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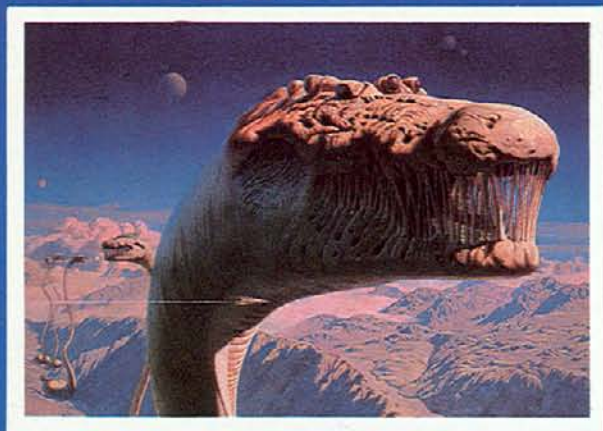
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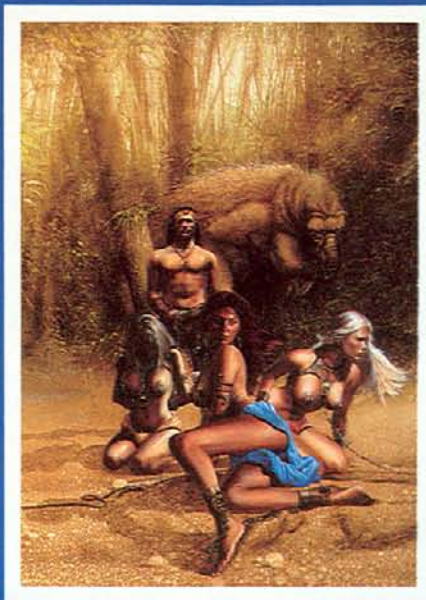
1040 Elric by Chris Achilleos

- * Famous Artists
- * Thick green board pieces

- * Puzzle size 42cm x 60cm
- * Box size 37cm x 26cm



1042 Alien by Richard Clifton-Dey



1043 Slave Trader by Jim Burns



1044 Standard Bearer by Chris Achilleos

500 DE LUXE FANTASY PUZZLES

PIECES



1022 Forest of Doom by Iain McCaig

- * Fighting Fantasy Artists
- * Thick green board pieces
- * Puzzle size 49cm x 36cm
- * Box size 34.3cm x 25.3cm



1021 Warlock of Firetop Mountain by Peter Andrew Jones

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Merry Xmas

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Well man-things as its Xmas I decided to get somebody else to write to you and do it so as not to offend you. Personally I think its a load of drivel and not worth the effort for the likes of you man-things, but Zlarch has a sense of humour.

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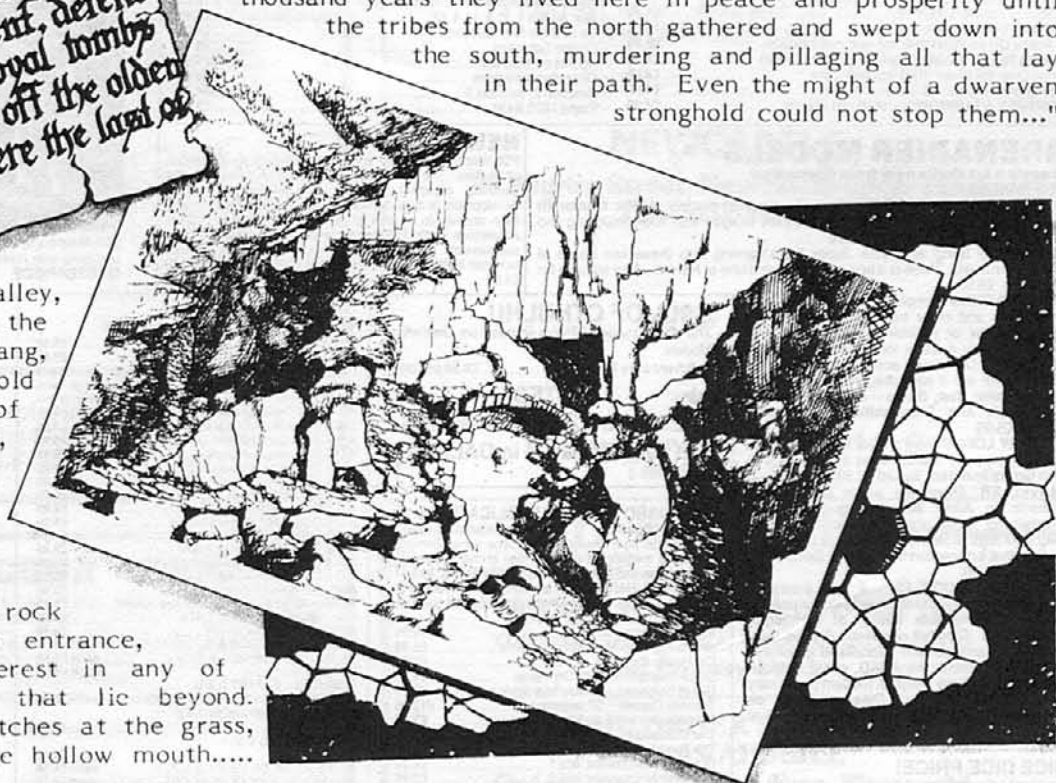
The Halls of the Dwarven Kings

Before the marauders of Hemminga could reach the inner chambers of the priests seated in tombs, casting spells of concealment, defence and lead off the olden hall where the last of

The old mage quietly began to speak...

"You must have heard the legends of these Halls from the tales told by father to son for many generations. The wealth of the dwarves and the fabulously intricate jewellery that they create must have reached even the uncivilised ears of these regions. In the Kasar mountains, at the foot of triple-peaked Yetzin, there is a wide valley running to the south, a valley that was once holy to the trolls and goblins that inhabit those blasted wastes. In this place the dwarves established their kingdom, mining deep beneath the earth for its treasures which they then crafted and shaped into artifacts rivalling those of the gods themselves. For one thousand years they lived here in peace and prosperity until the tribes from the north gathered and swept down into the south, murdering and pillaging all that lay in their path. Even the might of a dwarven stronghold could not stop them..."

At the head of the valley, partially concealed in the grey shadow of an overhang, is the entrance to the old Halls. From the mouth of the cave flows a narrow, winding stream, coldly trickling down to join those criss-crossing the valley floor. On each side of this cave is a low, rough spur of rock jutting out across the entrance, discouraging casual interest in any of the ancient mysteries that lie beyond. The cold south wind catches at the grass, echoing ominously in the hollow mouth....



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ASSISTANT EDITOR: Jon Sutherland
PRODUCTION EDITOR: Albie Fiore
ART EDITOR: Mary Common
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Ian Marsh
PRODUCTION ARTIST: Brian Cumming
PASTE-UP ARTIST: Shelagh Dwyer
COVER: Chris Achilleos
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What is to become of metal gaming figures? That is the question on many people's lips as we go to press, after the astounding *trebling* in the cost price of casting metal recently. Already, most figure manufacturers have announced price rises, and all have warned of more to come.

Plastic figures might be one answer. *Citadel* are remodelling their whole range to take on snap-on plastic bases and weapons immediately, and will be launching a full range of totally plastic 30mm figures in 1985. But the investment needed for such a venture is high, and well out of the reach of smaller manufacturers.

It does seem, however, that gaming with metal figures will become more of a luxury, with the average price of a humanoid figure being 60p in 1985. It might be considered that this still represents good value for money, but the percentage price rise is a little difficult to swallow.

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FIRST ISSUES

An Introduction to Superhero Games Part 1: Starting Adventures by Simon Burley

Many people have peculiar ideas about how to play a Superhero RPG, particularly when they bring playing styles from other games over into the world of the comics. Being a *Superhero* is a unique challenge and experience and refereeing a Superhero game is different from GMing most Fantasy and SF RPGs.

The only way you can really appreciate the difference between superheros and other, equally outlandish, activities is to play a game. Though I will give alternatives and discuss different approaches to the various facets of design, planning and playing, I will take you step by step through the points that are most useful in running your first superhero adventure.

STARTING GEAR

There are several items you need to have before you can plan and play your first game. Beside all the usual role-playing impedimenta you need the rules. Now, I'm not going to recommend to you which Superhero RPG you should buy, you'll have to make up your own mind which suits you best.

Having got the rules you will need the map on which to play the game. Unlike other RPG's, the players don't draw out the map. The GM is expected to supply a scale map of the street, etc in which the adventure is set. If you have chosen *Champions* as your game, you are already supplied with two grids of 1" hexes, one with a perspective streetmap overlay. Similarly, should you also own a copy of *Boot Hill*, *Gangbusters*, *Starfrontiers* et al, you could use the 15mm street maps in those games as a setting for your own games. If you do not already have a streetmap, however, and wish to use a 25mm scale for your game, draw out a 1" grid on a fairly large piece of paper. A simple street map will serve you well for several games; it is best to keep games outdoors, initially, as superpowered types tend to feel a bit cramped indoors and often end up trashing quite a few interior walls and quaintly decorated rooms before finally shifting the battlefield to a more suitable arena. If you want building interiors, you can draw them on smaller sheets of paper and overlay them on the map. This will allow you to draw several floors for one building, alter building interiors as the locale changes etc.

Now you need figures for the heroes and villains, thugs, police, passerby etc. Metal figures do exist which are suitable for heroes and villains and it is possible to get thugs and police by buying the 1920's gangster figures. However, ordinary civilians and people, whether for hostages, NPCs or secret identities are hard to obtain.

Luckily, when it comes to the figures for player characters and villains, you should not need to fight only one or two supervillains at a time. Each player should be able to supply a figure for his or her hero quite cheaply, and superhero figures are easy to paint (an all-over coat of one colour often works well). A box of metal superhero figures should be enough to get started with, though.

If you've opted for the 15mm scale because of using the maps supplied in another game) you could be a bit stuck for figures for the heroes and villains. Figures for *Traveller* will probably prove the most useful, if you can trim off or ignore the blasters and gauss rifles.

Finally, you need some cars and vehicles. Not only do the thugs need a fast car if they're to stand any chance of getting away, your resident muscleman (and every game has at least one) will want some decent-sized missiles to lob around. It's usually better to draw the aerial views of some cars, lorries etc on cardboard, using a scale of 1" to 2 metres, colouring them in with crayons and cutting them out.

ASSEMBLING A CAST

The first thing a potential superhero GM should do is to read the rules on character creation and use them to roll or create between one and half a dozen supercharacters - as many as are needed to give familiarity with the system. Don't worry if they are weak, strong, unbalanced, weird, corny etc. Experiment - try to create powerful single option characters or use-

ful multi-option ones, but keep the notes on every one you create. These will become your first supervillains.

Villains do not need to be as well-rounded or well-thought-out as the heroes, in fact they shouldn't be. Villains should be above all, two-dimensional (at most).

Choose the villain or villains you would feel most comfortable playing (not the toughest or the most interesting) and select figures for them. Give them grandiose names.

Once fairly familiar with the character creation system, the GM should help the players create heroes which are similar in concept to those found in comics.

Since heroes rarely die, the players are going to be stuck with the heroes they design here, so they have to be happy with them. Use comicbook examples to show what the system means in superhero terms. If a player wants a hero who is superstrong, for instance, you could ask him or her how strong by giving examples. (As strong as Captain America? Beast? Thing? Thor? Superman? Hulk?). Also, comicbook heroes are already balanced - heroes who do one thing well (eg Havock) don't appear very often whereas multi-option heroes (Spiderman for instance) are very popular. Player characters should be fully rounded with a variety of attack and defence modes.

Most of all, don't be afraid to let the players have tough characters. We're talking about *superheroes* here, not your average hack and slay RPG fodder. These guys should be *powerful*.

Each player should add finishing touches to their hero so that his or her description matches the figure they are using. If the figure is not a complete match for the hero, the figure can be converted.

Do not allow the heroes any 'starting funds' and limit their starting equipment. Unlike other games, the characters in a superhero world should be able to get by using only their 'natural' abilities and superpowers. Anyway, it is impossible to find a proper superhero figure which is covered in jet belts, radio transmitters, ray guns, gas masks, etc. No self-respecting comicbook hero would be seen dead depending upon such equipment.

Having determined the hero's abilities and selected a suitable figure, the players should give some thought to naming their heroes and writing an origin for them. In one classic case in my own past campaigns, one of the ubiquitous muscleman was stuck for a name until the end of his first scenario when he looked at the villain's truck he had torn the wheels and back axle off, the balcony he had chucked a thug through, and the walls he had smashed down. He decided to call himself VANDAL!

As to their origin, you can wait for quite a long time until they come up with one. Origins are not always revealed in the first issue of a comic, especially in those featuring superteams. A good origin should be compatible with your chosen setting and could give you some ideas for future games, but should never contain features which are forced to put into your game. An origin can be two sentences or five A4 sheets of tiny handwriting, as long as it fulfills these criteria.

PICKING THE ARENA

Comics are set in many places and many times. Before you can plan your first game it is important that you decide what sort of time and arena you want to set it in. If you play *Superhero 2044*, for instance, you may well wish to use the super-heroes' (and villains') paradise of Inguria so lovingly detailed.

Unless you have some fixed views upon the world in which you want to set your games, it is worth remembering that most comics are set in contemporary American cities, usually New York. This is because of the familiarity of the locations to the writers and artists. Set the adventures in your own home town or city in places that both you and your players are familiar with.

There can be one or two other differences. If you think your own area does not contain the potential for enough excitement you can always add a nuclear power station where the local park is, a missile base where the car factory is and so on!



STARTING PLOT LINES

All you need for your first game is a crime, a setting, some badies, some goodies and some ordinary people. You don't need a subtle plot, a complex scheme to take over the world, thoroughly detailed NPC's or complex underground bases. These can all be used later but they are by no means essential for an interesting game.

For your first adventure, select a simple crime - bank robbery is always a good bet, but hijacking a bullion van or kidnapping all have their good points. Murder or assassination should not be used at this stage!

Choose one or two vehicles for the villains and usually have a truck or at least a spare automobile for carrying the loot. Similarly, the civilians in the game will need some cars to escape from the bad guys. Don't get carried away - four or five cars are enough.

Let each player select a figure or token to use as his or her character's secret identity. Choose three to six more to be on the scene of the crime.

Criminals need ordinary people to threaten or to take hostage and criminals feel better when they've got someone to protect and to fight for. However, civilians should take only a passive role in the game and need not be specified. One blow from anyone will incapacitate or knock out them.

This, believe it or not, is all the planning you need to do for your first game. All you need to do now is to set it up and play.

THE FINAL EDIT

Armed with the rules, street plans, vehicles and figures you are ready to start the first issue of your own 'comic'. Set up the street map and have each player place the cardboard figure representing their secret identity on the edge of the street map nearest to them, at ground level.

The heroes should be put on before the crime so that any positional advantage gained by a player is totally accidental. No figure should be placed on rooftops or flying through the air as the heroes are discovering the crime accidentally and would not be in costume or 'on patrol'. Now arrange the figures representing thugs, civilians and the cardboard vehicles in the positions they would be if the crime were just taking place.

Criminals should be rushing out of the bank with a bag labeled 'cash', leaping out of a car and grabbing an innocent woman, ramming the security van, etc. Describe what is happening to the heroes, making it perfectly clear that here is a heinous bit of villainy which must be stopped. Ask the players what they are doing. Their first action should be to change into costume. Allow them to do this without being overlooked. The thugs will perform no significant actions during this period.

If anyone is in a position where changing would appear difficult, tell them that no-one is looking their way. Anyone attacking in civilian gear should be told, firmly, that they are jeopardising their secret identity.

The heroes should now close to engage the criminals. The criminals will be, at first, boastful, overconfident and scornful. Try to make them seem threatening and don't give away how weak they are.

Players used to other types of RPG may now begin worrying and feeling '1st level'. You, as their GM, should try to capitalise upon this paroxysm by making comments about how thin superhero costumes are etc. Be sadistic, get the players as worried as you want, it makes what happens next much more enjoyable for all concerned. The heroes should now attack the thugs. Play the first round slowly and carefully, referring to the combat rules. You must get used to the system before the supervillain appears.

Make sure that you and the players understand what is happening in the game. If you have designed the thugs weak enough the battle should be enough of a foregone conclusion for you to be able to ignore the result and concentrate on how it is achieved. The heroes should give the goons a thrashing and take minimal damage themselves. As the heroes rapidly dispatch the crooks you should attempt to capitalise on the humour of the situation by making the villains initial scorn turn rapidly into disbelief and fear.

One of the greatest joys when you first play a Superhero RPG is discovering how tough you really are. As you punch that crook through a wall, you start to realise that you are a *superhero*.

Just as the tide is turning in the heroes' favour, however, you should have your supervillain make as dramatic an entrance as possible. Supervillains typically punch or blast their way out of a building, choosing to cow the populace by a demonstration of their power rather than using more convenient exits.

Alternatively, one of the heroes may have been 'clever'. Possibly he or she ignored the thugs to scout around the rear of the bank or climbed into the security truck to see if anyone was hurt. Whatever clever action the hero performed they should be rewarded by being allowed to 'discover' the supervillain on their own, sneaking out of the rear entrance or hypnotising the security guards.

Regardless of the rules or any initiative systems, the game must stop for a few seconds whilst the villain makes a boastful and bombastic speech! Villains' voices and personalities can be as individual as their costumes. Players should be allowed only a limited right of reply to this speech and should be forced to prove themselves through their actions rather than through words.

The supervillain will now attack. The players must be made to realise that, despite the weakness of his hired help, this foe will be no pushover. You must play him as well as you can under the game system. Any crooks still remaining will rally and either attempt to aid their boss or to make their getaway. Up until now, you should have been more concerned with teaching the players the game system and instilling in them a sense of their own importance and power. Try to make the battle as colourful and exciting as possible.

When the heroes win, have the civilians, press and police thank them. Congratulate the players and start dropping strong hints that forming a superteam might be a good idea.

The reward motive is important in role-playing games. Whilst players might not play merely to become tougher the awarding of experience points does make a satisfying conclusion to a games session. You can also create your own rewards for the players. In the form of adulation from NPCs and congratulations from the GM. If you've followed my instructions you won't have any further plans as yet for future games, except for some rough notes on a few supervillains. However, it doesn't take much to have a captured thug drop a suitably vague hint about 'The power station at midnight'. By now you should be able to plan a much better game to cover this, after all, you do know what you're doing now. □

Next issue: Developing scenarios for superheroes.



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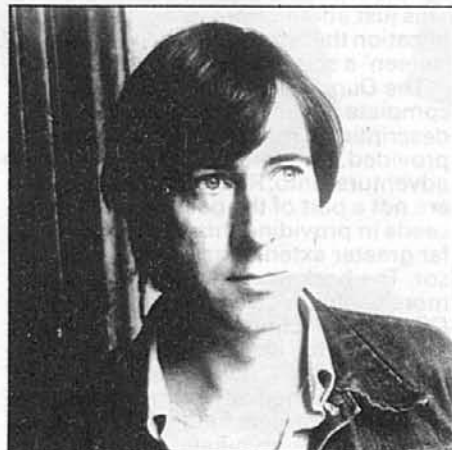
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Critical Mass is a regular fantasy and science fiction book review column by Dave Langford. This issue, a look at some...

LUXURY GOODS



The Moral Majority was right: fantasy role-playing games have corrupted my soul and shortly I shall offer up unhallowed prayers to terrible gods in the hope of an obscene material reward. Or, translating into English, I'm preparing a list of What I Want For Xmas. A *Charm Editor* spell-scroll; +5 enchanted word-processor; Goblet of Perpetual Real Ale (especially that); Helm of Infallible Hangover Prevention...

Foremost on many SF readers' Xmas lists will be *The Glamour* [Cape 303pp £8.50], first novel in years from Christopher Priest (see photograph). Like his *The Affirmation*, this book bears out Aldiss's remark that SF can be at its best when turning into something else. Like *The Affirmation*, it's written with a cool lucidity shot with hints of unease, luring you towards shocking and fantastic revaluations of the story so far. The earlier book is vaguely related to the SF theme of parallel worlds; *The Glamour* relates in the same skewed way to *The Invisible Man*.

What is invisibility? Aha. Something you don't notice is, for the time being, invisible. Hypnosis can block you from noticing a person in the same room. Invisible things lurk in your memory, invisible because they've been edited out — as always in a Priest novel — forgotten. Priest's hero is a cameraman, accustomed to editing, and also an amnesiac. Behind veils of forgetfulness, quasi-blindness and 'glamour' is a cleverly worked-out SF rationale, but — as always in a Priest novel — this too is not to be trusted. *The Glamour* should be read rather than described in all its strange detail; hypnotic, tricky, uneasy and full of double meaning, it demands to be reread the moment you've finished. Excellent.

A present for the affluent film fan: Phil Hardy's *Aurum Film Encyclopaedia Volume 2: Science Fiction* [Aurum Press 400pp £17.95; Vol 1 dealt with Westerns, Vol 3 will cover Horror]. The price is high

but justified; this is a huge-format quality production with over 450 photographs (some in colour), built to survive the heavy use it'll get from SF fans and professionals. More than 1200 SF films are covered, from one-minute fantasies in the 1890s to the big releases of 1983. Listings give title, studio, running time, and names of directors, producers, screenwriters, effects people and lead actors; best of all, there's a critical essay on each film. These mini-articles are unfailingly intelligent and provocative: they don't just describe, they analyse. I can only admire a book which notes that the awful *Plan 9 from Outer Space* [1956] is, though worthless, a fascinating mirror of '50s US phobias.

Laid out chronologically, the book provides a quick picture of SF filmic activity at any given time. The index lists films alphabetically, referenced to the appropriate year. The chief omission is a 'people index', making it needlessly hard to check through — say — a particular director's films. Otherwise it's top class, for both browsing and reference.

George Allen & Unwin offer three suave Xmas gifts with snazzy colour pictures. The inevitable *1985 Tolkien Calendar* [16pp £3.95] features 12 large, painstaking and often grim paintings by Swedish artist Inger Edelfeldt. A large-format, lavishly produced reissue of *The Hobbit* [290pp £11.95] has more than 50 full pages painted by Michael Hague. And Alan Lee's *Castles* [192pp £12.95] ranges through almost every aspect of the castle in history, myth and fantasy: the clear narrative text by David Day is suitable for readers of any age, and the book's almost impossible to open without finding one or more of Lee's ethereal drawings/paintings.

As you'd expect from *Unwin*, famous proprietors of Tolkien, all three have a high standard of technical excellence. I liked Hague's illustrations best: their muted stained-glass or ancient-tapestry look suits a classic tale of long ago and far away (though like many before him, Hague doesn't quite succeed with Gandalf). *Castles* is constrained by subject matter: a castle is a castle, and despite Lee's evident skill — especially at far-off vistas — there are only so many changes to be rung. (Is it a joke that practically the same delicate pink is used for Aristo's Castle of Earthly Paradise and for Barad Dûr?) But the Gormenghast picture is almost worth the price of admission, alone. Edelfeldt has the hardest task, with yet another *Calendar*: she's undeniably good, but her stiff figures and the hard-edged, near-photographic quality of many paintings seemed (to me) to jar. Yet she makes a good stab at the near-impossible task of painting Gollum.

Garry Kilworth's SF shorts are something special, with concentrated colour and impact: 13 are collected in *The Songbirds of Pain* [Gollancz 187pp £8.95]. Themes? Ordinary things — pain, religion, death, immortality, yearnings for impossible ideals. They're SF/fantasy, though, with mind transfers, alien places, ETs waging war with philosophical weapons, time-travel and, outrageously, the quest for a new primary colour. Amid Kilworth's exotic settings, 'ordinary' and 'fantastic' aspects fuse in a blaze of style. Try it.

Collectors and libraries will seize on on the SF Alternatives series from John Goodchild — solid hardback editions of those thumbed, disintegrating classics. Alfred Bester's *Tiger! Tiger!* [249pp £8.95], soon to be 30 years old, has long deserved a British hardback: the compulsive, pyrotechnic tale of obsession and revenge needs no introduction (read it!). A less obvious choice is John Crowley's *Beasts* [184pp £8.95], a strange story of genetically engineered man/beast hybrids who are greater than the sums of their genes. This one's a bit young for canonization [1976], but it's a fine book. Quibbles for series editor David Wingrove: *Tiger! Tiger!* follows the Penguin typesetting with two bits of fancy typography missing on p231, while the author's dedication and epigraph are omitted from *Beasts*. Tch-tch.

A timely reprint for the grim '80s is H G Wells' *The Croquet Player* from 1936 [Ian Henry 82pp £5.25]. Its evocation of nameless evil haunting English marshland is better than anything Lovecraft could do; but the horror relates to prehistoric savageries of our ancestors, a haunting (as in *The Glamour*) from deep inside our own minds. As civilization totters, the blood-spattered caveman begins to re-emerge. Read this; remember what happened soon after its publication; look around you today; and allow yourself a shudder.

Savoy Dreams: The Secret Life of Savoy Books [Savoy 260pp £7.95] is a monument to another worrying facet of '80s Britain. *Savoy*, interesting Manchester-based publishers, were smashed for publishing/selling rude things. They even asked police what was safe to sell. No, said the police, you start selling and then we decide whether to do you... *Dreams* is a *Savoy* retrospective, for completists, worriers about liberty and fans of the old *New Worlds*, with bits by Burroughs, Moorcock, M John Harrison... articles on being persecuted, reviews, extracts, clippings, and graphics which I hated. Fascinating. Very '60s.

Mick Farren's *Protectorate* [NEL 252pp £1.95] is far-future SF — decaying Earth under alien rule — which shows deep knowledge of decadence. The story of rebellious forces is over-long and more or less irrelevant to the black ending. A competent read. *Tales from the Vulgar Unicorn*, edited by Robert Asprin [Penguin 223pp £1.95] is the second 'Sanctuary' fantasy anthology — it must be good, there's a story from A E van Vogt which actually makes sense! *The History of the Runestaff* [Granada 573pp £2.95] packs four Hawkmoon novels in one almost liftable volume, a reminder of how fluently Moorcock could churn out heroic fantasy even while asleep. See hardback coverage in *WD40* and *WD47* for the now paperbacked *Chekhov's Journey* by Ian Watson [Granada 176pp £1.95] — enjoyable, ingenious SF — and *Asimov on SF* [Granada 384pp £2.50], so-so nonfiction. Oh, and do buy the wonderful Platt/Longford *Micromania* [Sphere £1.75].

Help — a whole column gone and I haven't been unforgivably rude to anyone. I must be off, to re-read Hugh Kingsmill's *Anthology of Invective and Abuse*. □

**ELFQUEST,
The Official Role-Playing Game
Chaosium**

£19.95

One of the best loved American comic books, deservedly so, is Wendy and Richard Pini's *Elfquest*. The twenty-issue series, published quarterly, tells of the struggle of the Wolfriders, one of several splintered groups of elves, to recover the secrets of their origins, lost these many centuries with the culture and final resting place of their progenitors, the semi-mythical 'High Ones'. Their quest has to overcome, not only their hereditary enemies, the trolls, but also superstitious and brutal stone-age mankind and their own isolation from others of their own kind.

The game, utilising the simplicity of the *RuneQuest* characteristics and skills system, concentrates squarely on storytelling and the creation of the atmosphere. The *Elfbook* provides all the background on the creation of Elf characters, their traditions, ethics and attitude to the World of Two Moons. This latest incarnation of the *RuneQuest* system is elegantly straightforward and very, very well laid out and explained. The skills and magics of the different elves met in the series are well covered and some excellent suggestions for new tribes are put forward. I particularly approved of these carefully worked out expansions to the *Elfquest* world. Since the series has a definite conclusion (sometime this year), the potential games master need have no worried about his own developments conflicting with future publications, but has a sufficient base of information on which to build a rewarding storyline. A separate booklet for the games master covers game elements the players do not need knowledge of. Weather, fire, poison and illness are simply accounted for and an interesting variety of evocatively named animals and plants are worked out, from Zwoots, Mad Horns and Stingtails to Puckernuts, Strangleweed and Dreamberries! *The Gamemaster's Worldbook* concludes with two simple scenarios, and a more detailed one.

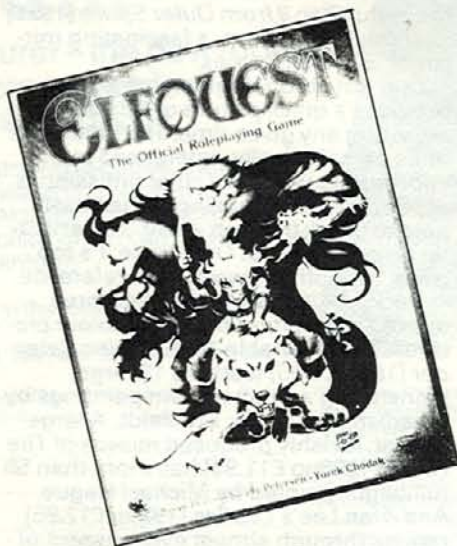
The icing on the whole cake is the profusion of illustrations by Wendy Pini, who has also provided a map of the World of Two Moons and has let her talent spill over onto the character sheets, which, taking a leaf out of *Superworld's* book, come with an assortment of character outlines drawn in for players to embellish and colour. This provides hours of fun in both games!

This is not a game for the traditional wargamer, who will find a lack of emphasis on tactical or combat skills, which are relegated to the last section of the players' book. The established *RuneQuest* player will also find little that he could not engineer for himself from reading the series. This is really the nicest RPG I have seen to give someone as a present. It would suit especially a new player or the parents of young children, who will undoubtedly love the elves wholeheartedly, but also any player who really cares about The Story.

Presentation: 10 **Skill(tactical):** 5
Playability: 8 **Skill(storytelling):** 8
Enjoyment: 9 **Complexity:** 5
Overall: 9 **Murray Writtle**

In Open Box, science fiction/fantasy games and rulebooks are reviewed.

OPEN BOX



**NIGHTMARE IN BLACKMARSH
Dungeon Planner 2
Games Workshop**

£4.95

Not being very impressed by *Dungeon Planner 1* the eye turned towards *Nightmare in Blackmarsh* was of a stern and critical cast. The one good thing about *DP1* was its physical production. Number 2 is its equal in this respect. Graphics, materials, printing — they're all first rate. However, when dealing with products of major manufacturers, it should be possible to take such things for granted. Time, I think for a short stroll through the components which these admirable bits of printed paper form. There is an A4 map of the area surrounding the village of Blackmarsh. Some 280 square miles are covered on a very attractive colour map. It is intended to join on to the area map from *DP1*. I cannot vouch for the faithfulness of the colour compatibility of the two maps, since I traded my *DP1* in for a few pots of paint and some toy soldiers, but I see no reason to doubt that they are identical. The play sheet is a 32"x22" plan of the village, done in the style and scale of *Games Workshop's Dungeon Floor Plans*. It is on thick paper, is in colour and is most attractive. The invitation it extends to get some figures out and start playing on it is almost irresistible. Details of the village buildings and inhabitants are provided in a 24-page booklet. Space is provided in the booklet for referees to add their own notes if they wish to embellish the information supplied. The booklet is enclosed in a thin card wrap which is ludicrously described as a 'screen'. The outer surfaces of the 'screen' are in colour and feature the rather good illustration

which also appears on the box, along with a history of Blackmarsh and a number of encounter tables. Although these supply interesting outlines for encounters, to fully utilise them, it would be necessary to decide on which to use in advance and flesh them out preparatory to play. A referee relying upon rolling them up in mid-game and using them off-the-cuff is condemning the players to long stretches of boredom whilst the necessary work is done to render the encounter tables to in-game use. This just about removes any small justification there may have been to call the 'screen' a screen.

The *Dungeon Planner* idea is that a complete adventure framework — NPC's descriptions, maps and floor plans — is provided for referees to insert their own adventures into. Ready-made scenarios are not a part of the package. *DP2* succeeds in providing this framework to a far greater extent than did its predecessor. The background booklet has a lot more useful information than that in *DP1*. The selection of a village is a much more sensible idea than the glorified dungeon of *DP1*. It is an ideal setting for referee-designed adventures but a time consuming project for a referee to map and describe him/herself. It is also an ideal setting to have a permanent floor plan of, but once again, time would dissuade most people from making such a detailed plan themselves. Two good reasons for providing a ready-made village for referee's use. Add to this the variety of game that can be planned around a village setting and it can be seen that *DP2* is fulfilling a useful role. The fact that the playsheet is good enough to be almost worth the purchase price on its own, is something of a bonus.

Dungeon Planner 2 is a much more useful product than *DP1*. Undoubtedly it would have made a lot more sense if it had been released first. If equally utilitarian settings can be devised for future releases, this series will have a lot going for it. If only *Games Workshop* would scrap the infuriating and inaccurate little jingle 'We do the paperwork, you have the fun' from *DP* booklets, I think that *Dungeon Planners* and myself may strike up a reasonably cordial relationship

Overall: 7

Doug Cowie

LONE WOLF

Flight from the Dark

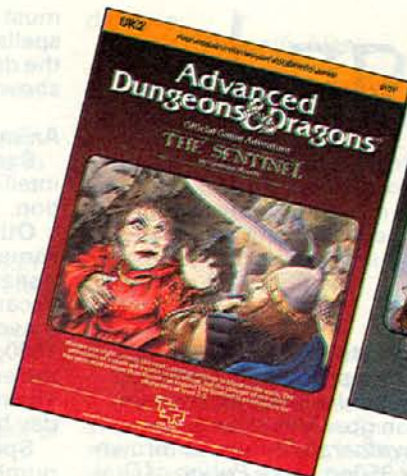
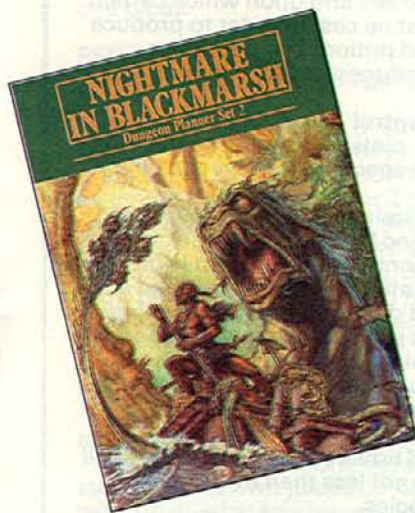
£1.50

Fire on the Water

£1.50

Sparrow books

These books introduce a new solo 'role-playing' series, featuring a novel combat system and the use of specialised skills, rather than the generalised combat and magical abilities found in other adventures. In this system the hero's characteristics, equipment and skills yield a number (combat skill). The difference between this number and the enemy's combat skill is used to determine the result, in conjunction with a random number table. This sounds complex, but actually works well; if the hero has Combat Skill of 14 and the enemy has skill 18, the modifier is -4. If the player then selects a 6 on the random number table,



and reads this number on the -4 column of the combat results table, a result of three points injury to Lone Wolf and six points to the enemy is found. Possible results include the immediate death of either party, though the tables are biased to favour the hero. One weak point of this system is the fact that the tables are printed at the back of the books, and the random number tables are printed on thin paper, not the card of the covers. Since numbers are selected by blind stabbing with a pencil, the books may soon become badly worn. A ten-sided dice or a few photocopies of the tables may be a useful investment.

Both books consist of 32 pages of rules and tables, and 350 numbered sections, with maps and illustrations by Gary Chalk.

The actual adventures are entertaining, though not particularly novel. *Book 1* establishes background history, and the character and skills of Lone Wolf, who is a sort of combat-orientated monk called a Kai. The scenario starts with the hero out gathering wood, when he sees a cloud of 'black leathery creatures' descend on his monastery. By the time he returns the monastery has been destroyed. Lone Wolf is thus the last of the Kai, and must set off to tell the King that the evil hordes of the Darklords are coming. On the way he encounters an enjoyable assortment of monsters, NPC's, and traps, which make good use of the skills and abilities acquired during character generation. Episodes allow the use of Camouflage (to hide from a party of monsters in a cave), Telekinesis (to defuse a booby trap), Sixth Sense, Tracking, and most of the other skills available. Since the hero only has five skills at the start, including combat skills,

the easy option isn't always available. This is primarily a wilderness adventure, with some exploration of ruins and an end section set in the King's town. Actually getting into the palace is nearly as dangerous as crossing the wilderness!

Book 2 begins with the king warned, and Lone Wolf setting out on a quest to recapture the 'Summersword', a magical blade which can defeat the evil Darklords. It's primarily set on board a ship, with episodes in port and on various islands. These include a stagecoach journey, a bar-room brawl, encounters with fortune tellers and thugs, and clashes with agents of the Darklords. The final scene shows the power of the Summersword, setting the scene for further adventures.

Both books are fair, emphasising combat rather than traps and tricks. Those traps which are used can be anticipated, and usually by-passed or defused by use of Lone Wolf's skills.

The series is accompanied by a range of figures from *Citadel*, a fan club, and computer software. While solo books can never replace true role-playing, these are reasonable value for money and may help to prepare readers for the wonderful world of RPG's.

Flight from the Dark Fire on the Water
Overall: 7 7

Marcus L Rowland

DUNGEON MODULES

UK2- The Sentinel	£4.50
UK3- The Gauntlet	£4.50
DL1- Dragons of Despair	£4.50
TSR Inc	

Graeme Morris has done a good job of designing UK2 and UK3, if you can get past the feeble cover art, and the adventures are well thought out and certainly provide several sessions' worth of intriguing play for experienced and novice players alike. UK2, *The Sentinel* is a series of linked encounter areas with characters moving between them as they seek clues to the strange and desperate history of Kusnir and the ill fortune that has befallen it. The module is very well presented, with excellently laid-out maps, information sheets for players to be given at various stages and a roster of all the monsters for the DM. UK3, *The Gauntlet*, forms the second part of the *Adlerweg* adventure, and is a little more restricted in scope. The party

are assumed to have achieved certain aims in part one, which follows naturally (or so it is hoped) into a predetermined series of events comprising this second module. I found the amount of channelling and character manipulation off-putting and at times very frustrating, but there is sufficient background to build an alternative story on if your players so wish. The encounters in *The Gauntlet* are also quite a bit deadlier than those in *The Sentinel*, which may surprise players, and are less easy to get around with good play, which led to too much hack-and-slay in the early stages. As with all professional scenarios, I found the amount of magic and treasure excessive, but the adventure was neatly planned and a tribute to the 'logical' scenario.

Tracey Hickman, designer of the excellent *I-series*, has come up with another very reasonable set of scenarios - DL1 (*Dragon Lance* series) *Dragons of Despair*. She has got hold of a concept and designed a world and an heroic adventure to go with it. The world of Krynn and the heroic adventure is heavily based on... *Lord of the Rings*. But never mind all the parallel plotlines, there's enough difference in the world to put such minor considerations out of most players' heads. Like gold, for example. Nice stuff, eh? Pity its worthless on Krynn. Fancied playing a cleric for a change? Sorry no clerics in Krynn for 300 years. Pleasantly enough, these changes don't destroy the feel of the scenario, whilst creating a very novel atmosphere. A lot of work has gone into designing the groundwork before the adventures were detailed, I'm sure, and it is a pity that more couldn't be shown in appendices etc so that the atmosphere could be more fully appreciated.

The adventure itself is very much taken off from *LotR* with a powerful magic item to be taken *at all costs* to the aggressor's innermost defences and through them. The characters will have to get past a nice new race of humanoids as well as a couple of other interesting monster-concepts. The artwork (aside from the cover) is good and usable in the adventure. Another good product!

	UK2	K3	DL1
Presentation:	8	8	9
Playability:	9	8	8
Enjoyment:	8	7	8
Skill:	9	8	8
Complexity:	8	7	7
Overall:	8	7	8

Graham Staplehurst

Eye of Newt and Wing of Bat

The Manufacture of Magic Items in AD&D

Part 2: The Creation of Rods and Potions

by Graeme Davis

Last issue's instalment covered the manufacture of staves, wands and scrolls; part 2 applies the same procedures to cover other magical items.

RODS

Rods are about 3' long and as thick as your thumb. They are typically shod at one end and tipped at the other, like a walking cane.

Rod of Absorption

Materials: The rod should be of flawless hawthorn, shod with the fingerbone of a pit fiend and tipped with a perfect star sapphire, the whole having a minimum value of 150,000gp.

Spells: *Enchant an item, permanency, wish* (so that the rod will stay permanently 'open' to receive magical power).

Rod of Cancellation

Materials: The rod should be of flawless rowan, cut with one stroke of a silver knife, shod with disenchanter hoof and tipped with a polished chrysolite, the whole having a minimum value of 150,000gp.

Spells: *Enchant an item, dispel magic* (as at 25th level or above), *limited wish*.

If the percentage chance of success is failed in creating this item, there is a percentage chance equal to creator's level that instead of being useless the item has turned out as a *Rod of Dispelling Magic*, with one charge.

Rod of Rulership

Materials: The rod should be made from the shin bone of a tyrant who has died of old age (a rare thing!), shod with a vampire fang and tipped with a cut ruby, the whole having a minimum value of 125,000gp.

Spells: *Enchant an item, mass charm, limited wish (x 2), permanency*.

THE MANUFACTURE OF POTIONS

The rules for potions in the *DMG* give some guidelines as to the ingredients and equipment necessary, but when the DM is faced with a high level character with a hired alchemist in tow wanting to produce fifteen gallons of *Potion of Invulnerability*, they are incomplete. Here are some suggestions for ordering the methods for potion manufacture.

Production Costs

In the *DMG*, the production cost of a potion is equated with its experience point value in gps. This means that a *Potion of Invulnerability* can be thrown together for 350gp and a *Potion of Dragon Control* (all) for a mere 1,000gp. It would seem more balanced to multiply this cost by a factor of ten to cover the cost of gems and other ingredients used in production. This cost does not include the monster-derived ingredients, which just might conceivably be stocked by the



Guild of Alchemists or Magicians in an extremely large town, but would more probably have to be obtained by the character in question.

Some potions may have commercial possibilities: for example, potions of *Longevity* and *Invulnerability* would be worth a great deal to a king or nobleman, and it takes little imagination to see a thriving market for *Philtres of Love* and *Persuasiveness*. It may be possible to sell such potions to the very rich in order to defray the production costs of other potions, as well as to gain court influence, but the details of demand and market conditions must be left to the individual DM.

Listed below are suggestions for ingredients and production methods for the potions listed in the *DMG*.

All potions have a Basic Constituent, which forms the liquid base of the potion, to which various further ingredients

must be added and upon which certain spells must be cast in order to produce the desired potion. The quantities shown produce one 'dose' of potion.

Animal Control

Basic: 2 pints of blood from the most intelligent species of the type in question.

Other: Brains and hearts of 7HD of same, boiled for 2 days with the blood in a sealed container. The liquid is then decanted off into a silver bowl and a powdered diamond (minimum value 1500gp) is stirred in using the legbone of the animal which provided the blood. The mixture is left to simmer for half a day before the spells are cast.

Spells: *ESP*, then *Charm Monster* a number of times such that the total spell levels are not less than the HD of the donor species.

Clairaudience

Basic: 2 pints of purple worm ichor.

Other: Ears and auditory nerves from a gorgon, steeped for 2 days. Crystal ball (non-magical), minimum value 750gp, and a life-size platinum model of a human ear, powdered together and stirred into the strained liquid. Leave to stand for half a day and decant liquid off.

Spells: *Clairaudience*.

Clairvoyance

Basic: 2½ pints aqueous humour from the eyes of 3 giant eagles.

Other: Eyes and optic nerves from one gorgon, simmered for 2 days with 4 grains of eyebright and 2lb marigold leaves harvested under a full moon. Filter and stir in a crystal ball (as *Clairaudience*) and a carbuncle (minimum value 500gp, powdered together. Stir for one hour in either direction, decant and leave to cool.

Spells: *Clairvoyance*.

Climbing

Basic: 3 pints giant spider ichor.

Other: Subterranean lizard feet, hands and feet of one hanged thief. Simmer for 2½ days, filter and leave to cool.

Spells: *Spider Climb*, the live spider being dropped into the liquid rather than swallowed by the caster.

Delusion

Basic: Blood of one doppelganger.

Other: Brains of three shadow goblins and one ogre magi, chopped and mixed. Boil for 36 hours, filter and stir in one powdered silver distorting mirror (minimum value 1000gp), stirring anticlockwise with the left hand. Leave to settle and decant.

Spells: *Suggestion*.

Dragon Control

Basic: Brain fluid of one adult or larger individual of the appropriate type (all types in the case of multiples).

Other: Brain and heart from a second, similar individual of the appropriate type, simmered in the fluid for one day per HD, decant and stir in powdered metal or gems of appropriate colour of value equal to 1000gp per 2HD.

Spells: *Charm monster* (to be read in the language of the dragon type in question, or that of the most powerful in the case of potions controlling more than

one type).

ESP

Basic: 4 pints of doppelganger brain fluid.

Other: Brain and eyes of succubus, steeped in the fluid for 2 days. Bring to the boil, add 3oz dried ground asafoetida, and simmer for 2 days. Decant and stir in a crystal skull, minimum value 1500gp, and a carbuncle, minimum value 2500gp, powdered together. Leave to settle and filter.

Spells: *ESP*, the copper piece being powdered into the mixture.

Extra-Healing

Basic: The blood and bone marrow of two trolls.

Other: The liver of one ogre magi, steeped in its own juices for 48 hours with 1lb dried acacia leaves, 4oz comfrey root, and 1 pinch of balmoney. Boil all ingredients together, simmer for 24 hours and decant, stirring in 1lb powdered haematite. Leave to settle and filter.

Spells: *Bless*, *cure critical wounds*.

Fire Resistance

Basic: 3lbs efreet fat, melted.

Other: The whole skin of one salamander, through which the fat is filtered after adding the diced throat lining of one adult or larger red dragon. After filtration stir in a powdered jacinth, minimum value 1500gp, leave to stand and decant.

Spells: *Resist Fire*, dropping 3 drops of mercury into the mixture.

Giant Control

Basic: The brain fluid of three individuals of the type in question.

Other: The brain and heart of another individual, simmered in the fluid for at least three days, treating occasionally with the essence of the type in question. Decant and leave to settle, and treat again with the essence.

Spells: *Charm monster*, cast a number of times such that the total spell levels equal the HD of the giant type in question.

Giant Strength

Basic: The blood of one individual of the type in question.

Other: The complete musculature of one individual of the type in question, removed complete in one piece, simmered in the blood for at least three days, stirring in 7oz powdered agrimony and 4oz powdered balmoney. Leave to cool and filter.

Spells: *Strength*, cast a number of times equal to the HD of the giant type in question.

Healing

Basic: The blood of one troll.

Other: The livers of three ogre magi, simmered and treated with herbs as for *Extra-Healing* (qv).

Spells: *Cure serious wounds*.

Heroism

Basic: The blood of one fighter of level 4 or higher.

Other: The heart of one lion, simmered for two days with a powdered ruby, minimum value 2500gp, and a fine sword, minimum value 500gp, powdered in.

dered in.

Spells: *Strength*, *bles*.

Invisibility

Basic: The blood of one leprechaun, pixie or sprite.

Other: One brain of each of the above, steeped for two days in its own fluids, simmered in the blood with a powdered chrysothase, minimum value 1500gp, stirred in using an ogre magi shin-bone. Leave to cool and filter.

Spells: *Invisibility*.

Invulnerability

Basic: The ichor of one pit fiend.

Other: One powdered mummy or shambling mound; one fine suit of plate mail, minimum value 1000gp, powdered; one powdered carnelian, minimum value 1500gp; one powdered star sapphire, minimum value 5000gp; all stirred into the simmering mixture using a haematite rod tipped with an olivine, minimum value 1250gp.

Spells: *Protection from evil/good*, *protection from normal missiles*.



Levitation

Basic: The ichor of one type IV demon.

Other: One complete beholder, simmered for two days; the gas from the levitation sacs of one lurker, bubbled through the mixture.

Spells: *Levitate*.

Longevity

Basic: The blood and bone marrow of three elves.

Other: One powdered alexandrite, minimum value 1500gp and 3oz powdered fennel.

Spells: *Slow*.

Philtre of Love

Basic: The blood of one dryad.

Other: One whole succubus, simmered for two days. Filter and stir in 4oz powdered rhinoceros horn 2oz dried asafoetida leaves, and the dried, powdered reproductive organs of three rab-

bits. Leave to cool and decant.

Spells: *Charm person*, *bestow curse*.

Philtre of Persuasiveness

Basic: Brain fluid of one vampire.

Other: Hands and tongue of one harpy, simmered for two days, then stir in one powdered ruby, minimum value 2500gp. Leave to cool and filter.

Spells: *Friends*, *charm person*, *suggestion* (x 5).

Plant Control

Basic: One shambling mound, well boiled and rendered down to liquid form.

Other: The brain of one ent, simmered for two days, stirring in mistletoe occasionally. Leave to cool and decant.

Spells: *Charm plants*.

Polymorph Self

Basic: The brain fluid of one ogre magi.

Other: The brain and pineal gland of one doppelganger. Simmer and stir in one silver distorting mirror, minimum value 1500gp, powdered. Filter through doppelganger skin.

Spells: *Polymorph other*.

Speed

Basic: The blood of one cheetah.

Other: The leg muscles of one axebeak. Simmer for 24 hours and stir in one powdered platinum arrow, minimum value 500gp.

Spells: *Haste*.

Undead Control

Basic: 8 pints of unholy water

Other: One powdered individual of the type in question, mixed with powdered chalcedony, minimum value 1200gp and stirred in using an unholy symbol made from the bone of a hanged murderer.

Spells: *Turn type in question by a Cleric of at least 15th level*.

Water Breathing

Basic: Gills and lungs of one sahuagin or locathah, boiled in salt water.

Other: 2 whole lungfish, simmered for 24 hours before stirring in 3lb powdered coral.

Spells: *Water breathing*.

Where the blood of an individual is required as a basic constituent, that individual should be killed without loss of blood, or the potion will have a 5% chance per hp of blood loss of being useless.

Where special equipment is specified it may only be used for the preparation of one dose of potion, becoming useless thereafter.

If some of the ingredients and demands set out above seem a little excessive, it should be remembered that potions must be difficult to prepare to avoid debasing their value; they are primarily treasure items, and characters should not be able to churn them out like home-brewed beer. This stricture must apply to the manufacture of all magic items, or there is no reason not to have a branch of Ye Olde Magick Shoppe in every high street. □

Next issue: *Rings, armour and shields*

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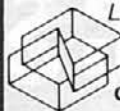
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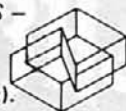
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THE BLEEDING STONE OF IPHTAH

A Call of Cthulhu Scenario

by Steve Williams, with Jon Sutherland

INTRODUCTION

This scenario was used as the basis of the final scenario in the 1984 GamesDay official *Call of Cthulhu* Competition. Although it does not have a set points system or objective goals, it provides plenty of opportunities for individual players to display their 'talents' or 'inadequacies' as rolegamers, as well as providing an interesting one-off session or addition to an existing campaign.

This scenario is designed to work with 3-5 players, all of whom should be familiar with the *Cthulhu* system.

KEEPER'S INFORMATION

This scenario details the Great Race of Yith's attempt to evade the destruction of their race at the hands of the Flying Polyps, some 50 million years ago, and their manipulation, through the Bleeding Stone, of the unfortunate Professor Foster. In their never ending quest for knowledge, they stumbled on the possibility of creating a gate in the time which would allow their physical beings, huge iridescent cone-shaped bodies, to travel through time and reinhabit the planet from which the polyps had once banished them.

The Scheme Of The Great Race

At various stages in Earth's history the Yith contacted suitable humans to extract from them what they could, to supplement their ever growing knowledge of the universe. As well as this psionic transfer of information, their human 'ambassadors' constructed secret shrines dedicated to the worship of their masters. In exchange the Great Race passed on some of their many secrets of science, technology and magic. This process was intended to sound out a possible 'stress point' in the time continuum through which their physical beings could once more unite with their mental manifestations. Once a suitable site had been found a circle of shrines were constructed which, when activated by the triggering stone, would create their cosmic highway. Disaster befell the race's plans when thieves raided one of the temple sites and stole its precious triggering stone. Years later, Professor Foster purchased the 'relic' from a Constantinople bazaar and unwittingly fell prey to the Great Race. The alien entities contacted Foster and have been using him to construct an immensely detailed picture of Earth in its current time period. His role was to pave the way for his masters and trigger the 'Drawing of the Gate' by replacing each stone from the circle of shrines, in strict sequence, with its cosmically charged partner. The culmination of this ritual is drawing near . . . However, Foster's strong will has enabled him to temporarily thwart his masters' wishes, with the help of strong hallucinogenic drugs (opium) which sufficiently dull his sensitivity enough to prevent total domination of his subconscious. As the professor begins to deteriorate mentally and physically under the strain of his struggle, the greedy Lotto used his addiction to help uncover what he thinks is Foster's great archaeological find. It is at this point that the players enter the scene . . .

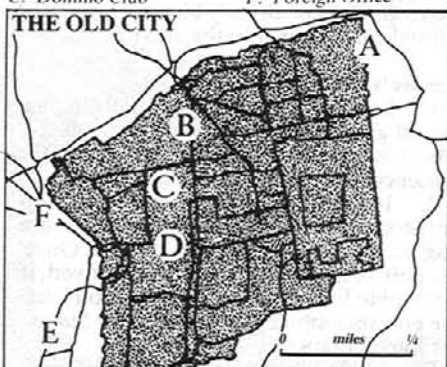
THE CHARLES LACY EXHIBITION

After a torturous journey from Europe, even the stony silence of the Charles Lacy Roman pottery exhibition seems a pleasant diversion from the chaos and confusion of





A: Archaeological Museum D: Library
 B: Lotto's Bar E: Colonial Office
 C: Domino Club F: Foreign Office



the packed city of Jerusalem and its bustling street markets. The exhibition itself is quite unremarkable, there are much better examples of such relics back in the British Museum and most of the typically European visitors look equally unimpressed.

Keeper's Notes

The players' attention should be drawn to a dishevelled creature shifting nervously between the exhibits. He wears a soiled white three piece suit, and his general appearance and manner are that of a European. A successful Anthropology roll will suggest that he is of Turkish origin. Players choosing to examine his actions will realise his attention is directed towards the party, rather than the exhibition. After a few minutes he will attempt to strike up some rather flaccid conversation with one of the players. The stranger's English is adequate although heavily accented, and his conversation shows an embarrassing lack of knowledge of this topic. The mysterious stranger continues to loiter until the party decide to leave. Once outside the small admirer will finally introduce himself to the PC's as *Lakey* and suggest a quiet drink with a friend of his, who, he claims, is a great art authority. Assuming the players accept his offer, *Lakey* will march them off to *Lotto's*.

LOTTO'S BAR

As the players push their way into the smoky confines of the bar it will become obvious that some of the city's less respectable inhabitants are seated amongst the small network of tables. The bar itself is a strange mix of old city and new European. Beads and silk mix with martinis and suits. A few soldiers have encamped against the bar, whilst locals haggle and drink in the room's numerous niches. The noise, smoke and heat are quite overpowering, especially to those unaccustomed to the chaos of Jerusalem.

Keeper's Notes

Seated at the far end of the room, flanked by two burly locals, is *Lotto*. He is clean-shaven and immaculately dressed in a white cotton three piece suit. Despite the noisy crowd, a small space has formed around his table. Most of the low life seems reluctant to venture too near his table. *Lotto* is a courteous and charming character. Once introduced by *Lakey*, *Lotto* will strike up some general conversation about the players' reasons for visiting the city and then move onto the subject of the exhibition. Any players with archaeological skill

will recognize that his knowledge of the subject is rather less developed than he implies. Despite this he will tell the party of his own 'dabbings' in the archaeological field. He has recently sponsored an English professor to excavate a possible site, hoping to uncover relics for his own private collection. As the evening progresses *Lotto* will confess to being worried by the lack of progress being made by *Foster*. Despite over two months of 'dig time', at considerable expense, the professor has failed to uncover anything more than a few unremarkable pots and tools. *Lotto* realises the time and effort involved in excavation, but can't believe so little has been achieved in two solid months of work. Although a man of considerable means, his revenue is not limitless. If, during the conversation, the players express an interest in his plight or dig, *Lotto* will suggest that they visit the site. He suggests it would be a perfect break from the rigours of city. In return for discreetly examining the professor's progress, he will supply transport and supplies (if necessary). Protection from the less savoury locals will be taken care of by *Lakey*, who will be armed with the 'necessary precautions'. Should the players express interest in his offer, *Lotto* will invite them to stay at his hotel the night before the journey, to facilitate an early start. *Lotto* will bid the party goodnight and retire, leaving them with their new guide, *Lakey*.

GENERAL INFORMATION

At this point the players have time to generally prepare themselves for their expedition. Anyone enquiring further into *Lotto's* background with locals will uncover very little, save the fact that he has considerable interests in the city's club and hotel businesses.

1. The city Library holds few clues. However, most of the librarians seem to know Professor *Foster*. Up until two months ago he was their most regular attendant, virtually ensconced in the building's study room. The subject of his work seems unclear, as his reading matter varied widely, from whole encyclopaedias to modern works of fiction.

2. The Colonial Office is responsible for administration. The Foreign Office is concerned with regional policy in the Middle East. All too frequently this has led to interdepartmental friction. Investigators would be advised not to hamper these departments with their inconsequential affairs. At the time of the adventure Jerusalem has just undergone a series of riots and both departments advise steering clear of trouble, which may be difficult in such a turbulent climate.

DOMINO CLUB

Lotto's Hotel is located off the Via Dolorosa in the Christian quarter. Once inside *Lakey* will show the players to their rooms and suggest a meal in the hotel's ground floor restaurant. The rooms are sparsely furnished, and judging from the giggling emanating from some of the adjoining bedrooms, their purpose seems less than reputable! The downstairs bar fills as the night draws in. Most of the patrons are crowded against it, and few seem interested in the food being served. After arranging the players orders, *Lakey* will excuse him-

self and return to the bar where he continues a conversation with a young Arab.

Keeper's Notes

During their meal the players will notice that *Lakey's* conversation with the man has turned into a somewhat heated confrontation. A successful Listening roll will reveal the nature of the argument - namely money for goods supplied. Obviously enraged, the young man storms out of the bar, cursing loudly. *Lakey* will leave shortly afterwards, along with two of the hotel's large 'attendants'.

Lakey is in fact chasing up on one of *Lotto's* clients, whose credit for drugs has reached an unsatisfactory level. The unfortunate youth is attacked once outside, and beaten unconscious. Any players who follow the group outside will see the two thugs attacking the youth, while *Lakey* stands casually watching the horrific scene. If the outside player(s) confront *Lakey*, he will explain that, "In my country we do things our way. If a man fails to pay his debts, he must face the consequences..." *Lakey* will usher the characters back into the bar and divert them from any further questioning. The victim will take some time to crawl away if anyone manages to go to his aid, they will get little from him. A successful Medical roll will show he is under the effect of strong hallucinogenic drugs.



KEEPER'S TIMELINE

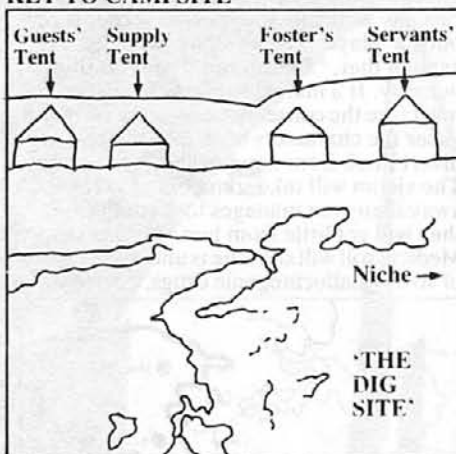
10.00 AM: Party arrive
 10.00-12.15: Van unloaded.
 12.15 PM: Professor *Foster* shows party 'dig site' and then retires to tent feeling tired.
 3.00 PM: Players' free to roam site. *Lakey* joins *Foster* in tent. Locals spotted in surrounding hills.
 10.00 PM: Professor and *Lakey* begin to argue.
 3.20 AM: *Foster* murders *Lakey* and attempts to dump body in secret. Following morning — *Foster* falls into coma.

10 am

As the vehicles pull into the dusty campsite, two Arab guards emerge from the small tent nearest the track. The site is not obvious at first, but scattered tools and marker flags give away its location. After a short delay the professor emerges from the largest of the four tents. The presence of so many Europeans overwhelms him at first, but his caution soon disappears as he discovers the purpose of this unexpected visit. He greets *Lakey* tersely and directs the unloading of supplies.



KEY TO CAMPSITE



Keeper's Notes

1. Any player able to successfully use their Psychology skill will detect a good deal of ill-feeling between Lakey and the Professor.
2. Time spent examining the professor's actions, combined with a successful Medical roll, will uncover the fact that he shows signs of intoxication, both voice and actions are slurred and clumsy. (NOTE: Do not suggest to the player concerned that his condition may be drug induced.)
3. The Arab guards speak little English, and answer only to the professor. Both of them loiter around the camp when not helping Foster. They will not allow players to enter his tent unless authorised, an unlikely occurrence.
4. Any players who deliberately watch the unloading of the truck will notice that Lakey carefully carries a small brown box into the Prof's tent. The mysterious box was not in evidence in the back of the truck.

12.15 pm Onwards

Once the truck is unloaded, and its contents stored away, the professor retires to his tent, obviously exhausted, followed a few minutes later by Lakey. At around 12.40 Foster emerges, apparently invigorated, and rallies the players round for a tour of the site. During the tour the Professor babbles voraciously about the various cultures and history of the area. He explains to the players that he believes the site of Tell 'Akil-lu' is one of the first permanent settlements of the Israelites in Palestine. If questioned about the slowness of the survey, Foster will immediately realise that Lotto is

behind this impromptu visit. "He has no idea of the processes of excavation, too impatient by far... does not understand the British way of doing things..." Despite this, it is obvious that the site is hardly touched. It certainly doesn't show the results of two months hard work. After an hour the professor will excuse himself, feeling ill, and limp off back to his tent.

Players with an archaeological ability over 40% will be familiar with the term 'Tell', a Semitic word describing an artificial hill formed through repeated occupation over the course of centuries.

Keeper's Notes

Whilst examining the site the players may notice a high, pitted ridge off to the left of the dig. A successful Spot Hidden Item will reveal that in one of the cliff's numerous hollows have been partially dug-out. If questioned, the professor will quickly explain its purpose - simple rock sampling. Foster will try to dissuade any closer examination of the niche.

3.00 pm

The surrounding area holds little of interest, the plateau above the ridge leads off towards similar rocky outcrops. A Spot Hidden will reveal signs of movement about 600 metres away, where a figure, clad in white robes, appears to be watching the proceedings. He is in cover, any attempt to approach him will prove fruitless, as he will simply withdraw behind the outcrop. The dig site itself is quite unremarkable. Any players with archaeological skill will realise it is nothing more than a section of Roman fort.

Keeper's Notes

The figure is in fact a tribesman who has taken interest in the activity at the site. Should the keeper wish to inject some extra drama, the local tribesmen could decide to 'drop in' for some of the dig's supplies. Another interesting twist to the plot might involve the tribe attacking shortly before the players trigger the Dimensional Shambles, the resulting chaos would make quite a spectacle!

THE NICHE

Over the passage of time the elements have heaped a bank of sand against the face of



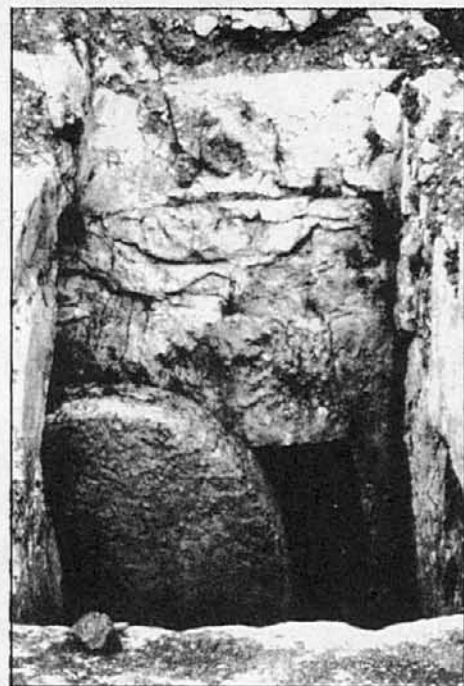
the cliff. The excavated area seems to be centred in a deep cut in its face. The constant winds have already blown most of the shifted earth back into the crevice.

Keeper's Notes

1. Exploratory digging will indicate that the slit goes back quite far into the soft limestone. A Geology roll might suggest the presence of a rough natural cave.

2. 1-2 hours digging will reveal the top key-stone of an arch with its stepped entrance dug below ground level (see photo). Once the bulk of loose earth has been removed, it is possible for the investigators to roll back the entrance stone (see *Turning the Stone* for tomb details).

It would be unwise for players to attempt an entrance while the professor and Lakey are awake.



3.20 am, Murder!

Any player awake, or close enough to Foster's tent, will be awoken by a muffled scream. After a momentary silence, the sound of a large object being dragged across sand can be heard (Listen roll). Silence returns and a few minutes later the light in Foster's tent goes out.

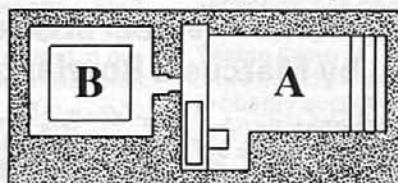
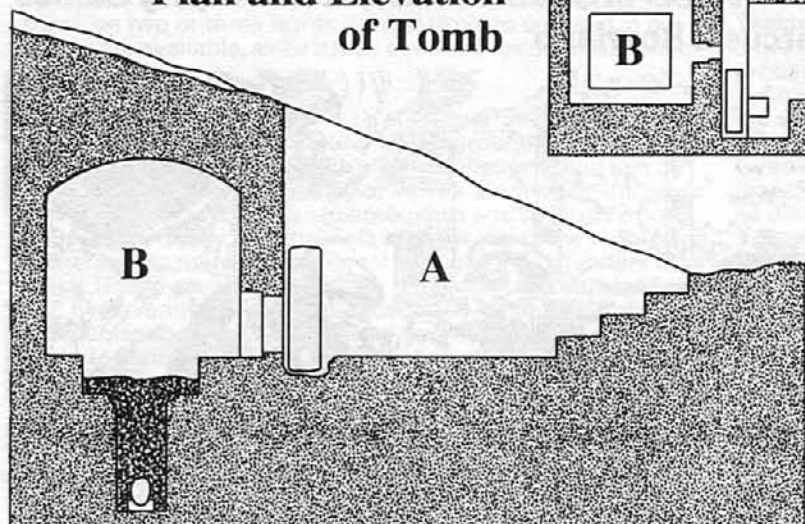
Keeper's Notes

The sound was that of Foster stabbing the sleeping Lakey, in a frenzied attempt to get at his box of tricks. The 'tricks' are, in fact, a small collection of lethal narcotics, stored in the mysterious brown box (seen earlier in Lakey's possession). Listening at the tent will uncover the faint clinking of glass bottles, interspersed with sharp intakes of breath. Should anyone attempt to look inside the tent, by peering under the awning or by slitting its side, they will see Foster administering a lethal dose of opium. Lakey is slumped by the bed, a pool of blood is slowly collecting around his lifeless body.

1. If the players decide to remain hidden and monitor events as they unfold they will see Foster and one Arab drag Lakey's corpse to the truck. Foster will tidy the bloody trail, and then return to his tent while Lakey is driven away by his servant to



Plan and Elevation of Tomb



be dumped. Early next morning the truck will return. The Arab will explain Lakey has business to attend to in the city.

2. If the players intercept the professor whilst in the tent, he will babble wildly, claiming that Lakey attempted to kill him. It requires little deduction, however, to realise that the knife wound in Lakey's back makes his claim of self defence somewhat dubious. Once Foster's lethal dose begins to take effect, his ranting will become incoherent, then inaudible as he lapses into a coma, from which he never recovers.

3. The players' car has mysteriously developed a flat tyre, making pursuit of the truck impossible. The puncture was caused by a knife, obviously no accident.

THE PROFESSOR'S TENT

Whatever the players' actions are during the night, the following morning Foster will be dead from an overdose of drugs. The players can enter the tent freely, as Foster's Arabs seem too confused to prevent them doing so. Once inside, the Professor's cluttered quarters will produce some interesting discoveries.

1. Various pieces of archaeological equipment are scattered carelessly about. Some remain unpacked.

2. A sprawling collection of books litter a large collapsible desk. They range from scientific journals, encyclopaedia and maps, to newspapers, photographs and cheap novels. All are well thumbed.

Scattered over these books are over four hundred pages of handwritten notes. They are written in a strangely simplistic style, as if the reader has no understanding of the author's subject matter. An hour's careful study will reveal it to be a massive world anthology, detailing world environment, geology, political systems and history. A work of such detail would require months of intensive research to compile. Note: these are Foster's notes to the Great Race of Yith.

Hidden amongst the general debris is a small map. Finding it requires a successful Spot Hidden. The poem on maps reads as follows:

'Our time is your salvation,
The minds will meet the matter
once more . . .'

3. At the foot of Foster's bed sits a chest, along with various clothes and personal items it contains a bundle of black velvet. The cloth protects a strange stone (see *The Bleeding Stone* for details).

THE BLEEDING STONE

The original stone that can be found in Foster's tent is a solid red semi-opaque capsule shape some 2 foot in length; it is not heavy, neither is it vulnerable to damage. The stone to be discovered in the tomb is transparent but milky; when swopped around the stones will slowly (three or four minutes) exchange colour. If an investigator looks through the transparent stone he/she will be able to clearly see the dimensional shamblers. *Always* the last holder of the bled stone will be menaced.

THE TOMB

The stone can be rolled aside revealing a small crawl-through opening, about two feet high. The walls, ceilings and floor are bare limestone, allowing no more than three people around the well. The crumbling chamber is dominated by a hexagonal well. Its lips rise some three feet above the floor and is made of hard black stone. A Geology roll will classify the well as obsidian, a vitrious volcanic rock. A careful search of the tomb will confirm initial impressions that the rock surface and well are unmarked, giving no clues to its origins. The well is less than 6 feet deep, and at its bottom, partially buried in sand is a strangely shaped stone. It is identical in all respects to the professor's except in that it is transparent and colourless. The stone sits neatly in a shallow cup, recessed into the stone.

Removing the stone from its cup requires little effort.

Cast of Characters

	STR	CON	SIZ	INT	POW	DEX	CHA	SAN	EDU	HP	AGE
Lakey	10	11	7	11	10	14	6	38	7	8	34
Lotto	10	8	12	13	8	7	9	64	10	11	42
Prof Foster	8	7	10	17	6	6	12	0	19	5	37
Arab Servants	14	11	12	9	12	13	10	59	6	11	30's
Local Arabs	13	12	14	11	13	12	13	63	4	12	20's

(Lakey and Arabs will be armed at the Keeper's discretion)

	STR	CON	SIZ	INT	POW	DEX	HP	MOVE	CLAW	ATT	DAM
Dimensional Shamblers	18	16	19	8	10	10	19	7	30%		1d8+1d6

(See *Call of Cthulhu* main rules for other details)

TURNING THE STONE— Keeper's Notes

In order to begin the turning ritual, the professor's stone must be placed in the well's cup. The 'charged' stone will slowly begin to drain its cosmic energy into the sister stone. Once the stone has bled (approximately five minutes) it can be transported to the next shrine in the circle. These steps should be followed exactly, failure to do so results in the summoning of three Dimensional Shamblers, whose task it is to 'persuade' the stone's holder to perform his/her task correctly. Attempting to leave the site with both stones or a partially (or totally) bled stone will stir them into action. They will simply force the holders back towards the shrine, ignoring anyone else and continue their vigil until the holder emerges with the correctly charged stone. Leaving the tomb with the original stone unbled will merely cause the wind to develop into a nasty storm. This should give the players time to contemplate their predicament as they shelter from the worst of the weather.

There is one way to break this diabolical chain: placing both stones in the well together causes the cosmic energy to flow from one stone to anyone and back repeatedly. Should the players allow this oscillation to continue the stones will begin to whine, building to an ear shattering climax seconds before they implode, bringing the entire cliff-face down on any players foolish enough to stay and watch.

CONCLUSION

Once the turmoil is over and the players have destroyed the shrine, what happens? Assuming they salvage the professor's notes and gain some insight into the ritual (possibly through insane realisation) they may begin to understand the significance of their act. If they succeed in doing so, it is then up to the keeper to award increases in sanity to those players who deserve it.

But complicity in the ritual will leave the party, or more specifically, the stone holder, with a problem. Even if the investigators decide to abandon the adventure the holder will be driven, by some strange force in his subconscious, to seek the next shrine in the chain. The character might suddenly disappear at a suitable opportunity and attempt to complete the ritual. This could provide an interesting scenario in its own right, as the party desperately searches for their companion, slowly realising the dreadful implications of his absence.

Most of the information required to run such a sequel is contained above. It should be noted that the scenario's casualties would be under investigation by the authorities. Players might have a harder time convincing Lotto of their innocence in Foster's and Lakey's deaths; what did they find at this site? Was it valuable enough to kill for?□

BOARDING STATIONS

Hints and Hazards for the Professional Privateer in Science Fiction Role-Playing Games

by Marcus L Rowland



One of the most common combat situations in any SFRPG is a spaceship boarding action. Theoretically, both parties in this type of operation have tactical advantages, but in practice the result is usually a confused melee around the airlocks, with bullets or energy bolts ricocheting off the bulkheads.

The attacking forces usually begin with the advantages of surprise and superior intelligence data. They can choose their moment, their means of entry, and the weapons they carry.

The defenders are fighting in their own terrain, they can spend weeks or years preparing for an assault which may never come.

Preliminary Manoeuvres

A ship which has been completely immobilised by an attacker is easy prey for a boarding party. The only circumstance justifying a fight in an immobilised ship is the need to delay the attackers while destroying documents, sending out lifeboats, or summoning help.

Defending ships sometimes pretend to surrender before the ship has taken immobilising damage, then attack the other ship at point blank range. Such surrenders may be accepted if the victim seems to have taken real damage. The defenders may give this impression by camouflage or releasing prepared debris. A few dummy weapons, rigged to explode harmlessly if damaged, can give a convincing impression of serious damage; such disguises may be vulnerable to sensor systems and other advanced technology. In Q-Ships most weapons will be hidden.

At this stage the attackers usually have the advantage, and should do their utmost to keep it. The attacking captain should be very cautious, and inflict more damage than the victim seems to warrant.

Entry Formalities

Once the two ships have closed, and the attacker has caused enough damage to make escape unlikely, the boarding operation begins. Provided matter transmission or teleportation aren't available (see Special Attacks below), the best place for the attackers to enter is an airlock. Unfortunately airlocks are usually good places to mount a defence, since they have armoured walls, easily controllable doors and hatches, and a good power supply.

Q-Ships may have one line of defence which isn't economical in other vessels - a false airlock concealing a heavy weapon installation [see diagram]. If the boarding procedure utilises a docking tube it's possible to bypass the outer hull of the attacking ship and send a shot directly into its interior. Such a weapon will kill anyone in the lock, and may wreck the attacking ship.

On a less lethal scale, most airlocks can be fitted with a few anti-personnel weapons. A remotely controlled TV camera

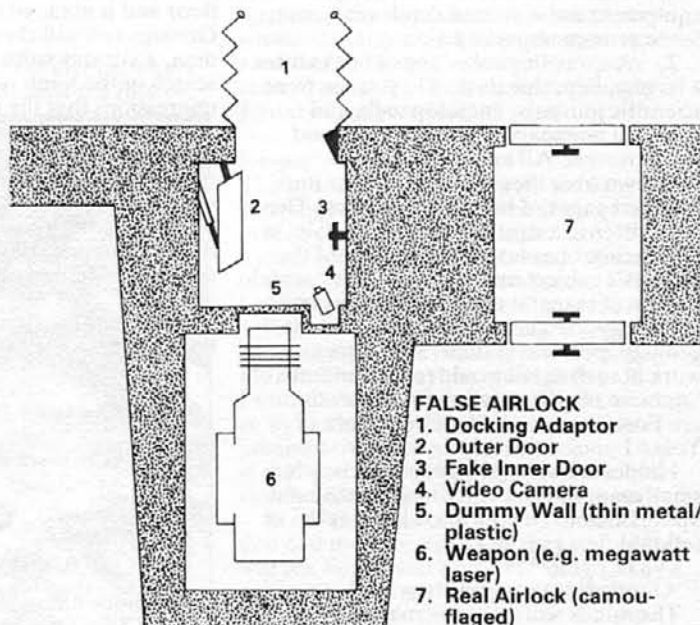
and laser form a useful system, but are easily destroyed by boarders.

Any airlock will contain two airtight hatches, or some equivalent, and sensors to indicate the exact status of the lock. Usually the hatches are operated by servo motors. One easy trick is to allow the boarders to enter the lock, let it fill with air, then suddenly open the outer doors. Anyone in the lock will probably be blown into space. This tactic fails if the enemy ship has docked onto the airlock. A simple alternative is a section of hull secured by explosive bolts, triggered when the airlock is full. If the attackers are destroying hatches and depressurising the ship as they board, these systems may not work.

The airlock is also the best place for the use of gas or acid sprays, and any other weapon which might inconvenience the defenders as well as the attackers. Examples include paint sprays (reducing vision through helmets), flame throwers, liquified gas nozzles, and water cannon. An even more extreme tactic is the placement of low-power mines or explosives, with damage insufficient to hole the hull.

Defenders should note that the use of human guards in an airlock is almost always futile. They will either be killed or taken hostage.

What can intruders do to reduce the hazards of the airlock? Nothing. Unless the attackers have paved their way by sabot-



FALSE AIRLOCK

1. Docking Adaptor
2. Outer Door
3. Fake Inner Door
4. Video Camera
5. Dummy Wall (thin metal/plastic)
6. Weapon (e.g. megawatt laser)
7. Real Airlock (camouflaged)

age or bribes, they must either run the gauntlet of the airlock or find another entry to the hull. Alternative entry points might include weapons turrets, ports servicing access panels, engine ducts, or holes left by the attackers' weaponry. Alert defenders may have surprises ready in these areas too. An attack on two or three fronts is most likely to succeed, if personnel are available, since it may overload the defenders' security systems.

Corridors of Power

Starship corridors are a natural killing ground for unwary attackers. They rarely contain vital installations, and can be isolated by armoured hatches or valves. Doorways and cross corridors lend themselves to ambushes and defensive positions. Additionally, the attackers are now inside the victim, and vulnerable to any environmental changes the defenders may make. Usually the crew start their defence with control of lighting, heat, ventilation, communication systems, fire-fighting mechanisms, drives, and internal gravity. Creative use of these facilities can seriously disrupt an attack.

Many starships use artificial gravity and compensator systems, countering the thrust of the engines and giving a 'natural' environment. If the security system is linked to these systems it's possible to leave the attackers in free fall, then drop them down the length of the ship with several gravities acceleration. If the ship isn't accelerating, suddenly cutting the gravity and activating the compensators will hurl the attackers forward.

Less lethal, but still dangerous, are the use of free fall and disorientation. Simultaneously switching off the gravity and lights, then flashing the lights on and off as strobes, will probably leave most attackers feeling distinctly unwell, it is probable that the attackers will be in no condition to fight. The referee should calculate appropriate saving throw, with modifiers for drugs, armour, and physical characteristics. Attackers wearing space suits may still be vulnerable to these attacks, and suffer serious consequences if they vomit into the suits' mechanisms. Space-suited characters are also vulnerable to radio jamming and magnetic induction attacks.

Other possibilities are more blow-out panels, rapid changes in atmospheric pressure (which may leave unsuited attackers deaf or dead), and remote-controlled weapons. Fire barriers, remotely controlled hatches, and powered doors can be used to split the attackers into small and easily handled groups.

If all these tactics fail, the defenders may finally be forced to enter the corridors themselves. Note that especially vulnerable sections (such as engineering and the bridge) will usually be sealed at the first sign of trouble, leaving crew in the remainder of the ship to deal with the intruders.

Provided there has been some warning, a starship defence team should be equipped with some or all of the following equipment:

A portable barricade, with weapon ports. A metal-topped table or a mobile partition can double for this role, provided it is sufficiently tough.

Fire fighting equipment.

Communications equipment operating unjammed channels.

Gas masks or space suits.

Personal armour and weapons.

Medical kit.

Their primary objective should always be to contain or expel the attackers, but other priorities are to take prisoners, to inflict maximum casualties, and to avoid becoming a hostage. The attackers should be allowed to escape if the alternative is a fight to the death.

As soon as the attackers enter the ship, the defenders should try to cut off communications, so that personnel in the attacking ship will be unsure of the situation. However, the attackers may retaliate by firing on the defending ship. Once inside the hull the attackers should try for the following objectives:

1: Incapacitate the ship. In particular, damage the drives, gravity systems, and weapons.

2: Destroy or neutralise the computer. The most valuable member of a boarding party might be a computer operator, if the attackers can capture a working terminal or break into data lines.

3: Capture hostages.

4: Maintain communications with the mother ship.

5: Any special mission objectives.

Attackers should be extremely wary of unusual design features. Concealed hatches, long fore-aft corridors, ceiling spray nozzles, and armoured bulkheads may suggest that a warm reception has been prepared.

Taking Control

If the attackers seize any important part of the ship, they will probably succeed.

An alternative to control of the ship is the use of hostages. If the attackers manage to take prisoners they may have a powerful bargaining card – however, some human and alien cultures will not be interested in such tactics. For example, Kzinti [see Larry Niven's *Ringworld* etc] would regard any surrender as dishonourable, as would the Aslan tribes of *GDW's Traveller*.

A third possibility is total subversion of the ship's computer. If the attackers can penetrate the system they may gain control, and operate the ship's defences against the crew.

Once control is established, the attackers can secure the ship, and capture and disarm its personnel.

The only viable defence at this stage is an unusually thorough reprisal system. Attackers who find that both ships are locked together, and are about to be destroyed by a moderately powerful hydrogen bomb, may be prepared to negotiate, this stage usually represents a victory for the attackers and a defeat for the defenders.

Special Attacks

So far this article has ignored the use of highly advanced technology and psionics, and assumed that all boarding operations will be physical.

If the defence have similar abilities available they may be able to block such attacks, or even divert them out of the ship and into space. Exact details obviously vary with game system, but the following broad suggestions may be helpful:

1: Compartmentalisation. If the ship can be divided into small areas, the attackers may be forced to materialise individually or in small groups.

2: Obstruction. It's difficult to imagine successful teleportation if all open spaces are obstructed. By filling compartments with any sort of solid, the attackers may be forced to materialise in a preplanned area.

3: Automatic weapons. Most forms of teleportation and matter transmission must leave some detectable trace. A security system could be programmed to react to such traces.

4: Overlapping fire fields. Each compartment is occupied by two or more guards, who set up in such a way that every part of the compartment can be seen. This method is best combined with obstruction and compartmentalisation.

Budgeting

How much can anyone afford to spend on defence? A minimal system for a very small ship may cost more, and installation may make the ship-owners eligible for reduced insurance rates.

Any spy looking at the plans of a starship will probably be able to get a general idea of the costs involved. Ship owners are naturally aware of this danger, and may take various steps to counter spies. The most obvious precaution is to file false ship plans and misleading flight data. □

Sources

This article has several important sources, which are recommended to all interested players and referees:

Alfred Bester	<i>Tiger! Tiger!*</i>
James Blish	<i>The Star Trek</i> books
Randall Garrett	<i>Unwise Child†</i>
Harry Harrison	<i>One Step from Earth</i> (collection)
Larry Niven	<i>Neutron Star</i> (collection)
Niven / Pournelle	<i>Oath of Fealty, The Mote in Gods Eye</i>
Fred Saberhagen	<i>Berserker</i>
James H. Schmitz	<i>Agent of Vega, The Witches of Karres</i>
E E Doc Smith	<i>The Lensman</i> series
<i>Flying Buffalo Inc</i>	<i>Grimtooth's Traps</i>
<i>Game Designers' Workshop</i>	<i>Snapshots</i>
<i>Game Designers' Workshop</i>	<i>Azhanti High Lighting‡</i>

* Also known as *The Stars My Destiny*

† Also known as *Starship Death*

‡ Games set in the *Traveller* universe



HELLO READERS, IT HAS RECENTLY BEEN BROUGHT TO MY NOTICE THAT CERTAIN OF YOU OUT THERE THINK THRUUD ISN'T WITTY AND SOPHISTICATED ENOUGH. SO, IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO PLEASE SOME OF THE PEOPLE ALL OF THE TIME I PROUDLY(?) PRESENT A NEW IMAGE FOR OUR HERO, IN...

THRUUD GETS SOPHISTICATED

A WITTY, SOPHISTICATED, STYLISHLY DRAWN STORY BY CARL CRITCHLOW - ALTERNATIVELY ENTITLED... HOW TO REACT POSITIVELY TO NEGATIVE CRITICISM

STORY+ART © CARL CRITCHLOW '84



AS YOU CAN SEE - UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS OUR HERO IS NOT EXACTLY THE WITTY, SOPHISTICATED SORT...

HOWEVER, BEING THE ARTIST, THIS CAN BE EASILY REMEDIED NOW - ON WITH THE PLOT...



OUR HEROES QUICKLY SETTLE IN, AND ARE SOON WITTLY BANtering WITH THE BEST OF THEM...

I SAY OLD CHAP! DO YOU LIKE KIPPING?



OH! VERY CLEVER! AND WHO'S GOING TO DRAW YOU NEXT MONTH EH? ANSWER ME THAT!

OH WELL, READERS - I DID TRY! I SUPPOSE IT'S BACK TO THE USUAL MAYHEM NEXT MONTH - PROVIDED MY ARMS BETTER!

THE FEAR OF LEEFIELD

An AD&D Adventure for 4-6 Characters of Levels 3-5

by Stuart Hunter

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

Whilst on your travels, fate has decreed that your stop-over point for the night should be the market town of Leefield, a small but busy settlement which thrives on its specialist occupations of forestry and cattle farming. Making your way to the 'Blue Beard Tavern,' the only inn, you are greeted on entering by the proprietor Olos (a dwarf), who on being asked if he has rooms for the evening, will inform you that you may have a room but only at great expense (five times the normal price) as tomorrow is market day and his rooms are already taken. Over a small yet satisfying meal something of the atmosphere of the place is gauged; the villagers seem wary of strangers and uncommonly hostile and the hushed tones of their conversations hint only at the ruin of a farm somewhere in the north.

Olos, however, senses that your desire for adventure is strong and suggests, should you be interested, that you might like to attend an emergency council meeting to be held the next day to find out more.

Attending the meeting, you find that only three members of the council are present - the chairman, Kairnley, Olos and Simmon, the village blacksmith, other members being unwilling to leave their farms and families unprotected. After all the formalities have been completed Kairnley explains the situation. A farm has been razed to the ground in unusual circumstances; although all the signs are that wild animals are in part responsible (talon and claw marks being found at the farm) no sign of tracks leading to or away from the farm have been found. Those bodies recovered show injuries inflicted by weapons, certainly not from natural attacks, further complicating the mystery. He begs you to assist them in their plight although the reward they can offer is small; the herd of the deceased farmer plus one quarter of the village herd and the sum of 100gp each for bringing the perpetrators to justice. Natural curiosity drives you to accept.

Smite's Crag

Leefield is the only community of any significant size within a 45 mile radius of Smite's Crag. It is a small town of some 1,300 inhabitants, the majority of whom are either employed by Yardley (the local timber merchant) or in other assorted trades and businesses catering for the large number of cattle farms around the town.

A. Timberyard. A large wooden building on the edge of the forest, built there to accommodate 30 or so men. If any of these are seen in the village they will be placed in the stocks, as their behaviour leaves much to be desired. The building also contains a large amount of vital felling equipment. During the day up to 150 men from the village will be working here.

B. Windy Hill. A lone hill standing in the middle of Summarin Wood. In a small wooden hut at the foot of the hill lives Madin, a druid who

has long since retired from adventuring and now devotes his life to the protection of a small community of mandrake people who live in a rocky dwelling only a few hundred yards away.

Madin; AC6 (3 wearing leather and shield); HTK34; LVL5; N; Druid; Str:11; Int:9; Wis:14; Dex:18; Con: 16; Chr:16.
Spells: 1st-Detect magic, entangle, faerie fire (x2), shillelagh, speak with animals; 2nd-Charm person, heat metal, obscurement; 3rd-Plant growth, pyrotechnics.

Madin is proficient in the use of the club and hammer and owns two spears which he is not proficient to use.

The druid has been unable to uncover the persons responsible for the disappearance of every bantling born in the last two fertile seasons. (These occur every four or five months, but regardless of the number of bantlings born, no more than 3 will survive due to a naturally high mortality rate among bantlings.) He is anxiously awaiting next season, due soon.

He occasionally visits the nearby town but the unpopularity of the mandrake people ensures his own cool reception.

C. Oldfield Copse. A small wood in the midst of the cattle farms, only allowed to remain unfelled as it provides vital firewood for the nearby farms during winter. Hidden in the copse is a small hut used by Yardley for the processing and storage of the drugs. It is always occupied by two men, Graygig the alchemist and his guard, Lamu.

Lamu; AC1 (+1 chainmail, +1 shield); HTK31; LVL4; LE fighter; Str: 18/30; Int: 13; Wis: 7; Dex: 7; Con: 15; Chr:12; +2 Dagger, bastard sword, morning star, long bow.

Graygig has 8hp and will never fight. Lamu also cares for the greater raven which is used to pass messages between the kenku lair, the timber yard and the cutting mill in town. At any time the hut will contain 1000-4000 (1/2 x 2d4)gp worth of quicksilver berries. It will only contain mandrake root during the week immediately after the theft of the bantlings. Hidden under the various tanks, bottles, urns etc used in the processing is a small wooden box containing 4500 gp worth of gold and silver jewellery.

D. Ruined Farmhouse The remains of a large farmhouse and several outbuildings consist of several burnt out timber frames and large piles of fallen masonry. The farmhouse was the property of a prosperous and prominent co-op member and it is the news of the events here that have brought the unrest in the village to a head.

The ruins are now occupied by a forest giant, an eschel named Snowleaf. It is unlikely that he will act against anyone who approaches in a friendly manner and upon hearing of the plight of the mandrake people he may be willing to help them directly.

Snowleaf (Forest Giant); AC5; Move 15"; Hit dice 8+5; N; Int: Average. Attacks:1

Attacks: Hurl rocks 2D8, dead trees 2D12.
Spells: *Pass without trace; purify water, locate animals, animal friendship, detect snares and pits, entangle, locate plants, warp wood, plant growth and tree.* Snowleaf may use any 4 per day.

Snowleaf has chameliad companion whose presence will probably remain a secret unless Snowleaf is attacked.
Chameliad; AC4; Move 15"; HD3d8; N; Int: very; Attacks: 2x1D4 claws. 85% hide and move silently. Surprise attack 80%.

E. Hidden Dell. The dell is accessible by a long tunnel running under the cliffs, the south entrance of which is hidden by foliage (treat as a concealed door), or by the door leading into the kenku lair, also concealed by foliage. The floor of the dell has been cultivated and is planted with several hundred small, semi-ripe berry bushes. The dell will also be occupied by two kenku working among the plants (only during the day). The bushes will yield a harvest of addictive quicksilver berries in about 3 weeks. Addiction will occur after 5 or more berries are eaten.

Benefits to non-addicted beings: +6 on dexterity, +2 on hit points. Last 1 hour after which -4 on strength, and -3 on intelligence. Benefits to addicts(!): +4 on dexterity, +2 on hit points. Lasts 5 hours after which -2 on strength, -2 on intelligence. Which lasts for 3 hours. No spells may be cast. If no berries are available, throw 1d6 for effects on addict:

- 1: -2 on strength
- 2: -2 on intelligence
- 3: -5 on dexterity
- 4: -4 on charisma
- 5: -4 on strength
- 6: -4 on constitution (-1 permanent)

Only 1 berry each 12 hours is safe, any more and save vs poison. Failure means a 5 hour coma, after which a saving throw may be made, doubling benefits and penalties.

F. Ruined Tower. This five storey tower has been fired but due to some magical property of the building's timbers, the top two storeys remain relatively unscathed. The lower three storeys are mainly made up of shattered masonry and it is apparent that the building could collapse at any time. There is a 2% chance in any hour that the whole structure will give way, but tampering with the ruins (climbing the walls or entering the top storeys) increases the chance to 40%.

Laboratory (4th storey). Entry to this room and the library can only be made through one of two shuttered windows, the staircase between the two floors having collapsed. The room shows signs of a very rough search, with laboratory equipment strewn everywhere. Lying hidden among the remains of a smashed desk is a scroll of *knock and hold portal*.

Study/Library (5th storey). The walls of this room are lined with shelves full of slashed and burned books with many others strewn across the floor. Enough books may be salvaged to help stock the library of any magician who will then save 1500gp on the cost of training

for his/her next level. An unusual 3/4 ring table dominates the centre of the room. Lost amongst a huge pile of papers on the desk is the magician's personal diary, a leather-bound book held shut by a delicate silver lock.

The majority of the diary is private and of little interest, but the last entry reads:

'These accursed spirits have hemmed me in. I am mortally afraid, fearing to peer from my window lest they pierce me with a poisoned dart or cast a spell at me. Curse the dark days for these dark faeries fear sunlight, yet she will hide behind the clouds and not smile on my world. I must try to escape now though I know not how.'

The MU's spell book has been hidden in the hollow swivel base of a chair beside the table. The book is guarded by a *fire trap* spell. It contains the following spells:

1st - *Read magic, light, find familiar, jump, message, feather fall, spell of awakening*; 2nd - *Wizard lock, web, detect evil, invisibility*; 3rd - *Leomunds tiny hut, protection from normal missiles*; 4th - *Fire trap, ring of binding*.

G. Jetty. A large wooden construction which projects 20' into the flow of the River Larr. On the bank are two large boathouses and a small office, manned during the day by two villagers but are locked up and left empty at night. The villagers are ordinary 0 lvl men who are innocent of the more sinister use of the jetty. The jetty is used for loading barges with cut and finished timber for transportation to a large town downriver (south). It is also where drugs are smuggled onto the barges.

The road crosses the river on a large stone bridge 50 yards upstream. At this point the river is about 75' wide and 15' deep, the current flowing at 7 mph.

LEEFIELD (MAP 2)

A. Blue Beard Tavern. Olos, the owner of the tavern, is generally fair and honest, but will not allow elves on his property. He also treats half-elves with caution and suspicion, although he will tolerate them if they are polite. The tavern has three beds for travellers, although Olos often allows people to sleep in the sitting room for a small fee. The rooms are fairly cheap and food, especially meat is also reasonable. All alcohol is expensive except the locally produced, tasteless (although the locals will not take kindly to such remarks) beer.

Olos; AC10 (3 wearing platemail), HTK21, LVL15; LG; Cleric; Str:11; Int:10; Wis:15; Dex:13; Con:14; Chr:7.

Spells: 1st - *Sanctuary, create water, protection from evil, light, detect magic*; 2nd - *Slow poison, silence 15' radius, spiritual hammer, known alignment*; 3rd - *Prayer*.

Magic Items: +2 Hammer, Scroll of *know duration* and *resist electricity*. Olos will go to great extents to prevent his clerical status becoming public knowledge. Only Kairnley shares this knowledge and he has been sworn to secrecy.

RESIST ELECTRICITY

Usable by: Cleric

Level: 3

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 turn/level

Area of Effect: Creature touched

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 4 segments

Saving Throw: None

Similar to *resist cold* and *resist fire*, this spell gives protection from electrical attacks. It affords complete immunity to electricity received by touch (eg *shocking grasp*) and allows a +3 bonus on saves vs *lightening bolts* or blue dragon breath, and halving the damage taken (1/2 damage if save fails, 1/4 if save made). The material component for this spell is a short copper rod.

B. Stable and Blacksmith. The stable and blacksmiths are both new wooden buildings; Simmon, the local constable, owns both and doubles as the village blacksmith. Simmon employs Ramish as a stable hand and uses him as a type of deputy. The stable contains six horses owned by Simmon and twelve horses owned by Yardley and used for dragging timber. Simmon is prepared to sell up to four of his animals, but will charge more for his two younger mares. Simmon once served in the national militia and as such is a natural for the job of constable, although he is far from popular in the village.

Simmon; AC10(3); HTK10; LVL2; LN; Fighter; Str:15; Int:12; Wis:13; Dex:12; Con:9; Chr:9. Banded mail and shield, broadsword, heavy crossbow.

Ramish; AC10(7); HTK5; LVL0; NG; Age 23; leather and shield, shortsword.

Ramish is totally dedicated to Simmon who raised him as his own son after his parents were killed by bandits. The boy is impatient and has a quick and fiery temper being prone to go berserk in battle (+2 to hit and damage, attack nearest person, never surrenders, 5% chance per round of battle for going berserk). Once Ramish makes a friend he will never shirk from helping them any way he can.

C. Village Green and Hall. This is a large wooden and stone building. The northern wing is used for auctions, co-op meetings and village gatherings, co-op members meeting every second market day. If for any reason the co-op has to hold an emergency meeting it will take at least 24 hours for all the members to arrive in the village. The rest of the building is used for storing village food supplies during the winter months.

Also in the northern half of the building is the treasurer's office in which the co-op's funds are kept. The money (376gp) is hidden in the hollow stand of an apparently innocent-looking hat stand.

The hall is looked after and lived in by an ageing caretaker, Rory, AC10; HTK2; LVL0; LG. Any stress is 5% likely to result in him suffering from a heart attack.

D. Market Place. This cobbled stone courtyard is used as the village market place (every other Tuesday). The main commodities available are beef, fruit and vegetables, cloth, tools and pieces of crude furniture. The occasional horse or other livestock will be brought for auction.

There is a 30% chance that a thief will visit the market in which case any adventurer who is obviously rich pickings is 70% likely to attract attention. The thief will be 3rd - 6th level, and if caught in the market will be stripped of all his possessions and thrown out of town.

E. Co-operative Shop. This large stone building is used by the co-op as a general store for the village population. It sells a wide range of reasonably priced goods but does not sell any weapons or armour.

The shopkeeper, Madlene, is the wife of Josh Kairnley and despite her apparent love of gossip is a very shrewd and intelligent woman. She is very suspicious of Yardley.

F. Timberyard/Cutting Mill. This large wooden building is the legitimate centre of Yardley's business empire. It contains areas for the cutting and treatment of the timber brought in from the forest. Yardley can be found there most days.

The whole complex is surrounded by a 12' high barbed fence. The 200 or so men who work in the yard are searched as they leave in the evening under the pretence that some of their number have been stealing tools from the yard. The search is to check that no-one has found any trace of drugs or the stockpile of weapons hidden here.

The weapon cache contains approximately 35 suits of battered splint mail and a similar number of bastard swords, light bows, arrows, shields and daggers. They are hidden

in a room which is *supposed* to contain explosives (a primitive type of gelignite which must be used in very large quantities) for the quarry which Yardley intends to start at Smite's Crag.

One man who discovered the hoard was mutilated with a saw, his remains then flung into some nearby woodland. Despite the discovery of the body by a peasant farmer, his death is still a mystery to the co-op.

G. Yardley's Shop. Yardley opened this shop in an attempt to undermine the authority of the co-op. He sells goods cheaply to the timberyard workers and will also (unlike the co-op) give credit to other villagers though he is not concerned with either the form of repayment or the methods he and his men use in debt collection. He stocks much the same as the co-op shop but also sells drugs to certain villagers.

The shop is run by Black Fred, a scoundrel who is almost as unscrupulous and evil as Yardley himself. He employs a group of ruffians to extract money from those unfortunates who fall foul of the extortionate rate of interest on the credit.

Black Fred; AC8(7); HTK; LVL1; LE; Fighter Str:16; Int:8; Wis:6; Dex:12; Con:11; Chr:5. He always wears leather armour and is a specialist whip user.

SPECIALIST WHIP

Weight: 40gp; space required: 4'; speed factor: 2; length: 5-10'.

To Hit Adjustments

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
+5	+3	+2	0	0	-1	-2	-5	-7

Effects Table (Roll d12)

1	: L	7	: 5
2	: P	8	: 1
3	: P	9	: 1, P
4	: XP	10	: 2
5	: XP	11	: 3, P
6	: B	12	: 3, P

L: Loss, whip snatched from hand P: Pain, victim attacks at -1 next blow. Extreme Pain, victim attacks at -2 for one full round mele. B: Blinding, victim sightless for 2D4 rounds. 5% chance of having to save vs poison to contract an eye infection. S: Stunned, victim immobile for 1D6 rounds. Numbers are hit points lost.

THE KENKU LAIR

1. A 3' wide path winding up the side of the cliff face leads to cave entrance 70' above ground level. About 20' from the cave entrance (marked by a cross) the path has collapsed leaving a ledge only 7" wide and 8' long.

2. At this point a narrow slit in the wall provides a lookout post. One of the male kenku will always be on guard here during the daylight hours. Once he detects intruders he will shapechange into human form and try to lead the party to the jaculi lair in the pillared hall (5).

3. The secret door at this point is a square flap designed to resemble the stone wall, but it is 7' above ground level. It cannot be opened from this side but requires only a light push from the other to make it swing outward on its hinges. The 2 ordinary doors both have locks but at present neither is locked. The 3 males and Snowbeak all have keys. The locks are magical in that turning the key in one lock will secure both doors, similarly opening one opens both. The locks lose their magical properties if removed from the doors. The doors themselves are solid oak.

4. This is a 20' deep shaft connecting a secret passage and the pillared hall. Half-way up the shaft is a lever which operates (6) when moved to the 'up' position. The shaft is 5' in diameter. All the shafts in this lair are magical elevators (features (4),(14),(16),(17)). Speaking the command 'rise' (in any language) will cause one person to move up the shaft (as *levitate* spell) at rate of 10' per segment. The command word 'fall' will cause one person to descend (as *feather fall* spell) at the same rate shown as above. Only one person may use the shaft at any given time.

5. This is the prison lair of 13 jaculi. They have been captured by the kenku and are kept half-starved in the dark. They will attack anything but will not pass the large pillar (marked with a cross) in pursuit of prey. All the pillars in the hall are 2' in diameter and stretch from the floor to the 20' high ceiling which they support.

Three of the jaculi are an extremely rare poisonous variety, the bite of which induces a coma lasting for 5-10 rounds (d6+4).

Jaculi; AC6; HD1; HTK7,6,6,5,4,3,2,2,1,1 [FF], poisoned jaculi; AC6; HD2+1; HTK11,8,6.

The kenku from (2) will attempt to lead the party down here before shapechanging to its normal form and ascending up the shaft and activating the lever as it goes. It will then return and lock the doors at (3).

6. This appears to be a normal staircase, but when lever in (4) is operated the stairs fold to form a perfectly smooth slide at an angle of 45 degrees to the floor. The surface of the slope is coated with heavy grease, making it impossible to walk up the slide. The stairwell walls are rough but slightly slippery. Note that opening the locked door at the top will be difficult as no firm base is available for kicking, swinging a weapon etc. The lock may be picked at -10% normal chance but this will only open one of the two magical locks.

Rooms 7, 8 and 9. At night the kenku will be in their rooms as described below. Each kenku will be asleep 70% of the time. During the day one room will be occupied by its kenku pair, one other pair by will be working in the dell and the remaining pair will be on guard, the male at (2) and the female on top of the cliff above the entrance to the secret dell.

7. This is the lair of two mated kenku. Female AC5; HD2; HTK14, armed with quarter staff. Male AC5; HD3; HTK14, armed with samurai sword.

Spells - *Magic missile* & shapechange ability. The room is fairly comfortably furnished and, as are the corridors nearby, is lit by lanterns on the wall. There is nothing of interest in the room.

8. As above except female HTK 13, male HTK16 (abilities and weapons remain unchanged).

9. As above but female HTK7, male HTK14. If for any reason any of these kenku are captured they will never reveal any information to their captors.

10. This extremely filthy room is the lair of Snowbeak, the kenku leader. The room is furnished similarly to (7) but it also contains a large wooden chest containing 7,800sp and 4200gp, under a heap of soiled straw.

During the night it is 80% unlikely that Snowbeak will be in this room, but 10% of the time she will be found in (11). The remaining time she will be out hunting or wandering on her own. During the day she spends the majority of her time in (11) praying (50% chance), but will be found in this room 30% of the time or out wandering (20% chance). If Snowbeak is out wandering she will return to the complex within 1-12 turns.

Snowbeak; AC5; HD4; HTK22, always fights without weapon.

Spells - *Magic missile*, *burning hands*, abilities of shapechange and invisibility.

Snowbeak and her tribe work producing drugs in the copse for sale to Yardley. They do not regard it as an honourable task for warriors and they had intended to leave very soon, but recently Snowbeak led the tribe on an attack against a farmhouse apparently in revenge for the disappearance of her mate Fleetmane.

Snowbeak knows a great deal about Yardley and his men, including the location of the hut at Oldfield Copse, the hidden weapon cache and the method used to smuggle drugs to a distant city. She suspects that Yardley ultimately intends to try and destroy her tribe and has tried to gain time for herself by stealing the bantlings for Yardley.

Less than two weeks ago Fleetmane her

mate went out hunting and vanished. While praying to the altar in (11) for his safe return, a fearsome voice informed her that he would only be allowed to return alive if she obeyed instructions. The voice has demanded the destruction of the farm and the sacrifice of a female kenku. If she finds a party of willing adventurers she will offer them all the tribe's treasure plus the information she had on Yardley if they will return her mate alive and destroy the threat of the altar. She had not told not other kenku of the voice and has no idea that drow elves are the source of menace, believing it to be of some alien and hateful deity.

11. The room is apparently empty except for the large altar of a well-built humanoid with small bat-like wings and huge taloned claws. At the feet is a bowl of burning incense, causing a cloud of luminous smoke to collect around the feet of the altar giving the impression that the whole statue is floating gently in mid-air. It is possible to step inside this hollow altar from a panel in the north wall.

12. The room is empty except for two stools and a small table. One female and one male drow will always be on guard here, the female sitting inside the altar. Although there is no way of seeing through the altar into (11) the female will use her *clairvoyance* ability as soon as she hears any noise in the room. Upon detection of a party they will retreat to (20) to warn the guard, then they will take their place on the battlements, joined by the other drow in three rounds. Inside the altar is a small trumpet-like device which when spoken through projects a deep echoing voice in (11).

13. Identical to the stair at (6) but the operating lever is on the balcony in (20).

14. A black hole in the ceiling at the end of this corridor tunneled out of dirt and stone, but with a wooden floor.

15. The trap is a 15' deep pit with a delicately balanced wooden panel on top, hinged by strong springs along the east wall. The floor of the pit is spiked, causing a total of 5-15 damage (2d6+3) to anyone falling in. If the party searched the floor of the pit they may (chance at DM's discretion) find a plain golden ring - a *Ring Of Spell storing* containing the MU spells *forget* and *phantasmal force*. The trap will only be activated by a weight of 60lbs or more. Note that hauling characters from the pit may prove extremely difficult because of the low height of the ceiling.

16. Another black hole in the ceiling leads up a further 10' to a similar corridor.

17. A hole in the ceiling is a 100' deep shaft.

18. This large storage room contains a whole selection of agricultural tools, picks shovels, trowels etc as well as several buckets containing a primitive but very poisonous weedkiller in liquid form.

19. The shaded floor area is where a metal pressure plate is hidden under 2 inches of loose dirt. A weight of 130lbs or more will cause two portcullis' (a & b) to fall from their hidden recesses in the ceiling. Chance to lift is normal bend bars/lift gates roll. The kenku inspect this trap every 12 hrs minimum.

20. (a) This area is a full 15' below the top of the battlement wall. The secret door in the wall can be opened by a mild shove but will only operate in total darkness. A lever at (b) can operate it at all times.

(b) The drow will defend from behind a 6' high stone wall with 1' wide slits every 3'. The door to (21) can be locked from either side. All drow carry a key.

21. The room contains only the barest necessities for the existence of a drow party (sleeping mats, iron rations etc).

Drow Leader, Xsarra; AC0; HTK16; LVL3/3; CE; Fighter/Cleric; Female; Str:11; Int:18; Wis:14; Dex:17; Con:14; Chr:11; Magic resistance 56%. *Chainmail* +1, shield, dagger, +2 mace, 30pp, 3 x 10gp gems, 2 x 50gp gems, 100gp gems.

Spells: *Dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness*, *clairvoyance*, *detect lie*, *suggestion*, *dispel magic*. Cleric spells: 1st - *Cure light wounds* (x2), *bleed*, *curse*; 2nd - *Hold person*.

Kilarta; AC-3; HTK 10; LVL3/2; CE; Fighter/MU; Male; Str: 13; Int:17; Wis:12; Dex:18; Con:10; Chr:10; Magic resistance 56%. *Chainmail*+2, shield, dagger, +1 sword, 30pp, 2x50gp gems. Spells: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness* MU Spells: 1st - *Magic missile*, *push*

Drow Elf, Fryteel; AC2; HTK22; LVL3; CE; fighter female; Str:11; Int:13; Wis:12; Dex:15; Con:13; Chr:11. magic resistance 567. *Chainmail* +1, shield, dagger +1, sword, crossbow and 12 poisoned darts, 25pp, 2 x 10gp gems. Spells: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness*, *clairvoyance*, *detect magic*, *suggestion*.

Drow Elf, Kortak; AC1; HTK18; LVL2; CE; Fighter; male; Str:16; Int:8; Wis:11; Dex:16; Con:14; Chr:11; Magic Resistance 54%. *Chainmail*+1, shield, dagger, +1 sword, crossbow (no poisoned darts), 30pp. Spells: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness*.

Drow Elf, Siffon; AC0; HT10; LVL2; CE; Fighter; male; Str:8; Int:16; Wis:11; Dex:17; Con:13; Chr:16; Magic Resistance 54%. *Chainmail* +1, shield, dagger, +1 sword, 3 poisoned javelins, 5pp, 50gp gem. Spells: *Dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness*.

(a) This hole in the floor is a secret passage leading to the mysterious passages of the underworld. If the party decides this way the DM should make it clear it is dangerous and that they will be probably become hopelessly lost. Actual encounters at DM's discretion.

DM'S BACKGROUND

Yardley, born and raised in Leefield, was a young trouble-maker who upon reaching manhood was expelled from the village. After years of adventuring he returned, seemingly quiet and respectable, and purchased the local timber company. But during his travels Yardley had nursed his grudge against the villagers, learning the clerical arts in the service of his god, Bane, the Black Lord. He soon discovered the existence of the kenku and with their help started producing and selling drugs in order to raise money to fund his purchase of arms and employ mercenaries. Yardley now lives with thirty men (equivalent of light footmen) at the timberyard in the forest. One of the rooms has been converted into a small temple dedicated to Bane. Yardley ultimately intends to kill the kenku and use his men to take over the village and enslave the villagers. Any serious threat to his drug smuggling operations will force him to bring forward his plans.

Yardley; AC2; HTK26; LVL6; Cleric; Str:13; Int:15; Wis: 16; Dex:8; Con:8; Chr:16. Spells: 1st - *Cure light wounds* x 3, *sanctuary*, *detect good*; 2nd - *Hold person* x 2, *chant*, *know alignment*, *silence 15' radius* 3rd - *Feign death*, *slavery* (see later). *Wand of Negation* (23 charges), *Flail of Improbable Teleportation*.

Drug Smuggling

The ripe berries are moved by horse from the kenku lair to the hut at Oldfield Copse (always on moonless nights). After processing (for the berries this merely involves packing in a preservative) they are smuggled into Leefield by villagers who do not know what they are carrying, but who are kept silent by threats to their families. At the timber mill they are packed in special hollow lengths of timber and then sent out with the other timber to be taken to the large town in the barges. If at any time it can be proved that Yardley is responsible for the drug smuggling the whole village will rise against him.

The recent addition of mandrake root to the business was the idea of the kenku leader Fleetmane and his mate who have stolen the bantlings from Windy Hill twice. Yardley does not know of the recent developments at the kenku lair (ie the disappearance of Fleetmane and the tribes' subsequent destruction of the farm.)

Co-Operative

The village co-op is a self help group of farmers and prominent villagers who now run the village and surrounding areas. The head of the co-op is Joshua Kairnley, an adventurer who retired after receiving severe mutilation in the torture chamber of an evil wizard.

Kairnley is an extremely tough character, who will not tolerate any evil in what he regards as 'his' villiage. If necessary he will not shrink at taking an active part in any trouble, even though he fights at -2 due to his various disabilities.

Kairnley;
AC10(3); HTK36; LVL4; LG; Ranger; Str:17;
Int:15; Wis:13; Dex:11; Con:17; Chr:10.
Splint Mail +1, shortbow, bastard sword.

Ending the adventure

Should the party succeed in smashing the drug smuggling operation they will be awarded ownership of the timberyard by a grateful village. They will also find a credit note for 25000gp from a banker in the nearby town among Yardley's possessions. If the party accept the offer made to them earlier (money and herd), the co-operative will almost certainly go out of business. This should be made clear to the players and dictates of alignment and personality may cause discord within the party.

Mandrake People [Best of WD Articles II]

Mandrakes are thin humanoids with bark-like skin which is covered with tiny rootlets. They are creatures of the forest and associate little with humankind. Mandrake females give birth to a *bantling*, an acorn-like seed that will eventually grow into a mature mandrake. This bantling can be harvested and used as an aphrodisiac; curing impotence it is greatly sought after by humans. Such practice is regarded as genocide and thus the mandrakes are hostile to all humans except for druids. The statistics for the tribe of mandrake people, should they be needed, are: 22 mandrake people; HD1+1; AC5.

NEW MAGIC

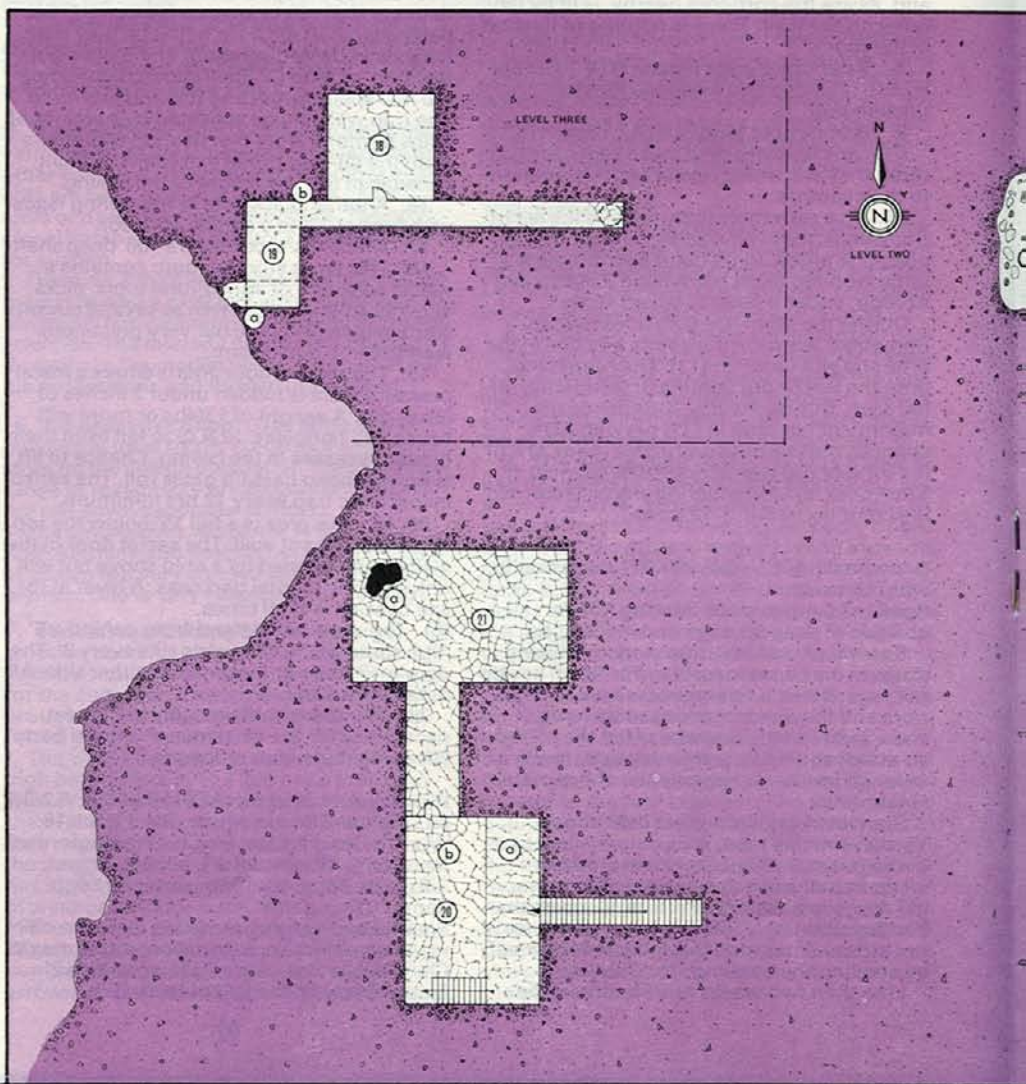
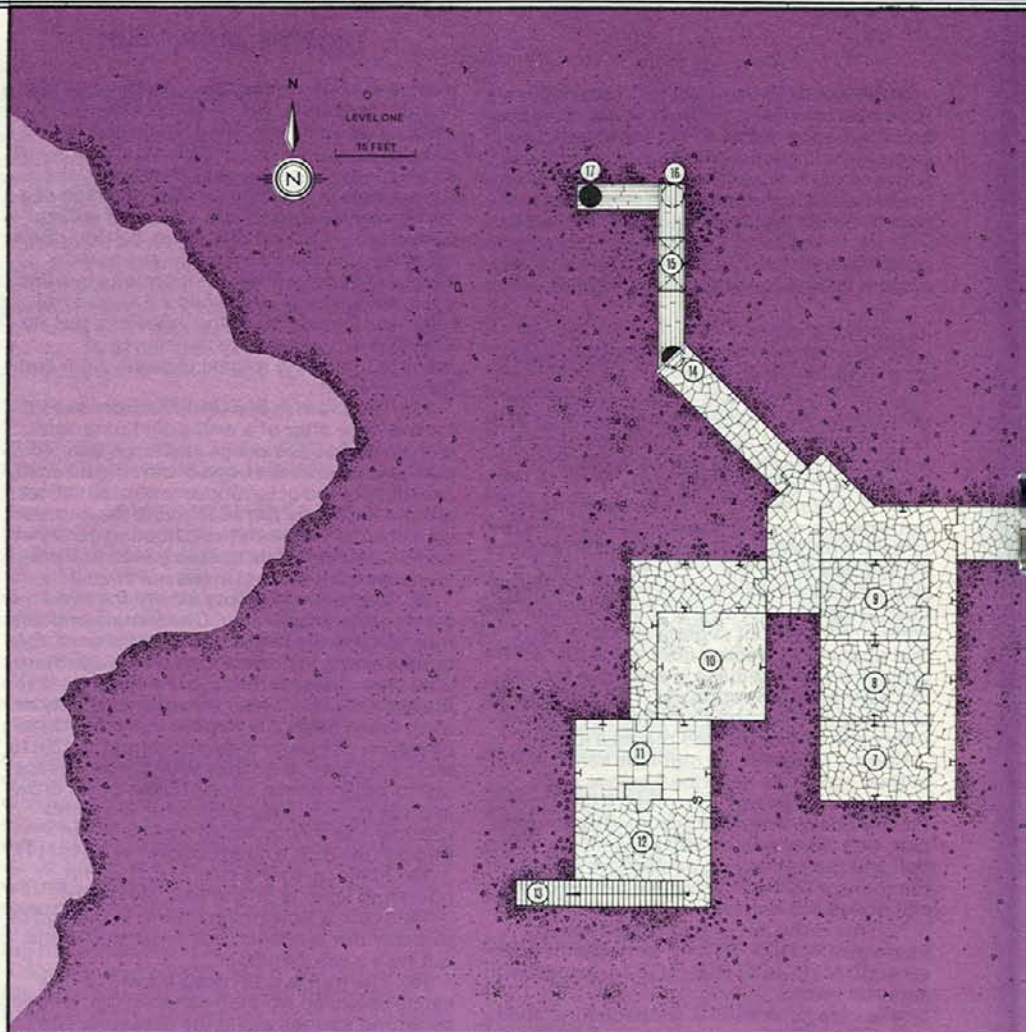
Flail of Improbable Teleportation

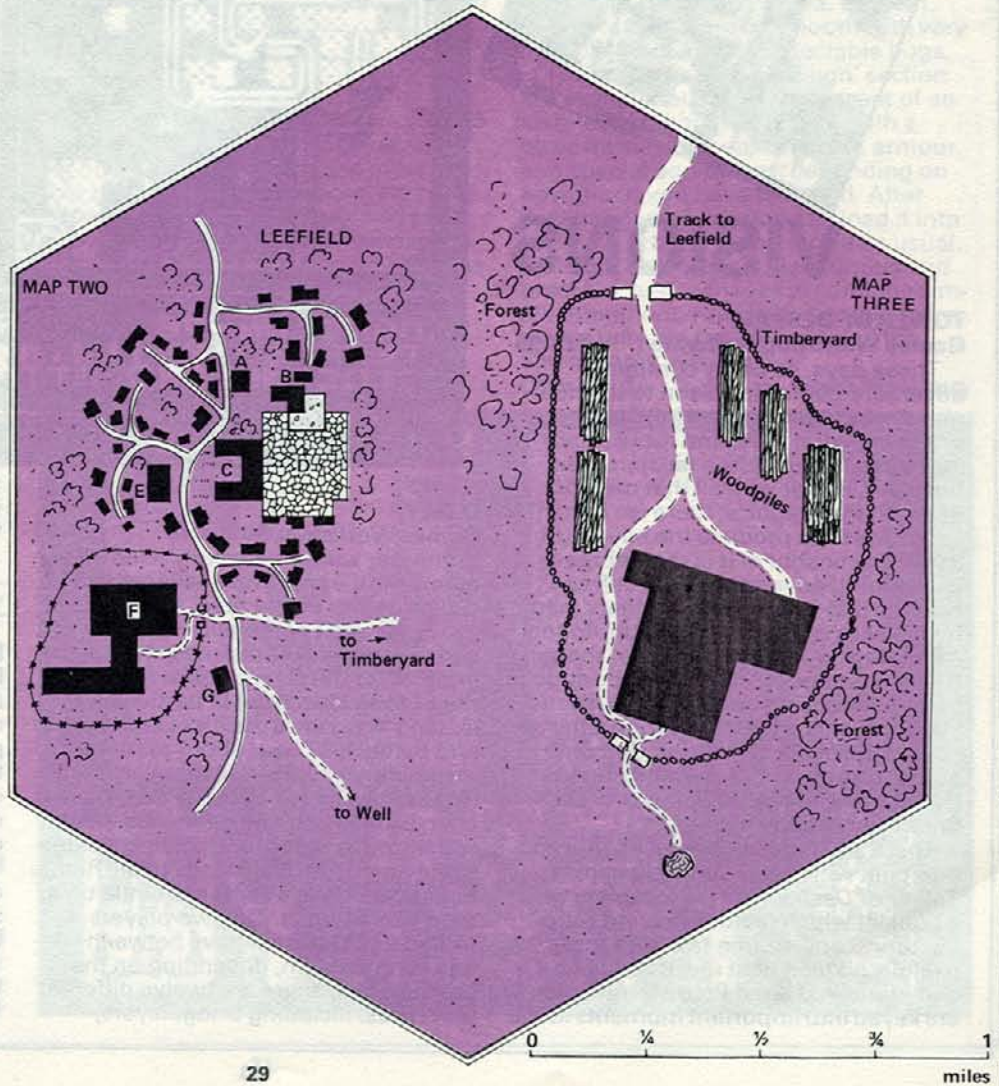
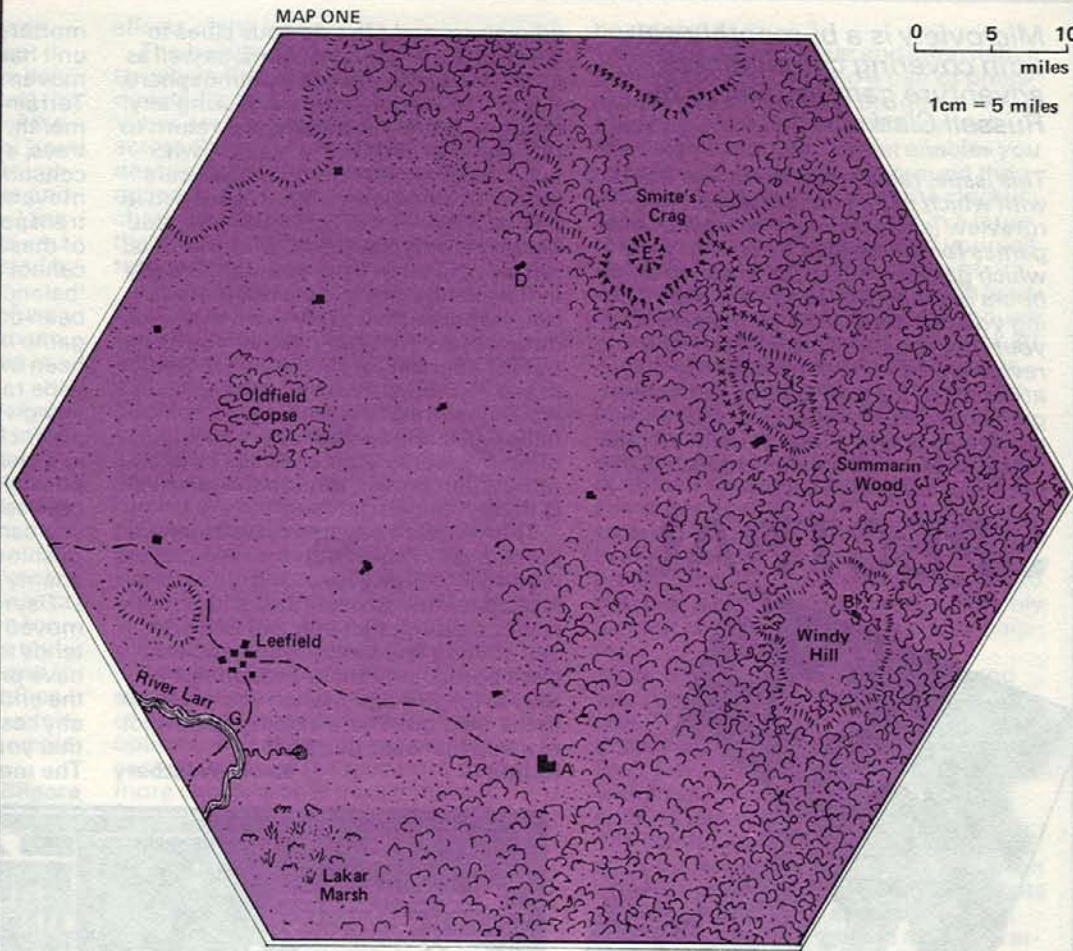
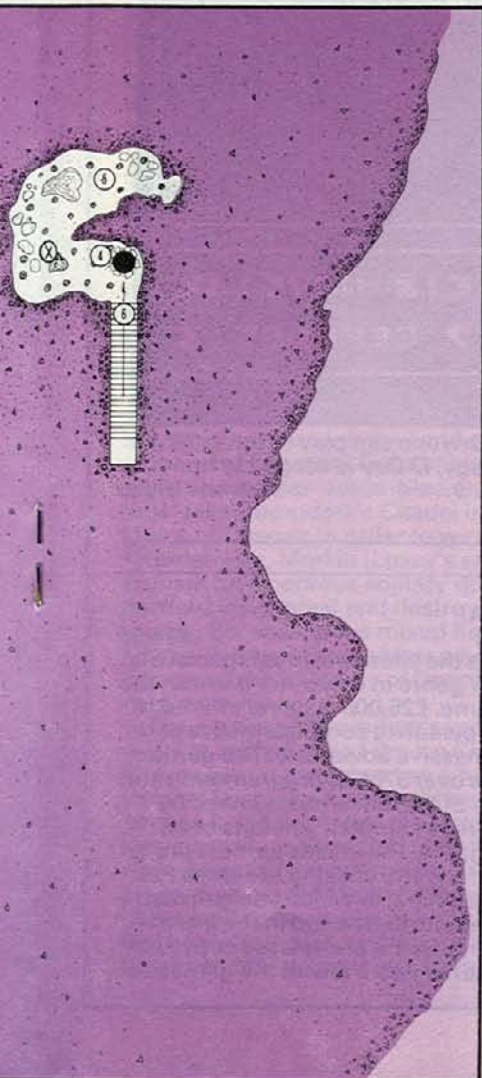
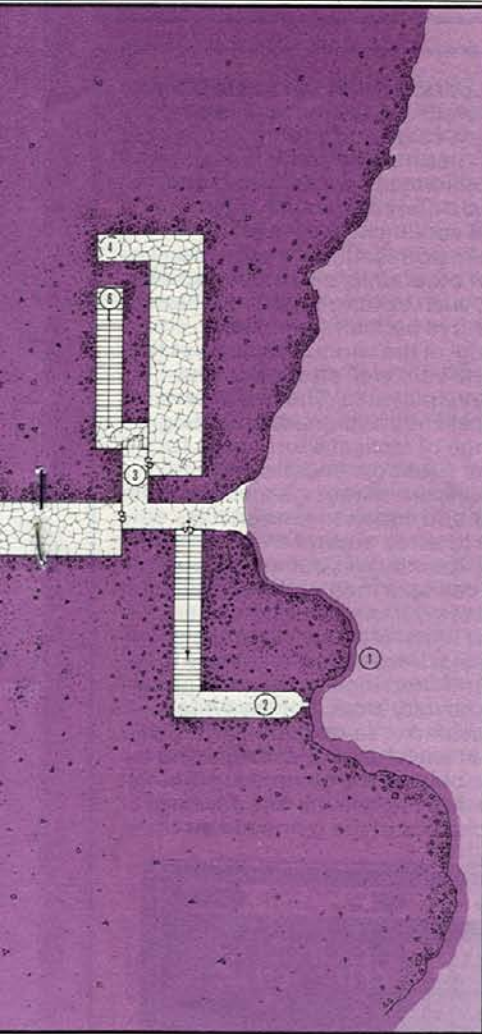
This magical +1 flail will, upon striking any opponent, teleport the said opponent a distance of 1-20' away from the wielder in a random direction. There is absolutely no danger of the person materialising anywhere but on the ground, but they will always be on their head. The person struck is allowed a saving throw magic which if made prevents the flail having any effect upon the person except normal damage. If the wielder is in serious trouble he/she may hit themselves (automatic hit, half damage) and be transported 20' away, landing on their feet.

SLAVERY

Level: 3
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 round/level
Area of Effect: One person
Components: V,S,M
Casting Time: 1 turn
Saving Throw: Negates

To successfully cast this spell the cleric must touch the recipient with his bare hand and the victim must fail his save vs spells. The spell enables the cleric to take complete control of the affected individual as though the victim's mind was an extension of the cleric's own. The cleric can never know any of the victim's knowledge nor can he force the victim to cast spells. Otherwise the cleric can control the victim in any way, commanding him to carry out any task that is within his physical capability providing it will not result in *obvious* self danger. The cleric communicates telepathically with the victim although control is immediately lost if they do not remain within sight of each other. The material component for the spell is a small platinum chain of at least 200gp value. Only creatures of up to 6D/levels can be affected. □





Microview is a bi-monthly column covering computers in adventure gaming, edited by Russell Clarke.

This issue, rather than bring you a GAP with which to fill your stockings, Microview is examining a number of new games for the Sinclair Spectrum with which gamers might like to spend a few hours over the Christmas break (providing you can get the family to agree to your monopolising the TV set!). Our reviewers have been hammering away at copies of the new Games Workshop games and the Eureka! package, and we're also taking a look at Lords of Midnight, all of which appear to be attractive packages for your Spectrum.

SPECTRAL



VISIONS

TOWER OF DESPAIR
Games Workshop Software £7.95

These days, so many computer adventure games lay claim to the dubious distinction of state-of-the-art graphics. What they, and more importantly the buyers, often fail to realise, however, is that with all that memory gone on the graphics, there isn't much left in which to produce the adventure itself. The upshot of it is that for really challenging adventures, you still can't beat the text-only mindwrenchers made by the likes of *Level 9* and *Scott Adams*. After playing *Tower of Despair*, though, I reckon *Games Workshop* can be added to that select list already! It may sound like hype - this is their magazine, after all - but look at it the other way: if anyone is going to know about creating superlative fantasy adventures they are, and I think they already have!

There are bonuses, however, that you don't get with other text-only games. *Tower of Despair* comes complete with a booklet which features a short introductory scene-setting tale, and more usefully sixteen neat illustrations by sometime *WD* artist Pete Martin. They are keyed into important moments in the

adventure, and offer devious clues to some of the trickier problems, as well as conjuring up the necessary atmosphere.

Not that the adventure is lacking any, though! The plot concerns the return to this plane of arch-nasty Malnor, who was banished into Limbo many years before by your father. He was helped in this by a pair of magical gauntlets; you however, only have *one*, and you must retrieve the other from your father's ally in the east before sorting out Malnor. I don't want to give away too many details of the plot, as I'd rather you found out for yourself (or died trying!). Suffice to say, it is replete with all sorts of perils which you must overcome by a combination of cunning and luck. You will often overcome your enemies by brains rather than brawn, though the gauntlet is there if things get tough.

This massive adventure loads in two parts, but I'm sure even the best players won't get to Side 2 for a long while. Such is the attention to detail and infuriatingly clever plotting, that you will find yourself smiling knowingly when you finally get a particularly tricky section right - only to lose it again when you get stuck in the next bit! There's going to be a lot of sleep lost over this one!

Rating 9

Kevin Westbury

mortars, paratroopers, tanks etc. Each unit has attack and defence values, a movement value and a firing range. Terrain types include sand, grass, marsh, buildings, hedges, scrub and trees, and different terrain types consume varying numbers of movement points. Ships and trucks can transport other units and indeed some of these, such as long-range howitzers, cannot move on their own. The 'balancing' of the various unit values has been done very well and makes the game more playable. The maps have been excellently designed, providing a wide range of tactical alternatives for any given situation, and playing instructions are always given on-screen in a clear and concise manner. It is possible to scroll around the map and precisely identify all your own units, or you can call up a map of the overall position of your own (but not the enemy's) units. My only real criticism of *D-Day* is that because each unit has to be moved and fired individually, the game tends to be very slow. But the writers have provided a 'save game' facility at the end of each turn which helps and in any case, playing the game is absorbing that you don't notice the day passing! The mechanics of the game are so



D-DAY
Games Workshop Software £7.95

Computer wargames rarely lived up to promise in the past. There have been some stylish games on the *Atari*, such as *Eastern Front* and *Legionnaire*, and one or two very expensive disk-based American imports for the *Commodore 64*; but for the *Sinclair Spectrum* in particular, the existing 'wargames', such as *Confrontation* and *Battle 1917* bear about as much resemblance to the real thing as Frank Bruno does to Joe Louis. *D-Day*, however, is different. The game has four separate scenarios, each giving a stage in the push from Normandy to the Rhine. Each scenario is a set-piece battle on a map 63 x 64 units. The two players (Allied and German) have between 40 and 60 units each, depending on the scenario, and there are twelve different unit types, including bridgelayers,

simple anyone can play it, but in terms of strategy, *D-Day* is second to none.

Overall: 9

Andrew Miller

EUREKA!
Domark £14.95

Eureka is the latest and most spectacular of a new genre in computer games - the prize game. £25,000 is being offered to the first person to complete all five parts of this massive adventure. The game contains over 375K of programming and consists of five adventures linked by increasingly complex versions of an arcade game. The arcade game is pretty straightforward, chasing around a Pac Man like circuit, in which you gain extra vigour points to be used in the adventure game. In the pre-release copy I had it only contained a few of the games so

for the overall feel of the game I can't comment. The five adventures take place in Prehistoric Europe, Roman Italy, Celtic Britain, Wartime Germany and the modern Caribbean. The premise of the game is that fragments of a crystal from the moon have been scattered throughout time - you must find all the bits and save the world, and (coincidentally) the secret telephone number that gets you on the prize line. The plots are created by Ian Livingstone.

The adventure comes with a profusely illustrated book, in full colour, with pictures which have vital clues hidden in them.

Without having seen the full package, my impression is that this should provide a sustained challenge for the experienced adventure gamer, and a complex and absorbing introduction to the complete novice. The graphics are not the best I have seen, however, every new location is illustrated with a fresh set of graphics, most of which appear to be mirror images, displayed in the top third of the screen. By employing a multiloading option, they have managed to cram far more into this than any other game I've seen. I feel it would be unfair to grade *Eureka* until I've seen the whole package.

Kath Bilgora

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT

Beyond

£9.95

Lords of Midnight is a unique concept. It would be erroneous to class the game an adventure or a wargame, as it is neither, but it successfully combines the best elements of both genres.

The game is accompanied by a glossy booklet which explains the mechanics of the game, and details events prior to the action. Also included is an overlay which fits snugly over the Spectrum keyboard; all the commands are entered through single key strokes, so the overlay is essential.

The theme of the game concerns a mighty conflict between Good and Evil. Luxor the Moonprice must defend the Free against the Foul, led by the witchking Doomdark. The War of the Solstice is about to commence...

Initially the player controls three characters, apart from Luxor himself, who must journey through the Land of Midnight recruiting men. Once enough troops have been assembled, the Free must take Doomdark's Citadel in the Plains of Despair in order to win. Alternatively, Morkin (Luxor's son) may embark on a perilous solitary quest northwards to steal and destroy the Ice Crown. Because of his mixed heritage, Morkin is the only character who can withstand the full force of Doomdark's magic power.

The source of Doomdark's power is a magical artifact called the Ice Crown. The Ice Fear it produces has a terrible demoralising effect on all those who oppose it. If it becomes too strong lords may become too terrified to fight, and even desert to the other side.

Luxor wears the Moon Ring, antithesis of the Ice Crown. It allows him to direct his forces from afar, and also protects its bearer and those near him from the

effects of the Ice Fear.

The beauty of *Lords of Midnight* lies largely in the visualisation and detail devoted to the Land of Midnight itself. Views are finely drawn in blue and white across the middle of the screen. A brief description of the current location appears at the top, and nearby characters, armies and monsters exhibit themselves at the bottom in glorious technicolour.

The landscape changes continuously. The closer you travel towards a terrain feature, the larger it becomes. If you happen to notice something interesting in the distance, you can just change direction and head towards it. Apart from the various settlements and fortifications, the countryside is positively littered with towers, liths, ruins, caves and lakes. Often, these places conceal benign or malevolent powers - bane swords, the Cup of Dreams, the Hand of Dark, the Waters of Life, etc. Experience will dictate which to investigate and which to avoid.

Response time is very fast, even when drawing the pictures. I found the game a pleasure to play - the apparent simplicity of the commands in no way limits your options. All actions necessary to the central theme of the game are covered, more choice would purely make it unplayable. This is not a game for the faint-hearted - be prepared to devote weeks to it. If you like a challenge, and are looking for something different and totally absorbing, try *Lords of Midnight*. I doubt that you will be disappointed.

Overall: 9

Lyndsey Paton

BATTLECARS

Games Workshop Software

£7.95

For a computerized version of an existing boardgame to succeed, it must be able to remove all the tedious elements of die rolling, record keeping, and piece-moving, whilst retaining all the excitement, playability and addictive qualities of the original. So many computerisations fail miserably on all counts, but thankfully in the case of *Battlecars*, the computerised version is very good indeed, much better than the original

boardgame.

Packaged with a clear and informative instruction booklet, and a pair of press-out keyboard overlays, the game is made up of a number of different elements; this modular format enables you to start with a simple race around the small racing circuit against the clock, and build up to full-scale war in a large town, in a car you've designed yourself and fitted out with a wide range of weapons and extra features! Upon loading (after a rather long load time, though you do get a pretty title screen to look at) a menu reveals the various selections.

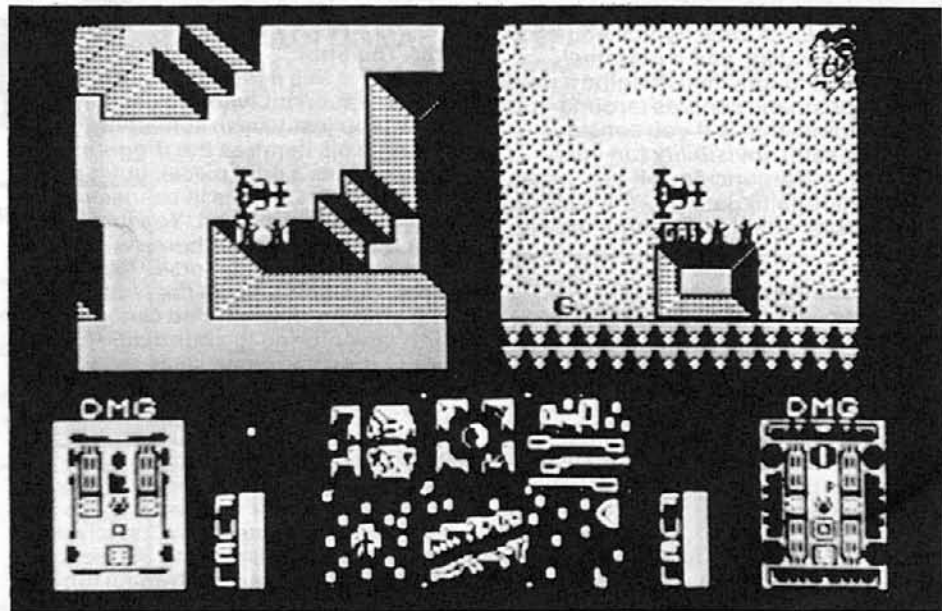
Choose 'Circuit' and you will get the option of a 'Time Trial', which can be useful in teaching you how to manoeuvre your car, or a 'Race', against the computer or a second player (or set the computer against itself!). There are 6 steering keys, together with Throttle, Brake, and four weapons keys. With practice though, this doesn't present too much of a problem, as they are sensibly laid out, and the overlays are very helpful.

Choose 'Autodrome' or 'Town' and you can load in another arena from side two. The former is a large open space dotted with a few bushes but the other, Slug City, is a very complex town plan, with many tortuous turns and dead-ends to trap an inexperienced driver. The screen layout is based around two scrolling windows, one centred on each car. Below these are the Damage sheets (parts of which flash as if you are hit), fuel and speed gauges, and a large overall map of the circuit, arena, or town. Graphics are crisp and smooth with very little flashing, and no detectable bugs.

The graphics in the 'Design' section are even better, very reminiscent of an architect's diagram. Starting with a basic frame you add weapons, armour and special equipment, depending on how much you have to spend. After designing your car, you can load it into the main program, and race it as usual. All in all, *Battlecars* is fast, furious and great fun, and manages to combine simple operations with quite complex play, where only the best drivers and the surest shots will survive.

Overall: 8

Kevin Westbury



Treasure Chest is a regular department for readers' ideas for Dungeons and Dragons.

ARS ARCANA

by Kiel Stephens

This issue's Treasure Chest concludes the series of spell tips for magic-users with ideas for the use of 8th and 9th level spells.

Glassteel

Another permanent little enchantment, so you may as well cast it on all of your windows (not that a magic user should have windows; a sealed home is a much better idea) and potion bottles. Since the armour class of this substance is 1, you might as well use it as the base material of your *enchant item* spells when making magic platemail as it will be two AC's better than magical metal platemail.

Mind Blank

An absolutely essential spell if you want to stay alive in a rough Universe. The only way to be totally safe from all harm is to be thoroughly unfindable, after all. The only way to achieve this is to use this spell. It is even better if you can get hold of a *wish* to make the effects permanent. The immunity to some spells is a nice extra, especially *soul trapping*.

Otto's Irresistible Dance

We've banned this one in our game. I mean, a spell with no saving throw that stops the poor guy from getting any saving throws against anything cast at him for at least two rounds, so make sure you carry a spell like *flesh to stone* in mind when you're going to cast this.

Permanency

A lot of referees extend this spell to include other spells that you can cast it on than just shown. But even as the spell stands, it is worth casting on objects such as *walls of force* (which you can shape as you like, and if *glassteel* platemail is tough, then imagine it made of this) *prismatic spheres* (around your bed at home, that is if you consider sleeping safe), *invisibility* (on your Familiar or Homunculus if you were stupid enough to get one - the less you have to look after in this game the better), etc.

Polymorph Any Object

This is nice for keeping items safe or small. Use it to turn large items into something similar but much smaller for ease of transportation. It is also useful to keep a selection of other people's flesh for various reasons as, if petrified, the flesh will stay fresh for *cloning*. I usually turn other peoples' flesh into labelled sticks, and then petrify them for storage. Because of this, when one fellow wizard decided that he didn't like the implications of having his flesh in someone else's grasp, he *wished* that all of his



flesh (except that which he was wearing) was destroyed. As the flesh was in another form at the time the sample survived.

Serten's Spell Immunity

At this stage, if all your saving throws aren't on ones, then there is obviously something wrong with you.

Symbol

Some of these *symbols* have durations that last as long as they are not used up. These are the ones such as *death*, *insanity*, and *stunning*. A *symbol of stunning* placed on the blade of a dagger before an adventure is very helpful so that if you have no recourse but to hit something (a sure sign that something is very wrong for a magic user) then at least you can affect 160 hit points with no save, a big improvement on the normal 1-4 for a dagger. It could also be a reasonable idea to put a *symbol* on the back of your jacket, just in case anyone tries to backstab you. I use *stunning* in the example as it affects the most hit points, and you never know how many you might need to stop.

Trap The Soul

Not only is this a foolproof way to capture an opponent whose true name you know (you just *vanish* something amongst his items as the triggering item, such as a gold piece), but it also has great possibilities in connection with the *magic jar* spell. You just keep your real body in your home with a simulacrum (the only totally loyal servants) that holds a *trap the soul* gem with your name on it. You can then go forth adventuring in your *magic jar* body, using your own jar as the trigger item for the *trap the soul* spell. What this means is that if you (your body) die, and are forced into the jar, you have *trapped the soul* yourself, no matter how far away it is. When this happens the gem glows, the simulacrum will see this and crush the gem, and you will safely enter your real body again. With this set up you need never fear death again (unless killed inside an *anti-magic shell*).

Temporal Stasis

At last, a spell with a range (it doesn't matter how short the range is, as long as you don't have to roll to hit) that automatically puts people out, no save. The only problem is that you can't hurt them afterwards. One nice way to deal with your trapped victims is to go up to them with an *anti-magic shell* on you and then they will be back to normal as long as you are within 10' of them. If they try to run away then as soon as they are over 10' away from them they go back into *temporal stasis*, and as long as they are in the *anti-magic shell* they can't cast any magic (and magic is the only thing worth worrying about, isn't it?). But chain them up first anyway, I mean, why start taking chances now. You may also like to use this spell to keep your future clones fresh rather than having to wait 2 - 8 months for one to grow.

Time Stop

The duration of this is long enough to steal an item or slit a throat totally unnoticed, and then leave again. People just won't realise what's happened. One moment they're talking to a friend, the next moment his throat is bleeding and he's dead.

One spell that I haven't mentioned independently is *dispel magic*, and if you suspect your opponent may have seen this article, then s/he might well need *dispelling*. Another thing to note is that if your referee tends to cast *dispels* at you a lot, then many of the aforementioned set-ups will be a waste of time for you, unless you can get hold of a *Bag of Holding* or a *Portable Hole* to keep your goodies in.

Many non-offensive spells (such as *passwall*) can be used in combat and a few offensive spells may be used to good purpose defensively, for example, the *symbol* on the back of the cloak to deter backstabbers. Combining two or more spells can give a spell extra potential, like the range of possibilities when using a *magic jar*, the different ways of succeeding with a *projected image*, and the devastating effect of *passwall* followed by a *dispel magic*. □

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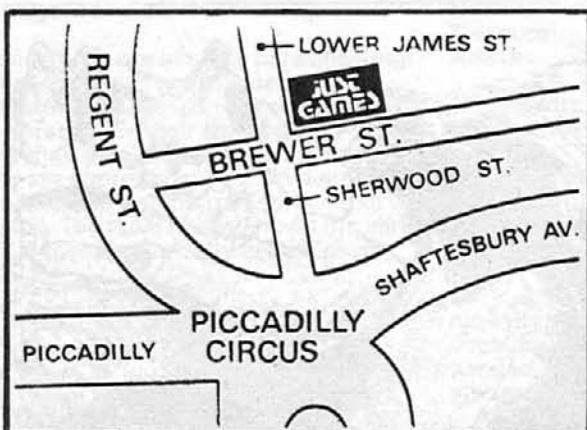
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Fiend Factory is a regular department for new AD&D monsters, edited by Albie Fiore.

Felines, Fungi and Phantoms

Fiend Factory Poll: Three years have passed since *WD* featured its last Top Ten of new monsters and, with another *Best of WD Articles* due soon, we'd like to know your opinions as to which monsters that have appeared in *WD* (whether they've been in *Fiend Factory*, a scenario or an article) are the best. List up to five monsters in order of preference and send them to: *Fiend Factory Poll*, White Dwarf, 27-29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP, to arrive no later than February 1st, 1985. We'll also accept entries for the *worst* monsters as well, but make sure you mark the entries clearly!

BUSH CAT by Robin Cameron

	Age 1-5 Years	Age 6-12 Yrs	Age 13-25 Yrs	Age 26 (+4d6)
No Appearing:	1 (10% 1-4)	1 (10% 1-4)	1 (10% 1-4)	1 (10% 1-4)
Armour Class:	3	3	3	3
Movement:	9"	12"	15"	12"
Hit Dice:	1d8+2	2d8+2	3d8+2	4d8+2
Treasure:	Nil	1/2U	U	Ux2
Attack:	2 claws for 1-3 each plus bite for 1d4			
Alignment:	Chaotic neutral	Chaotic neutral	Chaotic neutral	Chaotic neutral
Intelligence:	Very	Highly	Highly	Exceptional



These small cat-like creatures are found in forested, hilly, mountainous and rough areas. They frequently waylay parties of all sorts, especially gnomes, goblins, halflings and kobolds.

Bush cats usually attack by leaping from trees or ledges, or by their ability to cause *fear* by emitting their terrifying screech from their unseen place of ambush and then silently pursuing and attacking their fleeing victim from

behind (gaining the backstab modifiers as for a thief).

Bush cats live to a maximum age of 50 years (26+4d6). Their statistics and abilities vary with their age. However, all bush cats have the following abilities: track (as a ranger); pass without trace (as druid); *speak with animals*; and lick wounds (as paladin *laying on hands*) at 2 points per age category, once every 6 hours. In addition to common and their alignment tongues, all bush cats can speak the following languages: gnome, goblin, halfling, and kobold.

Bush cats also have other abilities depending on their age as detailed below.

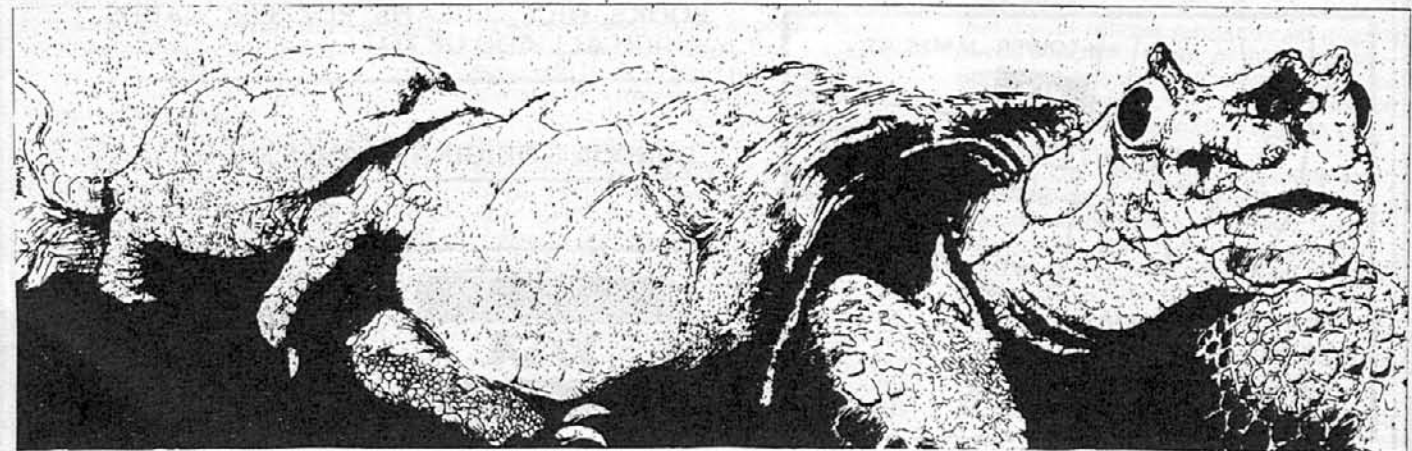
	Age: 1-5	6-12	13-25	26+
Magic Resistance:	10%	20%	30%	40%
DM to Fear Save:	-1	-2	-3	-4
Fall as Monk Lvl:	4th	4th	6th	13th
Damage/Backstab as Thief Level:	1st	5th	9th	13th
Move Silently, Hide in Shadows, Hear Noise as Thief Lvl:	4th	7th	10th	13th

TUNNEL CRAWLER by Mark Simmons and Dougal Dixon

No Appearing:	1 (2-5)
Armour Class:	4 (Back: 0)
Movement:	7"
Hit Dice:	5d8+2
Treasure:	R,V,X
Attack:	4 claws for 1d6 each, poison, spells and special (see below)
Alignment:	Lawful neutral (evil tendency)
Intelligence:	Genius

Tunnel crawlers are a reclusive race of earth dwellers whose main interest lies in works of a literary nature (ie, scrolls, spell books, poems, legends, etc). They stand at about the height of a small horse and blend in with the colours of the stones and earth around them. Although they are basically peaceful creatures, they will attack any party who they think may have written works about them and lust after any scrolls or magic-users' spell books.

Tunnel crawlers usually attack by surprise as they can hide in shadows as a 12th level thief. They prefer to attack with their spells or toxic spray (see below) rather than melee, but will claw if hard pressed. If attacked from behind, they can use their poison sting (save vs death at +3). They take half damage from





edged weapons and are 90% resistant to magic. If severely wounded, they can roll up into a ball (like an armadillo) and are AC0 in this state. They are immune to poison and attacks by acid or fungi.

These creatures feed on stone and fungi from which they produce the toxins for their poison sting. They mine and burrow using a spray that they can squirt from two glands in their forehead. The spray dissolves rock, making it easier for them to remove with their mandibles. If a tunnel crawler chooses to spray any attackers with this excrescence, it acts as a *web* spell as well as causing a fatal skin disease (save vs death at +5 or die in 1-6 months unless a *cure disease* spell is cast on the afflicted character).

All tunnel crawlers can use spells as a 7th level magic user and 2nd level cleric.

Any treasure of an individual creature will be hidden in its lair which is usually a chamber at the end of a long passage-way.

They speak their own language and common, as well as many other languages that they have learned from the various writings that they have collected. They are nicknamed 'Old Grandfather Lizards' by most earth dwellers.

BLOOD SPORE

by Alan Heaven

No Appearing: 1-8
Armour Class: See below
Movement: See below
Hit Dice: 1-5d8
Treasure: None
Attack: See below
Alignment: Neutral
Intelligence: Non

Bloodstones are actually parasitic fungi which have evolved to resemble gemstones so that curious creatures will be attracted by their colours.

At their smallest and youngest stage, they are approximately 2" in diameter and look like a shining multi-faceted crystal. The table below shows the various stages through which they grow:

Size	HD	AC	Colour
2"	1d8	2	Clear crystal
4"	2d8	2	Light emerald
6"	3d8	1	Turquoise
8"	4d8	1	Dark sapphire
10"	5d8	0	Blood-red ruby

These parasites live by drawing off the

blood, marrow and internal organs of any warm-blooded creature that they can become attached to, growing and changing colour according to the amount drained from the host. A fair estimate of the effect on the host is the loss of 1 point of constitution and 1 hit point per day until death is near when the fungus will arrest the process until a fresh victim is near. Equally, it can speed up the process to the rate of 1 constitution and damage point per turn but only if it senses a much greater source of food and reproduction nearby, or if attacked.

Once the fungus has reached the ruby-red stage, it will burst, if potential victims are in range, releasing 5-10 pease-sized spores up to 3" towards the nearest living, warm-blooded creatures with no more than half the spores going to any one source if more than one is in range. The spores strike as a 5 hit dice creature for 2d4 damage and, if they hit, are attached to the creature. They will burrow through cloth into the victim's body in one round, through leather in two, and through metal in four. The spores cannot easily be knocked off, and are treated as AC0 for this purpose. If they fail to reach living flesh in 2 turns, they shrivel and die.

Once the spore has burrowed through any clothing, it anaesthetises its victim and burrows unnoticed into and under the skin. Once there, it begins to grow its fronds through which it feeds, and the only sign of it is a small swelling. Once it has drained 1d8's worth from the victim it will by then have emerged on the victim's flesh in its clear crystal state. Once exposed, it can be removed by acid which will leave its fronds behind to rot inside the victim and will necessitate a *cure disease*; or by a salt solution which will shrivel and kill the entire parasite with no after effects. However, one third of any constitution points that it has drained can never be recovered and the remainder are recuperated at the rate of 1 point per week.

Blood spores are immune to fire. Extreme cold does them no harm, but causes them to hibernate (cease feeding and growing) until the cold has passed.

HELGHOST

by Andrew Baker

No Appearing: 1-6 (2-40 in army)
Armour Class: -2
Movement: 21"
Hit Dice: 9d8+4
Treasure: A
Attack: By weapon, spells and special (see below)
Alignment: Lawful evil
Intelligence: Exceptional-Genius

This extremely rare creature is the inherently corrupt form of a magic-user who was so evil in life that they became an undead personification of that evil. They appear as a skeletal figure (not unlike a lich), with glowing red eyes and are always cloaked in long black robes. They usually wield a huge, ornate two-handed sword (typically +1). They are also exceptionally strong (18⁰⁰).

A helghost can emit a powerful beam of psychic energy (4" long cone, 3"



diameter at end, 1/2" diameter base). Anyone caught in this beam takes 5 points of damage (no save) each round. The helghost can use this *mind blast* as well as attacking with spells or weapons each round.

To become a helghost after death, a magic-user must fulfil the following requirements: they must have been at least 12th level; have been lawful evil consistently throughout their life without any deviation; have more hit points than the helghost they are to become; and their average for strength, intelligence and wisdom must be at least 14. If a magic-user satisfies these requirements and wishes to become a helghost on their death, they must sacrifice at least 5000gp worth of gems and jewelry to their deity. If they do this, they have a 45% base chance of becoming a helghost with an additional 1% for every additional 5000gp worth of jewelry sacrificed to a total maximum chance of 75%. Illusionists can never become helghosts under any circumstance.

A helghost can use spells as a magic-user of one third the level that they were when alive (eg, an 18th level magic-user would become a helghost with 6th level magic powers). If the reverse of a spell is possible, then the helghost must always take the reverse.

A helghost can never actually die. If they are reduced to 0 or less hit points, they lapse into a comatose state indistinguishable from death. However, in 2-24 hours, minus one hour for each 10 hit points the helghost had (to a minimum of 2 hours), they will revive. If, when a helghost is reduced to a comatose state, the spells *exorcise* and then *bles* are used, the helghost will not revive for 1-12 months, minus one month for each 10 hit points the helghost had (to a minimum of one month). Experience points are awarded as normal for reducing a helghost to a coma.

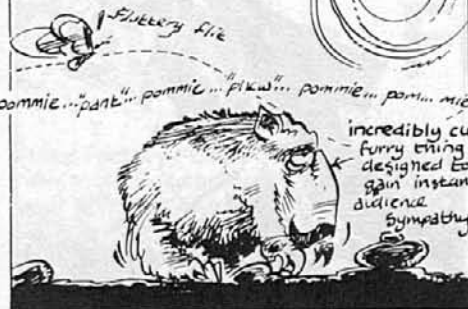
If the comatose creature is dismembered, and the parts scattered, then, once the time for revival has elapsed, each part can *geas* its discoverer to take that part to the others where it can reunite and become whole again.

Helghosts are turned by clerics as vampires.

Helghosts can sometimes be found in large, powerful armies of an evil nature, but this is rare (3%).

If any player character becomes a helghost, they should be removed from the campaign with the helghost becoming an NPC. □

The Desert...harsh...cruel... inhospitable



incredibly cute furry thing designed to gain instant audience sympathy.

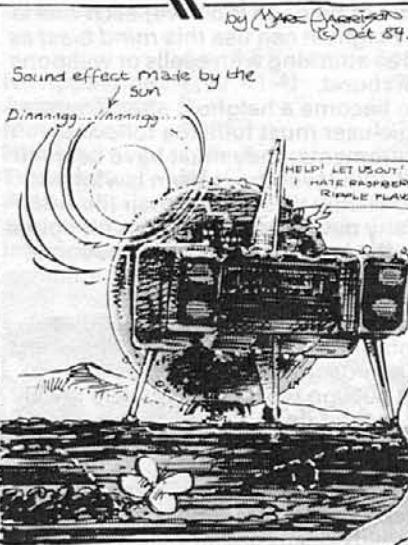
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...especially if your world has Gavin in it.

THE TRAVELLERS

CHAPTER 4: "A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE BASE" Having landed on Pscias, Flinn, Hayes, Syrena and Gavin (oh, and Felix) set off toward the prison complex. There they must deactivate the Sensor for the next part of the plan...



Sound effect made by the Sun
Dinnng...dinnng...

OH FINNY... DON'T YOU THINK LEAVING THE SHUTTLE CREW IN THE HOLD WITH TWO TONS OF RAPIDLY MELTING CHOC-ICES TO DIE A HORRIBLY STICKY DEATH A BIT SEVERE?

have cute furry things...



IT WAS EITHER THAT OR LEAVE DINALT WITH THEM.

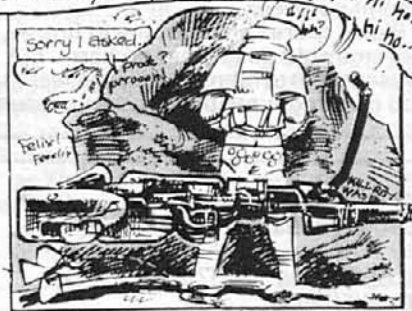
IT WAS A KINDNESS, SYRENA.

The arduous trek begins...



"Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to the Prison complex we go" With rockets and bombs and photon guns, hi ho... hi ho, hi ho, hi ho, "pneuw... gasp... hi ho..."

Frank Herbert Tortured Worms here
Gavin, why are you you wearing a camouflaged leaf battle-suit on a desert planet?
dun... To confuse the enemy - hum!



Sorry I choked.
Felix: "pneuw... gasp... hi ho..."



tense, slow, melodious music that always seems to follow you round when you're trekking across a desert...
gasp... pneuw... h... illi pneuw... h... hi ho...
Flinny... Felix has run off...
"oh dear what a shame Flinny!"
"Savvy, I mean he may be a bit of a dune!"
"MOTHER DUNE!"
JOE

Much later...



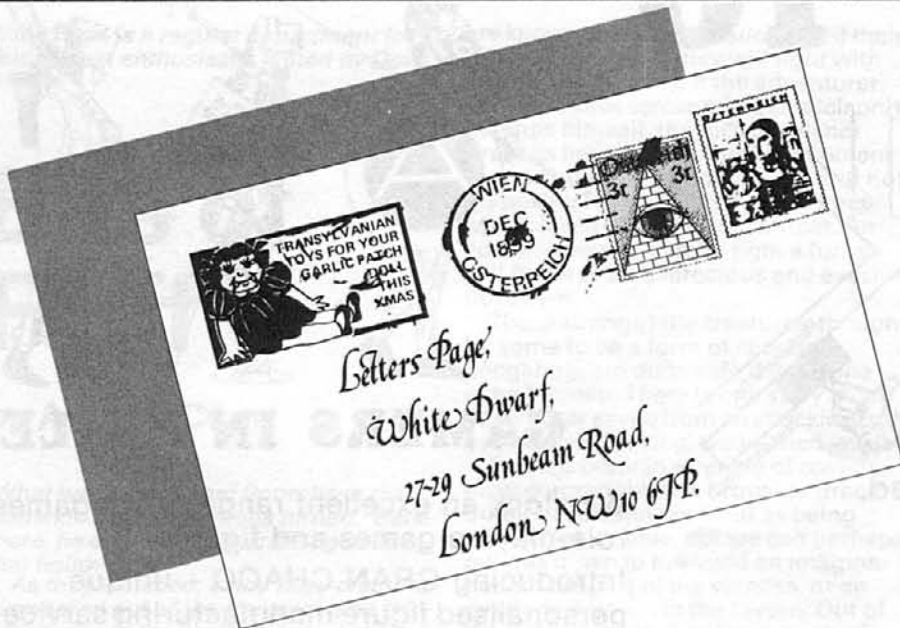
THERE IT IS GUYS - THE PRISON COMPLEX! LOOKS LIKE A MODEL.
Can I have a look?
SHUT UP GAVIN!
Urkk!



AM I WORRIED FLINNY?... WHAT ABOUT THE LASER-FENCED, THE ARMoured GUARDS, THE 'ough' PHOTON TURRETS? ...gasp! choke!



NO, FELIX. IT'S BEEN NEARLY 5 HRS AND HE STILL HADN'T COME BACK.
Oh... (Forget it) COME ON - LET'S GET DOWN THERE...
NEXT: NATURE RAMBLE.



Dear *WD*,

Over the months Carl Critchlow's *Thrud the Barbarian* has appeared in *White Dwarf*, we are sure that many readers have enjoyed the fun that he has had at the expense of some of fantasy fiction's most cherished clichés.

He is not the first, of course, as his use of classic sequences from *Monty Python & The Holy Grail* [WD50] and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* [WD55] acknowledges, but not all your readers may have realised that he is also a fan of Dave Sim's *Cerebus the Aardvark*, with the earthpig born himself making born a guest appearance in panel 5 of the *Thrud* strip in WD 52. As long-standing devotees of 'the-killer-who-looks-like-a-bunny' we are sure that many of *Thrud's* readers would get as much enjoyment as Carl obviously has from Dave's work, especially stories such as *Magiking*, in the compilation volume *Swords of Cerebus 4*. You'll have to hurry, though, to catch the remaining copies of *Epic* (Feb '83) which featured his glorious *Arnold the Isshurian*.

Sadly, although Michael Moorcock liked Dave's Elric parody, *Elrod the Albino* [*Cerebus 4*, June '78, and many succeeding issues], it looks as if another of Dave's best supporting characters has recently bitten the dust. The Wolveroach (aka The Cockroach, Captain Cockroach and the Moonroach) seems to have fallen foul of *Marvel's* party pooping corporate lawyers, who don't seem to appreciate the difference between parody, which introduces original material, and plagiarism, where chunks of someone else's work are used wholesale without acknowledgement. Still, that's the happy-go-lucky world of comics for you.

Yours, I say, yours sincerely,
Chris Elliott & Richard Edwards.

Dear *WD*,

Having read Kiel Stephens' suggestions on spell usage in WD57 I felt I had to comment on the proposed use of the *levitate* spell. Certainly the spell-caster can *levitate* an unwilling victim (if the target fails it's save vs magic) but the spell description clearly states that there is a maximum vertical movement rate of 10'/round in such cases, this limitation doesn't only apply to upwards motion

but also limits the victims's rate of descent. However, the *levitate* spell can be cancelled whenever the spell caster so desires and in this way the hapless victim can be made to fall normally but in doing so the spell is lost and the victim (if still alive) should once again be free to move unhindered. In this way the *levitate* spell continues to be as good as a death spell when the 'long drop' method is used in the wilderness, but even a 1st level Fighter shouldn't have too much to worry about in a 10' high room.

Whilst on the subjects of spells I may as well include my observations on the side effects of the *pyrotechnics* spell, specifically when the fire source is immediately extinguished by the employment of the spell. Although most DMs quickly learn to describe their favourite subterranean fiery chasm as being fed by numerous small jets of flame, a DM might allow the caster of this spell to extinguish a *wall of fire* or perhaps even banish a fire elemental (although the *pyrotechnics* chance of success is usually worked out along the lines of a *dispel magic* spell).

Well that's enough for now (my typing finger is getting sore).

Yours,
Mark Byng, Portsmouth.

Dear *WD*,

I'm sorry that your magazine 'caters' only for more popular games on the market. What about the less popular ones? One can become rather discouraged reading endless articles about *D&D* or *Traveller*. Where are the articles about *C&S* or *MERP* (*Middle Earth Role-Playing*).

This trend can be easily seen in the proliferation of scenarios and articles for *RuneQuest*.

I'm aware of the fact that the possible answer to this letter will probably be: 'We're willing to publish, but we need contributions -Ed.' But if your readers are not aware of the existence of those systems or think that you are interested in *D&D* they will play the game behind the DM's screen and you'll never hear of them. How about some constructive example giving?

As for *MERP*, you should consider the

fact that the vast majority of RPG players came to RPGs through Tolkien's work (or at worst Donaldson or May - yuck). This game has the *best* background of them all. Being superior to *D&D* doesn't harm it, either.

Despite the above criticism, your magazine is very, very useful, especially the general articles (like *Psionics* in WD57 or *Monsters Have Feelings Too* in WD38). Keep up the standard.

As a final request I would be very happy to see Albie Fiore eaten by Fenris Wolf, just to stop the gibbering moulder's factory.

Your Ever Murgio Killing Ally,
Marc A Volovic (Israeli-Elven spy)

Dear *WD*,

I have to agree with Altea the Envious (letters, WD57). The editorial in *WD* is becoming increasingly inane and immature, and tends to patronise the readers. Is this a part of a sinister plot to turn our noble pastime into a children's game and thus open a bigger market for the game moguls? We already have a *Dungeons & Dragons* cartoon series on telly, and those revolting plastic figures that have the temerity to call themselves *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* in the toyshops - is *WD* now muscling in on this *Beano* territory? I must point out that I have nothing against younger players - I was 14 when I started playing - but they will enjoy it more if it is treated in a more adult way, as in the golden age of early *White Dwarf*. Then it will be more challenging for youngsters and newcomers, and more useful for old hacks.

Fiend Factory proves itself also in declining. Scraping through borderline SF/Fantasy for new ways to spell monster, this department is overdue for a rest. Perhaps we should accept that an orc, by any other name, would fight as foul...

Yours,
John Outram, Camberley.

Dear *WD*,

Putting *Readers of the Lost Ark* on the back of the *Treasure Chest Crossword Competition* was not the most brilliant show of imagination you have ever had. Seriously, this could stop a lot of readers filling it in.

I am worried by what appears to be a case of selective blindness by Mr Steele (WD57). Since issue 54, *Treasure Chest* has been providing exactly what he wants - articles on campaigns and role-playing which have only a slight *D&D* basis, excepting *Ars Arcana*, and he still complains! These days people are seriously talking about role-playing, not just how to become Superman; the hobby has grown up.

All in all I have found little to complain about in the last issue of *White Dwarf*, except for the fact that *Fiend Factory* has been a bit dull. Even this has had its redeeming features though and the shapelings alone are justification for the column.

Yours,
R James, Hereford.

Several readers have pointed out the error of our ways with 'Readers...'; all I can say is that it won't happen again!

—Ed.

RALLY TO



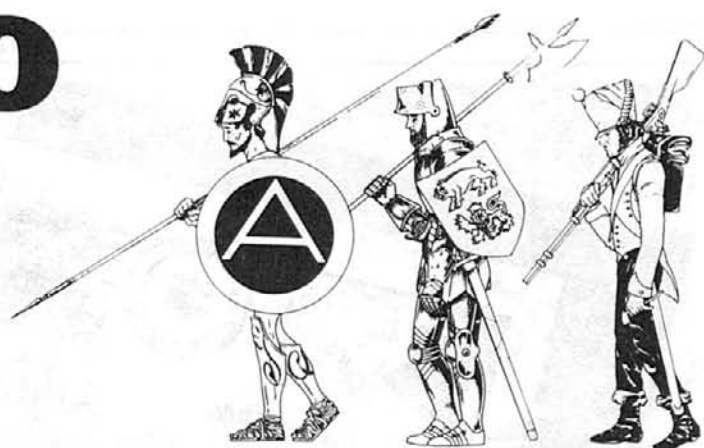
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Rune Rites is a regular department for RuneQuest enthusiasts, edited by Dave Morris

Bits of Fluff

by Alex McCunn

'What was what?' said Boombash the Humakti. His companions turned. 'Back there, he continued, 'a scuffling inside that hollow tree.'

As they watched, a tiny furry creature clambered out of the treetrunk and fell with a plop to the grass. It looked back at them with comically round eyes, a toy spear clasped in its little fist.

'You little so-and-so,' growled Boombash as he drew his sword. His teeth flashed in a malicious sneer as he advanced towards the tiny being. 'I'll teach you not to go frightening honest adventurers...'

FURBALLS

STR: 1d6 Left leg (05-08) 0/3
SIZ: 1d6 Body (09-14) 4/4
INT: 3d6 Right arm (15-17) 0/2
POW: 3d6 Left arm (18-20) 0/2
DEX: 3d6+6
CHA: 2d6
Move: 6

Hit points: 8-9 average

Defence: 30% average

Armour: 4 point fur

Javelin: throw (1d10),SR1,75%; melee (1d8+1),SR5,100% (Parry 70%)

Skills: Stealth abilities very high (80+)

Furballs are rare and peculiar creatures which dwell deep in woodland such as the Stinking Forest near Snakepipe Hollow. They live alone in hollow trees or under tree roots. These seemingly primitive creatures are friendly and intelligent, living off herbs and berries and the occasional lizard or snake. They

are known to hoard treasure, and if their privacy is invaded they will fight with spears and javelins. If the adventurer who stumbles across a furball's lair only defends himself, the furball will not press its initial attack. Once it is content that this particular adventurer will not go poking his nose into hollow trees again, it will retreat from combat. An adventurer who tries to fight a furball will find it to be a ferocious and evasive opponent.

These strange little creatures, thought by some to be a form of chaotic hedgehog, are quite safe if left alone - even friendly. There is one story of an adventurer saved from an attacking troll by a curious-looking, well-aimed javelin.

Furballs occur in a variety of colours, most commonly dark brown or green. Some have been reported as being garish pink or blue, but we can perhaps put this down to too vivid an imagination on the part of the witness, or an overlong sojourn in the tavern. Out of the furball's thick coat stare a pair of large soulful eyes which seem to constantly shift in hue. How many travellers must have been unnerved to see such eyes shining out at them from the darkness within a hollow treetrunk?

WEREBALLS

STR: 1d6+6 (x2 in were-form)
CON: 3d6
SIZ: 1d6 (x2 in were form)
INT: 3d6 (animal-level in were-form)
POW: 3d6
DEX: 3d6+6 (-6 in were-form)
CHA: 2d6

Move: 6(8)

Hit points: average 9-10 in were-form

Defence: 10%

Armour: usual 4 point fur; skin becomes 2 point in were-form and requires magic or Runic metal to penetrate

Were-form attacks:

Bite (1d6+2),SR9,55%

Claw (1d6+1d4),SR9,45%

Kick (1d6+1d4),SR9,30%

It will make all three such attacks in a single MR. Roll d10 for hit location. Once the opponent is down:-

Bite ((1d6+2),SR1,75%; *location:* head, ignoring armour

The lycanthropic furball, known as the wereball, is the best known variation.

Vampire forms are also hinted at. The wereball assumes the form of a bulky, dog-faced ball of light fur with great white claws. This wereball (or wolfball) is twice the size of a standard furball, and a formidable foe. It will attack unprovoked and attempt to knock down a character. If successful it will go for the throat and head, after first removing any armour in the way.

These unpleasant creatures live among the rocks and in the caves of Beast Valley and are not so rare as people would like them to be. They subsist mainly on a diet of unfortunate adventurers as they enjoy the sport of hunting humans.

DRAGON BALLS

STR: 3d6 Tail (01-02) 4/4
CON: 3d6 Right leg (03-06) 4/5
SIZ: 3d6 Left leg (07-10) 4/5
INT: 3d6 Body (11-20) 8/6
POW: 3d6
DEX: 2d6
CHA: 2d6

Move: 8

Hit points: 10-11 average

Defence: 15%

Armour: 4 pt skin; 4 pt fur

Claws: (2d6),SR10,60%

Bite: (d6+2),SR12,55%

(The dragon ball will strike with both claws and bite in a single MR.)

Dragon balls are another, less common variation. These yellow-skinned creatures live in the deserts of Glorantha and usually make their home in the vicinity of an oasis. They are almost perfectly round with the exception of the protruding dragonish snout and tail, and have two powerful limbs in place of the usual four. Their fur is golden brown and wispy. Because of their colouration they are also called sun-dragons.

The most outstanding trait of these man-sized creatures is their lambent green eyes. These have the effect of a befuddle on anyone gazing into them, unless the victim can roll INTx3 or less on d100. *[I assume an opponent would first get a luck roll to see if he avoided eye contact. Cf vampires, RQ chapter VIII. - DM].*

Dragon balls also live and hunt alone. They will attack humans only if provoked or hungry.□

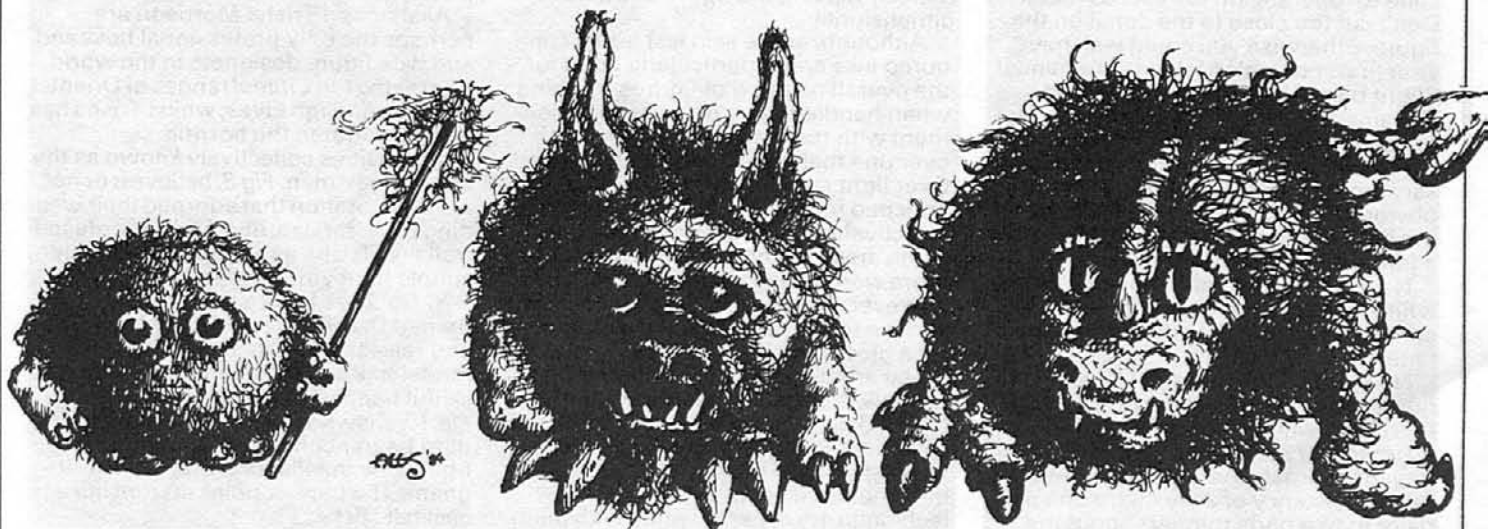
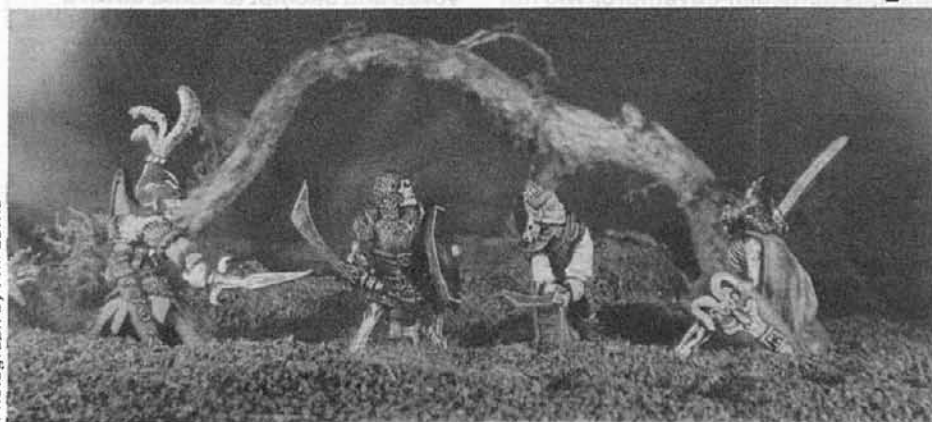


Table top heroes is a regular department covering figures and painting tips by Gary Chalk and Joe Dever.

A Wash and Brush-up



Photograph by Phil Lewis

Continuing our guide to painting, this month we're taking a look at colour wash techniques. A wash is the application of thinned paint, in such way that the recessed and indented parts of your figure (eg the folds of a cloak) become flooded whilst the raised areas (eg shoulders, knees, top of head etc) become coated by a much thinner, almost transparent layer of paint. The more transparent a paint is to begin with, the more effective the wash will be. We recommend acrylic paint for washes but enamels can be used just as readily, although the finish will be noticeably less brilliant. Generally, however, you'll get better results from paints with an exceptionally fine pigment -metallics are a little tricky to apply in this fashion, and we suggest that you practice the basic wash technique on a number of figures before attempting anything too complex.

Before applying a wash, be sure to take a number of precautions. Just as a wash will pick out the detail in a casting, so will it exaggerate any blemishes present - cavities, mould lines and the like. Therefore, before applying paint to your figure, make sure that it is free from these defects. We recommend that you follow the following tips to avoid any later problems.

To get rid of large pieces of flash or strange lumps, use a good modelling knife to 'operate' on the excess metal. Don't cut too close to the detail on the figure, otherwise you could well have your first conversion job on your hands! Slight blemishes and anything that remains can be filed (using a needle file) or sanded down (scrounge a bit of emery paper for this) to give the necessary smooth finish. Without all these obvious defects your figure will look all the better once it is painted up, for only a few minutes work beforehand.

Next, undercoat your figure with matt-white - a thin, even coat is best and will show the washes off to their best advantage.

Now, take some pigment (that thick gunge at the bottom of the tin!) and thin this down with an appropriate thinner: water for acrylics, white spirit or turpentine for enamels. As a guide to the correct consistency of a wash, try one part paint to two parts thinner; about the

same consistency as fountain pen ink. Next, choose your brush. For normal 25mm human-sized figures, we recommend a size 1, as this will hold a decent charge and permit the paint to run freely over the model. The best wash results are obtained on areas of a figure that are relatively smooth, or feature open details. Most clothing (especially cloaks), shields and scaly creatures (ie lizard men, dragons etc) benefit from a colour wash. Areas of intricate texture, eg quilting and armour (especially chainmail), are best dry-brushed: a technique we shall be examining in detail next month. Take your brush of thinned paint and gently apply it to the chosen area of the figure. The fluid nature of the paint allows it to run into every fold and crevice, and when this paint dries, it automatically forms a shaded area in these folds and a highlighted area along all the raised parts of the figure. In some cases, this will be all the shading a figure needs, but most will require further shading once the wash has dried.

Using our shading and highlighting guide [WD58], mix an appropriate high-light colour, but do not thin it out. The more opaque the highlight the better as it has to cover the mid-tone of the previous wash. Apply the highlight where the wash is at its lightest, so as to increase the contrast between light and dark, thereby making the figure more three dimensional.

Although, as we said last issue, coloured inks aren't particularly good for the overall painting of figures (rubbing when handled), you may like to experiment with them as a secondary wash over one that you have already applied. Over light colours they can give an enriched tone to the figure or, if applied selectively, can give the impression that some areas (without the ink wash) are more worn (being a lighter colour). Inks, however, will require a matt, absorbent surface to key on to - they'll simply run off a glossy or shiny surface.

The art of successful wash-painting is to allow the basic wash of colour to do the work for you. As the paint dries, the shading and highlights will appear on your figure in all the right places. As you become more adept at the wash technique, try experimenting with multi-

ple washes of different colours. Some stunning two-tone effects can be achieved, especially with successive layers of enamel metallics.

This Issue's Photos

Fig 1 shows an undercoated figure with the first colours added. One leg has been washed in green, the other in crimson with a mauve stripe applied once the wash had dried. Note that the figure has been glued to a temporary base to facilitate handling. Cloaked figures are particularly suited to wash techniques, and *Fig 2* shows the cloak of a *Citadel* Chaos Warrior after the first wash has dried. The next stage would be to add extra shading where necessary, in this case deep purple (a mixture of purple and black). *Fig 3*, a completed *Citadel* Vordak, illustrates just how effective a colour wash can be. The deep red was achieved by painting the figure with a base coat of *Humbrol* matt scarlet (Marker Red HT5), and then applying a wash of *Tamiya* red acrylic once the base coat had dried. Shading was enhanced with chestnut brown before any further detail was added. If you find that a one colour wash leaves your figure a little patchy, let it dry and then apply another coat. The Warrior Priest [*Citadel* C100/4E] in *Fig 4* is sporting two washes of *Tamiya* Royal Blue acrylic, which gives a particularly vibrant finish.

Fig 5 shows a *Ral Partha* Ogre atop an early *Ral Partha* land-lizard. This splendid conversion was constructed by the Player's Guild of Nottingham, and is one of their many innovative set-pieces. We will be featuring several of their primitive-tech' creations in the coming months, notably a dwarven hang-glider battalion and an orcish hot-air balloon!

In *Fig 6* we see *Citadel's* new War Wyvern painted by its designer, Tony Ackland. The beautiful detail on the wings was achieved by careful dry-brushing. This was applied to several colour washes after they had been delicately shaded.

Fig 7 shows some converted *Citadel* Spacefarer's, expertly painted by John Blanche, who is perhaps better known for his fantasy illustrations. We understand that he favours enamels and gouache paints, which he applies in thin washes. Much of the detail is picked out with a very fine black ink pen, in a similar style to his graphic illustrations.

Alistair and Trisha Morrison are perhaps the only professional husband and wife figure designers in the world. Ali created the *Citadel* ranges of Oriental Heroes and High Elves, whilst Trisha has just perpetrated the horrific monstrosities collectively known as the Chaos Beastmen. *Fig 8*, believe it or not, is the decoration that adorned their wedding cake, caricaturing Ali as a confused troll and Trisha as a harpy. The happy couple honeymooned in Mordor!

In *Fig 9*, we have a magnificent Great Spined Dragon, designed by Nick Bibby and released by *Citadel* for £15. This model has certainly benefitted from the skilful hand of its owner, Kevin Adams. *Fig 10*, shows an orcish officer and standard bearer converted from regular figures by the Player's Guild of Nottingham. The banner poles started life as cocktail sticks. □

Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6



Fig 7



Fig 8



Fig 9



Fig 10





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APOLOGIES

Last issue's Starbase should have been credited to Rudolf Stolle, and Pete Martin's name was omitted from the artists' credits. Gremlins also saw to it that Anna Prince became Anna Price and we can only apologise for the presence of these pranksters in the magazine!

MAYFAIR/TSR DISPUTE OVER

Mayfair Games and TSR have reached a mutual agreement in their trade mark dispute. The dispute concerned the use of the AD&D trade name on Mayfair's Role Aid modules. The settlement allows Mayfair to use the AD&D trade name with certain restrictions on placement and colour. Darwin Bromley, president of

Mayfair said 'Having this matter behind us allows for more time to devote to our products so we can continue to grow and expand.' This settlement will indeed be of great interest to other companies, who no doubt have considered the possibility of producing D&D related products. Will this signal an avalanche?

GOSSIP

*Over the past four years or so Parkers (makers of Risk etc) and Milton Bradley have been looking to enter the hobby games market in the US. Parkers, up to last year, were researching into a Middle Earth RPG, and a Star Trek RPG, but they fired all the staff and dropped out. Milton Bradley after great deliberation targetted on war-games instead, and consequently they bought three games: Axis and Allies, Broadsides, and Conquest of the Empire. These games are now available in the US, and should be over in the UK soon. *Iron Crown are in the process of re-formatting Rolemaster and updating it at the same time; the boxed sets Arms/Claw Law and Spell Law will become booklets, Character Law and Campaign Law will be amalgamated into one book. *Games Workshop's printing of MERP will have the rulebook, Dungeon Floor Plan maps (rather like Dungeon Planner), full colour character cut-outs and dice, it should be available in the new year.

*Games Workshop have secured the licence for Citadel to produce Official Tolkien Middle Earth miniatures. There will be figures available soon, both in metal and plastic to complement MERP and mass armies for Warhammer.

*FASA are in the process of re-packaging Klingons. It will reappear as two books in a folio sleeve, and Romulans should be out soon in the same format. Klingons price will also be reduced.

*Avalon Hill's version of RuneQuest will be available very soon (if not already), the prices are set at: Deluxe Set (£39.95), Game-master's Set (£24.95), and the Player's Set (£19.95).

*Doug Cowie is now the managing director of Grenadier UK. Production is to start in the early new year.

*Citadel's first batch of plastic 60mm Fighting Fantasy character and monster, will be released in the new year. They are painted, have a selection of weapons and are nicely animated, retailing at 95p.

ON ITS WAY FROM ACROSS THE POND

With the lead up to Xmas, predictably there's a profusion of new games, supplements etc. I've already mentioned some of them in other issues, and here's a rundown of the rest: Iron Crown has Moria I (£7.95), Lonely Mountain (£19.95), and Battle of the Five Armies (£19.95). Taskforce Games have the first of their History of WW2 series, Hitler Turns Against Russia (£12.95), Battleground, naval combat (like the Starfire system) repackaged in a box (£7.95); for Starfleet Battles, Captains Log 4 (£2); SFB Supplement 2 (£2); and New Empires (£7.95), an expansion set for Starfire. GDW have released a new role-playing game to spearhead their winter offerings - an RPG set in 'war-torn Europe after the nuclear war' called Twilight, boxed format (£16.95).

For Travellers there's a re-release of Striker (apparently not a new

version) and the Traveller Atlas (£16.95 and £5.95 respectively). Wargamers will be pleased to see further addition to the Europa series with Spain (£13.95) and for the rapidly expanding Assault series, Reinforcements (£7.95). Also from GDW (if they arrive for Xmas) will be Alien Module 3; Vargr (£3.95) and Adventure 13; Signal GK (£3.95). Pacsetter continue to produce new RPGs and accessories at a rate of knots. Vengeance of Dracula, and Isle of the Dead for Chill (both £5.95); Partisans from the Shadows, Cleopatra's Gambit and Arthur and Merlin for Time-master (all £5.95). They also have another RPG called Star Ace, not with it the first SA scenario Ruins of Kanree (£5.95). Gamelords release two additions to their Havenrange Secrets of the Labyrinth, and Intrigue on the North Bank, no prices or details. Finally, Sleuth hope to release Queens Park Affair (£9.95), a new adventure for Consulting Detective.

BOOK TALK

Penguin have released Caverns of the Snow Witch and House of Hell. Hutchinson's Sparrow Books have the third in the Lone Wolf series, Caverns of the Kalte. Software adaptations of popular gamebooks continue apace with the first two Lone Wolf books. Flight from the Dark and Fire on the Water (£6.95 each) and Penguin's Forest of Doom and Citadel of Chaos (£6.95).

J H Brennan's second attempt to write a classic series of gamebooks has brought us Demon-spawn with two initial titles, Fire* Wolf and Crypts of Terror (£1.50 each); they are certainly better than Grailquest.

BURLEY BLURB

Co-writer of Golden Heroes, Simon Burley has just launched his Superhero UK Fanzine devoted to all Superhero role-playing games in the UK, and is available from, 20 Honeswade Close, Handsworth, Birmingham, 20, at 45p plus postage.

TREKKIE CON

Sol III '85 3rd - 6th May - Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Confirmed guests include Mark Lenard (Sarek), and noted science fiction writers James White and Lisa Tuttle. Main programme included guest talks, films, fancy dress and a disco. Registration forms and further details are available from: 39 Dersingham Avenue, Manor Park, London E12. Enclose a SAE or 2 IRC's for details.

MAJOR NEW BRITISH ROLEPLAYING GAME

February will see the launch of Standard Games' new fantasy RPG, Dragonroar. Together with Warhammer, Golden Heroes and Judge Dredd this represents the new renaissance of British based RPGs; over the next six months for the first time gamers will have an impressive array of UK games to choose from.

Dragonroar, 'the complete role-playing system', will include a rulebook, full colour map, character sheets, floor plans and die-cut colour character pieces, and the appropriate dice. There will also be a special competition, details of which are unknown to

me at this time. To follow up the boxed set, which will retail at £10.95, Standard Games plan to release Compendium of Knowledge, Book of Monsters, Zhevzh Gauntlet, Cleric Compendium, Dictionary of Dragons, Historical Encyclopedia and Mass Combat Rules. The system is geared for either solo or group play, and will be previewed at the Model Engineering Exhibition, Stand 125, between the 31 December and 6 January.

More details when we see a copy!

NEXT ISSUE

Beyond the Shadow of a Dream, a D&D/Fighting Fantasy scenario, Spice of Life, alchemy in RuneQuest, Eye of Newt Part 3, more magic items, An Introduction to Superhero Games Part II, plus a special Treasure Chest scenario competition and all the regular departments.

GOBBLEDIGOOK by Bil



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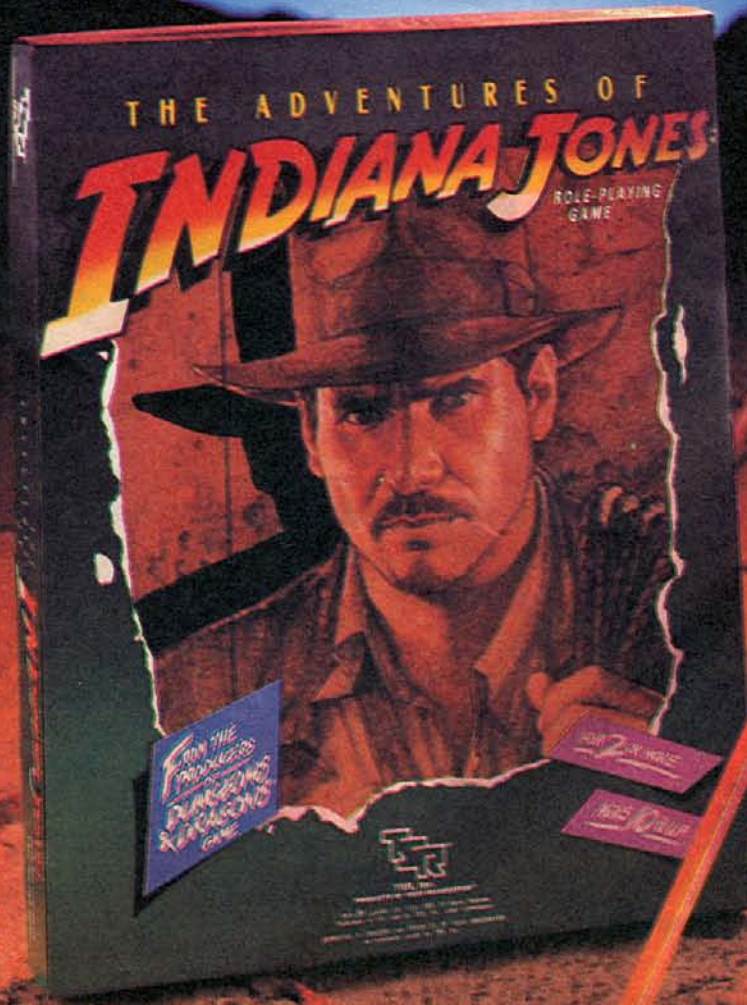
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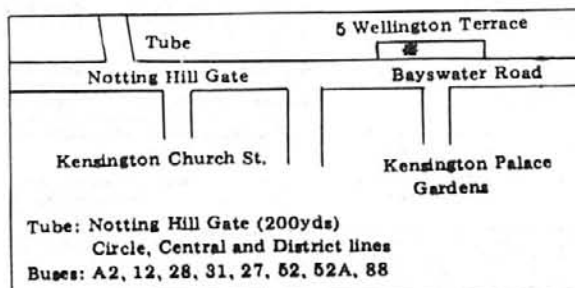
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Challenged by a ladder, whilst staggering home from a night's distraction, he fell off, and the ensuing blow on the head released a latent power, which enabled him to heal himself. He is now off to sign The Extraordinary Register in the hope he will be sent to The Academy of Elite. Now read on...

A distant cock crowed the start of another day for many people, but for me it was the greatest of my life. Having attended to my ablutions, and watered the other plants, I got washed and donned my best finery, a powder-grey cape and breeches, with crimson shirt, belt and boots. To top it all off I selected a silver circlet in preference to my hats. As I strutted and postured in front of the mirror, I mentally went through the interview.

"Welcome to The Register, Mr. Androx."

"It's just Androx."

"Sorry, sorry, I didn't know what came over me! Please forgive me, my lord Androx."

"Think yourself lucky I had a good night's sleep."

"Thank you, sir, thank you."

With a swirl of my cape I pirouetted and bowed low. An extremely flamboyant gesture, but with my revered powers it would not only be acceptable but down-right trend setting! In this frame of mind I turned heel and left my (at present) humble abode.

A few market traders were wheeling barrows to the square as pale beams of the new sun washed over the city. It looked almost peaceful.

With sublime indifference I sauntered along the awakening streets,

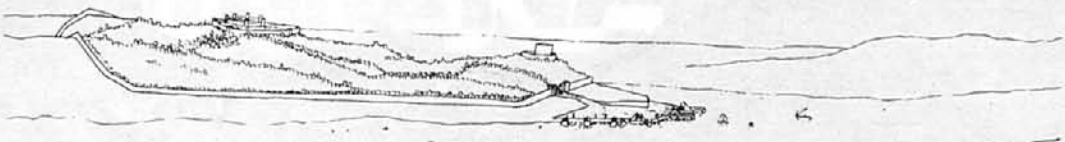
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The height I cleared must have been impressive as the guard nearly dropped his sword, but the landing was less awe-inspiring. I looked like something that had been tipped out of a wheelbarrow. As I slowly got to my feet I could hear a strange wheezing sound. I turned to see the guard in an apoplexy of laughter. Crimson face, purple lips, tears, heaving shoulders, inability to breathe and draped over the dias of a statue of the King.

I wandered off. The entrance hall gave way to an ornamental archway with a corridor to the left and right... and a plaque on the wall depicting the layout of the place.

Hurrying down the left-hand corridor I came to the sign that was to

at us and said

"All right, who's first then?"

"I am!" shouted the wretch.

"C'mon, follow me," and proceeded to one of the cubicles. The curtains closed behind them and all was silent.

After a few moments the murmur of voices could be heard, they got louder until the curtains were flung aside and the little creep propelled into the first rank of benches. An anguished scream accompanied his progress, which changed to a cry of pain as he connected with the seating arrangements, in turn fading to a whimper as he lay across two rows of upturned benches. The black-robbed figure shouted furiously at him.

"Setting light to farts with a tinder

box is considered an extraordinary feat! Get out or I'll have you flogged!" then raising his eyes to me, he said crossly "What do you want?" "I...er...I...ah...that is to s-s-say..." I stammered. "Spit it out low-life, I haven't got all day." "I've got a special power," I blurted. "What is it?" He smiled wickedly. "I healed myself." "What of? Intelligence?" He chuckled at his wit. "No!" I was getting annoyed. "I had a gash on my head when I fell off a ladder and the next day I healed myself by thinking about it." "Healed yourself, eh? Which god is yours?" "I don't have one." "Now that's better. Come here and we'll get a few details down." His attitude seemed much improved so I joined him behind the curtains. There were two chairs, a desk, upon which rested the book and quills, and a tinder box. He picked it up, stepped to the curtains, took aim and threw it. From where I was standing I couldn't see where it was destined, but a cry from the target answered any queries I might have had. "And close the door!" he shouted.

recognised swam into view. "You're taking up a lot of my time." "I was too hurt to be angry. All I wanted was relief from that nauseous suffering. As I concentrated I could feel the pain receding. I raised my hand to my nose... still tender. I concentrated again and it felt a lot better, not even bent." "That's more like it." He stood up and offered me a hand. I took it and heaved myself into a standing position. Again he circled the desk and bade me sit down. Opening the book and picking up a quill he asked my name, abode, age, occupation, question after question until he had all the information he needed. Flipping to the back of the book he removed a sheet of paper and scratched avidly on it. As he handed it to me, he said "Bring this and all you'll need for two months to the West Gate, tomorrow morning at sunrise. Be prepared for a journey of about ten days. Congratulations! You're in." He extended his hand and I shook it. As I silently vowed repayment tenfold for the indignity I had suffered at his hands, I smiled and said "Thank you so much." "It wasn't 'til I was out on the steps of the Great Hall that I displayed any joy. It took the form of a spring in the air

and a shout of 'Yippee!'

I seem to have problems with landings. This time I turned my foot on the side of a step and tumbled down half a dozen before I stopped. As I got painfully up, a familiar wheezing noise assailed my ears. Without turning round I limped away, my face almost as crimson with embarrassment as a certain guard's was with mirth. I didn't cure myself until I got home, hoping it would teach me a lesson. What a stupid idea!

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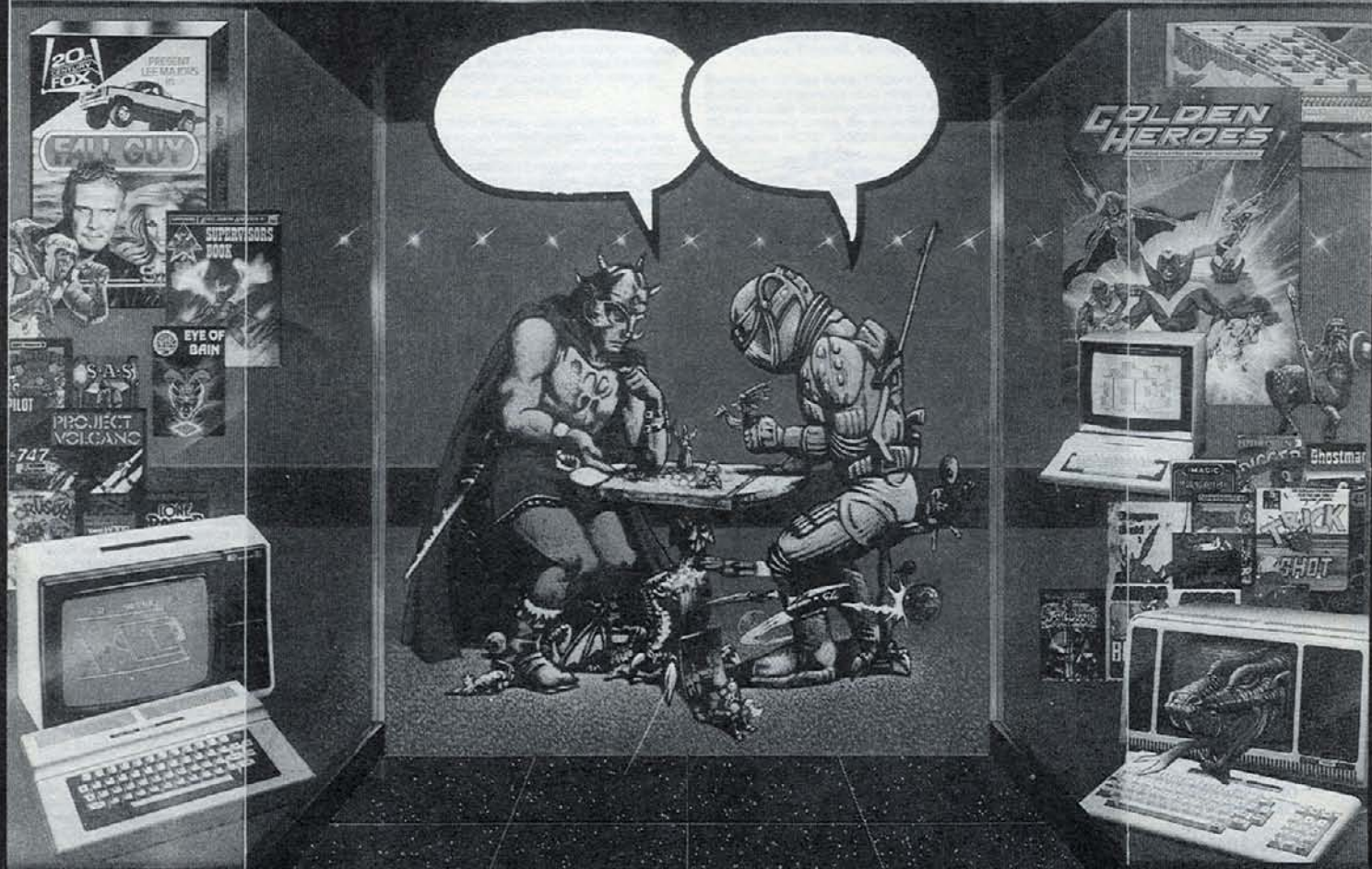
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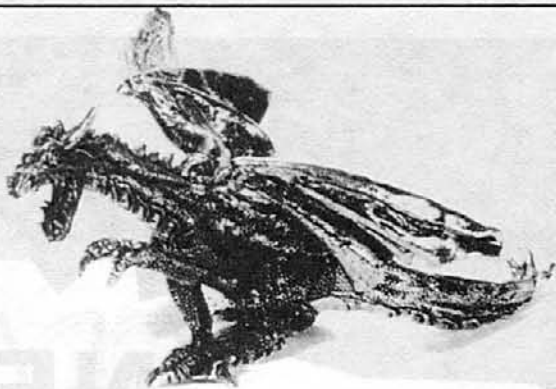
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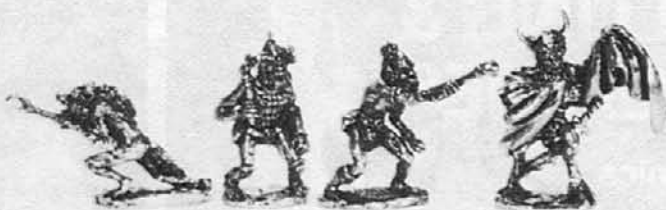
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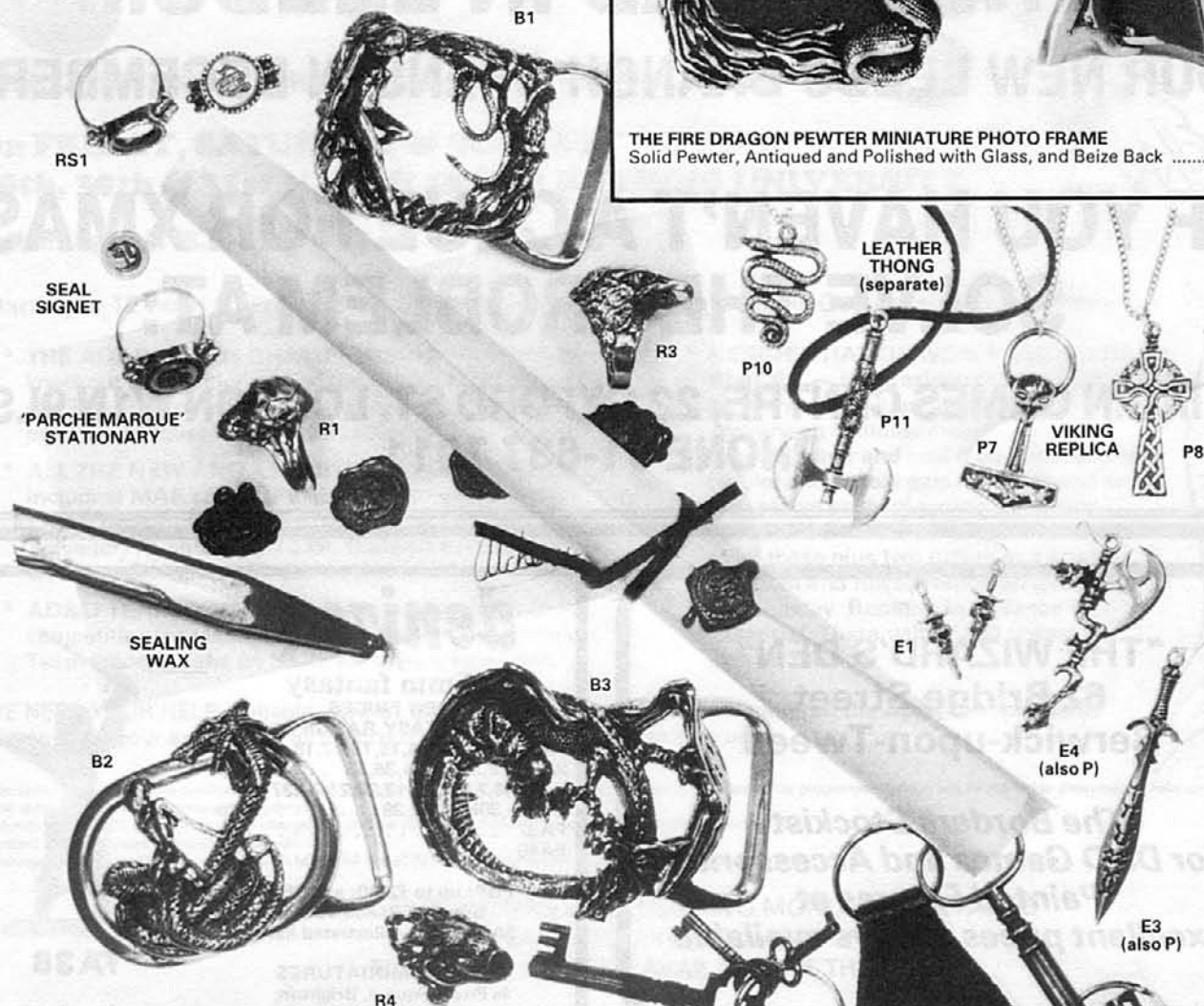
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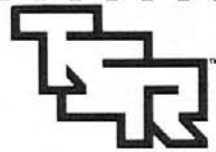
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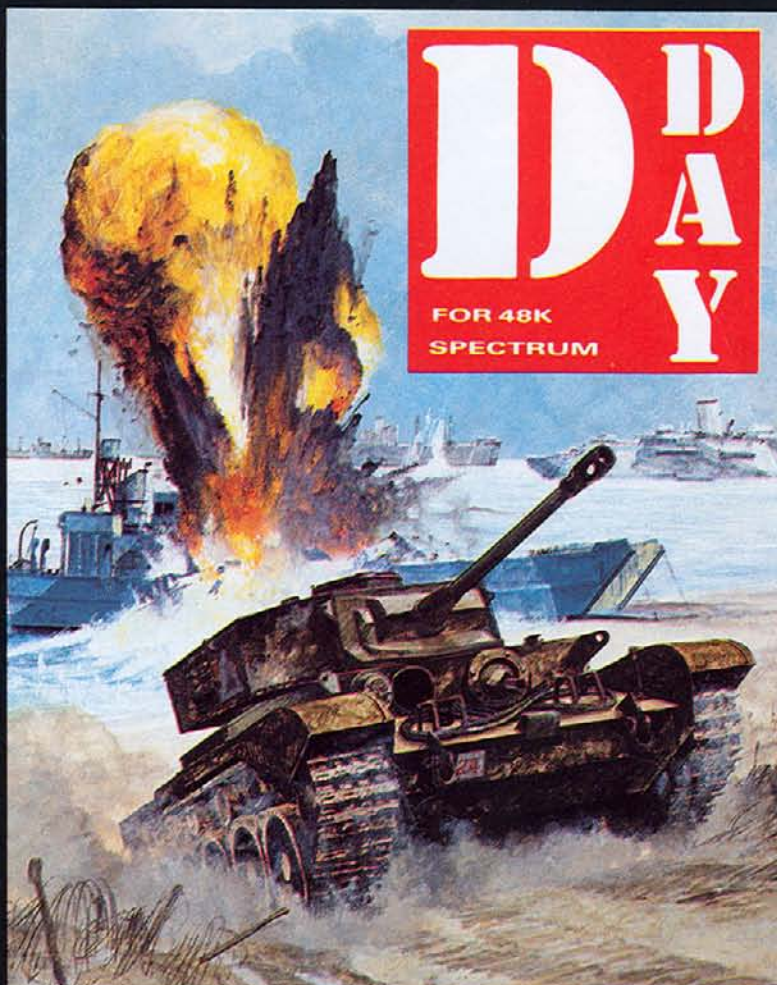
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