband took this decision (a decision which was followed by other corporations) for three main reasons. The first reason was, in agreement with the other macrocorps, to effectively sedate the population and provide them with an outlet for their fears, hatred and passions. The second reason was to make money from a range of other services. Although TV is provided free, only a limited range of channels are offered, with more popular, diverse channels costing an extra fee. In addition, users can also pay to have their cablenet carry phone signals. Sideband makes a healthy profit from this service, charging exorbitant rates for telecommunications provision. The third reason was that TV could penetrate the home more effectively than any other advertising medium. A full 35% of programming consists of adverts and infomercials. New products are glamourised and glorified, encouraging the huddled masses to purchase the latest consumer goods, even if they can barely afford them.

Actual entertainment programming covers a wide spectrum. The free channels mostly concentrate on cheap fiction shows, often featuring sex or violence as their main themes. Romances, war stories, police dramas and series purporting to give an insight into the lives of the rich and famous are all extremely popular whilst factual and news programming is almost non-existent on the free channels. For anything approximating documentary or serious news, a user must pay for one or more of the additional channels. More popular than these are the film channels, which show an endless diet of the low-budget movies churned out by Sideband, its subsidiaries and other smaller studios. They tend to follow the same pattern as the free TV shows, only with bigger budgets and better known actors. Sports channels are also highly popular, with the Association of Ground Effect Racing Leagues Wingship channel being by far the most heavily subscribed.

Workers come home at night, shrug off their working clothes and place themselves in front of the TV to while away their evenings. TV sedates the population and allows the macrocorps to create demand for their products. A more effective method of keeping the population under control has yet to be found.



Live Entertainment

Musical trends in The City are very varied, not just from culture to culture but from region to region. The most popular musical style at the current moment is a discordant, almost unlistenable, style named rust. There are many young bands that seek to make it on to TV and the rust scene is a very vibrant, constantly changing part of the music business. Popular new bands in this vein are Deadly Lethargy, WaaWaaWaa and SCB, all signed to small, non-macrocorporate, independent labels. Among the more wealthy, club orientated set there is a fad for fast, highly syncopated string music, quite hard on the ears but apparently great for dancing to. The scene is virtually dominated by bands made up of young macrocorporates. There have been a few good bands in this vein that are not tied to the macrocorps in some way, yet they seldom seem to have much success, possibly due to the stranglehold of the macrocorporates on the music industry. For the more cultured listener, opera and more sedate string pieces are still big business. The Grand Opera House in Brightlights and the Unsooth Hall in Luminosity Tower both play host to many high profile, expensive events.



Theatrical productions hold a strange place in The City, seemingly being confined to the two extremes of society. The massively rich attend live theatre events as a style statement, to show that they would not watch TV like the common herd. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the most poverty stricken members of society, who live in places where even Sideband refuses to provide TV access, rely on live acts for their entertainment. Ironically, it is crudely satirical plays which are most popular with both audiences.

SPORTS

Newsline

Subject : HSD Launch New Ekranoplan Racing Ship

Stringer : Merryn Lysak

"In a glittering ceremony at the Straits Raceway, HSD launched their new ship for the upcoming Class-A season. Based on last year's controversial fusion-powered design, the new ship is claimed to be faster, more agile and more stable. Regular readers may recall the tragic debut race of last year's design when 2 racers were killed at the Rapid Ring."

The most popular spectator sport in The City is, without a doubt, ekranoplan racing. The sight of these massively powerful ground effect planes careering around the canals, a few yards above the surface, is quite something. From the Class A races down to the lowest of the Limited classes, events draw huge crowds, all hoping for an exciting win or spectacular crash. Racing is co-ordinated and controlled by the all-powerful Association of Ground Effect Racing Leagues (AGERL). The Association controls every aspect of racing and lays down the rules for competition and vehicle design, occasionally enforcing them by rather violent methods.

RACING CLASSES

Class A: Class A is the fastest and most popular of the three racing classes. Using cutting edge design and having the best pilots, only teams with massive corporate sponsorship can afford to enter.

Class B: Less expensive than Class A, often using technology from Class A races of two or three seasons ago, Class B offers a more affordable route into the higher echelons of racing for less well off teams.

Limited: Within the Limited class there are numerous strata, from local clubman racing, up to semi-professional teams striving to get the sponsorship needed to enter the big time.

Aside from the three main classes, there are numerous underground and illegal races which take place across The City. These are frowned upon by burgh councils and militant organisations, but they all seem unable to stop them. Home built ekranoplans of widely varying design take to the waters for little or no prize money and often only for the kudos of winning.



FAMOUS TRACKS AND RACES

The Grand Canal 2000: Sponsored by Trilhoeven and organised by the TCMAA, the GC:2000 is the biggest, richest and most spectacular sporting event in The City. Every season, teams from all classes converge on the Grand Canal as it runs through the TCMA. 200 times they race up and down a ten mile stretch of the canal, the leading craft reaching speeds in excess of four hundred and fifty miles per hour. Fatalities are common, not only amongst pilots, but amongst the throngs of spectators and those foolhardy enough to slip past the Provosts and stray onto the canal in small craft. On average, five million pounds in bets changes hands running up to and during the GC:2000.

The Rapid Ring: A lethal, twisting watertrack, the Rapid Ring was downgraded from Class A to Class B last season after a series of horrific accidents on its numerous tight bends. Hirplakker, its owners, are furious about this and have made numerous threatening advances towards the AGREL.

The Straits Raceway: From the pollution of the Black Canal came something to cheer the population. Two subsidiary canals, cut off by the blocking of the Black were linked up to form the Straits Raceway, a highly competitive Limited Class watertrack. Maintained by sponsorship from the Firefinger corporation, the Straits are located in Fogwarren and often provides the only outlet for the entertainment starved population.

OTHER SPORTS AND PASTIMES

Aside from ekranoplan racing, there are few sports in The City which achieve anything other than limited or underground popularity. Combat sports are, by the very nature of life in The City, rather popular and many variations abound. One of the more widespread and popular underground combat games is Cripplecut. A Cripplecut venue can be almost anywhere: a cellar, a tunnel, a back alley or a factory floor. Games range from backstreet brawling involving a couple of local toughs to major underground events, perhaps drawing as many as a thousand spectators. Cripplecut is, at its most basic level, knife fighting. But the object is not to kill your opponent but, as the name suggests, to cripple him or her. Even in the lawless, violent world of cripplecut, actually killing your opponent is considered rather bad form. Each fighter uses the edged weapon of their choice (although there are informal restrictions on what you can and cannot use) and attempt to prevent the use of the arms and legs of their opponent. Surrender is allowed and takes place generally when one fighter has lost the use of two limbs. The permission of surrender and the prohibition against killing blows are the only two rules in cripplecut. Major cripplecut

events are often organised by the big criminal groups such as the 3rd Syndicate. Betting is always keen at these events, whether they are large or small and considerable amounts of money change hands. Due to the huge sums wagered on some events, some groups have taken to bringing in 'ringers' from outside the normal cripplecut circles. These are often ghostfighters (a class of stealthy knife-fighters) who have been paid very well to take part. However, much to the disappointment of their backers, the ghostfighters are often at a severe disadvantage, as their first instinct in a fight is to strike to kill.

Card games are particularly popular across The City, mainly because they provide a cheap, convenient form of entertainment. All games are based around the standard eighty card deck, containing five suits (Black, Red, Grey, Green and Blue) of 16 cards each. The numeral cards run from one to ten, while the face cards are named (in ascending order) Assassin, Priest, Temptress, Captain, Warlord and Daemon. Widely played games include 'Railwaymans Bluff', 'Dog' and 'Height'. 'Railwaymans Bluff' originated with the drivers, signalmen and engineers who work on the railways and can have up to ten players. The object of the game is to bluff the other players into getting rid of the face cards which you need in order to complete a run of all the face cards and the one card, of a specific suit. Assassin cards can be used to force the other player to discard a specific face card. If, for example, you suspect that one of your opponents holds Black Warlord, and you are attempting to collect Grey suit cards and have a Red Assassin which you don't need, you can throw the Assassin down a declare an assassination' on the other player's card. However, you need to be careful, because if you're wrong, the other player can randomly select a card from your hand and have it discarded. 'Railwaymans Bluff' can take an excruciatingly long time to play. Needless to say, it helped railway workers while away the hours during strikes.

You are what you eat: food and drink

In a city of millions, isolated from the outside world, one major question arises: how do the inhabitants survive? More pointedly, where does the food come from to allow them to survive? There are no farms, no herds of cattle, no rolling fields. People require sustenance and that sustenance has to come from somewhere.

The sustenance problem can essentially be divided into two categories: the macrocorporate problem and the everyone else problem. Dealing first with the macrocorporates, their situation is somewhat easier due to their access to resources and labour. Over the decades, the macrocorporate institu-



tions have built up vast supply networks, providing them with all the food they require, and more. All of the eight maintain vast underground hydroponics facilities producing fruit, vegetables, and pharmaceutical plants. Usually located away from the centre of The City, these enormous, multi-layered facilities consume extraordinary amounts of power and water. Plants exist in these facilities which are grown nowhere else in The City. Salvaged from the chaos of The Shift and The Bombardment, the genetic codes for these plants are almost all that remains of The City's pre-Bombardment flora. Outside of the macrocorporate facilities, many companies, families and individuals grow their own food, through various means. Some small corporations have purchased equipment and seeds from the macrocorps in order to start their own production facilities. These vary in quality from sparkling clean underground growing houses to dank, pestilence ridden warehouses which barely manage to produce anything edible at all. On roofs and in courts throughout The City, individuals and family groups maintain small gardens to feed themselves and, occasionally, to make a little money. Fertilised by treated sewage (or sometimes untreated sewage) these little gardens are fiercely guarded against those who might steal valuable food. Most law enforcement organisations will look the other way when a garden owner beats or kills a miscreant who has attempted to make off with a vegetable.

The most commonly available foodstuff in The City is fish, in all its varying forms. Bred in the turgid waters of the canals, feeding on the plant life (and other fish) they are perhaps the most valuable resource in The City. Commercial fish breeders use vast cages suspended in the canals to contain and grow their stock. Most famous of the fish producing areas is Bankside, which sells produce far and wide. Many people who dwell beside the canals maintain fish cages on a smaller scale, providing for themselves, their family or their local community. Selective breeding and limited genetic engineering have allowed the fish farmers to breed fish which are hardier and better able to survive and grow in the polluted, dark waters of the canals.

In stark contrast to the fishermen of the canals, the macrocorps maintain huge underground facilities (normally in the same complexes which house the hydroponic facilities) devoted to the production of edible fish. Using the water which has been cycled through the hydroponic growth areas, the fish not only provide food but also provide valuable fertiliser for the hydroponic facilities. Bloating, lazy specimens swim lethargically in the warm tanks, gobbling up food pellets as fast as the tenders can throw them into the water. The fish are a valuable source of food, oils and a wide range of other useful stuff: bones are turned into glue, fish skin is turned into clothing and oils are sold as lubricants.

Outside of the large-scale facilities, fish are still available if you have a line, a hook and a lot of patience. Canal dwelling fish are often ill, diseased and foul tasting, but for many they are the only option available if they wish to survive. However, fish stocks in the canals are sinking lower and lower and the chances of catching anything worth eating are becoming more and more slim as the years wear on.

Another popular food choice in The City, coming second only in popularity to the ubiquitous fish, is dog. Man's best friend has become man's favourite main course. Dogs, in a wide variety of shapes and sizes were and are endemic, found in every area of The City, adapting to different environments and generally thriving. Wild dogs are hunted for their meat and skin, whilst others are bred for the same purposes. Fat, waddling 'meat hounds' are kept in pens and fed on fish products that even the hungriest human would probably pass up. Here they are fattened for the slaughter, their meat sold for food, their skin made into clothing and shoes, their bones reduced to glue and other useful products.

Some people do keep dogs as pets, but a careful eye must be kept on them, as a stray dog is most likely to be snapped up and eaten. Dogskin is also tanned and made into shoes, coats, trousers hats and bags, another valuable source of raw materials for the imprisoned citizens of The City

All this having been said, The City does not simply survive on a diet of fish, dogs and vegetables. More sinister sources of food are available. Decades and decades ago, some bright spark figured that there was a huge source of raw material that was being burned to a cinder every day. A valuable resource was simply going up in smoke. What was happening? People were being cremated. Now, the thought of actually eating human flesh was repugnant to the vast majority of the population. Folklore recalled the horrific years after The Bombardment, when vast numbers of people were reduced to cannibalism in order to survive. But what if this resource could be used to create a more palatable foodstuff, one that the population would accept. Hence, the practice of selling the dead to food companies began, slowly at first, but now it has grown so much that it is a fully accepted part of City life.

Large numbers of the dead are bought by so-called Deathdealers who reduce the bodies to a nutrient soup from which tasty treats are grown. Using genetic engineering to modify the growth, meat, vegetable type substances and all manner of foods are churned out by the factories. Even the macrocorps have got in on the act. Macrocorporate workers often have to sign contracts which stipulate that they give up all rights to their body when death finally comes to them. The macrocorps can then use their loyal workers one last time to



feed the ravening hordes of The City. In return for this service, the families of the dead are paid a small amount, usually in foodstuffs. One chain of fast-food stalls has even adopted the name 'Meat The People' as a blatant signifier of what it is actually selling. As unpalatable as this may seem, it provides another valuable source of nutrients for a city which is cut off, isolated and in desperate need.

but where does it all come from? resources

An address by Fion Schlechner, Resource Management Executive, Hirplakker Combine, given to new employees of the Combine. Certain segments have been excised for security reasons.

"Colleagues, friends, co-workers. You're all gathered here today as new employees of Hirplakker Combine to find out one thing. How does this sprawling, chaotic, filthy cesspool in which we live survive? You've all suffered hardships to a greater or lesser extent. Now, you're one of us. Hirplakker shall provide everything you could need. However, I'm not a marketing man, so, enough of the advertising shit.

[laughs from audience]

How do our factories keep producing? Where do we get the raw materials for the steel, glass, fibreoptics, wood, plastics and all the other vital items this company produces? Well, I'll tell you. And this is something that 95% of the people in this city don't know. From The Outlands.

[gasps from some members of the audience, muted laughing from others]

Yes, I know, no one can go into The Outlands, Death waits for us at the borders of The City, blah, blah, blah. Well, that part is true. However, we've overcome that. Out there, under the blistered, cracked sand and rock are billions of tons of minerals, petrochemicals, a storehouse of natural resources. Desiccated forests of ancient lumber just waiting to be hacked down. Lights please.

[lights dim.]

[holo projection springs into life show a shaky view of a seared desert]

This is how we do it. Robots. Automatons. Drones. Whatever you call them, they can go where we can't. We've been sending them out for hundreds of years now, setting up mining

installations, prospecting. And not one of them has been touched by 'forces from above'. As long as they don't leave the ground, that is.

[camera pans to a view of a construction of pipeworks, tubing, massive cylinders set on end]

My friends, this is Extractor 34. It mines for ferrous metals, iron to you and me. The iron ore that we turn into steel, turn into weapons, armour, boats, mikefighters. We've got another seven like it, all dragging iron from the ground. Similar plants produce precious metals, light ores anything we need. Now don't get me wrong, we're not the only ones doing it. Gorunna, Trilhoeven, Arclight [sound of spitting] they're all at it. There's an unspoken law: don't fuck with the mining facilities, without them, this place would grind to a halt. Lights.

[lights come up]

We bring the stuff in, along the canals and on automated train lines, right into our factories, smelters and furnaces. That's how we keep going. That's how this city survives. We hold the keys. Only us and the other macrocorps can do this. Only we have the power. The will. The resolve. That's what puts us at the top of the food chain.

Never forget: we rule this city. Not the people. Not the Council. Us.

Thank you for your attention."

the Shifted

Mysterious? Misunderstood? Monstrous? The Shifted who inhabit The City are all of these, and more. Where they came from, none can truly say. What they want, no one has the answers for. Suffice to say, there is no group in The City more hated, reviled and mistrusted than The Shifted.

Shortly after The Shift and The Bombardment, the shell-shocked, terror-crazed inhabitants of The City began to notice strange new shadows and hear incomprehensible new voices. Ghastly figures stalked the alleys and prowled the streets. No one could pin down exactly what was wrong or what was causing these manifestations. In the chaos which abounded, most of the reports were discounted as the ravings of starving lunatics. Yet, as time wore on and The City began to haul itself into some semblance of normality, people began to take the tales and stories more seriously. Efforts



were made to investigate sightings and discover the truth behind these horrific folk stories. Then the truth dawned. Humanity was no longer the sole inhabitant of The City.

Since the dawning of realisation, The Shifted have been identified and classified into numerous groups. While only a small percentage of the population can say with any confidence that they have encountered a Shifted being (apart from the ubiquitous Simils), they are a real fact of life. From reports, sightings, and horrific evidence, mankind has pieced together fragmentary knowledge of these beings and learned something about their behaviour and existence.

dealing with the Shifted

To all intents and purposes, the motivations and goals of The Shifted are totally incomprehensible to humankind. If a Shifted being is heard to speak, it is, to the casual listener, a relentless babble of noise. Some of the creatures have been heard to speak in human tongues, yet even then their speech is beyond the realms of understanding. Jumbled words and fractured sentences pour from between their lips (if, indeed, they have lips). Some have, to a greater or lesser extent, attempted to deal with The Shifted, to make pacts and alliances. In some cases, these appear to have been moderately successful. In other cases, they have resulted in violence and death.

theories on the Shifted

Different groups across The City have widely varying views on The Shifted. Those who believe in the tenets of the Third Church of God The Architect view The Shifted as the minions of the Great Demolisher, out to destroy the work which God in His wisdom has wrought. Various sects of the Church actively attempt to fight the Shifted, tracking them down and destroying them. Admittedly, their schemes have met with little success, yet they continue to pursue their efforts with unabated vigour. The most easily dispatched are, surprisingly, the Simils. Captured Simils are fed into furnaces and melted down; their component parts reduced to iron ingots that the Church buries in crypts and catacombs. Efforts to destroy other Shifted beings have met with less success. Church Lay Reserves Martial units have often been torn apart trying to capture or destroy an Ubel, a fact which seems to little hinder their enthusiasm for the chase.

Perhaps the most sensible views on Shifted beings come from the Shift Studies Faculty (SSF) of Longshore University. Endowed with massive funds and utilising some of the best scientific brains in The City, they probe the very nature of The Shift and the beings which it threw up. The best guess of the

SSF is that the Shifted were brought here from somewhere else, although where that somewhere else is (or was), they seem unwilling or unable to say. Of all organisations attempting to enter some sort of meaningful dialogue with The Shifted, they have met with the most success. According to University rumour, members of the SSF have actually entered into conversation with Lugner and Ubel. What these 'conversations' revealed, the Faculty has not yet said. However, it seems that if any one group of people is going to penetrate the true nature of The Shifted, the Shift Studies Faculty will be that group.

A third source of speculation on these beings is the folklore and rumour which permeates The City like a fog. Pervasive rumours state that The Shifted are in fact the spirits of all those who died during The Shift and The Bombardment. The story goes that they have been brought back to life, to haunt The City and take vengeance for lives cut dramatically short. Other folk tales insist that The Shifted are the product of horrific experiments carried out by the macrocorps in years gone by. All of the macrocorps stoutly deny any involvement in either The Shift or the beings which arose after it. Those who shout too loudly about this theory are quietly disposed of, adding even more grist to the rumour mill. The last of the more common folklore theories is one of the oddest and least well regarded. Some say that The Shifted are in fact beings from beyond The City, maybe from even further beyond. This particular theory states that they were not created by The Shift but they themselves created The Shift for their own ends.

Suffice to say, until things are proven one way or the other, the competing theories and beliefs will continually war against each other for dominance.

the Shifted races

Below you will find the extent of common knowledge on the five most frequently encountered Shifted beings.

drache

Insubstantial, seemingly nothing more than a vague, shimmering haze in the air, Drache are the least understood of The Shifted, mainly because they have no physical aspect which humankind can relate to. Gazing upon a Drache causes the eyes to twist, vision to blur and pain to explode inside the head of the viewer. They seem to be a species which was never designed to be gazed upon by human eyes. Careful research has discovered that Drache can control small electrical currents and manipulate electrical fields. Hence, the Drache are viewed as the cause of most of the cases of 'possession' in The City. There have been documented cases of criminals being shot dead in the act of committing a foul



crime, only for those who stand witness to see a faint shimmer depart from the body at the time of death. Reliable individuals will swear to have seen some people surrounded by a faint haze which is painful to look at. While undoubtedly some of the incidences are acts of imaginative fancy, it is certain that Drache are responsible for some of these events.

hager

Tall, powerful, appearing from the dark and fog to kidnap and assassinate. Even in the rarefied circles of studying The Shifted, precious little is known about the Hager. Tales circulate of their immunity to bullets, their massive strength and utter ruthlessness. Many disappearances are attributed to the predations of Hager, but few can be proven. Physically, they are tremendously imposing, standing seven feet tall with a sculpted musculature beneath their all enveloping black garments. Their heads are featureless ovoids of pale, almost white, flesh. Their

exposed hands are similarly featureless, six fingered, long and slender, without the knuckles and joints which characterise human hands. Hager never seem to travel alone, unlike other Shifted entities. They are always seen in groups of three or four. Reliable witnesses are, however, rare, for a visitation by Hager is seldom a time of joy.

lugner

Lugner are seldom seen, but often heard. Of all The Shifted, they appear most adept at utilising human language for their own mysterious ends. Rumours and whispers appear from nowhere. Citizens lying in their beds hear strange voices in their ears, whispering terrible things. Those who claim to have seen the physical manifestation of the Lugner describe them as squat beings, almost obese, with pallid skin and puffy pink lips. Scientists working at Longshore University have theorised that the sole purpose of the Lugner is to spread dissent and misinformation. Why they do this, no one can truly say.

simils

By far and away the most common of Shifted beings, Simils present an aspect to the world which seems radically at odds with the other Shifted races. Walking juggernauts of iron, brass, glass and stone, they tramp about The City, emitting

sparks and goutts of steam. The most disturbing aspect of a Simil is its head: a human head. Seemingly impaled upon the mechanical construction which is the rest of the Simil, the head is that of a dead man or woman. Some have run screaming from certain Simils, fearing that they recognise certain features in the twisted face which looks out upon the world. The face of many Simils are horrific to look upon, ravaged by pain and frustration. Others present an altogether more calm outlook, a calm so unnatural is highly disturbing.



However, such is the strength of the Simils, they are commonly found labouring in hazardous environments, working for bizarre payments such as dolls, plants or photographs. Why they choose to do this, it is, again, one of the mysteries of The Shift. Suffice to say, they seem to be the only Shifted beings who will actually work for humankind, selling their services to whoever will pay them. Some gangs have taken to using these metal giants as hired muscle, relying on their strength and the fear that they inspire to defeat their opponents. In some cases, they have been hired as soldiers. In the Hundred Block War, Hirplakker hired many hundreds of Simils as 'suicide' troops in their fight against Arclight. Their lack of regard for their own physical bodies allowed them to wade through fields of fire which would decimate even the toughest and best equipped human troops.

ubel

Of all The Shifted, it is perhaps the Ubel who are most feared by the common populace. Many of the most horrific killings and brutal murders have been attributed to Ubel and it is because of the frequency of these acts that Ubel are amongst the best documented of The Shifted. Sightings are relatively commonplace, the unlucky viewers always giving the same description: horrible, creaking beings, apparently with skele-



tons of rotting wood, strung with sinew and muscle, cloaked with tattered black rags. They are always reported as carrying rusted black iron blades, with which they slice and chop at their victims, all the while gibbering in their own language. On very rare occasions, Ubel have been captured and placed in the most secure of detention cells. Here, they slam themselves against the walls, raving and screaming. After a period of incarceration, despite constant watches, they always simply disappear into nothingness.

the lost places

A lone man walks down a darkened alley, never to emerge on the other side.

An emaciated dog runs from nowhere into the middle of a crowded street.

Children scrabbling in cellars and basements, playing to blank out the misery of existence, find one of their friends gone. Forever.

Squads of heavily armed troops disappear while on patrol, their screams faintly floating on the breeze.

Half heard voices from nowhere, partial glimpses from the corner of an eye.

These are the Lost Places.

Even those who are wise in the ways of The City fear some places. Most feared are the Lost Places. Only whispered about on the streets or glimpsed in nightmares, the Lost Places are one of the mysteries of The Shift, places that are difficult to find and impossible to leave.

Some alleys, courtyards, cellars and even whole buildings appear on no map and reside in no memory. They are only stumbled upon by the unfortunate, the desperate or the mad. These are the parts of The City worst affected by The Shift, parts that were twisted and torn by the changes which The Shift wrought. No scientist can explain the nature of the Lost Places, they merely shrug their shoulders and turn away, afraid of what they may find if they look deeper.

Finding a Lost Place is a formidable task, you may only stumble upon one. For a moment, things seem familiar, but then you realise you must have taken a wrong turning, be on the wrong street. Then truth closes in. Buildings in these places seem to loom closer in, they appear to be more threatening. Alleys are tighter and more twisted, cellars more dank and

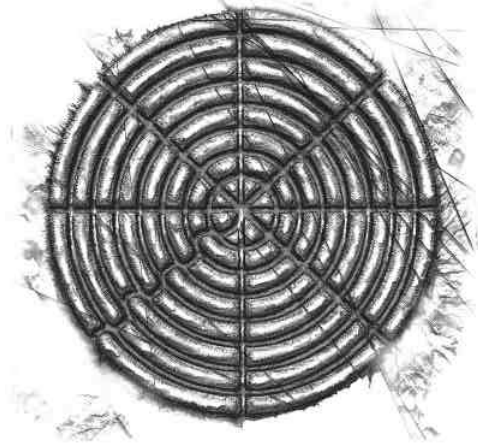
dingy. It is here where The Shifted are at their most powerful. Overhead, the sky is pure black without a hint of colour.

Even aerial photography will not reveal the location of a Lost Place, they remain hidden from sight. Once the casual visitor is within, there is only one way out: the exact way you came in. Any other routes will simply bring you right back to where you started. Entering a Lost Place can be as simple as stepping slightly to the side when entering a courtyard, it can be as complex as winding through a maze of dark tunnels.

Some of these places are recollected in myth and legend. Torture Lane, supposedly a place of unimaginable pain and suffering. Corner Alley, a twisting nightmare which can drive even the sanest, most rational man to the brink of madness. These are only two of the legends. Two out of a myriad of folk tales. Those who claim to have visited a Lost Place are usually discounted as insane, not an unreasonable viewpoint given the state in which these alleged victims are found.

Some have gone so far as to question The Shifted about the Lost Places, seeking arcane knowledge which may give them power over others. Allegedly, no answers have ever been forthcoming. Even the more 'talkative', of The Shifted remain tight-lipped (in those occasions where they are seen to have lips).





"Nah, don't care me. Got me boat, got me gun,
got me shivs. Fine, I am. Nothing scares me, not a
thing. I see one of those Ubel, I spit in his eye.

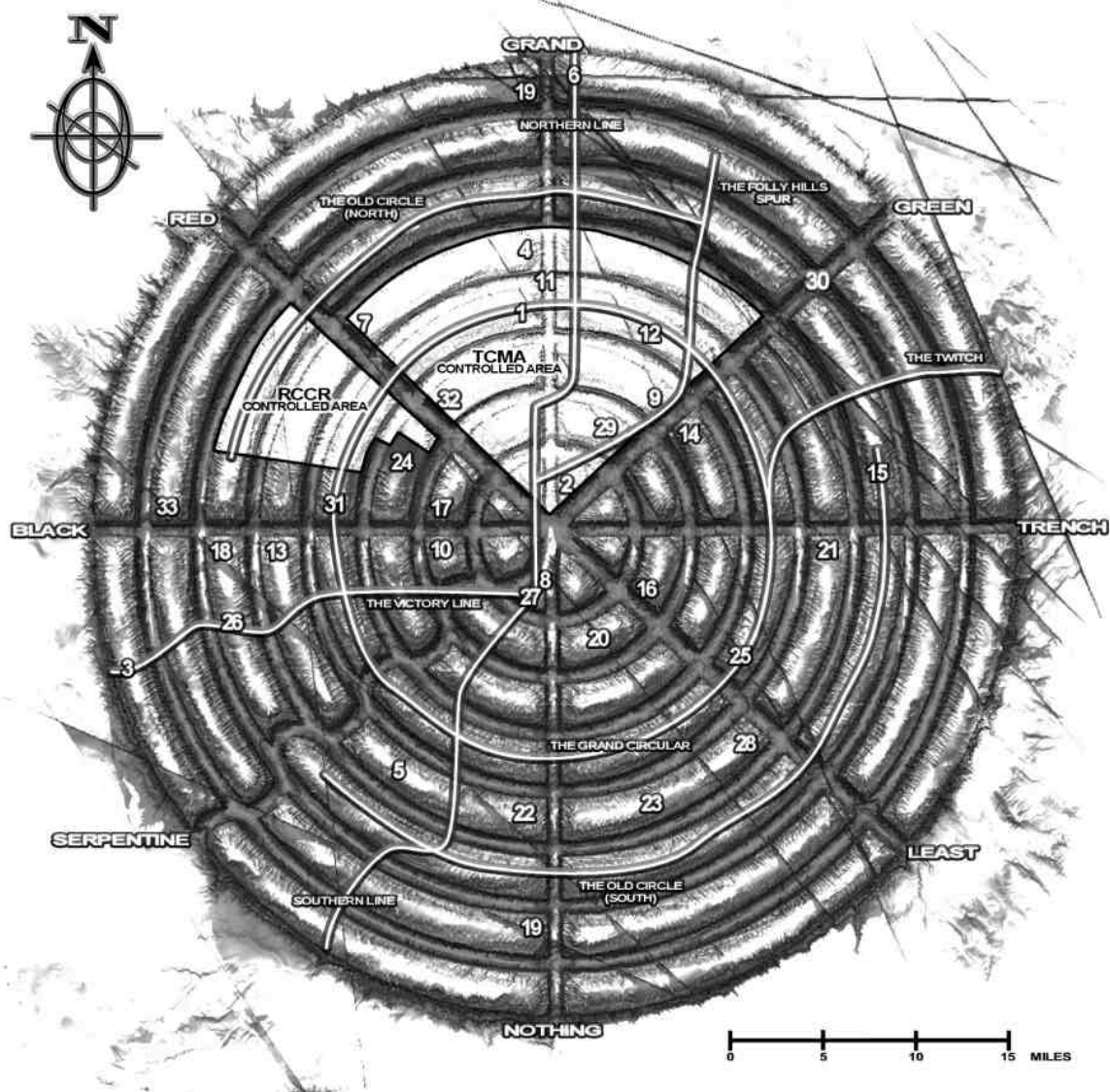
Shifted? It's all just madness. Me, I got me own
thinking on that. S'all just a big things those macros
got goin'. All this Shift stuff, just a big gag, keep the
locals fringed. Blokes in suits wi' knives is all. None
of it's real. All a con, if you ask me. Which you did.

Now, about that shilling²."

'Mudjack', Nomad/Boatperson, Least Canal South.

the place





Burghs

- 1. **Bankside**
- 2. Brightlights
- 3. Calculus Tor
- 4. **Clearwater Break**
- 5. Colsetter Parish
- 6. Dog Junction
- 7. Dreamingspires
- 8. Fogwarren
- 9. **Folly Hills**
- 10. Hangside
- 11. Long Pond
- 12. Lucent Heights
- 13. Merryhell

14. **Mire End**

- 15. Project 97
 - 16. Shore Ditch Warrens
- Industrial Areas
- 17. Burningfell
 - 18. Deepdown
 - 19. The Train

Macrocorporate Domains

- 20. The Cathedral
- 21. The Forbidden City
- 22. The Iron Bastion
- 23. Konkret

24. **Luminosity Tower**

- 25. The Powerhouse
- 26. Trenevier

Notable Buildings

- 27. CrossBar Terminus
- 28. Inferno
- 29. Longshore University

Other Areas

- 30. The Brackens
- 31. **The Contested Grounds**
- 32. The Forest
- 33. Smokey Mountain



the passing of time

A year in The City is composed of ten months, each month consisting of thirty three days and each day consists of 25 hours of sixty minutes each. Months, days and hours are simply referred to by their numbers, nobody has gone to the trouble of devising specific names for them. However, the year is also divided into five two month seasons named Cold (1st and 2nd months of the year), Mist(3rd and 4th months of the year), Burn (5th and 6th months of the year), Damp (7th and 8th and months of the year) and Freeze (9th and 10th months of the year). The most common system of counting the years is to take the alleged time of The Shift as a baseline and numbering from then on. Consequently, the current year is 997, with the time of The Shift being Year Zero.

For the vast majority of the inhabitants of The City, time is not a massively important feature in their lives. They live according to when they have to go to work, when they have a day off, when it's time to eat. Actually taking note of what day it is seems rather pointless, especially when most days drag by in a dull repetition of those which have gone before. Those who feel the need keep track of the day of the month and what year it is through various means. Holographic displays (if you are that wealthy), water clocks, steam timepieces and mechanical watches all have their part to play in keeping those who need to know in the know. For example, if you had to meet someone in front of Luminosity Tower at a given time, you would arrange to meet them at, for example, 18.35/15/5/997. 18.35 represents the time of day (in this case thirty five minutes past the eighteenth hour of the day), 15 represents the fifteenth day of the month, 5 represents the month itself and 997 tells you what year it is.

bankside

Region: Lat 8, Ring 4

Status: Residential, light industrial

Law: Self-policed

Wealth: Low

overview

An almost palpable odour of fish, sweat and sewage rose over Bankside. As the sun came up, the residents were already going about their business, legal or otherwise. Stories circulated that One Eye Frank had jacked another Provost patrol on the edge of the burgh. Down by the canal, massive cages full of bulbous, lethargic fish were scrutinised

by expert eyes. The fish were the lifeblood of Bankside and anyone that fucked with them would have a whole heap of trouble on his hands. Hardly any buildings here were over three stories tall and all were interconnected by walkways, gangplanks, ropes and pipes. This was a place of scum and treachery, but also a place of invention and commerce. The genetically engineered fish were sold all across The City, making Bankside one of the most prosperous slums anywhere. Boats, barges and skiffs began to congregate around the wharves, off loading buyers, keen to get the best fish for the best price. They were met with the steely glares of the fish farmers, who knew a good deal when they saw one. Back from the wharves, more secretive dealers laid out their wares and filthy mod clinics opened their doors for business. Commerce. That was the key. Something which hellholes like Mire End could never hope to achieve. Bankside began to throng and the day wore on.

Running for three miles alongside the hundred metre wide Grand Canal, Bankside is really numerous smaller districts that have become tangled together. The smells of sewage and rotting fish are predominant in this area. Many residents run microcorps specialising in breeding bio-modified fish that can live and reproduce in the stinking, polluted waters of the canals. While not especially tasty, these fish are a valuable source of food. Bankside is also home to numerous back street biosci clinics which, rather strangely, have grown out of the genetic engineering programs used to breed the fish. So twisted and tangled are the streets and so numerous and aggressive the denizens, the Provosts seldom venture into Bankside and as such, it is considered to exist separately from the TCMA.

However, despite the lack of interference from the forces of law and order, there is one conspicuous absence from Bankside: organised crime. For some unexplained reason, even the 3rd Syndicate and the Hohler Gang refuse to have anything to do with Bankside. Perhaps it is the clannishness of the denizens, or that the complexity of the area is too much even for the hardened criminals and then maybe it was because the 3rds and Hohlers found out that the people of Bankside were even more violent and nasty than themselves.

Few buildings in the area rise over two stories and only one could be described as high-rise: Block 54. This is the only remnant of Bankside as it was hundreds of years ago, some say that Block 54 even predates The Shift. Whatever its origins, it is an imposing, looming concrete tower, stretching two hundred metres into the sky. Scabbed with fungus and blackened with centuries of smoke and soot, '54 is uninhabited and feared. Many rumours surround the block: some say it is home to families of cannibals who snatch babies from their



beds, others will tell you with authority that it is the lair of a cadre of Ubel who stalk the streets, creaking and rasping in their search for victims. The more hard-headed will tell you that this is all a load of old nonsense and that the block should be used for living space. Regardless of opinions, nobody ventures into Block 54.

Street level in Bankside resembles a cross between an open sewer and full-scale riot. If you want to get anywhere fast, use the walkways, gangplanks and bridges that arc across the streets and between the buildings. Such is the complexity of this overground highway system, that you can often find yourself walking through someone's dwelling without realising it. Most take this as a part of everyday life.

SECURITY/MILITARY PRESENCE?

Despite the fact that Bankside forms part of the TCMAA, the Provosts still refuse to go in. "Too dangerous" they say, "Cannibals" say some. Whatever the reason, you'll only ever find Provosts on the very edges of Bankside, never daring to venture more than a few tens of yards inside its boundaries. The only law in Bankside is that dished out by the citizens themselves. The most heinous crime in the area is interfering with the fish cages. Anyone found damaging cages, poisoning fish or stealing farming equipment is drowned in the Grand Canal without so much as a trial. Nobody asks questions.

HIGHLIGHTED LOCATION

THE UNDERGROUND MARKET

Description: Black market trade site, below Black Row, Bankside, TCMA

Located under Black Row in Bankside, the Underground Market (known simply as 'The Market') is an extensive series of underground tunnels, rooms and disused cellars. Within this cramped maze, hundreds of people come to deal in various illegal or stolen goods. The Provosts are well aware of its existence but as it lies deep within Bankside, they prefer to leave it alone. Current thinking goes that a campaign to clear it out would prove extremely costly due to the defensive, not to say psychotically violent, nature of the inhabitants. Almost anything, from a sewing machine to a machine-gun can be purchased here, from individuals or small groups of dealers. The large criminal organisations such as the Hohler Gang and the 3rd Syndicate have no presence here, only occasionally sending someone in to purchase a particular item.

HIGHLIGHTED PERSONALITY

WILBUR RENTON

Age: Unknown, looks in his mid 30's

Height/Build: Short/Plump

Eye/Hair Colour: Hazel/Mousy brown

Occupation: Drug Dealer

Affiliations: None

If the price is right, Wilbur Renton can obtain almost any pharmaceutical substance you care to mention. Rumour has it that he has major league connections in one of the big chemical corps, other rumours say that he makes most of the drugs in a secret lab of his own. Whatever the case, it seems he has a never-ending supply of most drugs on the market. Circumspect and cautious, he never seems to be troubled by the police and maintains two tough bodyguards for that little bit of personal protection. If you met him in the street, you'd probably pass him by, being ordinary and unremarkable is his stock in trade, standing out would only be a hazard.

CLEARWATER BRIDGE

Region: Lat 8, Ring 5

Status: TCMAA Burgh

Law: Strict

Wealth: Very high

OVERVIEW

"Easy, easy. Wind it back gentle now. Not that hard you arse! Gently. That's it."

Bearnice Micwhat crossed her arms and prayed that the rope would hold. Her colleagues strained and sweated as they pressed back on the levers attached to the winding mechanism of the bastard assemblage which stood in the centre of the roof. Creaks emanated from the spars and lines, iron bars groaned as the pressure increased. Micwhat watched the ropes.

"Easy now lads, just a couple more turns."

"Bearnice, why are we doing this?" The questioner was a small, scrawny figure clad from head to foot in a bulky, matt black suit which looked as if it had been made from lengths of electrical insulation.

"Because, young Hegger, we are striking a blow against the bloody posh nobs who live in that stuck up, dandified, overblown rats nest over there. See?"

"Yeah, I get that, but why?"

"You bloody just stop asking questions and get on with wind-



ing that damn thing, right!"

"Right Bearnice, sorry."

Standing out at right angles to the rest of the contraption, two laminated beams of iron were gradually being bent back, the tension increased.

"Whoa, whoa! That's it! Put the lock in place and get back."

Bearnice ambled around the contraption, fiddling with lines, checking nuts, applying oil here and there.

"Here's the plan. First off, we fire that bag of iron there at the nets. Then, we crank her up as quick as we can and start slinging those bags of shit through the hole. That should give them a little surprise. Now, Hegger, you sure you got the range right?"

"No worries, checked it again this morning, we should be dead on."

"Right. Load! Stand back! Ready? FIRE!"

There was a thump and an immensely loud TWANG as the catapult arm was slammed forward by the massive cross-bow construction. Half way through its trajectory, the bag of iron split open and a rain of scrap fell on the filternets of Clearwater Break, tear gaping holes in the opaque sheets.

"YES!" Bearnice danced about the roof. "Yes, yes, yes!" She danced over to a shocked and confused Hegger and kissed him full on the lips. "Get the crap loaded and wind that thing back." She grinned broadly and made a rude gesture towards Clearwater Break.

"Great plan Bearnice. So where did you get the idea for an excrement catapult?"

Clearwater Break claims to be "The Cleanest Place You'll Ever See" and, on the surface, that would seem to be a pretty viable claim. Walled off from the rest of the TCMA, shrouded in filternets, its canals cleansed and purified, Clearwater Break sparkles with perfection. From a distance, the burgh looks like a low fortress which has been draped with gossamer fine tents. In reality, this is not far from the truth. The gossamer fine nets are filters which purify and strain the rain which falls almost every day, removing pollutants and particulates, turning it into a clear drizzle free from harmful contaminants. The nets themselves are products of Trilhoeven biosci, living creatures which trap pollution and send it to centralised collection sacs, from which it is taken and dumped elsewhere. The canals which riddle the burgh are also clear and sparkling. Complex filtration systems, using some of the technology developed for the filternets, strain the water flowing in from the Grand Canal and elsewhere. However, this has given rise to the bit of a security problem for the burgh. So clean is the water which flows out from Clearwater Break that hordes of the poorer citizens of the TCMA gather round the outflowing canals, filling buckets with water before it can mingle with the polluted filth of the Grand Canal.

It is unsurprising that Clearwater Break is not the cheapest place in the TCMA to live. Many wealthy citizens choose to make their homes here, amongst the clean canals and elegant glazed brick buildings. Some of the macrocorps have also purchased property in this area, gifting it to favoured executives or using the area for rest and relaxation purposes. For those not wealthy enough to live in Clearwater Break but who still have to work in the various service industries which keep the burgh running, cleanliness and hygiene measures are extremely strict. Workers coming into the burgh are thoroughly showered and periodically cleansed of parasites and other noxious evidence of life in The City. Their working clothes are not permitted to leave Clearwater Break and must be scrupulously cleaned at the end of each working day. Actual amenities with the burgh are lavish but not extensive. There are many bars and restaurants, but few nightclubs, limited shopping and no theatres or music halls.

Security/Military presence?

The very nature of the area and the wealth of those who live in it makes Clearwater Break a target for the spite and vitriol of the lower orders. This leads to a rather substantial and intimidating Provost presence. All entrances are guarded with extreme vigilance by Assault Division Tacticals, clad in their best dress uniforms. On the streets, subtle but effective plain clothed officers patrol night and day, keeping watch for any disturbances or breaches of security. The all-important filternets and canal filters are constantly monitored and any attempts at sabotage are dealt with in the harshest possible manner. At any one time, there will be upwards of two hundred Provosts in and around Clearwater Break.

highlighted location

the peak

Description: Restaurant, 1-5 Trium Crescent

The only building extending above the all encompassing filternets, The Peak juts into the sky on a slim blue concrete needle, allowing diners to look down on the shimmering sea of the 'nets. The cost of a meal in its glass walled and glass floored dining room can be far in excess of what the average city dweller earns in a whole year, yet The Peak is always fully booked. Discriminating guests come from as far afield as Lucent Heights and Coldbath Fell to sample the creations of the renowned chef, Filip Horten. Horten is known to scour The City for the best fish to serve his well-heeled diners.



highlighted personality

Claudine Loftus

Age: 26

Height/Build: 5' 4"/Slender

Eye/Hair Colour: Blue/Black

Occupation: Barmaid

Affiliations: None

Claudine Loftus is a young woman with a long standing grudge. Ordered by her rich parents to do, of all things, work for a living, she spends her days seething about her situation and longing for her thirtieth birthday when she can finally get her hands on some of her parent's money. She feels that working as a barmaid in the 'Yellow Strand Brasserie' is way, way beneath her and that she really deserves something better. In truth, Claudine is not that bright and not that highly motivated, with a self-opinion that far exceeds her intelligence. What got her in to trouble with her parents in the first place was her unwholesome habit of wandering out into The City and picking up boys. Many a time her parents had to call upon a private security firm to pick her up from some sordid drinking den in Folly Hills or elsewhere. Now she either works full time or suffers the consequences.

of Folly Hills went about their business, scurrying like vermin, serving their masters, serving themselves. A fight broke out at the base of the giant statue. Some drunk appeared to be having an argument with a Simil. An argument he was going to lose, if Cordwainer was any judge of things.

This was the place to be. Far above the streets, far above the crime, the filth, the despair. One day, he thought, all people would feel like this. The City can't go on forever. Staring up through the brown clouds, there was a sudden break and for moment, a gap. A black space filled with twinkling lights. Then it was gone.



FOLLY HILLS

Region: Lat 1, Ring 3

Status: TCMA Burgh

Law: Moderate

Wealth: Low-moderate

OVERVIEW

The view from the soldiers' head was incredible. Below, all of Folly Hills, Coldbath Fell, Mire End and father afield were spread out. It was as if the soldier would reach down and scoop The City up in the palm of his mighty hand. Ahead stood the great arch and beyond, the splendid angel, shrouded in a thin mist, reflecting the flares, gas lamps and sodium slights below.

Cordwainer drew breath. Even two hundred feet up, the air was still stale. He looked down. Far, far below the denizens

Time to go. Cordwainer balanced on the eyelid of the soldier and gazed around for one last time. Closing his eyes, he smiled and launched himself into space, falling away from the soldier and his mighty hand.

A study in contrasts, Folly Hills combines areas which only just raise themselves above the level of a slum in its eastern end, with expanding areas of middle-class housing in the West End. The eastern half is deemed too near to Mire End for any renovation or area assistance, while the East End abuts Coldbath Fell, one of the more salubrious residential areas in the TCMA. Hence the extensive monetary assistance that the west end has received. The good people of Coldbath Fell do not want to see a slum on their front doorsteps.

The area gets its name from the three hills on which it is built. Sloping up from the Green Canal, the hills rise to a little over five hundred feet. These are the hills. The follies surmount these minor rises, increasing their height to over seven hundred feet. Each hill is topped with a different folly.



The southernmost is capped with a concrete angel, wings outstretched, right hand clasping a sword of justice. The middle hill displays a fine stone arch, badly corroded by centuries of acid rain and vandalism. The northernmost of the three hills is surmounted by the most massive of the three follies, a statue of a soldier, clutching a rifle and pointing to the south. Nobody knows why they were built but all are sure that they predate The Shift. Folly Hills has grown up around these gigantic monuments, crowding into their bases. Rumour has it that Folly Hills was once open parkland, where families could stroll and admire the fantastic architecture. Sadly, if this was ever true, it is not now the case.

Security/Military presence?

Being one of the lower priority areas within the TCMA, Folly Hills has only one Provost bunker, and a small one at that. If additional forces are needed, the Provosts are happy to fly in manpower from Bankside Air Station a few short minutes away. The Folly Hills Bunker can accommodate up to 90 Provosts, which is deemed more than enough. A couple of aerostats are always at the ready on the rooftop pad, but these are always older, less reliable models, with the newer aircraft being used over the wealthier areas. Most of the Provosts consider Folly Hills only one step up from Mire End just across the Green Canal, despite the expanding middle-class population in the renovated buildings of the east end.

highlighted location

boundary street

Description: Street of food stalls, Boundary Street, Folly Hills, TCMA

Lying parallel with Folly Hills High Street, Boundary Street is one of many thoroughfares in The City devoted to fast food. The street is lined with tiny cafes and open-air stalls serving all manner of food and drink. All kinds of cuisine are available here at reasonably cheap prices. Most stalls and cafes are family or individually run, there are no chain outlets in these locations. The street is thronged 25 hours a day, and making your way down the street carrying a full plate of food can be a tricky proposition.

The air is humid from the heat being given off by hundreds of cookers and grease hangs like a fog. Your senses are assaulted by a myriad of scents, some pleasant, some downright disgusting. The clientele of the area are as varied as the foods on offer, from Mire End types trying to bum a hot meal, to well-to-do businessmen from Coldbath Fell (trying to avoid getting mugged).

The most common fare by far is fish, freshly brought in from the tanks and cages of Bankside. Poached, fried, grilled, baked, barbecued, you name it, it's available on Boundary Street. As Bankside fish are not the most pleasant tasting items in the world, the Boundary Street chefs have become adept at whisking up pungent and spicy sauces to coat their wares. It's really better that you don't ask what's in the sauces. Honestly.

highlighted personality

robert baker

Age: 34

Height/Build: 6' 2"/Toned and well-muscled

Eye/Hair Colour: Brown/Black, short

Occupation: Flowghost and Security Consultant

Affiliations: None

Robert Baker is something of an outsider in the Dataflow community. Not only is he a capable and intelligent flowghost, but his training in combat techniques and security make him a formidable physical opponent also. It is this physical aspect that other ghosts dislike, they feel that using violence to solve problems is for the ignorant and unworthy. However, his skill earns him a nice living and his third floor flat in a Folly Hills block is one of the most secure places in the area. Physically imposing, he is not the average pale, underfed flowghost of popular folklore. He works out every day and practices martial arts. In addition to this, he has a natural way with technology and wears his clothes in a manner which impresses clients. Baker also makes money from repairing and selling firearms as well as computers and security equipment, a large cache of which he has at his flat.

mire end

Region: Lat 2, Ring 3

Status: Uncontrolled slum

Law: None

Wealth: Poverty stricken

overview

Slap. Slap. Slap. The sound of boots hitting concrete through an inch or so of water. Water was everywhere here. A pervasive dampness, a state of decay. Across the canal was Folly Hills, even that had been taken in by the TCMAA. But, they wanted nothing to do with Mire End, too deprived, run down and plain hellish for the Burghers and the Provosts to deal with. Three men came round the corner, ducking the jagged



ended pipes jutting from the rotting brick wall. Sparklocks in their hands, heavy, ugly weapons. Not guaranteed to kill you straight away, but kill you they will in the infected waters of Mire End. A single gas lamp above the alley caught their pale, waxy faces, almost the same sheen as their slick oilskin coats.

"Cardyouthere?" It was almost like hearing a machinecannon speak. The man's comrades shifted uneasily and hefted their guns. One was a bit too nervous and held the trigger that little bit tight. The sparklock boomed and emitted a huge gout of smoke. There was splintering sound as the heavy ball embedded itself in the brick.

"Youutterprick!" said the leader and stabbed the shooter in the throat with a long stiletto. He fell backwards into the scummy water, gurgling and moaning. But only for a while. I lowered myself from the rusting fire escape and stepped out into the middle of the alley.



"Brady, you should really be more tolerant."

"Hefuckin'! Miss Card, how nice to see you." He spoke slowly, stilted, like a man unused to enunciating individual words. "Likewise Brady, likewise. So, what you want?"

"Needafighterfor... I need a 'fighter to take out Frontier, he's stepping in on my territory."

"Expensive, what you got?"

"This." He grinned, exposing a row of broken, brown teeth. In his hand he held out a small, matt grey object. An Arclight computer. An exceptionally rare sight in these parts.

"You could sell it for a pretty sum, Miss Card."

"Deal." It's not a nice way to make a living, but in Mire End, your choices are few and far between. I took the comp.

Mire End is a forgotten, forlorn place. Denied help by the powerful TCMA sitting just across the Green Canal and despised by its citizens, it is a place of crime, indolence and apathy.

A few square miles of brick and concrete tenements, Mire End is slowly rotting into the ground. Drainage system s destroyed years ago have given rise to a permanent layer of water to cover the streets. The ground floors of most buildings are left empty, the inhabitants moving to the higher levels in order to escape the dampness and rot. With little indigenous industry or employment, Mire End has had to turn to crime in order to survive. Most of the citizens are engaged in some form of illegal activity, whether it be shopkeepers selling blatantly stolen goods or young toughs soldiering for the Hohler Gang, criminality is endemic. Out of this, Mire End has become something of a trading ground for those dealing in items that the Provosts across the canal may take a dim view of.

If any one group can be said to control Mire End, then it would be the Hohler Gang. They moved in countless years ago and began swallowing up the smaller outfits and local gangs. More than half of the population of Mire End is now connected in some way to the Gang. The gang

ruthlessly runs all the prostitution along the bank of the Green Canal facing Folly Hills, with any freelancers being dealt with in the most ruthless of fashions. The pitted, worn concrete bank with its jagged stumps of rebar ready to slice the unwary is a 25 hour a day flesh market, with girls in their flouncing skirts and young men in their frock coats selling themselves to punters from across the water. Scattered amongst the flesh peddlers are sellers of trinkets and assorted wares. The Hohler Gang

tolerates these individual enterprises, as long as they don't get too big for their boots. Here you can find ammunition being sold from rolled up blankets, drugs from trays and pornography from coat pockets.

Most activity is concentrated around the ferry, the ancient, creaking, highly dangerous means of getting from Folly Hills to Mire End. There are few sizeable bridges connecting the two areas and the ferry provides the main link for those travelling between the two areas. A decrepit, flat-bottomed



wooden construction, the ferry is guided by two huge chains strung across the canal. Sparking, arcing, diabolical electrical engines beneath the decking power the gearwheels which grip the chains and drag the ferry across the carpet of green. Sparks shower down from the pantograph which runs along the electrical cables suspended above the canal, powering the ancient vehicle. At both landing stages, there are always crowds of passengers, prostitutes, pickpockets and assorted gawpers. A one way trip on the ferry will cost you a shilling, handed over to the bent and bewhiskered ferry-master, a man of venerable age and spiteful temper.

SECURITY/MILITARY PRESENCE?

The only thing that could be described as a 'security service' in Mire End are the internal strictures of the Hohler Gang. They police themselves brutally and efficiently, weeding out the weak, the traitorous and the incompetent. Unlike many other organised crime groups, the Hohler Gang does not extort protection from the citizens. On one level, this is to make the citizens more amenable to their activities and on another level, and certainly in Mire End, the people are just too poor to pay protection money.

HIGHLIGHTED LOCATION

THE CORNER OF H STREET & POWELL

Description: Ruined, semi-inhabited area

Devastated during the Hundred Block War, this was already one of the worst bits of Mire End. Hirplakker, in their wisdom, decided to build a fake staging area here, on the other side of The City from the main fighting in what are now the Contested Grounds. The residents of Mire End were in no position to argue, while the TCMA turned it's back and pretended nothing was happening. Nobody expected Arclight to strike as massively as they did.

Eleven days after the fake staging area was built and manned, the Brigade of Light attacked. Two armoured Tentenel companies, backed up by aerostat gunships and swarms of mike-fighters descended from the skies. On the canals, Brigade gunboats pounded the supposed Hirplakker positions, caring little for the poor, forgotten inhabitants of Mire End. When the dust settled, the only corpses were those of the unlucky residents. The Brigade quietly withdrew. Now, H Street & Powell is home to the most wretched of Mire End's residents, living in hovels constructed from scrap brick and iron sheeting. Disease is rampant here, even more so than in the main body of Mire End. Cripples, orphans and the insane all cluster together through sheer lack of somewhere else to go.

HIGHLIGHTED PERSONALITIES

JANUS KRIPITSCH

Age: 28

Height/Build: 5' 11"/Thin, slope shouldered

Eye/Hair Colour: Deep green/Black, cropped

Occupation: Lostfinder

Affiliations: The people of Mire End

One of the few Lostfinders in Mire End and the only one not to be completely under the thrall of the Hohler Gang, Kripitsch is a man of moral principle and utter practicality. Born in Folly Hills, he moved to Mire End because of a girl. The girl went a long time ago, but Kripitsch remains. Standing a little above average height, he has a slightly lopsided appearance due to a head injury sustained as a child. His cropped black hair, sallow complexion and deep green eyes combine to give him an appearance which is not immediately trustworthy.

However, his appearance belies his manner, which is kind, caring and compassionate. He believes deeply in helping the people of Mire End and, unbeknown to all, he is conducting a long letter writing campaign to Markus Heilige in the TCMAA, begging that the TCMA give Mire End some assistance. Letters scrawled in his scratchy handwriting arrive on Heilige's desk every few weeks, beseeching that notable man to offer succour of some kind.

JANE CARD

Age: 25

Height/Build: 6' 0"/Muscular

Eye/Hair Colour: Blue/Light brown

Occupation: Ghostfighter

Affiliations: None

Card is a hard woman, and one that it is best not to cross. Even the Hohlers leave her alone, pretending to themselves that she is not worth the trouble. Her skills are in great demand and she travels far across the City, wherever a job may take her. She grew up in the Third Church of God the Architect orphanage in the eastern half of Mire End, enduring an upbringing of toil, prayer and abstinence. Aged thirteen, she left the orphanage and set out to make her own way in the world. The hard life of the streets quickly taught her that she had a natural talent for fighting and she soon saw that there was money to be made from this talent. Now twenty-five, she has been fighting on the streets for over a decade, honing her skills and establishing a fearsome reputation. At six feet in height, she is tall and also very broad.



She is also exceptionally light on her feet, almost a prerequisite for being a ghostfighter. Always the professional, she has made many enemies in her life. Yet nothing seems to perturb her dour, humourless exterior. She always maintains the same blank expression of total disinterest. It is only when fighting that a faint spark of life comes into her eyes.

LUMINOSITY TOWER

Region: Lat 7, Ring 3

Status: Macrocorporate domain

Law: Extremely high

Wealth: Extremely high

OVERVIEW

"It is a work of the deities. Man cannot have built so wonderful a structure. Man alone has not the strength or the genius to draw such a splendid thing from the earth. I come here every day to gaze in wonder. I petition the guardians at the portal to grant me access, to see the wonders kept sealed within. Yet, they continually deny me. They are harsh men and women, the light of suffering and torture is in their eyes. Although, behind it all is pride, pride to stand guard of the greatest wonder man has ever gazed upon.



I have contacted those who serve the builder-deity. I beseech them to allow me to serve, even in the most humble fashion. Continually, they reject me. What can I do to make them think me worthy. I know that there are those who would seek to destroy the tower, to smash its wonder into dust. Perhaps if I strike against the defilers, then I will be granted access, even if it is in the next life.

So here I stand, gazing at the holiest of holies for perhaps the last time. I stand with this device, this assembly of wires and clockwork parts, ready to strike with all the power of my faith. This corporeal body may be struck down in the process, but my spirit will live on. I will be granted access. Some day."

A gigantic building, dwarfing all those around it, Luminosity Tower is home to Arclight. A slender, glass pyramid, the tower reaches 700 yards into the air, making it easily the tallest building in The City. How Arclight mustered the resources to construct such a magnificent building in only three years is

unknown, speculation is rife. That having been said, Luminosity Tower succeeds in putting all other macrocorporate domains in the shade by quite a margin.

In the weak sunlight, the glass plates shine gold, bathing the area surrounding the tower in heavenly light. The main entrance is ablaze with light. When the main doors open, brilliant white light shines out, turning night into day. Arclight knows the value of impressing the public and people will travel over large distances to see the wonder that is Luminosity Tower. The structure itself is divided into 110 floors. The vast majority of levels are taken over by administration and research facilities.

SECURITY/MILITARY PRESENCE?

Security is provided by elite companies from the Brigade of Light. It is considered a great honour to be chosen to guard the tower and competition is fierce to be chosen for this most prestigious of duties. It is often given as a reward to units which have performed particularly successfully in the Contested Grounds. On average, there will be eight companies (each containing 110 men and officers) guarding the tower, including at least two Tentenel companies. The main entrance is always watched over by Tentenel troops, ready to crush anyone who attempts to enter the building.

Dotted in a half mile radius around the tower are numerous mikefighter and aerostat bases, providing round the clock combat air patrols. There is a three quarter mile diameter no fly zone around the tower; any and all aircraft breaching this zone without permission are automatically attacked. Concealed within the tower is an impressive array of anti-mis-



sile weapons. A mix of laser and gauss weapons are used to provide defence against anything from an RPG to a cargo aerostat. Within the tower, the Brigade guards are vigilant but unobtrusive. Tentenel troops guard the most high-security areas, while regular Brigade of Light infantry are posted about the rest of the building.

highlighted location

the atrium

Description: Ground floor of Luminosity Tower

Designed to awe those who enter the tower, the Atrium is a massive space, a giant gap running up through ten stories of Luminosity tower. Massive glass cases hold items which Arclight is proud of, including a Hirplakker powersuit captured during the initial phases of the Hundred Block War. The sole purpose of the Atrium is to give an impression of power, wealth and strength. This it manages with singular aplomb. Cunningly fashioned into the massive support struts, gauss lifts run to all levels of the tower, although some require higher clearance to enter than others. Lush greenery, tended by an army of low paid workers manages to introduce an organic feel to the place, offsetting the prominence of technological sophistication. No inhabitant can fail to be struck dumb with wonder at this most magnificent of sights.

highlighted personality

Shigunda bundabbie

Age: 57

Height/Build: 6'/Wiry

Eye/Hair Colour: Watery blue/Grey

Occupation: Head Gardener, the Atrium, Luminosity Tower

Affiliations: Arclight

A man of fierce devotion to his duty, Bundabbie cares for the plants within the Atrium of Luminosity Tower with a fervour that approaches fanaticism. Ten hours a day, his knurled hands prune, water and landscape, driving his minions to greater exertions in the name of the macrocorporate. His loyalty surpasses even that of Brigade troopers, he will brook no dissension and will absolutely not tolerate any form of criticism of Arclight. Orders from above are to be obeyed without question and without delay. Those who tamper with the plants, walk on the grass or pollute the soil will rue the day they ever met Shigunda Bundabbie. A spade to the head is the most likely consequence, and rumours circulate that he has used certain 'fertilisers' to make the blooms in the Atrium grow with even greater vigour.

the contested grounds

Region: Lat 7, Ring 4

Status: Warzone

Law: None

Wealth: High

overview

"It was a terrible, exhausting battle above and below the ground, in ruins, cellars and factory sewers. Our warcrawls climbed heaps of rubble and tangles of iron, and crept screeching through chaotically destroyed workshops and fired at point-blank range in the narrow railyards.

Many of the warcrawls were shaken apart or exploded from the force of an exploding Hirplakker mine. Or, it could have been one of our mines. Such is the nature of war in this place, the battle swinging back and forth so quickly, that we are constantly being strafed by our own mikefighters and wandering into our own minefields.

I cannot understand how men can survive in such a hell as this, yet the Hirplakkers sit tight in the ruins, and foxholes and cellars, and a chaos of steel skeletons which used to be factories.

No one can tell me this war means anything any more. We are all just meat for the cannon, pawns in a game none of us understand."

Force Commander Eric Danzig, 2nd Battalion, Brigade of Light.

Formerly a vast industrial and railhead area controlled by Hirplakker, the Contested Grounds bore the brunt of the Hundred Block War and still remain a festering sore on the face of The City. While Hirplakker admitted defeat, no formal surrender was ever organised between them and Arclight. Hence, the war drags on in a low-level manner, each side desperately wanting to pull out, yet unable to concede.

The Contested Grounds lie alongside the Black Canal, on the northern bank. Because of the ongoing conflict, their periphery has become a haven for smugglers, traders, scavengers and thieves. Small settlements housing prostitutes, drug dealers and gambling dens have sprung up along the water's edge, taking advantage of soldiers who have gained a few hours respite from the constant pressure of the Grounds. These settlements are interspersed with the camps of both sides, areas of unspoken truce where supplies are offloaded and the wounded taken out. Noise is constant, with boats



coming and going, mikefighters and aerostats droning overhead and the intermittent thump of artillery and heavy weapons fire. The heaviest fighting takes place around the Flak Towers, massive concrete fortifications constructed decades ago by Hirplakker for just such an eventuality.

The opportunities presented by the Contested Grounds are many, hence the fact that large numbers of scavengers and mercenaries come to probe the ruins for hitech military equipment. Discarded weapons are quietly removed and find their way onto the black market. Stores are liberated and sometime small units of fighting troops are attacked in order to steal their gear.

However, of all the inhabitants of the Grounds, most hated are the snipers. Concealed in ruined towers and in camouflaged trenches, they strike without warning. Snipers from either side are shot if caught, an end usually accompanied by brutal, inhuman tortures. The pain and suffering of the 'Grounds draws The Shifted in as well as the scavengers and mercenaries. Simils sell their services to the highest bidder, clanking through the ruins, hunting for their prey. Reports abound of strange sightings within the Grounds; visions best left unseen and sounds best left unheard.

SECURITY/MILITARY PRESENCE?

Large numbers of troops from both sides occupy the Contested Grounds, making it the most heavily militarised region in The City. Add this to the hundreds of mercenaries, scavengers, prostitutes, and peddlers which occupy the Grounds and their borders, then you have a fairly sizeable population. At any one time, it is estimated that there will be ten thousand troops from both sides fighting in and around the Contested Grounds.

highlighted location

the flak towers

Description: Weapons emplacements/fortifications

Constructed decades ago by Hirplakker for just such an eventuality, the Flak Towers have become the bastions of the Contested Grounds. Concrete towers five stories tall, with reinforced walls five metres thick, the eight towers are virtually impregnable. Bad planning on Hirplakker's part caused four of the towers to be captured during the Hundred Block War. Never really expecting that such a conflict would take place, the towers were kept poorly supplied and badly equipped. When the war kicked off, the Hirplakker troopers found themselves sealed inside with precious little food and

dwindling ammunition supplies. Unwilling to surrender, the troops starved, some turning to cannibalism in a vain attempt to survive. When the last, emaciated, half-mad soldiers finally opened the portals, they were summarily shot by Brigade of Light troops, disgusted at what they found within. Arclight now controls three towers, Hirplakker four and one acts as a base-cum-meeting ground for scavengers, guffers and assorted camp followers.

Each tower can hold up to two thousand soldiers and enough food and ammunition to keep them fighting for two hundred days. The roofs are studded with anti-aircraft artillery which is in constant use, shooting down mikefighters and aerostats from both sides. Hirplakker concentrates its fight on the towers, preferring to occupy solid defensive positions rather than adopt a more attacking style. Arclight on the other hand uses the towers as supply bases for its more fluid form of fighting, striking out at the enemy, then retreating for re-supply. No weapon has yet been developed that can breach the walls of the towers, although the Brigade are known to have in place something known as Unit 731 which, it is alleged, may give them a decisive edge in the battle for the towers.

highlighted personality

SERGEANT GERALD GREEN

Age: 30

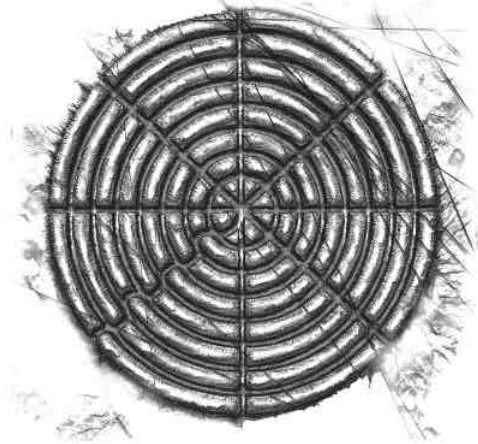
Height/Build: 5' 10"/Stocky

Eye/Hair Colour: Grey/Grey

Occupation: NCO commanding, 3rd Platoon, 'C' Company, 31st Infantry Regiment, Hirplakker Cadre
Affiliations: Hirplakker

Green has served in the Contested Grounds for two years and doesn't want to leave. Every time he goes on leave he feels dislocated, disjointed. The hell of the Grounds has become normality for him, without them, nothing seems right. He can no longer relate to civilians, preferring the company of soldiers. Three times he has been assigned other duties within Hirplakker's military forces, three times he has demanded reassignment to the Contested Grounds. His commanders have resigned themselves to the fact that Green will live out the rest of his days there. Some discount him as a madman, others see him as the harbinger of a new race, a new breed of man evolved for fighting in this wasted landscape. Whatever their opinions, he remains, crouching in the rubble, cradling his rifle, praying that he will remain here forever.





"Those people down there don't have a clue. You think they matter, the scum, the plebs, the huddled masses? All they want is violence, pornography, booze and blissful ignorance. None of them matter. Drones, nothing but a resource, Their blood lubricating the machines of society. Why? Because it's the cheapest thing there is. From here I can see farther than any of them have been in their lives.

None of them can comprehend, none of them understand. We built this company, we sit on top of a timebomb, waiting for the final second to come. They will not be the cause of our downfall. Not while I still have one breath left in me."

Matt Kenzie, Senior President, Arclight
Macrocorporation.

the power



the 3rd Syndicate

Status: Criminal organisation

Headquarters: Unknown

Membership: Not quantified, but supposed to be at least ten thousand

Areas Of Operation: Narcotics, hitech weapons procurement, kidnapping, extortion

Overview

Most massive and widespread of the criminal groups in The City, the 3rd Syndicate wields enormous power and exerts influence over the lives of a vast number of inhabitants. Notoriously violent, individual assemblies (as the sub-organisations are known) can control entire burghs and parishes in the more lawless parts of The City. They are particularly active in the TCMA, where they are a continual thorn in the side of the Provosts.

Persuasive rumours circulate that the leaders of the 3rds have powerful, influential contacts within the Council and the macrocorps. Although never proven, they do seem to have access to large amounts of hitech weaponry and equipment. Another persistent rumour is that back in the mists of history, the 3rds were allied to one or more of the macrocorps. However, any media service even mentioning

this rumour (indeed, any rumour about the syndicate) suddenly find themselves the target of threats, escalating into violence. Another feature of the 3rd Syndicate is its almost pathological hatred of the Hohler Gang. The most obvious expression of this is the continual gang warfare around the Long Pond area of the TCMA. The Provosts are at a loss to prevent the continual round of killings, bombings, reprisals and kidnappings which this conflict has given rise to. The citizens of Long Pond have become inured to this over the years, seeing collateral casualties as just another hazard of living in The City.

Organisation

The 3rd Syndicate is made up of many assemblies, individual cells numbering from ten to two hundred gang members. Only the most trusted of the assembly leaders are aware of the identities of the Syndicate leaders, and even they do not know the exact location of the groups headquarters. What is known is that there are three people who exercise overall control, criminal masterminds of unparalleled sophistication and brutality. Each assembly has strict instructions to avoid treading on the toes of others, transgressions of this rule being punished in the most severe way.

highlighted personality

CARPENTER HALSTEAD

Age: 25

Height/Build: 5' 8"/Stocky

Eye/Hair Colour: Grey/Blond, shaven

Occupation: Assembly leader (Long Pond)

Affiliations: 3rd Syndicate.

Weak willed is a description which could never be applied to Carpenter Halstead. Exceptionally young to be in charge of a major 3rd Syndicate assembly, he is extraordinarily young to be in charge of one of the most important assemblies in The City. Long Pond is the scene of constant fighting between the 3rds and the Hohler Gang, a war which has been carried on over many years.

Murder and deception come easily to this young man, a fact which has only endeared him to his superiors. Hating the Hohlers with a passion which seems routed in his very soul, he persecutes the 3rd Syndicate's aims with unabashed vigour. It is an immense source of pride for both him and his assembly that he ranks among the top ten most wanted individuals in the TCMA.



three canals metropolitan area authority (tcmaa)



Numerical Strength: 56,000 personnel directly employed by the authority.

Wealth: Expenditure of approx. £234,000,000.00 per annum.

Areas of Operation: Three Canals Metropolitan Area and surrounding border areas (see map).

Military Capability?: TCMAA Provosts (police service).

OVERVIEW

Seen by many as an oasis of order within the chaos that is The City, the Three Canals Metropolitan Area (TCMA) is a sprawling mass wedged between the Green and Red canals. Running straight through the heart of the region is the Grand Canal, mightiest of waterways within The City. Incorporating diverse areas such as Folly Hills, Bankside, Lucent Heights and Clearwater Break, the TCMA is a study in contrast. From abysmal poverty to enormous wealth, it is a microcosm of The City itself.

Exercising control over the teeming masses which inhabit the area is a phenomenal task, a task overseen by the Authority. Here, bureaucracy is taken to the highest level, as civil servants strive to make sense out of the labyrinth of streets and canals which surround them. Monitoring this hydra is the Chief Burgess, Markus Heilige. Heilige rules with an iron fist concealed within an iron glove. He is not averse to making deals with the Shifted or criminal organisations such as the 3rd Syndicate in order to ensure the smooth running of his Authority. It is, for example, well known that he let the Hohler Gang have Mire End, lying just across the Green Canal from Folly Hills, if they guaranteed not to encroach into Folly Hills, Fogwarren and Bankside. It is this kind of manipulation and bargaining, which have made Heilige such a force within the Authority.

Heilige manipulates public opinion through the august office of the Mayor. The current incumbent is Owin Hardgadley, an easily lead dupe from the Authority who is little more than a figurehead for Heilige's machinations.

Ruling from the enormous, rambling pile that is Breaken Hall, there are two forces within the Authority which vie for supremacy: the Community Service Board and the Provosts. The Community Service Board is in absolute charge of welfare, housing, healthcare and the provision of residency permits, whilst the Provosts have ultimate control over law enforcement within the TCMA.

the community service board

Dear Mr Jorgensen,

It has come to our attention that you have been resident within the TCMA for nineteen years, within which time you have been employed for a total of seventeen days. The TCMA values each and every one of its citizens, which is why your situation concerns us. It would therefore be appreciated if you could attend Community Service Board Office 26 (Lake Boulevard, Folly Hills) for an informal interview. Please bring your residency permit, birth certificate, Council Tax certificate, water and sewerage tax certificate and a two thousand-word essay on why you should continue to be a citizen of the TCMA.

Yours sincerely,

Rolf Garner

pp Islera Koretz

Both fearsomely complex and fearsomely harsh, the Community Service board is the most powerful and influential (outranking even the Provosts) part of the TCMAA. They provide unemployment benefit, citizenship permits, business permits, tax collection, health services and also (by some long forgotten ancient ruling) water, power and sewerage.

Every citizen lives in fear of the Board, dreading the day when a message inviting them to attend an informal interview lands in their lap. The working lower and middle classes are terrified of losing their jobs, as this entails a huge round of interviews and tests to see if they will be allowed to remain a resident. In a stark contrast to this, the Board seems to take precious little interest in the unfortunate slum dwellers of Dreamingspires and other run-down regions. They prefer to husband their resources, doling them out to those who they deem most worthy.

The CSB has one hundred and three sub-offices scattered about the TCMA, each with their complement of assiduous, tenacious CSB staff. Externally, the offices are surprisingly like Provost bunkers, a fact which has not gone unnoticed among the citizenry. Working for the Board is a guarantee of a job for life and good treatment for ones immediate family.



Competition to join (especially amongst those in more tenuous employment) is unsurprisingly fierce, despite the revulsion which the majority of the population feels towards the Board.

the PROVOSTS

Sideband Newsline

Subject: CATCH Team Kills 43 In Raid

Stringer: Anon

"Tonight, the neighbourhood of Crush Street bore witness to one of the most bloody police actions in the history of the TCMA. An eight man Provost CATCH team raided a tenement block in which it was suspected that members of the 3rd Syndicate were operating a drugs factory. '

'In the ensuing violence, 43 people, men, women and children are known to have been killed and many more injured. The CATCH Team suffered no injuries.'

'Local burgess Francois Hoysek stated: "Seldom have I seen such brutality and casual disregard for the wellbeing of the very citizens whom the Provosts are sworn to protect. I shall be taking this matter to the highest level"

'Commander of Provost Assault Division, Captain Adam Micdevitt gave the following statement to the press: "Fuck off."

Maintaining law and order within any portion of the City is an arduous task, a task that is no easier within the boundaries of the TCMAA. Since the TCMAAs' inception, one of the prime concerns of the authority has been to provide safety and security for its citizens. Consequently, one of the earliest programs set up by the fledgling authority was to train and equip a professional police force.

In the one hundred and eighty years since then, the Provosts have grown to a force of 9,000 men and women. Although they nominally answer to the TCMAA Council, the Provosts are commanded by Provost Marshal Graeme, an officer with thirty-eight years of service behind him. Graeme oversees the workings of the five Provost Divisions (Patrol, Support, Assault, Investigation and Internal Affairs) and represents the interests of the force on the council.

Broadly speaking, the Provosts are well respected by the citizens of the Three Canals and the job brings with it no small measure of pride, responsibility and remuneration. It is well known that the Provosts receive a handsome paycheck for carrying out what is an admittedly difficult job. In terms of manpower, the largest of the five divisions is Patrol, which carries out the role of general policing. Second to Patrol is Support,

which is home to pilots, mechanics and vehicle crew as well as other ancillary staff. All vehicles used by the Provosts are maintained by support and all vehicles are piloted by Support officers. Compared with Patrol and Support, the other three divisions are very small, scarcely having one thousand officers between them. Least liked is Internal Affairs (not surprisingly). Made up of dedicated officers with no families or strong ties, IA watches not only the activities of the provosts but also covertly spies on the goings on within the TCMAA Council. Investigation Division carries out the work of investigation into Category A crimes (murder, rape, industrial espionage etc.) and is a strictly plain-clothes division. Lastly, Assault carries responsibility for riot control, hostage rescue and tactical response. For this purpose, it has three sections to call on: the Rapids, the Tacticals and CATCH. The Rapids are fast response SWAT units and are often the first on the scene of a violent disturbance. They are lightly armed and equipped. The Tacticals are the heavier counterpart to the Rapids, carrying heavier weaponry and wearing far more substantial armour. Last of the Provost units are the CATCH Teams. When the toughest criminal hideouts have to be raided, or a crazed serial killer is cornered, it's CATCH who are called in. Other Provosts reckon that the CATCH team members are borderline psychotic themselves and tend to steer clear of these very heavily armed, very well equipped but very unpredictable officers.

highlighted personalities

Lieutenant MYLES HARKING

Age: 29

Height/Build: 6'/Strong

Eye/Hair Colour: Hazel/Black

Occupation: Police officer

Affiliations: TCMA Provosts

First and foremost, Myles Harking is reckoned by most that are in the know to be one of the few good cops left in The Provosts. Saying that is quite something, as he is commander of the Assault Section officers of the 87th Street Patrol Area. His gritty determination and an iron will in the face of adversity have got him where he is today. He is known to react with disgust to dishonesty within the police force and has had many officers under his command transferred or dismissed. Rumour has it that he is being groomed to take over one of the top spots in the Provosts, possibly as head of Assault when Adam Micdevitt retires (although the likelihood of that happening in the future is minimal).

Physically, he is an imposing figure at 6'1" tall and of strong build. His dour visage masks a keen sense of humour and a sharp mind.



deputy assistant chief community service officer islera koretz

Age: 37
Height/Build: 5' 9"/Average
Eye/Hair Colour: Blue/Blond
Occupation: TCMA CSB
Affiliations: TCMAA

Koretz is a stern woman, and is most certainly on her way to the top. It is no secret that she has ambitions of eventually inheriting Markus Heilige's job, a position which she has been manoeuvring for over a period of years. Her talents for sniffing out fraud and keeping a tight reign on expenses have achieved almost legendary status. What is less well known is her background.

Growing up in Dreamingspires provided the hardest of possible educations. Life amongst the most wretched citizens of the TCMA was a lesson in survival. Through her own choice, she begged for entrance into one of the Third Church of God the Architect orphanages dotted about the TCMA and when she came of age, was eligible for TCMA citizenship. Determined to make the best out of her life, she joined the CSB as soon as she was able and since then her steely determination and killer instinct have taken her almost to the top of the most complex organ in what is a diabolically labyrinthine bureaucracy.

Captain Adam Micdevitt

Age: 42
Height/Build: 5' 10"/Wiry
Eye/Hair Colour: Pale grey/Black, greying at the temples
Occupation: Police officer
Affiliations: TCMAA Provosts

Well known throughout the TCMA and further afield, Micdevitt is the hard-hitting commander of the Provost Assault Division, with personal command of the feared CATCH Teams. Leading from the front and providing an example for his men are two of the features which have endeared him to the personnel under his command.

A fairly unremarkable figure at first sight, Adam Micdevitt is wiry and of average height, not at all looking like the public image of an ex-Brigade of Light man. On duty he is tough and at times brusque, off duty he can be pleasant and mild mannered. Unknown to anyone but himself he regularly makes large donations to various charities helping the vast numbers of homeless in the TCMA.

superintendent Julia Whitelaw

Age: 44
Height/Build: 5' 6"/Trim, well muscled
Eye/Hair Colour: Dark brown/Strawberry blond
Occupation: Police officer
Affiliations: TCMAA Provosts

The highest-ranking female officer in the Provosts, Julia Whitelaw has proved to be an exceptionally gifted and talented senior officer. An Inspector with Lansing Defence before being headhunted by the Provosts, she has risen through the ranks at a steady pace but has finally settled on being the commanding officer of the Patrol Division. Despite offers of higher ranking, less demanding supervisory posts, she has stolidly stayed put for the past four years, tackling the day to day difficulties of the Provosts largest division with skill and ease.

Now aged 44, she is a slim, slightly greying woman of above average height. Physically, she is very capable, easily able to cope with the rigorous and regular Patrol combat training. With an IQ of 178, she is undoubtedly one of the most intelligent officers within the organisation.

arclight



Status: Territory owning macrocorp
Headquarters: Luminosity Tower
Product(s)/Service(s): Advanced armaments, aircraft, communications systems, personal electronics, powered personal armour.

overview

A stern challenger to the might of Trilhoeven in the field of advanced armaments, until a few years ago Arclight were considered outsiders in the macrocorporate world. Indeed, it was the opinion of the other seven macrocorps that Arclight were merely a very large company trying to create waves in The City by attempting to gain control of resource facilities.

However, Arclight asserted their macrocorp status during the Hundred Block War three years ago when they defeated the massive Hirplakker Combine in a dispute over trade and



exploitation rights to several highly lucrative regions of The City. Arclight are now firmly ensconced as the eighth macrocorp while the tail end of the Hundred Block War rumbles on in the Contested Grounds.

Arclight rules its corporate empire from the astonishing Luminosity Tower, built entirely since the Hundred Block War. No citizen can fail to be impressed by the elegance and might of the tower. From here, the leaders of the corporation control their business dealings, watching the thousands who labour for Arclight live out their lives.

Organisation

Controlled by five families, the van den Haas', the McKenzies', the Singhs', the Grays' and the Spitzers, Arclight's business organisation is somewhat idiosyncratic and not a little nepotistic. Infighting, assassination and sometimes war are not uncommon within Arclight. Currently, the Grays' hold the upper hand, with seven out of the twenty-three seats on the board.

Security Forces

The Hundred Block War revealed that Arclight had managed to construct one of the best equipped and best trained security forces anywhere in The City. The military heart of these forces lies in the Brigade of Light, a 15,000 strong force of elite soldiers. Complementing this military arm are the paramilitary Ruby and Sapphire Sections. Ruby Section deals with internal security matters, Sapphire with external matters. The Brigade is made up of infantry with limited heavy armour support, a reasonably sized air wing and a large force of power armoured Tentenel troops. Their tactical ability and training are second to none, while their equipment is among the best, if not the best, in The City. Most troops are fanatically loyal to Arclight, more than ready to lay down their lives to defend both it and the honour of the Brigade.

Highlighted Personality

General Katarina van den Haas

Age: 67 (looks 30)

Height/Build: 5'7"/Slim

Eye/Hair Colour: Grey/Dark Brown

Occupation: Commander of the Brigade of Light

Affiliations: Arclight, all sections of the Brigade

General Katarina van den Haas, Commander-in-Chief of the Brigade of Light. Eldest daughter of the van den Haas family, one of the five families who control Arclight, Katarina is now

sixty-seven years old but thanks to her genetically enhanced background and limitless medical treatment, she hardly looks a day over thirty. This has led to more than a few embarrassing situations with young suitors apparently unaware that she is old enough to be their grandmother.

A strong willed woman, it was she who masterminded Arclight's victory over Hirplakker during the Hundred Block War. She also turned the Brigade of Light from a merely good military machine into one of the most formidable fighting forces in The City. Her drive to ensure Arclight's pre-eminence saw the Brigade of Light go from strength to strength, increasing the number of armoured Tentenel troops and destroying the rigid, stratified, nepotistic chain of command which had been so endorsed by previous commanders.

Sideband Media



Status: Territory owning macrocorp

Headquarters: The Cathedral,

Product(s)/Service(s): Films, television, tri-D, newspapers, Dataflow access services, media analysis, intelligence gathering.

Overview

Working out of the massive, gargoyle encrusted edifice that is the Cathedral, Sideband dominate the media landscape of The City. No other corporation can claim to have such an influence over the daily lives of so many citizens of the urban sprawl. They wire themselves into the consciousness of The City, feeding dreams and playing off nightmares. Sideband holds a vital position in keeping the citizens sedated. Without the entertainments they produce, the entire city would simply descend into chaos. The controllers of the corporation are well aware of this, using their perceived power to influence other organisations. Cutting off TV services to a burgh can have drastic effects as the population are isolated from their electronic sedative. More than once have Sideband used this tactic and more than once they have got their way.

Organisation

Each of the eight departments has an equal controlling interest in the corporation. In many ways, each of the departments can be seen as a separate corporation, competing for market share



and scarce resources. SBMT (Sideband Media Technologies, providers of TV, Tri-D and pay-per view cable) compete in the same marketplace as Cinematographics (who produce feature films). Laydown (newspapers and Dataflow newswire services) compete against HiGloss (magazines and Dataflow information services for the well-off). This often results in bitter infighting between the departments as they scabble to attract the attention of the jaded consuming public. In the many vaulted cafeterias and restrooms of the Cathedral, fights are commonplace between employees of varying departments and Media Break (the security arm of Sideband) are often called out to intervene.

Perhaps the most lucrative part of the Sideband operation is its intelligence gathering operations. With the vast flow of data which pours into the Cathedral, everything is useful to someone and the corporation are willing to sell information to anyone. SideScan are the department responsible for intelligence gathering and information sales. Everything has a price and no request (apart from the monumentally unreasonable) will be refused.

SECURITY FORCES

As mentioned before, the corporation maintains a reasonable security force in the form of Media Break. Their purpose is mainly to provide internal security services, as most of the other corporations see Sideband operations as too vastly labyrinthine to even contemplate a violent take-over. Employees of the corporation view Media Break as a harsh, authoritarian part of the company, and, indeed, they are. They have no bias towards any part of the company, despite the influencing tactics that other departments employ. In addition to their more obvious security function, they also provide an arbitration service between squabbling sections and departments. Their smooth, urbane negotiators are the last word in diplomacy, exercising their skills for the good of the corporation.

HIGHLIGHTED PERSONALITY

BRANDON SHAPE

Age: 43

Height/Build: 6' 7"/Very well muscled

Eye/Hair Colour: Green/Light Brown

Occupation: Head of Security, Sideband Media

Affiliations: Employed by Sideband Media, alleged connections to the 3rd Syndicate.

Respected by his superiors, peers and staff, Brandon Shape is a man of great cunning, wit and immense physical presence. Standing a fraction over six and a half feet tall, he is an impressive figure, always clad in immaculately pressed black suits.

After a stint in the armed forces of an unspecified company, he joined Sideband at the lowest level of their security operation but, after many years of hard work, perseverance and success in his field, he has now gravitated to the very highest echelons of his profession. He oversees all aspects of security operations for the Cathedral with a precision and dedication which almost defies belief.

It is said that he knows the name and career record of every single one of his security personnel. A career corporate, it is rumoured that he has close ties with the 3rd Syndicate, although he remains characteristically tight lipped and the 3rd's are certainly saying nothing.

Religious groups

RELIGION AND CULTISM

The City is a fertile seedbed for all manner of religious and quasi-religious organisations. Millenarian cults, animist klatches and apocalyptic suicide sects all play their part in the decaying tapestry of life. Religion is a vital part of life for many people, providing them with a bulwark against the horrors of everyday life. It provides the column which gives them strength in a horrible, dark place.

MILLENARIAN GROUPS

By the common reckoning, The Bombardment and The Shift occurred 997 City-years ago. This means that it is nearly one thousand years since the terrible events which so shaped life in The City. In recent decades, there has been an explosive rise in the number of sects whose beliefs are centred on the upcoming millennium. Groups such as this have always existed, most of them believing that there is a thousand-year cycle of destruction, chaos and re-building. However, as the thousand-year mark draws closer, many more extreme groups have sprung into being, with views and practices that challenge even the hardened sensibilities of The City.

Most common are groups which believe another Shift is on the way and that they alone hold the key to living through the event. Sacrifice, torture and self-mutilation are hallmarks of these sects. Believers generally have tenets that revolve around extreme practices, practices which guarantee their survival during the next Shift.



One of the most radical of the millenarian groups are the Soldiers of Change. They are almost exclusively made up of veterans of the ongoing conflict in the Contested Grounds, most of them driven to the edge of insanity (and beyond) by their experiences. Having a strict code of martial discipline and religious observance, their rigorously regimented hierarchy demands that any transgressions are punishable by death and all orders from the senior officers must be followed to the absolute letter, even if it means death or injury for the soldiers concerned. Their central belief is that only through martial virtue and discipline will man be prepared for the trials of the next Shift. Unsurprisingly, the Contested Grounds have become the spiritual home of the Soldiers of Change, a place where they learn to master themselves and indulge their compulsion to kill. Driven by their nightmares and personal demons, they see most people as traitors, infiltrators, spies, an enemy to be rooted out, tortured and executed. The Soldiers of Change are a dangerous, violent and unstable group of people (probably amounting to no more than a few hundred individuals) who could, if they desired, wreak major havoc in The City.

MACROTISTS

Some citizens choose strange idols to worship. To many people, those who belong to the macrocorps are beautiful figures who come down from on high, dressed in wonderful finery, skin unblemished by soot or pollution, beautiful in every aspect. Macrocorporate worship assumes many forms, from idolisation of a particular figure or product, to a building or even the organisation itself. Within all of this, there are two distinct types of worship: spontaneous and conceived.

Spontaneous worship (as the name would suggest) arises naturally, as individuals or small groups start to hold certain aspects of macrocorporate life as the acme of existence or examples of the divine. In recent years, one of the most notable aspects of spontaneous worship is that associated with Luminosity Tower, the headquarters of Arlight. So impressive is the building, shining with an almost heavenly glow, that many have come to believe that it has indeed been divinely inspired. Some choose to believe that the structure itself was created by a deity figure, others choose to believe that, although built by men, the tower is a symbol of holiness and divine wisdom.

Conceived worship is an altogether different matter. Some elements within the macrocorps noted the existence of corporate worship and decided that such beliefs could be valuable to their interests. Through various means, certain macrocorp interests manipulate people into macrotism. Some choose to 'plant' individuals who preach belief in certain

divine aspects of the company, whilst others choose subtle manipulation via television and the media. Others choose even more insidious methods, such as drug manipulation of entire workforces to make them susceptible to religious suggestion. Whatever the means, worshipping macrocorps has become a part of life in The City. Although fractured and disparate, the number of believers steadily grows, becoming ever stronger as the years roll by.

ANIMISM

Some within The City hold the belief that natural objects, places and even The City itself have a 'spirit', a binding force which unifies all things. Most animists or groups of animists have differing views on what exactly constitutes a 'spirit' and how it is manifested, yet all adhere to the same basic beliefs. Animists quite often receive revelations from the spirits in the form of dreams and visions, often connected with the presence of a particular thing or place. Some areas in The City have attracted large numbers of animists to live in and around them. The Forest and Central Park are both popular locations, due to their bountiful natural resources. Much of the time, the authorities in these areas tolerate people building tiny shrines under trees or next to flowering shrubs. They realise that the believers are highly unlikely to damage the objects which they venerate and are, in most cases, more likely to tend the item in question. There are some cases where animists stray dangerously close to Shift worshippers and there is some cross-fertilisation of belief between the two. Some of the more extreme animist sects see The Shifted as spirits of The City, to be worshipped and communed with. This, from any reasonable standpoint, is a fairly bad idea which can only end in trouble.

One of the more notable and widespread animist religions are the Greenkeepers. Each Greenkeeper worships their own personal plant, which they must tend and respect. Each plant is grown from a cutting taken from a gigantic, ancient tree which grows at a secret location somewhere in The City. Only the inner circle of believers know where the tree is located and they guard it with a fierce determination. Members of the religion believe that by tending for the plant, there is a two-way process which benefits both the plant and the tender. There may be a certain amount of truth in this, as Greenkeepers tend to be marginally happier and better balanced than your average citizen.

APOCALYPTIC CULTS

Often confused with some of the millenarian groups, most apocalyptic cults believe that The Shift and The Bombardment were a literal apocalypse and that the world,



as it existed prior to these events, no longer exists. In many senses, this is true. Life in The City is radically changed from what it once was; it is now a cauldron of social problems gone hopelessly insane. These cults believe that the inhabitants of The City are literally living in a hell. Some of their beliefs are not so far removed from the tenets of the Third Church of God The Architect. Indeed, some apocalyptic cults are splinter factions of the Third Church. These cults vary in the extreme in their beliefs. Some believe that as the populace has been condemned to hell, then it must be because mankind is essentially evil and deserves as much punishment as possible. In a contrary view, some believe that the only way to release mankind from this apocalyptic state is by doing good, by exhibiting kindness and compassion. This view is exemplified by the Children of Beneficent Compassion and Blessed Relief. Although not very widespread, they run a number of poorhouses, orphanages, hospitals and schools in an attempt to bring succour and assistance to as many poor souls as possible. Taking a opposite line to the Children are the Despondent Brothers, a quasi-monastic group which believe that extreme penitence through starvation, flagellation and self-mutilation are they key to achieving external rest. Needless to say, the Brothers attract the more unusual citizens of The City into their fold, sadists, masochists, the insane and the hopelessly weak-willed.

Shift worship

Disturbed, deranged and quite possibly demented. This is the common perception of those who worship and adore Shifted beings, venerating them as deities. However, the truth is, if anything, even more disturbing. Not all Shifted worshippers are the deranged lunatics of popular folklore, sacrificing themselves in bloody services and ending their miserable lives in a frenzy of destruction. Many see the power of The Shifted as a key to greater power for themselves. Respected citizens, powerful executives and admired sportsmen and women have been know to be followers of The Shifted, worshipping them for their own ends. In truth, worshipping The Shifted is dangerous; at best, a path to insanity, at worst, a road to death. The incomprehensible nature of The Shifted makes dealing with them a shaky proposition, one founded on misunderstanding, confusion and hatred. If The Shifted do, in their own way, decide to 'assist' worshippers, it is usually for their own mysterious ends rather than for the ends of the worshippers. Yet, many still flock to the underground churches, the darkened back rooms, the secluded courtyards to pray and beseech in the hope of attracting those whom they fear and venerate.

the third church of god the architect



Status: Citywide religious organisation

Headquarters: Colsetter Parish

Membership: Estimated to be between 15 and 25% of the population of The City

Overview

Austerity. Penitence. Toil. These are the hallmarks of the Third Church of God The Architect. Born out of the schismatic fires of the Second Church, the Third Church has grown to be even more powerful and popular than its more lenient predecessor. Hundreds of thousands worship God in His aspect as the Great Architect, creator of this penitential domain and judge over all. The core belief of the Church is simple: God created The City as a testing ground for the faithful, to see who was fit to enter His Eternal Heavenly City or be forever cast into the Many-Cursed Slums of the Great Demolisher. Only those who show true devotion to the Church, who live an appropriately humble and austere life, who regularly sing the Seventeen Virtues and Devotions and who work to further the glory of God can even have a hope of entering His Eternal Heavenly City. Everyone else is just in the shit.

Organisation

The Church is ruled over by the High Cardinal, supreme leader of all the faithful. The High Cardinal is chosen from the ranks of ordinary cardinals upon the death or abdication of the previous incumbent. This is by no means a position for life and more than one High Cardinal has been persuaded to abdicate his office in light of certain matters.

Under the cardinals are the numerous bishops who take care of the day to day running of the Church. It is they who hold the true power within the Church, as it is the bishops who carry out the vast amounts of clerical and organisational work required to keep the Church running. The lowest rung on the ladder of ordained members of the Church are the ordinary priests. Their duties can range from presiding over a given parish, assisting in clerical (in the



administrative sense) matters, carrying out diplomatic work or any number of duties which the bishops and cardinals might find for them. The ordained hierarchy is exclusively male, the Church forbidding women from taking holy orders.

While not hugely vocal, there have always been factions in the Church who seek to change the status quo and allow female adherents to become priests. However, these movements are never very large and rarely manage to obtain the support of higher officials within the hierarchy.

Working alongside the priests, bishops and cardinals, there are numerous members of the laity who have chosen to dedicate their life to the Church. These are the deacons and sub-deacons. While many deacons act as assistants and advisers to members of the clergy, a large proportion of their number serves in the Lay Reserves Martial, the military arm of the Church. Ordinary priests are forbidden from taking up arms except for ceremonial purposes. It is the sub-deacons and deacons who act as non-commissioned and junior officers within the Reserves. The higher ranks are held by bishops and some of the more senior and well-regarded deacons.

SECURITY FORCES

As has been mentioned, the Church maintains a large armed force in the form of the Lay Reserves Martial. Each member of the Church, male or female, is expected to serve at least two years in the armed forces.

An almost monastic organisation, the Reserves indoctrinate its members with a fanatical devotion to the Church and to God. Combining the functions of police force, army and intelligence agency, they are a stern and forbidding group, clad in their tight fitting black uniforms and proudly displaying the elaborate tonsures which are their marks of rank. As rank increases, the tonsure become even more elaborate, the highest ranking officers must maintain their hair on an almost daily basis if they do not wish to be reprimanded and suffer loss of face in front of their fellow believers.

The vast majority of the reserves are formed into infantry companies, they have no air force as air travel is considered a sin against God and His Creation. Armaments vary widely, with the most lowly units simply being armed with sparklocks, while expensively purchased hitech weapons are reserved for the members of the Chosen Path: the personal guard of the High Cardinal.

HIGHLIGHTED PERSONALITY

the Reverend JAIMES MICKITRIK

Age: 37

Height/Build: 5' 5"/Slight

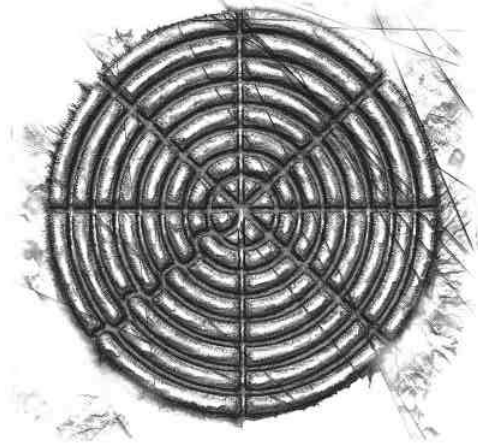
Eye/Hair Colour: Blue/Brown

Occupation: Priest

Affiliations: The Third Church of God The Architect

A lowly parish priest, Mickitrik tends to the needs of his parishioners in the densely populated slums of Fogwarren with a care and attention to duty which surprises even his superiors. He seems to be one of those rare individuals who actually care for the wellbeing and safety of others above all else. Many laugh and deride his efforts to help the poor, the sick, the starving and the mad. However, despite his seeming naivete, the people of Fogwarren have taken him to their hearts. His trust is rarely abused, his Chapel left relatively untouched and he can even walk in safety through the roughest neighbourhoods. His chapel has expanded from a single, small stone building in to a structure large enough to house a sanatorium, hospital, dormitory, soup kitchens and meeting hall. Physically, Mickitrik is a small, unassuming, prematurely balding man of quiet demeanour. He evangelises to a certain extent, but most take this as small penance for the good works that he carries out.





"It's not right, you're not right, he's not right, nothing's RIGHT! Concrete, blood, iron, tracks, canals, houses, trees, towers, knives, axes, fire, fury, wealth, poverty, shit, death. None of this matters, you don't matter, he don't matter, I don't fucking MATTER! Nobody cares. That's the point. Nobody cares. At all. Any time. We are all dead men. We're born into the shit and just don't realise until a bullet tears our spine out. You just don't get it, neither does he. Because I know. I KNOW! I FUCKING KNOW!"

Prisoner 74019, Wing 32, 'Inferno' Mental

the procedure



In a/state, all primary attributes and skills are defined by a number from one to one hundred. If a player wishes to have their character try their hand at a particular test of a skill or attribute, the player must roll a 100-sided die (hereafter referred to as a D100) on or under the appropriate attribute or skill in order to succeed. Under normal circumstances, rolling on or under the attribute means that the character is successful and passes the test. If a number greater than the attribute or skill level is rolled, then the character fails the test.

his roll. The dice come up 25, Kripitsch has passed the test and the thief remains blissfully unaware that he is being followed.

However, a roll of 01 will always pass and a roll of 00 will always fail. This serves to at least give characters a small chance of succeeding, even in a hopeless situation, and makes characters with very high skills nervous, as there is always the chance of failing.

Modifying the Roll

Sometimes, circumstances will conspire to make it easier or harder for the character to pass an attribute or skill test. When a skill or attribute is modified (either positively or negatively) the modified number is known as the 'Effective Total'. This is the number which must be rolled on or under in order that the character is successful in the test.

The difficulties and the level by which they modify the appropriate skill or attribute are shown below.

Difficulty	Modifier
Absurdly Easy	+80
Very Easy	+60
Easy	+50
Simple	+40
Routine	+30
Complicated	+10
Challenging	0
Difficult	-10
Very Difficult	-30
Extremely Difficult	-50
Formidable	-70
Impossible	-90

EXAMPLE

John is playing the character of Janus Kripitsch, a type of character known as a *Lostfinder*. Kripitsch is attempting to follow a suspected thief silently and without being observed. Unfortunately, the thief heads down a silent alley strewn with discarded rubbish, making it rather difficult to move quickly. The GM informs John that he must make a successful *Shadowing* roll in order that the thief remains unaware of Kripitsch's presence. Kripitsch is rather good at this and has a *Shadowing* skill of 70%. However, due to the circumstances, the GM states that this is a *Difficult* roll, meaning that John must subtract 10 from Kripitsch's skill level in *Shadowing*. This gives an *Effective Total* of 60%. John makes

Skill and Attribute Challenges

On certain occasions, a character will be called upon to pit a particular skill, or attribute, against that of another character, creature or even an inanimate object. This is known as a Skill (or Attribute) Challenge. Resolving such a challenge is very simple. Both sides roll against their base skill or attribute. Whoever passes by the most or fails by the least has won the challenge. Simple as that.

EXAMPLE

Local *Mire End* loudmouth and all round bully Valentin Brady is in a local pub one night. Out of sheer braggadoccio, he challenges another man to an arm wrestle. Brady has a *Strength* of 70 (the appropriate attribute for such a challenge) and his opponent has a *Strength* of only 40. Should be easy to beat. The player playing Brady rolls first and the dice turn up a score of 75, Brady fails his roll by five. The GM rolls for his opponent and gets a 35, passing by five. Much to his surprise, Brady is defeated by the weaker man.

Skills and Skill Modifiers

Skills are organised into groups of related skills know as 'Skill Areas'. These Skill Areas serve to indicate what attribute or attributes should be used to modify a particular skill. Each Skill Area (see 'Skill Descriptions' in 'The Players' for a full list of skill areas and skills) has an attribute, or attributes, associated with it. The associated attribute(s) serve to modify the skill.

In order to work out what the modifier is, take one tenth of the attribute (or one tenth of the average of the attributes) associated with the skills in the area and use this as a positive modifier in any skill roll. Note: Skill areas cannot be bought, you have to buy the individuals skills separately in that area.

This is explained further in 'The Players'.



COMBAT

In a/c/state, the best way to avoid being killed or injured is to avoid a fight in the first place. Even if a stab wound or a gunshot doesn't kill you straight off, there's a good chance you'll succumb to infection, medical care being what it is in The City. Unless you're rich, affiliated with a macrocorp or have managed to scavenge some decent medical gear, medical care will be primitive and not particularly effective. Take the hint: don't get into a fight, and if you do, keep behind cover and out of the line of fire.

basics

Combat can be divided into two types: melee combat and ranged combat. The end result is essentially the same in that the object is to kill or injure your opponent. However, there are specifics for each which must be covered in detail. Before we get into that, though, there are some basics which apply to both types of combat.

rounds

Combat is arbitrarily divided into one second segments called 'Rounds'. Within this timescale, an individual can perform a single action, such as run a given distance, fire a gun a certain number of times, throw a knife and so on. How quickly a character can react in combat is determined by the Reaction (REA) rating. The higher Reaction is, the faster your character can react in a high pressure combat environment. Base Reaction is found by taking the average of Awareness, Intelligence and Agility, and rounding down to the nearest whole number if the fraction is below .5 and rounding up if the fraction is .5 or above and adding or subtracting certain modifiers. The combat round runs from the highest Reaction to the lowest, thus allowing faster, more aware characters to get the drop on slower opponents. A character can also choose to hold their action, waiting until their opponent has moved before taking action. This allows a quick character to instantly react to manoeuvres. When a character has chosen to hold action and reacts to an opponent's move, both the actions of the opponent and the character are considered to have happened simultaneously.

example

Jane Card, a ghostfighter has an AWR of 70, INT of 50 and AGL of 80. Her Reaction is therefore the average of these three numbers, giving an REA of 67 (66.67, rounded up). She's just been challenged by Flash Valentine, a well known local gang leader. Valentine has an AWR of 65, and INT of 40 and an AGL of 60. His Reaction is therefore 55. Card can therefore either strike at Valentine before he has a chance to move or can hold action until he moves and choose an appropriate response.

melee combat

Melee combat, whether using weapons such as knives and clubs, or using fists and feet can be a messy, brutal business. Generally, no one gets out of a fight completely unscathed. Melee weapons (from table legs to laminate combat blades) are all defined by the following stats:

Damage Value (DAM)

The basic level of damage which the weapon will do to a target. The damage level of a hand held weapon is added to a character's Punch Damage.

Penetration (PEN)

How good the weapon is at penetrating armour.

Reach (RCH)

How much the weapon extends your effective reach, generally based on the length of the weapon.

Reaction Modifier (REM)

How the size and mass of the weapon affects the reaction time of the user.

Mass (MSS)

How heavy the weapon is.

Cost (CST)

The basic retail cost, in pounds, shillings and pence, of the weapon.

For weapons such as knives and swords, PEN will usually have two ratings separated by a slash. The number before the slash represents the PEN when stabbing with the weapon, the number after the slash represents the PEN when cutting with the weapon.

example

The profile for a Llive looks like this:

DAM	PEN	RCH	REM	MSS
6	10/20	+0	+5	2

Characters who are within two meters of each other may make melee attacks, using any appropriate close combat skill.

hitting the target

Taking into account any appropriate modifiers (see next page) a character may attempt to strike an opponent with fists, feet, knives or their melee weapon of choice.



The attacker must specify where they are striking, taking the appropriate modifier shown in the table below

Area	Penalty
Head	-20
Chest	-10
Abdomen	-10
Arm	-15
Upper Leg	-10
Lower Leg	-15

A Challenge roll must be made between the attacker and the defender. Whoever makes the roll by the most or fails by the least makes a successful attack or defence. Defending does not count as an action on the part of the defender, allowing them to strike back when their turn comes.

fire combat

Fire combat is a deadly and dangerous business, usually over and done with in a few seconds, with one or both sets of combatants either injured or dead. Firearms (and this covers gauss weapons, lasers and all ranged weapons) are defined by the following attributes:

Damage Value (DAM)

The basic level of damage which a standard round from the weapon will do to a target.

Penetration (PEN)

How good a standard round from the weapon is at penetrating armour.

Range (RNG)

The close range (in metres) of the weapon.

Rate Of Fire (ROF)

How many times in a one second combat round the weapon can be discharged.

Reaction Modifier (REM)

How the size and mass of the weapon affects the reaction time of the user.

Clip (CLP)

How many shots a single clip for the weapon contains.

Mass (MSS)

How heavy the weapon is.

example

The profile for a medium sparklock looks like this:

DAM	PEN	RNG	ROF	REM	CLP	MSS
7	5	10	1	+10	1	2.5

hitting the target

Actually hitting the target in fire combat is a combination of many factors including, but not limited to, the skill of the user, the range to the target, the quality of the weapon, the ambient light, movement, etc. In order to hit the target, the firer must make a skill roll against the appropriate skill for the weapon they are using (i.e.: firing a sparklock pistol requires the use of the Pistol skill, firing a shotgun requires the use of the Longarms skill). In ideal conditions (which never, ever exist) the skill of the firer is merely modified by the range to the target and the modified skill is rolled against to see if the round hits. This is always the first step in determining if you can hit the target. The Range (RNG) stat for a given weapon shows the Close Range in Metres of the weapon. Medium range is between the figure for close range and twice that number. The figure for Long Range is between twice and four times Close Range and the figure for Extreme Range is between four and eight times this number.



EXAMPLE

The profile for the Medium Sparklock given above shows a RNG figure of 10. Therefore, the range bands are:

Close	10
Medium	20
Long	40
Extreme	80

As the range to a target increases, it becomes increasingly difficult to hit the target. Each range band has a different modifier, as shown below:

Close	00%
Medium	-20%
Long	-50%
Extreme	-80%

Range is not the only modifier. Movement, lighting, rain, tiredness and a vast range of situational modifiers can all conspire to turn the best marksman into a hopeless shot. The list given below is not exhaustive and GMs should feel free to change the modifiers and make up new ones as the situation demands it.

Situation Modifier

Walking	-10
Jogging	-20
Running	-30
Sprinting	-40
Poor Light	-10
Bad Light	-30
Near Dark	-70
Mist	-20
Fog/Smog	-40
Light Rain	-10
Heavy Rain	-30
Poor Footing	-10
Restricted Movement	-10
Aiming (1 second)	+10
Aiming (2 seconds)	+20
Aiming (4 seconds)	+30
Aiming (8 seconds)	+40
Laser Targeting	+20

EXAMPLE

A character running through mist and attempting to hit a target fifteen metres away with the aforementioned medium sparklock, would suffer a whopping -70% penalty to hit.

Called Shots

Sometimes, it may be better to try and hit a specific part of a target rather than just randomly blazing away, hoping that something vital will be hit. In this instance, the firer can declare a called shot and take a penalty to hit based on the area of the body they are attempting to shoot.

Area Penalty

Head	-40
Chest	-20
Abdomen	-20
Arm	-30
Upper Leg	-20
Lower Leg	-30

Rate of Fire

The Rate Of Fire (ROF) of any weapon determines how many single shots or bursts it can fire in any combat round. For example, a semi-automatic cartridge pistol has a ROF of 4, meaning that it can fire up to four shots per combat round. Automatic weapons (i.e.: those that can fire continuous streams of bullets) will have their ROF show like this : 4(5). This means that the weapon can fire up to four single shots or four bursts of five rounds each. Burst fire can either be Aimed or Suppressive.

Aimed burst fire is treated exactly like firing a single shot at a target, only multiple rounds are being fired at once. A single hit roll is made for each burst, all rounds either hit or miss. When a target is hit by a burst, all rounds strike the same area. Needless to say, a well aimed burst can have a devastating effect on a target.

Suppressive burst fire is mainly designed to cover an area or keep opponents heads down. A single burst can be used to cover an area one meter wide and the chance to hit a target within that area equals:

(number of bursts fired x number of rounds in each burst) x2, modified by various range modifiers.

The chance to hit is doubled at close range and halved at extreme range. As an example, an automatic rifle with a ROF of 4(5) could spray bullets across an area four meters wide in one combat round, giving a chance to hit targets within the area of 10% (modified for range, if appropriate). Or, the firer could concentrate all four bursts on an area one meter wide, giving a chance to hit of 40% (modified for range, if appropriate). Targets caught by a suppressive



burst will be struck by 1D10/2 rounds, up to a maximum of the number of rounds in a single burst.

miss completely). Rolling on the table below will determine where the bullet or blow hits.

RECOIL

All firearms produce recoil and this can quite easily throw off the aim of the firer. To represent this, each shot or burst fired AFTER the first shot or burst in a round takes an additional, cumulative -10% to hit (so the second shot is at -10%, third shot is at -20% and so on). Of course, this rule does not apply to lasers. That would be silly.



COVER

In some situations, a target may have benefit of cover: walls, barrels, tables and so on. Cover is defined as either full or partial. Full cover, as the name would suggest, provides protection to the character's entire body whilst partial cover provides protection to either the upper or lower half of the body.

Cover effectively provides extra armour for the character, depending on the construction of the cover. So, a brick wall provides more protection than a wooden table, for example. Sample AVs for some common types of cover are given below.

Cover Type	AV
Brick Wall	10
Plasterboard Wall	03
Reinforced Concrete	40
Table	02
Wooden Door	03

If a character is in full cover, then the AV of the cover applies to any hit location. If the character is in partial cover, the AV only applies to those areas of the body which are behind cover.

HIT LOCATION

Once it has been determined that the target has actually been hit, then the attacker must roll to see where he or she hits the target (with a called shot, this part of the process is unnecessary, as the attacker will either hit the chosen area or

D10 Role	Location
1	Head
2,3	Chest
4	Abdomen
5	Right Arm
6	Left Arm
7	Upper Right Leg
8	Upper Left Leg
9	Lower Right Leg
10	Lower Left Leg

The hit location will come into effect later on when determining armour effects and damage results.

PENETRATING ARMOUR

Each weapon has a Penetration (PEN) rating and each item of armour has an Armour Value (AV). The basic rule of thumb is that if PEN is greater than or equal to AV, then the round hits the target with no reduction in the damage. If, however, the PEN is less than the AV, one point is subtracted from damage for each point PEN is less than AV. Armour is only effective if the area which it covers has been hit. A character wearing an armour vest would be protected if hit in the chest or abdomen, but not if hit in the head, legs or arms.

Soft armour (chainmail, armoured clothing, etc) have no effect against blunt melee attacks (club, fists, etc). Hard armour (such as a flak vest) has half effect against blunt attacks. Melee weapons such as knives, swords and axes use the full armour value.



damage

trauma damage

All characters and NPCs will have a resistance to damage known as Resilience (hereafter referred to as RES). When a target is struck by a projectile, melee weapon, fist, foot or whatever, compare the damage (taking any armour effects into account) with the RES of the target. If the DAM is less than RES, then the character takes a light wound. If the DAM is equal to or more than RES, then the character takes a moderate wound. If the DAM is equal to or more than twice RES, then the character takes a serious wound.

The effects of wounds are decided in terms of Shock Points, which combine blood loss, trauma, broken bones and the effects of shock into one number. The table below will show the number of shock points a specific wound on a specific area will cause.

However, for each five points that DAM exceeds the serious wound level for the character (twice RES), an additional Shock Point is added.

	Light	Moderate	Serious
Head	1S	4S	Dead
Chest	2S	4S	Dead
Abdomen	1S	2S	4S
Upper Leg	1S	2S	3S
Lower Leg	Bleeding	1S	2S
Arm	Bleeding	1S	2S

example

A character with a RES of 5 is wearing an armour vest with an AV of 10. He is shot by an attacker with a rifle which has a PEN of 7 and a DAM of 20. Comparing the PEN with the AV, we see that AV exceeds PEN, therefore reducing the DAM by 3 points (AV of 10, minus PEN of 7 = 3). The damage is now reduced to 17. The target has been hit in the upper right leg with the adjusted DV of 17. This is more than twice the target's RES, inflicting a serious wound. Normally, this would give 3 Shock Points. However, the DV of 17 exceeds the serious wound level for the character by seven points, inflicting another Shock Point, bringing the total to 4, a very serious wound.

blunt trauma damage

Attacks with feet, fists, clubs (or indeed any non-penetrating melee attack) and non-penetrating projectile attacks (such as stones or bricks) do what is known as blunt trauma damage. Blunt trauma damage is worked out in the same manner as trauma damage, only there is no blood loss effect.

Projectiles which fail to penetrate armour are still capable of doing severe damage. Take the damage level which was stopped by the armour and divide by five. The number which is arrived at is taken as blunt trauma damage, measured against RES to determine actual damage in the normal way.

unconsciousness & death

When a characters total number of shock point becomes greater than his or her RES, then they must make a Willpower check with a modifier of -(10x number of Shock Points). If they fail, they lapse into unconsciousness. This check must be taken each time another Shock Point is gained.

When a characters total of Shock Points equals RES x1.5, they are about to die and only immediate first aid can save them. At this point, characters will die in a number of minutes equal to their basic RES unless a successful first aid roll is made (see below).

damage effects on skills

When characters receive Shock Points, they automatically receive a penalty to all skill use equal to the total number of Shock Points x10.

medical aid and healing

After being shot, stabbed, cut, kicked, punched or generally injured in some way, the first thing a character will probably want to do is get some form of medical aid. For the purposes of the game, there are essentially two forms of medical aid: First Aid and Long-term Aid.

First aid refers to any treatment which is administered shortly after an injury being received. It is, in the main, designed to stop bleeding, set bones and hopefully ameliorate the damaging effects of shock.

Long-term aid refers to any medical care which is received after first aid. This can range from something simple, like taking pills, to something more complex, like an extended stay in an intensive care unit.

When a character has been injured, first aid may be attempted in order to prevent further damage from a particular injury. The individual giving aid must make a basic roll against their First Aid skill, modified according to the conditions and the severity of the wound, as laid out below.

Light Wound	+0%
Moderate Wound	-20%
Serious Wound	-40%
Using Extemporised Materials	-20%



Working Under Poor Conditions -20%

(e.g.: in a rain-soaked alley)

Working Under Terrible Conditions -40%

(e.g.: in a combat zone with mortar shells falling all around)

If the character giving the aid make the roll successfully, then the character being treated will have had the bleeding stopped and had basic treatment of his or her injuries.

However, if the first aid roll is unsuccessful, the character will continue to accumulate Shock Points at the following rate:

Most Severe Wound Is Additional Shock Points

Light	+1 per hour
Moderate	+1 per 30 mins
Serious	+1 per 10 mins

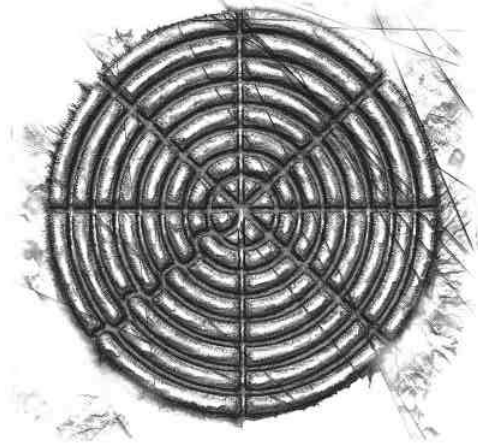
However, first aid does not necessarily mean that the character will recover successfully from his or her injuries. Injuries take a long time to heal, the more serious the injury, the longer the healing time.

RECOVERY FROM INJURIES

A character will naturally recover from one shock point per week. This can be increased through the use of drugs and medical care. Rolling for any of the tasks below will allow shock points to be regained over the period specified in the task. The skill used is the General Medicine skill of whoever is carrying out the treatment.

Intensive hospital care	+20%	1 shock point regained per day
Hospital care	+0%	1 shock point regained per 2 days
In-home care	-20%	1 shock point regained per 4 days





"Why am I happy? Because I've managed to make peace with myself. There are too many people in this city who are bent on causing misery for others. I choose a different path. Make a difference. Bring some light into peoples lives. Give them hope. That's the key. Hope is important."

Florentina Venkatseramany, Streethealer, Hangside.

the players



The a/state character creation system is designed to allow players to create rounded, realistic characters. Although this involves a large number of individual choices, the process is laid out in as simple and straightforward a manner as possible, making it easier for both player and GM.

Character creation follows seven stages:

- 1) In discussion with the GM, the player should come up with a character concept that both are happy with.
- 2) **Choose Advantages and Disadvantages: These are not included with a/stateLite**
- 3) Choose an Origin for the character.
- 4) Choose an Upbringing for the character.
- 5) Purchase the character's attributes, using the attribute point pool.
- 6) Purchase the character's skills, using the skill point pool.
- 7) Round out the character and purchase any appropriate personal possessions.

attributes

Before going any further into the character creation system, we should have a look at the main attributes which define characters in a/state. These are:

Strength (STR)

This represents the raw physical power of the character. A character with Strength 10 is very weak, while a character with Strength 90 is exceptionally strong.

Agility (AGL)

Sense of balance and physical flexibility.

Dexterity (DEX)

Fine manipulation with the hands (or occasionally, feet).

Health (HLT)

The general state of health and resistance to disease and injury.

Awareness (AWR)

The spatial awareness and generalised sensory acuity of the character. Awareness covers all five senses and the more nebulous category of 'intuition'.

Intelligence (INT)

The 'brainpower' of the character, the ability to learn and use knowledge.

Willpower (WIL)

How mentally strong the character is. A character with Willpower 10 is remarkably gullible and phenomenally easily lead. Whereas a character with Willpower 90 would be a leader of men and able to bend others to his or her will.

Personality (PER)

How likeable, friendly and charismatic the character is. Personality 10 would be someone remarkably unapproachable, dull and not in the least likeable. Whereas, someone with personality 90 would be the life and soul of any party going.

buying attributes and skills

Attributes and skills are bought using Attribute Points (APs) and Skill Points (SPs). Starting APs and SPs for all characters are 360AP and 500SP. These amounts can be modified by taking advantages and disadvantages. Buying attributes and skills is a simple 'one for one' process until you reach 70%, when both attributes and skills become more expensive, as shown on the table below:

Skill/Attributes	Cost
70 - 79%	X2
80 - 89%	X3
90 - 100%	X4

Some skills on the Skill Table have the letter 'd' in brackets after them. This means they are difficult to learn, either because of their complexity or rarity. Learning these skills costs 50% more than normal. For example, learning to pilot an ekranoplan is quite a difficult business, so to get a level of 40% in this skill would require the expenditure of 60 skill points.

Certain skills have sub-skills which form part of the whole. On the skill table, these are indicated by being indented under the main skill. If a character wishes to be more specialised in particular areas of a skill, he or she can choose to purchase sub-skills if appropriate. Sub-skills add their level to the main skill when rolling for success in the particular skill area. Sub-skills are purchased at half the cost of normal skills, but can only be taken to half of the level of the main skill. For example, a character has the skill of Unarmed Combat, which means she can punch, kick, grapple, etc. However, the player wants their character to be good at kicking, so decides to spend some SPs buying the Kick sub-skill. With an Unarmed Combat skill of 60%, the character can take Kick up to +30%. So, when in close combat and using a kick, the character (if the maximum level of skill was purchased) could kick with a skill of 90%. All other melee attacks would be at 60%, unless sub-skills in other areas were purchased.



Each skill area has a 'controlling attribute'. This gives an additional bonus when using the skill. This bonus is equal to 10% of the attribute in question. For example, a character with a DEX of 50 and a Pistol skill of 60 would make rolls against a total skill of 65%.

All characters can speak Common at their INT x1.5. Characters from the Lower Middle Class, Upper Middle Class, Nomenklatura, Median Corporate and High Corporate upbringings also gain Common (read and write) at a level equal to their INT.

Character Concept

The first and most important stage of character creation is the basic concept. Where is the character from? What do they look like? What is their outlook on life? By answering a series of questions about the character (given below), the player will create a broad picture of what this person is like, making the more number based sections of character creation far easier.

Questions to be asked

- 1) The name, age and sex of the character.
- 2) What part of The City was the character born in?
- 3) What social class were the character's parents?
- 4) What were the character's parents' occupations?
- 5) What was family life like?
- 6) Did the character have siblings?
- 7) Why did your character eventually leave the family home (if at all)?
- 8) What kind of things did your character learn as a child?
- 9) What does your character look like?
- 10) Does your character have any notable physical strengths or weaknesses?
- 11) Does your character have any notable mental strengths or weaknesses?
- 12) What does your character do for a living?
- 13) What kind of training (if any) has your character received?
- 14) What are your character's main goals in life?
- 15) What motivates the character?
- 16) Are there any particular traits which the character respects in people?
- 17) Are there any particular traits which the character dislikes in people?
- 18) Does the character have any close friends, dependants etc?

Origin

Origin tells you what kind of family your character comes from. This should be firmly based in the Character Concept and reflect the answers given by the player. Each different origin offers the character a choice of certain skills. The player can choose to purchase two, all, or any number in between of these skills for their character. However, no starting skill may be greater than 20%. The player has 40 skill points (not part of the starting total of skill points) to spend on Origin skills.

dispossessed

The lowest of the low. Dispossessed is an origin where characters are born into the serried ranks of the homeless that inhabit The City. It is a rough upbringing that teaches you to look after yourself, sure as hell no one else will.

Skill Picks: Armed Combat, Unarmed Combat, Sneak, Foraging, Fast-talk

redundant

Lucky enough to have a place to live but not lucky enough to have a job, the redundant are a step above the dispossessed, but only just.

Skill Picks: Unarmed Combat, Mechanics, Foraging, Economics.

drudge

Born into a family which slaves through a life of hard, manual work. Most of the drudge class work for the lowest echelons of monolithic corporate organisations.

Skill Picks: Unarmed Combat, Mechanics, Machinist, Electrician, any Trades skill.

Middle Class, Lower

Mildly affluent, the lower middle classes are made up of shop owners, small businessmen and the lower ranking professionals. Their life is not extravagant but they are comfortable in their situation.

Skill Picks: Mechanical Computing, Economics, Writing, Land Vehicles, Bureaucracy.

Middle Class, Upper

Professionals, skilled tradesmen and the owners of mini or microcorps go towards making up the majority of the upper middle classes in the City.

Skill Picks: Negotiation, Economics, Diplomacy, Bureaucracy, Writing.



nomenklatura

The nomenklatura are respected professionals of high rank or those who have been born into inherited wealth. They are the cream of non-corporate society in the City.

Skill Picks: Act, Diplomacy, History, Politics, Economics.

low corporate

Perhaps skilled tradesmen or lower echelon managerial staff, low corporates have security and a regular wage, which is more than many can boast.

Skill Picks: Mechanical Computing, One Trades or Science skill, Ground Vehicles, Persuasion.

median corporate

The people who truly run the corporate monsters, they live comfortable lives, mostly secluded from the rough and tumble of the city streets.

Skill Picks: 2 Science, Trades or Administrative skills, Mechanical Computing, Negotiation, Persuasion.

high corporate

The very top echelons of corporate society, an individual born into this stratum of society can expect a life of luxury and privilege unparalleled anywhere else in the City.

Skill Picks: 3 Scientific or 3 Academic skills, Act, Diplomacy.

upbringing

Again, this is a choice which the player must make based on answers given during the creation of the character concept. The player may only choose one upbringing, and this choice is influenced by the origin of the character. The 'Available To:' line under the title of the upbringing shows which origins can have this type of upbringing. For example, someone with a dispossessed origin, could not choose the Academic upbringing, as this is only available to the Upper Middle Class, Nomenklatura, Low Corporate, Median Corporate and High Corporate. However, the player, in consultation with the GM, can choose an upbringing which is not normally allowed by the origin, if the character concept warrants it.

As for the origin, upbringing bestows certain extra skills on the character. The player can choose to purchase two, all, or any number in between of these skills for their character. However, no starting skill may be greater than 20%. The player has 40 skill points (not part of the starting total of skills points) to spend on upbringing skills.

academic

Available To: Upper Middle Class, Nomenklatura, Low Corporate, Median Corporate, High Corporate.

Skill Picks: Any 4 Scientific and Academic skills, Writing.

apprenticed

Available To: Dispossessed, Redundant, Drudge, Lower Middle Class, Low Corporate.

Skill Picks: Any Trades skill, Economics, Mechanical Computing, Ground Vehicles or Water Vehicles.

corporate (macrocorp or smaller business)

Available To: Low Corporate, Median Corporate, High Corporate.

Skill Picks: Economics, Writing, Law, Diplomacy, Act.

criminal

Available To: All

Skill Picks: Pistol, Unarmed Combat, Sneak, Fast-talk, Criminal Culture.

dangerous

Available To: Dispossessed, Redundant, Drudge, Lower Middle Class, Low Corporate

Skill Picks: Pistol, Armed Combat, Unarmed Combat, Tracking, Tactics.

independently minded

Available To: All

Skill Picks: Unarmed Combat, Negotiation, Psychology, Economics, any Trades skill.

militaristic

Available To: All

Skill Picks: Longarm, Armed Combat, Ground Vehicles, Unarmed Combat, Tactics.

minority group

Available To: All

Skill Picks: Unarmed Combat, Act, Diplomacy, Negotiation, Running, Hide.

political

Available To: Upper Middle Class, Nomenklatura, Median Corporate, High Corporate.

Skill Picks: Writing, Economics, Politics, Psychology, Act.



POOR

Available To: Dispossessed, Redundant, Drudge.

Skill Picks: Foraging, Economics, Unarmed Combat, First Aid, Negotiation.

RELIGIOUS

Available To: All

Skill Picks: Theology, Psychology, Oration, Writing, History (Own Religion)

SHeltered life

Available To: All

Skill Picks: Any 2 Scientific or Academic skills, First Aid, Writing, Musical Instrument

TRANSIENT OR NOMAD

Available To: Dispossessed, Redundant, Drudge.

Skill Picks: Ground or Water Vehicles, Foraging, Fishing, First Aid, Negotiation, Persuasion.

WEALTHY

Available To: Upper Middle Class, Nomenklatura, Median Corporate, High Corporate.

Skill Picks: Economics, History, Musical Instrument, Bureaucracy, Diplomacy.

types of character in the city

This particular section outlines different types of character which can be found in The City. Each character type gives a brief description of the essentials of the character, as well as listing some recommended skills for that particular type. However, everyone is an individual, and these are merely guidelines. A player may think that the ghostfighter is a great character type, but wants something a little different. So, they may decide that instead of using knives, their ghostfighter only uses blunt weapons such as clubs, nightsticks or coshes. This is only a small change to the character type, but serves to make it unique.

Character type also has an influence on the starting wealth for the character. This is explained further in the section entitled 'Starting Wealth'.

activist

The scent of power lures many into the shady, shadowy world of local politics. The many and varied burgh and parish councils, local committees and advisory boards are always stocked

with the ambitious, the cunning, the concerned and the glory seeking. People come into politics for different reasons. Some would seek to make things better for their fellow citizens, some merely do it in order to exercise some feeble and meaningless power over others, whilst others use it as a means of making a living via graft and corruption. Whatever their reasons, Activists are all strongly motivated. Some are skilled orators, while other adopt a quieter, more measured approach.

Recommended Skills: Bureaucracy, Diplomacy. Oration, Negotiation, Persuasion, Act, Fast-talk

Resource: A small office (either owned or rented), typewriter and printing press.

Wealth Level: 6

CLERGY

For the millions who seek solace in religion, the clergy are their spiritual and moral leaders, passing on the word of God (or Gods) to the masses of the laity. From the rigid, dour priests of the Third Church of God the Architect to the voluble, demonstrative orators of The Shining Sky, many tend to the welfare of their flock and to the survival of their religion with great devotion. However, some slip from the true path and become more self serving, more interested in worldly possessions and physical pleasures than inner piety. Members of the clergy can vary between these extremes, often exhibiting a pragmatic view of life, counselling where necessary and holding their tongues as the occasion demands.

Recommended Skills: Psychology, Theology, Music, Writing, Oration, Persuasion

Resource: Holy items and garb

Wealth Level: 1 to 5

CRIMINAL

If there is one thing that The City has more than enough of, it's criminals. From the common cutpurse working the canalsides and back alleys to the heads of the massive organised crime syndicates, they all contribute to the criminal culture of The City. In many ways, the vast majority of The City's population are criminals in one way or the other. However, to actually make a living through a life of crime requires a special mindset and a particular kind of person.

Specialisations: Ganger, Scrounger/Scavenger, Fence, Crook, Cutpurse

Recommended Skills: Unarmed Combat, Armed Combat, Running, Persuasion, Act, Hide, Sneak, Criminal Culture

Resource: Varies, from a bludgeon to an entire gang

Wealth Level: 1 to 9



flowghost

Prowling the pathways of the Dataflow, the calling of the Flowghost is a dangerous one. Nobody likes their information being stolen and some groups will pay Flowghosts back with the proverbial six inches of steel. Incompetent Flowghosts, therefore, are few and far between. Skilled in cryptology, mathematics and the science of The Dataflow, they are adept at using both dingin and electronic computer systems to trawl the vast pool of information, cutting into secure systems and extracting the juiciest morsels. Unlike netrunners, matrix jockeys and hackers in other game settings, Flowghosts are more closely related to cryptographers and codebreakers than to the prototypical cyberspace cowboy. Such is the nature of the Dataflow and so widespread the use of mechanical dingins, that having a bank of programs ready to assault a datacore is just not enough. Careful perception, skilled manipulation and intelligent application of mathematics will see the successful 'ghost through. There is no 'jacking in' and perceiving the Dataflow as a 360 degree simulation. Flowghosts must observe what happens on screens, tanks or mechanical displays, listening to sounds through headphones, handsets or speakers. The skill of Dataflow Perception is not easily picked up and takes a lot of trial and error. Simple visual cues are not enough, the successful Flowghost must listen, observe and often act on instinct and intuition.

Recommended Skills: Dataflow Perception, Mathematics, Cryptography, Electronic Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computing (electronic), Computing (mechanical), Investigation.

Resource: Microscale dingin and peripherals

Wealth Level: 7

ghostfighter

The ghostfighters of The City are a breed apart from the common guffer or militant trooper, having honed their skills in knife fighting and stealthy attack to a remarkable degree. The most talented of ghostfighters are prosperous and in demand. Untalented ghostfighters are dead. A ghostfighter is quite simply an individual who has trained themselves to a high degree of expertise in stealth, infiltration and armed combat. Do not make the mistake of thinking that they are assassins. They are stand up fighters, preferring to look their enemy straight in the face before delivering the killer strike. Many notable figures employ a ghostfighter or two as obtrusive bodyguards at exorbitant prices.

Recommended Skills: Unarmed Combat, Armed Combat, Thrown Weapon, Tactics, Running, Climbing, Hide, Sneak, Shadow, Tracking

Resource: 2 melee weapons

Wealth Level: 6

labour

The toiling masses of The City. Labourers struggle in the factories, mills, and works. They scabble in mines, unload cargo and construct new buildings. Being a labourer is a harsh, rough, unyielding lifestyle which offers little reward for hours of toil. Many members of the labouring classes supplement their meagre income through petty crime or some kind of shady second job. Labourers in the employ of the macro-corps fare slightly (only slightly, mind you) better than their fellows working for smaller companies or local councils.

Specialisations: Factory Worker, Labourer, Construction Worker

Recommended Skills: Unarmed Combat, Machinist, Drinking, Bureaucracy, Criminal Culture, Mechanics.

Resource: The resources available to the common labourer are understandably limited. They may have a few tools, specialised working clothes etc, etc.

Wealth Level: 2 to 4

lostfinder

Seekers, searchers, investigators. Lostfinders take a quasi-mystical approach to their work, seeking to be in harmony with The City and its people in order to better carry out their chosen tasks. As a result of this, Lostfinders will never accept payment in cash, only in kind or in the form of simple goodwill. An investigation of weeks into the disappearance of a child may result in no more payment than a hot meal and the long-lasting thanks of a poor family. In the parish or burgh where they work, Lostfinders are often figures of respect, trusted by the community for their altruistic efforts to help others. It is a foolish person, however, who betrays the trust of a Lostfinder. For not only will they incur the anger of an individual, they will incur the wrath of the entire community. Such is the place of the Lostfinder, a semi-religious force for good in a dark place.

Recommended Skills: Investigation, Law, Diplomacy, Negotiation, Shadow, Forensics, Criminal Culture.

Resource: The good-will of community is a resource not to be underestimated.

Wealth Level: 2

mikefighter pilot (qx)

"One centimetre too tall, one kilo too heavy". So runs the credo of the former Mikefighter pilots. Most have finished their careers by the time they are sixteen, if they are lucky. Once they are too tall or too heavy for maximum combat efficiency, they get thrown out by their corporate masters, out onto the streets where they must use their skills as best they can. Even aged sixteen, most ex-mikefighter pilots are com-



bat hardened veterans, carrying a casual contempt for life and limb. Despite being skilled pilots, they often find it difficult to find work. Getting a job as an aerostat pilot is prized, but rare. Most live out their lives in criminal activities, never to take to the air again.

Recommended Skills: Pistol, Unarmed Combat, Tactics, Air Vehicles, Vehicular Weapons, Navigation

Resource: Flight suit, small handgun

Wealth Level: 4

NOMAD

Nomads wander the canals and streets, having chosen a life without a permanent home, rather than having the existence thrust upon them like a jake. All their worldly possession are carried in a pack, a carpetbag or some other easily carried piece of luggage. Due to their wide-ranging travels, nomads are experienced in the many diverse cultures of The City and often have an excellent grasp of idiosyncratic local laws and customs which could catch the unwary by surprise.

Recommended Skills: Longarm, Unarmed Combat, Mechanics, Fish Farming, Negotiation, Water Vehicles, Orienteering, Navigation

Resource: Small boat (if waterbourne), bundle of possessions (bedroll, cooking pan, oil stove etc)

Wealth Level: 3

SCIENTIST

Whether they be experimenting in pristine white clean rooms or dissecting a mutated fish in a dingy garret room, scientists throughout The City all share a passion for research and the advancement of knowledge. Sometimes, this is perverted for their, or their employer's, ends, resulting in horrific experiments or dubious technological 'advances'. The life of a scientist can range from one of great wealth and prestige to an existence little better than that of a jake. Great discoveries tend to go unnoticed when the discoverer dies of alcohol poisoning, slumped in a urine soaked alley.

Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Wealth										
1	£0	£0.05s	£0.10s	£1	£1.10s	£2	£2.10s	£3	£3.10s	£4
2	£1	£2	£3	£4	£5	£6	£7	£8	£9	£10
3	£5	£8	£11	£14	£17	£20	£23	£26	£29	£32
4	£8	£12	£16	£20	£24	£28	£32	£36	£40	£44
5	£10	£15	£20	£25	£30	£35	£40	£45	£50	£55
6	£20	£30	£40	£50	£60	£70	£80	£90	£100	£110
7	£40	£60	£80	£100	£120	£140	£160	£180	£200	£220
8	£60	£100	£140	£180	£220	£260	£300	£340	£380	£420
9	£100	£200	£300	£400	£500	£600	£700	£800	£900	£1000
10	£1000	£2000	£4000	£6000	£8000	£10,000	£15,000	£20,000	£25,000	£30,000

Recommended Skills: Electronic Computing, Mechanical Computing, Investigation, Writing, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Bureaucracy, Pharmacology

Resource: Lab (standard of which depends on the reputation, status and wealth of the character)

Wealth Level: 2 to 8

STRINGER

Digging in the dirt for juicy stories, stringers are the lowest level of the media system which encompasses The City. Some are crusading journalists, out to expose the cruelties of the macrocorps or the schemings of the crime syndicates. Others are simply greasy hacks looking for a titillating bit of gossip that they can sell to a newswire for a few shillings. All Stringers are skilled at wheedling information out of people, putting two and two together (often arriving at a figure of five), watching, waiting and following. The average citizen has an intense dislike of stringers, viewing them as parasites trying to burrow under their skin. The only hope for many stringers is that one day they will be taken on by the vast empire of Sideband Media, where a comfortable office, regular pay and the admiration of one's peers awaits.

Recommended Skills: Investigation, Politics, Writing, Bureaucracy, Negotiation, Persuasion, Act, Disguise, Shadow, Fast-talk

Resource: Notepads and pencils, recording device of some kind

Wealth Level: 3

Starting Wealth

Each character has certain amount of money to begin with, representing cash on hand, savings, property etc. There can be wide variations in this, according to social status, occupation etc. Each character profession has a Wealth Level. This level is cross referenced with a D10 roll on the table below to find out how much wealth the character starts with. Some professions have a range of Wealth Levels. It is up to the GM to decide which level within the range to use, according to the fame, skill or otherwise of the character in question.



Combat (aimed) - dex

- Heavy Weapons
 - HeavyMG
 - Man-portable Cannon
 - Medium MG
- Launcher
 - Grenade Launcher
 - Missile Launcher
 - Mortar
 - Rocket Launcher
- Longarm
 - Crossbow
 - Light MG
 - Rifle
 - Shotgun
- Pistol
 - Semi-auto
 - Single Shot
 - SMG
 - Revolver
- Thrown Weapons
 - Axe
 - Grenade
 - Improvised
 - Knife
 - Spear/Javelin
- Vehicular Weapons
 - Heavy Weapon
 - Launchers
 - Light Weapons

Combat (melee) - agl

- Armed Combat
 - Axe
 - Club
 - Improvised
 - Knife
 - Polearm
 - Sword
- Unarmed Combat
 - Block
 - Grapple
 - Kick
 - Punch
 - Throw

Combat (misc.) - int

- Command
- Logistics
- Strategy
- Tactics

Computing - int

- Dataflow Perception
- Electronic Computing (d)
- Mechanical Computing

Academic - int

- Economics
- History
- Law
- Investigation
- Philosophy
- Politics
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Theology
- Writing

Language - int

- Commerce (spoken)
 - Electrospeak
 - Fighting Talk
- Commerce (read & write)
 - Electrospeak
- Common (spoken)
 - Broken
 - Menace
- Common (read & write)
 - Cant
- Culture (spoken)
 - Cant
- Culture (read & write)
 - Cant

Scientific - int

- Architecture
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Cryptology
 - Cryptanalysis
 - Cryptography
- Engineering
- Genetics
- Mathematics
- Physics
- Shift Studies (d)

Technical - int/dex

- Demolition
- Dinginsmith
 - Macroscale
 - Microscale
 - Nanoscale
- Electrical Systems
- Electronics
- Gas Systems
- Locksmith
- Machinist
- Mechanics

Trades - int/dex

- Blacksmith
- Fish Farming
- Jeweller
- Watchmaker

Administrative - per

- Bureaucracy
- Diplomacy
- Man-management

Athletic - hlt

- Climbing
 - Abseiling
 - Free Climbing
 - Rappelling
- Drinking
- Running
 - Distance Running
 - Sprinting
- Swimming

Communications - per

- Fast Talk
- Negotiation
- Oration
- Persuasion

Artistic - awr/int

- Act
- Creative Writing
- Dance
- Draw
- Moviemaking
- Music
 - Musical Instrument
 - Accordion
 - Barrel Organ
 - Drums
 - Harp
 - Guitar
 - Mouth-organ
 - Penny whistle
 - Piano/Organ
 - Squeezebox
 - Violin
- Paint
- Photography
- Poetry
- Sculpture

Medical - int

- First Aid
- Forensics (d)
- General Medicine (d)
- Pharmacology
- Surgery (d)

Vehicles - awr/dex

- Air Vehicles
 - Aerostat
 - Dirigible
 - Mikefighter
- Ekranoplan (d)
 - Military
 - Racing
- Ground Vehicles
 - Automobile
 - Haulage Wagon
 - Powerbike
- Trains
 - Cablecar
 - Funicular/Tram
 - Train
- Tracked Vehicles
- Water Vehicles
 - Large Barge
 - Large Skiff
 - Small Barge
 - Small Skiff

Subterfuge - awr/dex

- Bribery
- Criminal Culture
- Disguise
- Forgery
- Hide
- Lockpick
- Pickpocket
- Shadow
- Sneak

Survival - awr/int

- Fishing
 - Line
 - Net
 - Rod
 - Spear
- Foraging
- Navigation
- Orienteering
- Tracking



rounding out the character

Rounding out the character is simply a matter of defining various secondary attributes and deciding on such things as height, weight, hair colour, etc (taking into account the answers given when deciding the basic character concept).

The secondary attributes are as follows:

Reaction (REA)

Reaction is found by taking the average of Awareness, Intelligence and Agility, rounding down if the number has a fraction below 0.5 and rounding up if the number has a fraction of 0.5 or above.

Resilience (RES)

This is the character's resistance to injury and disease. Resilience is found by dividing Health by 10, rounding down if the number has a fraction below 0.5, rounding up if the number has a fraction of 0.5 or above.

Encumbrance (ENC)

The maximum weight (in kilos) a character can carry before he or she starts to feel weighed down and have his or her actions slowed. Encumbrance is found by dividing Strength by two.

Kick Damage

The damage a character can do with a kick equals STR/15

Punch Damage

The damage a character can do with a punch equals STR/20

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

Combat (aimed) - dex

Pistol: Skill required to use all types of handgun and one handed automatic weapons. (Specialisations: Single-shot, Revolver, Semi-auto, Submachinegun.)

Launcher: Covers the use of all rocket, missile and grenade launchers. (Specialisations: Grenade Launcher, Missile Launcher, Mortar, Rocket Launcher.)

Longarm: The use of all rifles, shotguns and man-portable machineguns. (Specialisations: Crossbow, Light Machinegun, Rifle, Shotgun.)

Heavy Weapon: Semi-portable, fixed and support weapons. (Specialisations: Medium Machinegun, Heavy Machinegun, Man Portable Cannon.)

Thrown Weapon: The ability to accurately throw an object is a skill in itself and covers knives, grenades, bolas, axes and any other form of thrown weapon. (Specialisations: Axe, Grenade, Improvised, Knife, Spear/Javelin.)

Vehicular Weapons: Covers the use of any weapons mounted on a vehicle. (Specialisations: Light Weapons, Heavy Weapons, Launchers.)

Combat (melee) - agl

Unarmed Combat: Utilisation of fists, feet, elbows and other body parts to inflict damage on an opponent. (Specialisations: Block, Grapple, Kick, Punch, Throw.)

Armed Combat: Hand to hand combat using knives, swords, axes, polearms, clubs or any other form of melee weapon. (Specialisations: Axe, Club, Improvised, Knife, Polearm, Sword.)

Combat (miscellaneous) - int

Tactics: The use and deployment of small units in combat.

Strategy: The use and deployment of large scale military formations in combat.

Logistics: The supply of combat related materials and associated formations in the field.

Command: The ability to command others is a skill harnessed by few but can prove valuable when attempting to control subordinates. Command can be used to control and influence others in a combat situation. How effective this is and how far it can be taken is up to the GM.

Computing - int

Mechanical Computing: The programming and operation of dingins.

Electronic Computing (d): The programming and operation of electronic computers, a rare and little used skill in The City.

Dataflow Perception: The ability to make sense out of the sensory chaos of the dataflow, pulling out relevant information and retrieving desired data.

Academic - int

Investigation: Use of investigative techniques (searching records, interviewing people, looking for evidence, etc) to ascertain facts or come to conclusions.



History: The study and theory of events and people in the past.

Sociology: The study of social groups, individuals and their interactions.

Politics: Understanding of the purpose and processes of governments and institutions, ranging from tenement councils to macrocorporate structures.

Theology: The study of religion.

Psychology: Can be used to gain understanding of the subconscious feelings affecting an individual's actions and emotions.

Philosophy: The study of various schools of thought.

Writing: The ability to write reports, theses, essays and dissertations in a coherent and understandable way.

Economics: The ability to understand the arcane and often confusing workings of economic systems and trends.

language - int

Commerce (spoken) and Commerce (read and write): The language of business and trade in The City. (Specialisations: Electrospeak, Fighting Talk.)

Common (spoken) and Common (read and write): Most widely spoken of all languages and used by the vast majority of citizens. (Specialisations: Broken, Menace.)

Culture (spoken) and Culture (read and write): The language of the arts and the upper classes. (Specialisations: Cant.)

scientific - int

Cryptology: The study and application of codes and code-breaking. (Specialisations: Cryptoanalysis, Cryptography.)

Biology: Knowledge of organic life and how it functions.

Chemistry: Understanding of the workings, composition and interaction of chemicals and chemical processes.

Physics: The science of matter and energy.

Genetics: Understanding of the genetic makeup of organisms

Engineering: The design and application of engineering principles to a wide variety of manufactured items, from bridges to powerbikes.

Architecture: The application of architectural principles to the design of buildings.

Shift Studies (d): The study of the phenomenon known as The Shift, the entities known as The Shifted and the effects of both on The City and its inhabitants. Note: It is extremely unlikely that any character would have a very high skill in this, if at all. It is a little known, poorly understood area, mostly the preserve of a select group of scientists and academics.

Mathematics: The ability to understand and utilise mathematical systems such as algebra, trigonometry and geometry.

technical - int/dex

Mechanics: The ability to operate, repair and design mechanical equipment.

Electronics: The ability to operate, repair and design electronic equipment.

Electrical Systems: Design, usage and repair of large scale power systems such as cable networks.

Demolition: Knowledge of how to use explosives effectively to demolish buildings or vehicles.

Dinginsmith: The construction of dingins. (Specialisations: Macroscale, Microscale, Nanoscale.)

Gas Systems: Design, usage and repair of large scale gas transfer systems such as those which supply gas for heating and lighting to many houses in The City.

Locksmith: The construction and operation of mechanical locks.

Machinist: Skilled at using lathes, drills, presses and other machinery to fabricate items.

trades - dex/int

Blacksmith: The ability to use furnace and tools to manufacture items from iron, usually less intricate, more functional items than someone would produce using Machinist skill.

Fish Farming: Knowledge of how to breed, care for and harvest fish for sale or consumption.

Jeweller: The ability to produce items of jewellery from a variety of materials.



Watchmaker: The construction and operation of intricate clockwork mechanisms for use in timepieces.

administrative - POT

Bureaucracy: Knowledge of the ins and outs of any bureaucratic system and how to manipulate and utilise them to best effect.

Man Management: The effective use, deployment and treatment of individuals within an organisation.

Diplomacy: The subtle art of representing the interests of one group to another group or to an individual.

athletic - hlt

Running: The ability to run particularly fast or for extended periods. (Specialisations: Distance Running, Sprinting.)

Climbing: The ability to climb using a variety of equipment or simply using hands and feet. (Specialisations: Free Climbing, Rappelling, Abseiling.)

Swimming: The basic ability to swim.

Drinking: The ability to consume large quantities of alcohol over a short period of time or in some form of 'sporting' competition.

communications - POT

Fast-talk: Bamboozling, confusing and confounding another individual by rapid-fire discussion.

Oration: The ability to influence people's attitudes and behaviour patterns through powerful and effective public speaking.

Negotiation: Mainly used in mercantile transactions, negotiation allows the manipulation and alteration of the flow of communication to give the successful user advantage.

Persuasion: The ability, through reason and psychological manipulation, to influence individuals to change their opinions or actions.

artistic - aWT/int

Creative Writing: Skill in crafting words to induce emotions in the reader.

Poetry: The ability to craft words into a variety of poetical forms.

Songwriting: The ability to write pleasing or effective lyrics.

Musical instrument: Ability to play a chosen instrument (this skill must be taken once for each instrument the character can play). (Specialisations: Accordion, Barrel Organ, Drums, Guitar, Harp, Mouth Organ, Penny Whistle, Piano/Organ, Squeeze Box, Violin.)

Music: The ability to compose musical scores.

Sculpture: The ability to carve or construct sculptures from a variety of materials.

Paint: Skill at rendering images using various types of paint.

Draw: Skill at rendering images with pen, pencil or charcoal.

Moviemaking: Usage of various equipment and techniques to make moving pictures.

Act: The ability to use dramatic techniques to portray character or emotion.

Dance: Allows the skilled performance of many forms of dance.

Photography: Skill at using photographic equipment to take pleasing, accurate or otherwise effective images.

medical - int

Forensics (d): A branch of medicine concerned with identifying causes of death and any criminal circumstances surrounding it.

First Aid: Emergency medical treatment given shortly after an injury.

Surgery (d): Use of instruments to alter, repair or remove parts of the human body.

General Medicine (d): An education in medical care and treatment, such as that a doctor would receive.

Pharmacology: The ability to make, use and identify a variety of drugs and medicinal compounds.

vehicles aWT/dex

Air Vehicles: Covers the ability to take off, land and perform manoeuvres in a variety of aircraft. (Specialisations: Aerostat, Dirigible, Mikefighter.)

Ground Vehicles: Any wheeled vehicles. (Specialisations: Automobile, Haulage Wagon, Powerbike.)



Water Vehicles: Covers the piloting of boats and barges of all sizes. (Specialisations: Small Skiff, Large Skiff, Small Barge, Large Barge.)

Trains: The ability required to control the mechanisms of the train systems which run throughout The City. (Specialisations: Cablecar, Funicular/Tram, Train.)

Ekranoplan (d): A fairly rare skill, this is the ability to pilot the dangerous, unstable and fast ground effect planes used for racing in The City. (Specialisations: Military, Racing.)

Tracked Vehicles: Any ground vehicles which run on caterpillar tracks, such as warcrawls and APCs.

SUBTLE FUGO - aWT/dOX

Disguise: Use of various means (makeup, false hair, costume and suchlike) to resemble someone else or to alter one's own appearance.

Pickpocket: The theft of items from pockets and bags, either by directly lifting them or by cutpursing.

Hide: The ability to make maximum use of cover and concealment to remain unseen in a static position.

Sneak: Using concealment, shadow, cover and stealth to move quietly and unobtrusively around.

Shadow: Unobtrusively tailing another individual.

Bribery: A knowledge of who, where, how and when to bribe officials, functionaries, policemen and others in authority.

Forgery: In conjunction with various artistic skills, forgery can replicate (to a greater or lesser extent) money, coins, documents, paintings and so forth.

Lockpick: The use of specialist tools to open purely mechanical locks.

Criminal Culture: Knowledge and awareness of the structure and operation of criminal organisations in The City.

SURVIVAL - aWT/int

Tracking: The ability to follow the signs left on the environment by a person or animal, thereby allowing it to be followed.

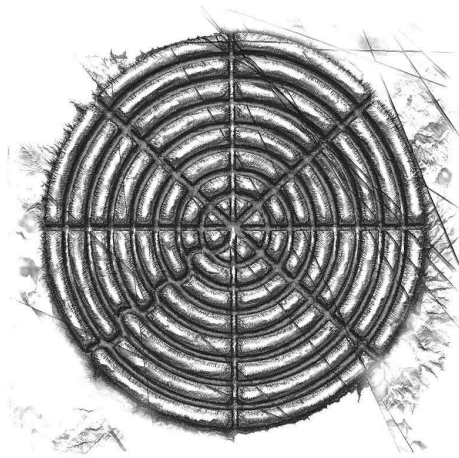
Orienteering: The determination of location using known or easily identifiable landmarks.

Navigation: The determination of location, distance travelled and course taken using a variety of maps and instruments.

Fishing: Use of rod, line, net or spear to catch fish to eat. (Specialisations: Line, net, rod, spear.)

Foraging: The ability to find edible plants and animals.





"Uh huh, I want a big set of sparklocks just like One Eye Frank. Me mum says that guns isn't nice, that there's too many bad people wiv them. Nah, me mum talk shit. Guns is what folks respect you for. Got no guns, got no respect. Bankside here, you got no gun, people don't care 'bout you. I want a big gun. Then I can jack a macro and get his gun. Shiny, quick, slick. Guns are good."

Oleevia Harkness, age 9, Bankside

the product



Money in the City

Currency in The City consists of Pounds, Shillings and Pence. While all of the macrocorps, several banks, some local governments and a few churches produce their own scrip, all are denominated in the same manner and are generally given equal value, as money circulates around The City at a fairly rapid rate. That having been said, most people prefer to deal with macrocorp pounds, as they are backed by the power and resources of the largest institutions in The City. Local governments, such as the TCMAA issue money through banks which they control, as is the case with the TCMAA and the Canals Trading Bank.

One pound contains twenty shillings, with each shilling being made up of five pence. A good baseline for working out the value of items can be found by looking at the average weekly wage, which amounts to £5.0s.0p. Admittedly, this is an average, many earn far less than this and a few earn vastly more.

Pricing & Scarcity of Resources

When browsing through The Product, you'll notice that each item has a cost and availability. The cost indicates an average price for the item if it were freely available on the open market, whereas the availability indicates the scarcity or otherwise of the item. Cost and availability have a direct relationship, as scarcity will tend to increase the perceived value of an item.

There are six levels of availability, as show below:

Very common: The item can be purchased anywhere and commands no premium on the listed price

Common: The item can be purchased in most places and if it does command a premium, this will only be a matter of a few percent.

Uncommon: The item is available in specialised retailers or through underground contacts. It may command a premium of up to 100% more than the listed price.

Rare: The item is hard to come by, requiring a bit of work to obtain. It may command a premium of 100 to 200% more than the listed price.

Very rare: The item is very hard to come by and will require a lot of tracking down or considerable influence or money to purchase. It can command a premium of from 200 to 400% more than the listed price.

Scarce: The item is almost impossible to find. If available, it will command a premium of 500% more than the listed price. And that's just for a start, it could be a lot more.

Technology Levels in the City

Broadly speaking, technology in The City can be divided into two areas: hitech and lotech. Hitech equipment is generally compact, highly designed, reliable and most of all, expensive. Hitech gear is generally produced by the macrocorps or by smaller companies with ties to the macrocorps. At the opposite end of the scale is lotech equipment. Lotech items are often crude, clunky and large but can be astonishingly well made and reliable. Lotech technology does not imply a lack of skill on the part of manufacturers. Indeed, the skill required to produce a lotech microscale dingin may exceed that required to produce a hitech nanoscale dingin.

Armament Technology in the City

Sparklocks

The most common and the most primitive firearms in The City, sparklocks range from crudely lashed together specimens made from old iron pipe to cunningly fashioned devices made by skilled artisans. The weapons function by using an electric spark to ignite a propellant charge of loose powder. The powder is poured down the barrel, tamped down, then a ball or bullet forced down the barrel on top of the powder. When the trigger is pulled, a spark is provided by scavenged capacitors or superconductors. The spark causes the propellant to ignite and propel the bullet down the barrel. After firing, the capacitors or superconductors need to be recharged, usually accomplished by connecting them to a small clockwork generator/dynamo mechanism. In order to allow more rapid fire, many sparklocks mount more than one power source.

Ammunition for a sparklock is usually a ball or elongated bullet made from compressed brick dust bound with resin, carved stone or cast iron. The weapons can come in a variety of forms, including pistols, carbines, rifles and small cannon. They can also come in single or double barrel variants, or even in rare revolver or repeater configurations.

Sparklocks are, in the main, unreliable at best and tremendously dangerous at worst.



Cartridge Guns

Offering superior reliability with good power and accuracy, cartridge guns are highly favoured by most of the militant organisations in The City. The guns themselves are fairly easy to manufacture but it is the ammunition which poses problems. Intricate primers, precision made bullets and high-tolerance casings are required to make the weapons function effectively. Hence, they tend to be made by the macrocorps or companies affiliated with them. This having been said, a cartridge revolver is possibly the most inherently reliable weapon in The City, and find much favour with soldiers, police officers and criminals. Cartridge guns can be found in single shot, semi-automatic, revolver and fully automatic versions, Depending on your needs, you can acquire the weapons as pistols, rifles, sub-machine-guns, machineguns, shotguns and a whole plethora of weapons types.

Magnetic Repeaters

The highest of hitech weapons, magnetic repeaters are almost exclusively used by macrocorporate forces and a few favoured allies. Magnetic repeaters use no propellant, but instead use a series of stepped magnets arranged down the barrel to propel an iron flechette up to very high velocity. Although very small, the projectiles are fired at such a speed as to ensure great armour penetration and reasonable tissue damage. Another feature of these weapons is the rate at which they can fire. They can, if required, spew out flechettes at an astounding rate, allowing them to literally 'hose' a target. If striking power is the issue, then magnetic repeaters can also be made very powerful. Long barrels can endow such weapons as sniper rifles with extreme range, accuracy and firepower. They can also be used in lower-velocity applications such as mortars and grenade launchers, where their adjustability allows for a variety of range settings.

Reliability

In the harsh world of The City, having a reliable weapon by your side is often an important issue. Some types of weapon are more reliable than others, some manufacturers make weapons which are inherently of better quality, some systems are just more prone to breakage by their very nature. In a game context, each weapon is rated according to its reliability. In simple terms, this rating tells you how often the weapon needs to be cleaned/maintained in order to stop it malfunctioning

There are five classes of reliability. They are:

Very Unreliable

Needs maintenance and cleaning every 10 shots.

Unreliable

Needs maintenance and cleaning every 20 shot.

Average

Needs maintenance and cleaning every 100 shots.

Reliable

Needs maintenance and cleaning every 1000 shots.

Very Reliable

Only needs maintenance and cleaning about once per year.

Weapons

Pistols (Cotech)

Sparklock Pistol

Most primitive of firearms found in The City, sparklocks use batteries or clockwork to charge scavenged capacitors or superconductors to spark-ignite powdered propellants. They are single shot weapons, mostly of dubious reliability. When fired, they create voluminous clouds of smoke which can often impair the vision of the firer. Repeating pepperbox and double barrelled versions are available at an increased cost (roughly 75% more than their single barrelled cousins).



Light

Cost: £20

Availability: Common

Heavy

Cost: £40

Availability: Common

Medium

Cost: £30

Availability: Common

Pepperbox

Cost: £100

Availability: Uncommon



Cartridge Pistol

Representative of the thousands of sidearms manufactured by back street shops and microcorps, the Cartridge Pistol is a regular, cased ammunition weapon with no special ad-ons. The cartridge pistol is available in Light, Medium and Heavy versions as well as in semi-automatic and revolver styles.



Light

Cost: £65

Availability: Uncommon

Medium

Cost: £85

Availability: Common

Heavy

Cost: £110

Availability: Uncommon

Pistols (hitech)

Gorunna 'Sling' Heavy Pistol

A bulky, ugly weapon, the Sling is a semi-automatic heavy gauss pistol used by Gorunna corporate forces. Due to Gorunna's liberal sales of arms and equipment, untold numbers of these weapons have found their way on to the streets. Many toughs find the size and bore of the weapon appealing and intimidating, that is until the recoil breaks their arm. They are limited in ammunition capacity but have massive stopping power.



Cost: £300

Availability: Rare

Souken Vent-450 Heavy Pistol

Manufactured in plants across The City, the Vent-450 has become the symbol of a mercenary for hire, and as such has become something of an institution. Its popularity is mainly due to its reliability and solid hitting power.

Cost: £230

Availability: Rare

Submachineguns and Machine Pistols (lo-tech)

Cartridge SMG

Like the Cartridge Pistol, the Street SMG is a typical, cheap weapon found on the streets. While variants may differ slightly, they all share broadly the same characteristics.



Cost: £120

Availability: Uncommon

Submachineguns and Machine Pistols (hitech)

Trilhoeven KM-067R

Trilhoeven's latest SMG produced for its front line troops and security operatives, the KM-067R is well ahead of anything produced by other corporations, perhaps with the exception of Arclight. Each round consists of a projectile bonded to a superconducting power cell. On discharge, the cell is ejected from the bottom of the weapon, just ahead of the trigger guard. Integral to the weapon is a din-gin moderated sensor array which scans for human silhouettes and highlights them for the user. An additional back-up din-gin unit makes the gun effectively invulnerable to any kind of interference and very resistant to battlefield damage.

Cost: £900

Availability: Very rare

Rifles (lo-tech)

Sparklock Rifle

Other than sparklock cannon, these are the largest and most powerful sparklock weapons in The City. Generally between three and four feet in length, they provide good firepower but are pretty unwieldy for use in tight spaces.

Cost: £100

Availability: Common



RIFLES (hitech)

Trilhoeven KSK-G30

Rarely available in the commercial markets, the KSK-G30 equips large numbers of Trilhoeven militia troops. The weapons main advantage is its massive ammunition supply, which allows troopers to literally hose targets with flechettes.

Cost: £1500

Availability: Very rare

SNIPER WEAPONS

Furien 'Shellbreaker' Gauss Rifle

A devastatingly accurate and powerful weapon, the 'Shellbreaker' has enabled Furien to virtually corner the market in gauss sniper weapons. Fully 50% of this type sold to militant organisations are Furien 'Shellbreakers'. Expensive, they are seldom seen outside militant or macrocorporate hands.



Cost: £2000 (including basic sight)

Availability: Scarce

SHOTGUNS (lotech)

Sparklock Blunderbuss

Using a design common to most other sparklocks, the sparklock blunderbuss looks like nothing more than a sparklock carbine with a grossly over-sized barrel. While inaccurate in the extreme and possessing a hopelessly short range, few toughs will argue with someone toting one of these vicious weapons.

Cost: £70

Availability: Common

SHOTGUNS (hitech)

Hirplakker 'Lacerator' Gauss Shotgun

This versatile 15mm weapon can fire clusters of needles, HEAP shells, APDS rounds or all manner of specialised ammunition. Examples captured by Arlight during the Hundred Block War were studied and Arlight have since produced their own weapon, the 16mm 'Thorn'.

Cost: £600

Availability: Scarce

AMMUNITION TYPES & COSTS

Solid shot

The standard projectile for sparklocks, cartridge weapons and magnetic repeaters, solid shot is a basic solid ball, bullet or (in the case of magnetic repeaters) flechette. The listed DAM and PEN values for all projectile weapons (other than those firing explosive rounds, such as the Microhowitzer) are for solid shot.

Cost multiple: None (see table below for costs)

Availability: Same as weapon

Safety Rounds

Something of a misnomer, as they are anything but safe for the target. Safety round are designed to increase the damage done to a target at the expense of penetrating power. They can be frangible, soft-nosed, hollowpoint, crosshead or any number of similarly nasty ways to do more damage to living tissue. Safety rounds have their PEN reduced by 50% but any damage that gets through is increased by 50%.

Cost Multiple: x2

Availability: Same as weapon

Armour Piercing Rounds

The exact opposite of safety round, armour piercing (AP) rounds have increased penetration at the expense of delivered damage. AP rounds have their PEN increased by 50% but penetrating DAM is reduced by 50%.

Cost Multiple: x3

Availability: One level higher than weapon

Ammunition Cost is per clip, or 20 rounds if the weapon uses loose ammo.

Type of Weapon	Ammunition Cost
Sparklock Pistol (any)	£1
Cartridge Pistol or SMG (any)	5% of weapon cost
Magnetic Repeater Pistol or SMG (any)	10% of weapon cost
Sparklock Carbine, Rifle or Blunderbuss (any)	£1.10s
Cartridge Rifle or Shotgun (any)	5% of weapon cost
Magnetic Repeater Rifle or Sniper Weapon (any)	10% of weapon cost
Heavy Weapon (lotech)	5% of weapon cost
Heavy Weapon (hitech)	15% of weapon cost



melee weapons

Ceramic Blade (hitech)



Constructed from composite ceramic materials, the blade of this knife has unrivalled sharpness and strength.

Cost: £25

Availability: Rare

Ceramic Long Knife (hitech)

A longer, larger version of the ceramic blade, offering slightly greater reach and a more intimidating appearance than its smaller cousin.

Cost: £40

Availability: Very rare

Llife (hitech)



Incredibly sharp weapons, llives are made up of extremely thin layers of diamond sheet, ceramic and high quality steel bonded together on the molecular level. Not designed at all as stabbing weapons, in a slashing attack they can cut through armour, bone, muscle, metal and just about anything else. They are very much in favour with ghostfighters and others who rely on quality edged weapons for their livelihoods.

Cost: £200

Availability: Very rare

Billy Club

As used by the Provosts and numerous other police agencies across The City. The billy club is constructed from high-impact materials and is carefully weighted to allow maximum energy transfer upon impact. In trained hands this can be an exceptionally effective weapon and gives superior punch when compared to a regular cosh or club.

Cost: £35

Availability: Rare

armour

Armoured Clothing (hitech)

Regular clothing with a layer of ballistic fibres.

Cost: £7 per item

Availability: Uncommon

Armour Vest (hitech)

Covers the torso, shoulders and groin with a layer of hardened plastics, ballistic fibre and other materials which the manufacturer chooses to include.

Cost: £20

Availability: Common

Integrated Armour Suit (hitech)

Fully sealed, semi-powered, used by some macrocorporate troops for assault duties

Cost: £500

Availability: Rare

Mail Vest (lotech)

Painstakingly made of tiny metal links, mail vests are generally the highest quality lotech armour.

Cost: £5

Availability: Common

Makeshift Armour (lotech)

Constructed from a hodge-podge of materials, most makeshift armour looks and is home-made.

Cost: Homemade

Availability: Very common

Padded Armour (lotech)

Really nothing more than very heavy clothing, perhaps reinforced with hardened dogskin at vital points. Useful against knives and suchlike, but pretty much useless against guns.

Cost: 10s per item

Availability: Common

Helmet (hitech)

Protects the head and features attachment points for sensor systems.

Cost: £20

Availability: Rare



Helmet (Iotech)

Still protects the head, but not very well.

Cost: £1

Availability: Common

Roadarmour

Ideal for the powerbikers who wants that little edge in protection. Made from the same light but strong materials as light bullet proof vests, Roadarmour is a tight fitting, full body suit of powerbike/ekranoplan clothing. With padded joint sections and improved ballistic fabrics, it offers impressive protection in a potential roadrash situation.

Cost: £40

Availability: Rare

Dingins

Dingins are the fundamental building blocks upon which almost all the computing power of The City is based. Rod logic provides the power for businesses to operate and for the Dataflow to function. The dingin is both ubiquitous and vital, in all its many forms and variations. From the creaking, clanking macroscale engines still used by the Three Canals Metropolitan Area Provosts to store their crime information, to the compressed efficiency of single cubic inch nanoscale units (and all the sizes in between), dingins are everywhere you look, calculating, storing, processing and analysing.

Macroscale

Slow, clunky and requiring constant maintenance, macroscale dingins can perform basic arithmetical and mathematical tasks. Provided you keep them oiled. They are generally programmed by means of punched cards, punched tapes or manual programming inputs.

Cost: £30 to £1000

Availability: Common

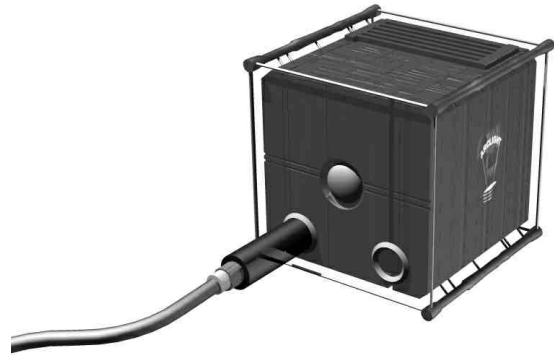
Microscale

Faster and more powerful than macroscale dingins, microscale variants can run more sophisticated programmes and carry out far more complex tasks. However, they are high maintenance items requiring specialist skills and tools. They are programmed via tiny metallic tapes.

Cost: £50 to £2000

Availability: Common

Nanoscale



Packing immense processing power into the same space as a microscale unit, nanoscale dingins can also be made extremely small to fit into a variety of other devices. Exclusively produced by the macrocorps, they are programmed by molecular 'tapes' or 'chains'.

Cost: £80 to £5000

Availability: Very rare

General equipment

Clothing

The following lists give costs for various common items of clothing.

ITEM	COST
Hat	2s to £50
Work Trousers	10s
Cheap set of clothes (trousers, shirt, jacket)	15s
Average Suit	£2.15s
Tie	1s to £100
Waterproof Jacket	£1.5s
Military Trousers	£1.2s
Jumpsuit	£2
Greatcoat	£2
Dogskin Coat	£10 to £500
Cheap Shoes	7s.2p
Average Shoes	£1.10s
Quality Shoes	Up to £200
Quality Boots	Up to £250
Powerbike Boots	£10 to £400
Belt	1s upwards



Navigation devices

Automapper (hitech)

A handy device for those who just can't find their way about. Simply tell the unit where you are currently and where you wish to go to, plug it in to a public phone and it will link in to the local Dataflow and access map data-bases to give you the best route to your destination. It can, however, take a very long time to access the information through the chaos of the Dataflow.

Cost: £10

Availability: Rare



Inertial Compass (hitech)

Must be calibrated at the starting point of each journey. The small dingin computes distance travelled and gives direction back to the starting point. Not hugely effective in a three-dimensional environment.

Cost: £7

Availability: Rare

Medical equipment

First Aid Kit (hitech)

Contains hypospray with a variety of drugs, self-hardening casts, second skin spray and a small dingin with diagnostic programming.

Cost: £5

Availability: Rare

First Aid Kit (lotech)

Contains some antiseptic, bandages and tourniquets.

Cost: 10s

Availability: Very common

Survival gear

Blanket

A simple doghair or plant fibre blanket.

Cost: 2s

Availability: Very common

Gas Mask (Lotech)

A lowtech solution to airborne gases and toxins, the gas mask is a simple, flexible mask with two glass covered eye-holes. Air is filtered through a bulky box attached to the users belt and makes its way to the mask via flexible hose.

Cost: £5

Availability: Uncommon

Respirator (hitech)

This is a small (10x20cm) oxygen cylinder attached through a hose to a light facemask. It provides enough air for five hours of moderate exertion.

Cost: £25

Availability: Rare

Rucksack

Multipurpose bag, ideal for all manner of outdoor activities.

Available in a variety of sizes.

Cost: 5s to £50

Availability: Very common

TOOLS

Basic Tool Kit

This kit includes small hand tools, suitable for a variety purposes, including wrenches, pliers, screwdrivers etc.

Cost: £10 to £100

Availability: Very common

Electrics Tools

A standard set of tools for working on electrical equipment.

Cost: £15 to £200

Availability: Very common

VISION ENHANCERS

Binoculars

Either flat, compact digital imagers or bulky, easily damaged lotech optical versions. Hitech models can have lowlight, IR, gyrostabilisation and rangefinder facilities. Hand made optical binoculars can also be purchased, but only from specialised manufacturers at considerable (not to say extortionate) prices.

Cost: £4 to £200

Availability: Rare



Electric Torch (hitech)

Compact, reliable, tough and powered by high-capacity batteries. Once the batteries run down, it is almost impossible to buy spares unless you are in some way connected with the manufacturers of such things or have access to nomenklatura shopping areas.

Cost: £3

Availability: Rare

Electric Torch (lotech)

Powered from either a hand crank or clockwork mechanism connected to a dynamo or by very bulky, short-duration batteries.

Cost: £1

Availability: Common

Fish Oil Lamp (lotech)

Hand carried lamp which burns refined fish oil in a glass enclosed chamber in order to produce light. More than a little smelly in operation.

Cost: 5s (enough oil for an hour of operation costs 10p)

Availability: Very common

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

Climbing Kit

Contains 50 yards rope, pitons, hammer and slings.

Cost: £3 (lotech), £35 (hitech)

Availability: Common

Clockwork Generator

Wind-up dynamo used to recharge sparklocks, power dingins or similar activities.

Cost: £5

Availability: Very common

Goggles

In hitech or lotech form, both feature flat lenses of glass plastic to prevent harmful objects reaching the eyes.

Cost: 7s (lotech), £3 (hitech)

Availability: Very common

Grappling Hook

A heavy, three pronged grapple designed for scaling walls.

Cost: £2

Availability: Common

Rope, 10 Yards (hitech)

Artificial fibre rope with a breaking strain of 1000 kilos.

Cost: £5

Availability: Rare

Rope, 10 Yards (lotech)

Made from huyzel vine fibres, lotech rope has a breaking strain of 200 kilos.

Cost: 15s

Availability: Very common

VEHICLES

BOATS

Of all types of vehicle in The City, boats are by far the most widely used. From tiny, one man, skiffs for punting about the capillary canals to massive ore barges used by the macrocorps to transport precious natural resources, all sizes and classes of vessel can be found on the watery network of canals. Almost as wide as the variety in size is the variety of construction materials used. Wood, harvested by the macrocorps from long dead forests in the Outlands, is used to construct rude rowing boats. Metal sheeting makes the hulls of barges. A melange of different materials goes towards making some vehicles, constructed from the scrap and detritus of life in The City. Power sources also display wide degrees of variation. The smallest craft are powered by oars or punts, relying on the strength of their users to propel them along. Others use primitive electric engines, sparking and shuddering, driven by bulky, badly sealed, dangerously toxic batteries. Hitech watercraft use hydrogen-fuelled turbines and fuel cells, technology unavailable to the common citizen.

The examples below illustrate only a few of the myriad of designs available in The City

Small Skiff

A small, flat-bottomed boat, ideal for swift, stealthy movement along the canals. Typical skiffs can seat up to four people in relative comfort, overloading the boat gives an increased chance of being dumped unceremoniously in the canals. Oar-driven versions are extremely common, with electric driven being slightly less common. For long journeys, some travellers mount sails on crude masts, taking advantage of the winds that whistle down the canals.

Cost: A new, oar powered skiff will cost between £25 and £100, depending on quality. Add another £30 to £70 for an electric engine.

Availability: Very common



Medium Cargo Barge

By far the most common form of cargo transport in The City, medium barges can range from 10 to 25 metres in length and 4 to 10 metres in width. If you can think of a cargo, there will be a barge carrying it somewhere in The City. Some citizens, disdaining a life fixed to one place, use barges as their homes, floating about The City in search of work, food or salvage. Macrocorporate barges tend to be swift, solid and well armed, typically with reinforced bows to allow them to breach right through obstacles (robbery on the canals being a regular occurrence).

Cost: £600 on average.

Availability: Common

aircraft

As discussed in 'The Precepts', aircraft in The City can be divided into three broad categories: the heavy, lumbering aerostats, the flimsy, agile mifighters and the wallowing, slow dirgibles.

aerostats

Gorunna Logistics 'Megalifter' Heavy Cargo Aerostat

Workhorse of aerostat fleets across The City, the 'Megalifter' is the most common large aerostat in The City. Used by all of the macrocorporations and a few smaller organisations, this disc shaped craft can lift up to five tons of anything you care to load inside it. Modified 'Megalifters' have been given massive underside doors and used as rubbish dumpers over Smokey Mountain whilst others are used by macrocorp forces as troop transports. Their wallowing, disc-shaped bodies can be seen everywhere in The City, yet very few citizens will ever see one close at hand or from the inside.

Cost: £150,000

Availability: Rare

GROUND CARS AND OTHER VEHICLES

Haulage Wagon

Commonly used in the more outlying areas of The City, where the canal network becomes more sparse, these behemoths are normally powered by pantograph systems, massive battery trailers or (rarely) by compressed gas burning internal combustion engines. Most of the space on the wagon is normally taken up by the engine which in most ver-

sions transmits power to the massive rear driving wheels. Cargo is carried on a trailer or series of trailers strung behind the wagon. Constructed of iron and brass and often very, very old, these vehicles are most usually owned by small private haulage companies.

Cost: £500 to £20000

Availability: Common

GSV Imperator Automobile



Wide, low, sleek, menacing and always black, the Gorunna Special Vehicles Imperator is the vehicle of choice for those who wish to make a serious impression. Rising on wide HyGrip tires and clamped to the road by DynaGlyde suspension, the Imperator carries its passengers smoothly and comfortably from one high-powered appointment to another. Its powerful hydrogen burning engine gives impressive acceleration combined with quiet running. Gorunna's latest Glyphread driving aids, running off of a powerful nanoscale dingin unit, give the driver every possible assistance. The sinister, dark Imperators are rarely seen outside of macrocorp controlled areas or the domains of the supremely wealthy. If they do venture out of such areas, they do have discreet armour to protect themselves from the occasional stone or garbage throwing mob.

Cost: £35,000

Availability: Scarce



the PRODUCT 70

	DAM	PEN	RNG	ROF	REM	CLIP	MSS	Rel.	Cost	Avail.
Pistols										
Sparklock Pistol, Light	5	4	5	1	+10	n/a	0.5kg	UR	20	Common
Sparklock Pistol, Medium	7	5	10	1	+10	n/a	1.0kg	UR	30	Common
Sparklock Pistol, Heavy	9	5	10	1	+5	n/a	1.5kg	UR	40	Common
Sparklock Pistol, Pepperbox	5	4	5	3	+10	10	1.0kg	VUR	100	Uncommon
Cartridge Revolver, Light	6	4	10	3	+10	6	0.8kg	VR	65	Uncommon
Cartridge Revolver, Medium	9	7	15	3	+5	6	1.3kg	VR	85	Common
Cartridge Revolver, Heavy	11	9	15	2	+5	5	1.7kg	VR	110	Common
Cartridge Auto, Light	6	4	10	4	+10	10	0.5kg	AR	80	Uncommon
Cartridge Auto, Medium	9	7	15	4	+5	10	1.0kg	AR	120	Common
Cartridge Auto, Heavy	11	9	15	4	+5	8	1.5kg	AR	150	Common
Gorunna 'Sling'	16	13	10	4	+5	4	2.3kg	VR	300	V. rare
Souken vent-450	13	11	15	4	+5	12	1.2kg	VR	230	Rare
Sub-machineguns										
Cartridge SMG	9	7	15	3(5)	+5	25	3.5kg	UR	120	Uncommon
Trilhoeven KM-067R	12	17	20	4(5)	+5	100	2.5kg	VR	900	V. rare
Rifles										
Sparklock Rifle	13	12	20	1	+0	n/a	4.5kg	UR	100	Common
Trilhoeven KSK-G30	16	24	50	4(10)	+0	100	3.5kg	VR	1500	V. rare
Sniper Weapons										
Furien 'Shellbreaker'	19	47	100	10	-10	10	6.0kg	R	2000	Scarce
Shotguns										
Sparklock Blunderbuss	15	4	5	1	+5	n/a	2.5kg	UR	70	Common
Hirplakker 'Lacerator'	30	10	15	4(5)	+0	40	3.0kg	R	600	Scarce

	AV	Weight	Cost	Avail.
Armoured Clothing (hitech)	5	1.5kg	£7	Uncommon
Armour Vest (hitech)	20	3.0kg	£20	Common
Integrated Armour Suit (hitech)	50	35kg	£500	Rare
Mail Vest (lotech)	10	5.0kg	£5	Common
Makeshift Armour (lotech)	8	5 - 15kg	n/a	V. common
Padded Armour (lotech)	3	2.0kg	10s	Common
Helmet (hitech)	30	1.5kg	£20	Rare
Helmet (lotech)	15	2.0kg	£1	Common

	DAM	PEN	RCH	REM	Weight	Cost	Avail.
Ceramic Blade	5	10/12	+0	+10	0.3kg	£25	Common
Ceramic Long Knife	7	10/12	+0	+10	0.5kg	£40	V. rare
Cosh	6	0	+0	+5	1.0kg	10s	V. common
Hatchet/Axe	6	8	+0	+0	1.5kg	£5	Common
Knife	5	7/8	+0	+10	0.5kg	£2	V. common
Lliffe	6	5/20	+0	+5	1.0kg	£200	V. rare
Polearm/Spear	8	12/7	+2	-10	2.0kg	£20	Uncommon
Sword	8	7/8	+1	-5	3.0kg	£40	Uncommon
Billy Club	6	0	+1	+0	2.0kg	£35	V. rare

	Weight	Cost	Avail.		Weight	Cost	Avail.
Dingins				Tools			
Macroscale	Varies	£30-£1000	Common	Basic Tool Kit	5.0kg	£10-£100	V. common
Microscale	0.5-50kg	£50-£2000	Common	Electrics Tools	2.0kg	£15-£200	V. common
Nanoscale	0.1-20kg	£80-£5000	V. rare	Vision Enhancers			
Navigation Devices				Binoculars	1.0kg	£4-£200	Rare
Automapper (hitech)	0.5kg	£10	Rare	Electric Torch (hitech)	0.5kg	£3	Rare
Inertial Compass (hitech)	0.5kg	£7	Rare	Electric Torch (lotech)	2.0kg	£1	Common
Medical Equipment				Fish Oil Lamp (lotech)	1.0kg	5s	V. common
First Aid Kit (hitech)	0.5kg	£5	Rare	Misc. Equipment			
First Aid Kit (lotech)	1.0kg	10s	V. common	Climbing Kit (hitech)	5.0kg	£35	Common
Medical Kit (hitech)	5.0kg	£20	Rare	Climbing Kit (lotech)	10.0kg	£3	Common
Survival Gear				Clockwork			
Blanket	2.0kg	2s	V. common	Generator (lotech)	1.0kg	£5	V. common
Gas Mask (lotech)	2.0kg	£5	Uncommon	Goggles (hitech)	n/a	£3	V. common
Respirator (hitech)	0.5kg	£25	Rare	Goggles (lotech)	0.5kg	7s	V. common
Rucksack	1.0kg	5s-£50	V. Common	Grappling Hook	2.0kg	£2	Common
				Rope (hitech)	2.0kg	£5	Rare
				Rope (lotech)	3.0kg	15s	V. common

