

THE

BEHOLDER

ISSUE

no 23

50p



EDITORIAL

Here we go again with another issue of "The Beholder", a British D&D fanzine. (Surely you know the rest of this bit by now? No!!? Oh well...) D&D (Dungeons & Dragons) is produced by TSR Hobbies Inc, P.O.Box 756, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin 53147, AMERICA. Their British subsidiary is TSR(UK) at The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD. TBH is run by:-

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We start off with some good news. There is hope that TBH shall live on beyond the quarter century! Several parties have shown interest in taking over the mag, and at present we are trying to find out more about the potential of the more promising of these groups. There is also interest in producing a copy of TBH26 from material contributed by members from our local D&D mob. Hopefully we'll have fuller details by next issue.

Subbers: Don't forget that a star in the top-left-hand corner of your envelope means that your sub has run out.

If you have a sub that runs beyond TBH25 don't panic. Your excess money will be returned, barring some unforeseen problem, as a cheque enclosed with your copy of TBH24, next month. Sorry but we can't send out postal orders as refunds.

The answer to last issue's "Wordsearch 2" was TYRANNOSAURUS REX. Many congrats if you managed to work it out.

Some people didn't seem to appreciate the large dose of "Space Opera" in TBH22, but they're sure to be more satisfied with this near 100% D&D issue. Space Opera is an excellent game though, and deserved a big push to get it going in this country. Hopefully we've started that.

Mike and Guy.

TBH23: C O N T E N T S

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EMBLEMS

Magical items can get very boring and apart from the odd chatty sword they don't seem to enter too much into the game. Fighters can get pretty attached to their paranoid +2 broadsword, or whatever, but what about everyone else? The easiest thing to do is use the sword IQ and ego tables (possibly with a few appropriate variations) for certain other advanced magical items that seem to have potential, (but no wise-cracking portable holes, please!). However this is a bit unimaginative and often rather excessive. What is needed is something to give a bit of life to weaker magical items and one answer is emblems. Do you imagine that shields should always be blank? Of course not, they always sport emblems or logos of some kind in films and so they should in D&D. Where's the magic in that? I hear you cry and the reply would be that various emblems can be allocated as "magical" when painted onto objects by MUs, in conjunction with various spells. If you want you can work out all the details for things like this and let players do it, but what I am basically getting at is that when players find a magical item it could have an emblem upon it, which gives it extra powers. I've given some examples below but would just like to suggest that if you take up this idea it would be a good idea to allocate extra bonuses to people with several items with the same emblem, and possibly have different emblems "dislike" each other and cancel out or weaken each other.

- EAGLE:** A stylised red eagle on a yellow background. The item with this emblem is virtually weightless, not encumbering by more than a 50th of its normal weight. If dropped it will fall slowly (see Feather Fall) and is therefore very unlikely to get damaged. This emblem is most commonly found on fragile items, especially crystal balls and potion bottles.
- SKULL:** A white skull on a black background. Gives its owner a limited "sense danger" ability. Basically this comes down to a 1 in 10 chance per emblazoned item carried of "feeling something wrong" when in a unknown life or death situation (dragon creeping up behind you, poison needle, 200 foot pit ahead, etc).
- CASTLE:** A blue rook-like picture on a white background. A castle is a symbol of safety and security so these items give their owner the same effects as a +1 ring of protection, however they are not cumulative.
- LION:** A golden lion rampant on a yellow background. This symbol of ferocity and majesty on an item gives its owner +1 damage in combat.
- AXE:** A silver great-axe on a brown background. This emblem signifies great strength and, fairly predictably, gives its owner +1 STR.

So there you have a few ideas. Rather uninspired I feel but I think the basic idea has a lot of promise. I haven't given any "bad" emblems but they should be fairly easy to come up with and would be quite interesting. A +2 sword with an elephant on the hilt could weigh ten times normal and present a bit of a problem. Is it worth the trouble it'll cause to carry it about? Hope it'll set you all thinking.

D.I.Y.

By NICHOLAS CLIFTON

This is not another review, but rather an article giving some hints and ideas on how to make your own DM's Screen. After all why pay £4.95 for a piece of printed cardboard when you can make your own for around 50p?

I have divided the article into four different sections starting below:-

MATERIAL:

All this is is a large piece of folded cardboard; preferably stiff, but if you only have thin available then doubling it up to give it extra strength would be a good idea. Protecting the corners with sellotape (to stop them going dog-eared) is also advisable.

LAYOUT/DESIGN:

There are two main ways of folding the cardboard: down the middle or, as I prefer, with two flaps, one at each end and with a large unfolded central space. This gives a large area for the main tables and also helps to make the screen fairly steady when standing up.

The cardboard should be white if possible, although light colours such as yellow or orange are also fairly good. When writing on it you should use colours that will show up well (black, green, red, etc) and also remember that it is sometimes worth using spaces and gaps to bring something to prominence.

When you are putting the tables on the screen it is advisable to put the main ones (attack matrices, saving throws, etc) in the middle near the top where they are easily seen. Remember the screen is there not only to hide your maps and things but it is also to save the time and effort of looking up the commonest tables in the DMG and PHB. There is not much point in making the tables just as hard to find on the screen as they are in the books.

CONTENTS:

Obviously the main table(s) are going to deal with combat as these are the ones that are most often used. Now you could copy out all 5 tables if you really wanted to, but it is better to combine them into one together. This table would need to be fairly large (stretching from AC-10 to AC10 down the left-hand side and from 26 to 14 along the top (remember to include 6 20s)). If you do this then you will end up with a table beginning something like this:-

	1-5th MU	-	6-10th MU	-				
	1-4th THF	-	5-8th THF	-				
	-	1-3rd CLR	-	4-6th CLR				
	Upto 1-1HD MON	1-1HD MON	1HD MON	1+ HD MON				
A.C.	Oth FTR	1st FTR	2nd FTR	3rd FTR	4th FTR	etc...		
-10	26	25	24	23	22			
-9	25	24	23	22	21			
-8	24	23	22	21	20			
-7	23	22	21	20				
etc...								

The second table that is really essential is the saving throws. For the DM it will only be necessary to have the fighter and magic-user saves as very few monsters have clerical or thievish abilities. However if you usually have a lot of NPCs in your game then it might be worth including the full info. Two other tables that really should be on the screen are the Clerics vs Undead and Monster Reaction Table.

Any other tables that are included must really be a matter of personal choice and also perhaps reflect the type of dungeon/campaign that you run. However I've listed below some of the more useful tables to help you in your decision:-

TABLE	BOOK	PAGE(S)
Intelligence rating of monsters	MM	6
Strength ratings (above 16)	PHB	9
	DMG	126 & 145
Racial preference table	PHB	18
	DMG	106
Fighter attacks/round	PHB	25
Weapons and damage done	PHB	37
Wall climbing speed	DMG	19
Poison (effects & cost)	DMG	20
Loyalty effects	DMG	36
Recovery of spells (time)	DMG	39
Chances of becoming lost	DMG	49
Outdoor movement	DMG	58
Detection of invisible creatures	DMG	60
Hearing noise (by race)	DMG	60
Advantages of cover/concealment	DMG	64
Grenade-like missiles	DMG	64
Special bonuses "to hit"	DMG	67
Max height/weight for monk hand attacks	DMG	70
Magic items saving throws	DMG	80
Effects of intoxication	DMG	82
Experience values	DMG	85
Typical inhabitants	DMG	88
Time taken for various activities	DMG	97
Wandering monsters	DMG	174+

You might want to put some tables on the back of the screen but if you do make sure they are ones which the players can be allowed to see. If you don't want to do this you may like to cover the screen with runes or drawings to improve its appearance.

When you have finished the screen it would be advisable to cover it with clear plastic film to protect it and prolong its life. Once you have done this the screen is ready for use.

A rather amusing and silly game of Space Opera produced the following:-

Q U O T E S

- 1) Bleep-bleep, zzzz blip (and other feeble R2D2 noises).
 - 2) I'm bored, let's blow up a planet!
 - 3) Screw the law level, I'm taking my auto-cannon.
 - 4) Drokk it!!!
 - 5) Halt lawbreaker!
 - 6) Eat judgeboot! (NB: 4,5 and 6 may not mean much to you unless you read a certain excellent publication).
 - 7) Flash I love you but we've only got 14 hours to save the Earth.
 - 8) Zaphod Beeblebrox I presume. (The two heads gave it away).
 - 9) Okay we've got a ship and we can fly it, maintain it and navigate it. Can anyone cook though?
 - 10) This sure beats the hell out of Space Invaders!
 - 11) It was built by the Sirius Cybernetics Corporation? Now he tells us!
 - 12) Forty two?
 - 13) Blake's 7 has done for SF what Cyril Smith has done for hanggliding!
- TBH now brings you the first Christmas joke of 1981:-

WADON
THE
MAGIC-USER

DUNGEON SHOPPE

HANGING
CHRISTMAS
DECORAT
-IONS
GOING
CHEAP!



Q&A ²

We printed a questionnaire in TBH14 and got a very good response indeed, which revealed some interesting opinions and views held by our readers. Well, that was quite some time ago so now, as TBH approaches its end, or at least quite a change-round, it seems appropriate to give you all a platform to air your views. Just take a few minutes to answer the questions below and send them into us. Please mark your envelope Q&A in the top left-hand corner. If any question doesn't apply to you (e.g. rate a game you've never played) then just leave it out.

- 1) Which issues of TBH have you read?
- 2) Give your favourite three issues, in order.
- 3) Which is the worst issue you've read?
- 4) Rate the following regular features out of ten:-
 - a) Monster Summoning
 - b) Magic Jar
 - c) Thoughts on...
 - d) Reviews
 - e) Chronicle
 - f) Fali-Ur
 - g) Cover artwork
 - h) Interior artwork
- 5) Is the dungeon/wilderness in each issue usually the best article?
- 6) Which has been the best dungeon/wilderness?
- 7) Which has been worst?
- 8) Rate out of ten the following games as subjects for articles:-
 - a) Traveller
 - b) C&S
 - c) Runequest
 - d) Superhero 2044
 - e) Space Opera
 - f) Dragonquest
 - g) In the Labyrinth
 - h) Other (specify)
- 9) What have been the three best TBH articles (not scenarios)?
- 10) What have been our three worst articles?
- 11) What sort of articles would you like to see in TBH, that aren't included at the moment?
- 12) How did you first find out about TBH?
- 13) Rate our service (posting issues, replying to letters, etc) out of 10. Comments/criticisms welcome.
- 14) Rate the following mags out of ten:-
 - a) The Beholder
 - b) Trollcrusher
 - c) White Dwarf
 - d) The Aerial Servant
 - e) Dragonlords
 - f) Stormlord
 - g) The Wanderer
 - h) Wyrn's Claw
- 15) How could TBH be improved?
- 16) Have you any thoughts on the SF/FRP hobby in this country? If so, let's be hearing them!

(Please send your answers to the above in as soon as possible so that we can print the full results in TBH25.)



A Norse adventure of mystery for use with AD&D

"DRAGON ~ ISLE"

by G. Duke

BACKGROUND for the players

In temperate climes, the party has run into a fellow by the name of Thorvald Olafsson. Thor, as he is known, is a large Norseman, with a thick beard, clad in thick skins. He is the master of a small ship on his way home to Ingolsfjord in the far northern lands.

As the spring is now here, the ice of the northern seas will've receded far enough for him to sail home. However, he lacks a crew and therefore wishes to strike a bargain with the adventurers. He will take them to the village of Vapns in Vapnsfjord, from where they can reach the treasure island, Dragon Isle. In return, they must crew for him as far as Vapns, and again on his voyage back to the south. At Vapns, he says he can get fresh crew for his voyage on to Ingolsfjord.

The adventurers have been given an old rhyme by a strange little beggar;

'In the fire of the rising sun,
the hour of the Dragon Lord,
the treasure's grave all golden glows,
on Dragon Isle of Vapnsfjord.'

Thus, hoping to find their fortunes, they have agreed to Thorvald's bargain. Thor makes the adventurers work well in return for their food and passage and after three weeks voyage, the ship enters Vapnsfjord. From the narrow entrance, the fjord penetrates some two miles inland. The sheer sides are indented by several tributary valleys and at one point the fjord passes around a rocky islet encircled by treacherous rocks. This, Thor tells the adventurers, is Dragon Isle, a haunted island with a long-hidden treasure. He believes the villagers of Vapns may be able to tell them the way through the encircling rocks.

About 1½ miles into the fjord, Thor puts in at the village of Vapns. He picks up his fresh crew and tells the adventurers that he will return for them in 14 days for the return voyage. He directs them to the village inn, Dragonhame. Thus the adventurers have a fortnight to win their fortunes.

BACKGROUND for the G/M ONLY

The far north lands are very harsh and food is scarce. The people of Vapns have often suffered starvation and to avoid this have developed a horrific taste for human flesh! From their village, they have sent people south to spread the ancient legend of Dragon Isle to lure people to Vapns. The legend is true but the people of Vapns have left the treasure where it is to keep the lure to adventurers. If only two or three paltry adventurers arrive, the villagers will kill them straight away. With stronger parties however, they play a careful game of testing their strength and weakening them before trapping them and murdering them on Dragon Isle...

This scenario is set for 5-10 adventurers of 2nd-4th level, the total levels not exceeding 24 (eg; 3 2nd, 3 3rd and 2 4th level = 8 adventurers totalling 23 levels).

- (ii) A store cave. This rough hewn cave is about 40' high. Around the walls are numerous cavities containing sheep's milk cheeses, crates of torches and flasks of oil.
- (iii) The harbour-master's cabin, a strong lodge stone-built to resist the sea. It is one-roomed, containing a table, a bed layed with skins, a pile of fire-wood, a couple of lanterns and a central fire. On the table is a keg of fresh water and a half-eaten cheese. The cabin is occupied by Veld (16 strength and dexterity, 17HTK).
- (iv-xvi) Villagers' cottages built in a clearing in the forest above the fjord. Each is wood-built, with a single room containing: table and chairs, central fire (smoke-hole in centre of roof) and several thick rugs on the floor. Each is occupied by a married couple and 1-3 children. Each of vi, vii, ix, x and xvi have a young man in the family counting as warriors like their fathers. Other children and women do not fight. xvi is Thor's house and there is a human skull above the doorway (which may be a warning to the adventurers). Thor takes his crew from v, vii and viii and it is these that hide out in the cellar of the tavern.
- (xvii) The Dragonhame. This 'tavern' is a larger, stone-built, three-roomed cottage. The three rooms are: a bar, a guest-room (the floor is covered in furs), the barman's living quarters (which is the same as cottages iv-xvi). The tavern provides food and drink (cheese and wine) and board for 10sp/night, and has room for up to 10 guests in the guest room.
- The barman is Carrock (17 strength, 16 dexterity, 20HTK), the chief of the village as far as any visitors are concerned (for Thor's chieftanship is kept secret). From his room there is a secret trapdoor to a cellar below containing: 3 barrels of wine, a shelf on which are 76 skulls of previous victims, several furs (for Thor and co. to rest on while in hiding). There is a secret tunnel from the cellar to a secret exit 100yds north of the tavern (see map of village).
- It is Carrock who tells the adventurers what to do, and he may resort to any of the following tests to weaken the party in readiness for their death on Dragon Isle.

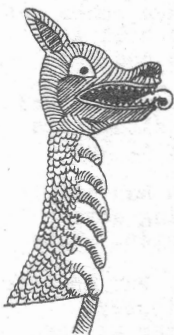
The G/M should not make it obvious to the players that their characters are being manipulated by the villagers; however, should the players discover this for themselves, they will be able to act appropriately.

There are 5 requirements for adventurers to reach Dragon Isle. These are;

- Test 1, to visit the Oracle of the Dragon Lord (this is secretly run by the villagers who obtain info. on the adventurers through it - all parties must undergo this test).
- Test 2a, to find the map to the Stone of Safe Passage (the map is held by the villagers, who will give it to a weak party, but place it at the end of this difficult test for strong parties).
- Test 2b, to find the Stone of Safe Passage (the Stone is held by the villagers who will give it straight to very weak parties but will make other parties undergo this fairly easy test to get it).

- Test 3. to find the map of the channel through the treacherous rocks encircling Dragon Isle (the map is held by the villagers who will give it to weak parties but make others undergo this fairly difficult test to get it).
- Test 4. to find the key to the treasure chest on Dragon Isle (again, the villagers hold the key and will make strong parties undergo this difficult test to gain it, but will give it to less strong parties).

For example; a) a party arrives at Vapns. They are told that before setting off for Dragon Isle they must visit the Oracle. From the events at the Oracle, the villagers decide that the adventurers are weak enough to send straight to the Isle. They give them the 3 (not 2a) requirements and a couple of rowing boats to set off for the Isle, they prepare the ghost ship for the murder (see THE GHOST SHIP).



b) a party arrives at Vapns. From events at the Oracle, the villagers decide that they are quite a strong party and so tell them that they must find the Stone of Safe Passage. The party returns from this test hardly touched, and so the villagers decide to tell them also to find the key to the treasure chest. This test quite severely weakens the party, and the villagers give them the other two requirements and send them off in a couple of boats to the Isle. They then set about preparing the ghost ship.

Test 1, The Oracle of the Dragon Lord

Carrock tells the party to follow the west path out of the village. This passes into the forest and becomes narrower dictating single file. There is no undergrowth but the conifers have spiky branches almost to ground level restricting vision through the trees to 10' and passage to 3"/turn. During the first mile, nothing happens. The party then reach a ford; the river is 30' wide, knee-deep and very fast. Those with under 12 strength will be swept downstream unless held by a rope.

Beyond the ford, the path climbs steeply for another mile and ends at the foot of a 20' bluff in which is a narrow entrance. This leads to a rough-hewn 10' diameter cave on the far side of which is a small 6" hole in the wall. This, unknown to the adventurers leads to a cave 30' below to which a villager secretly comes. He is the voice of the oracle and he speaks to the party when they enter the cave above as follows;

"I am the Oracle of the Dragon Lord; answer or venture not to Dragon Isle."

He then proceeds to ask the following questions;

"Can you turn the living dead?

"Name 3 evil beasts you have conquered.

"Is there one among you who can warp wood?

"Is there any among you who may become invisible?

"Is there any among you who may cure diseases?

"Can one among you pull the silver dagger?" (there is a silver dagger stuck in the centre of the floor - requires 18 strength to be withdrawn).

Once these have been answered (and the Oracle has an innate ability to detect lies), if the Oracle considers the party weak, he will say;

"Return to the village and thence to Dragon Isle."

If he considers them stronger, he will say;

"Return to the village and inquire about the Stone of Safe Passage."

Test 2, The Stone of Safe Passage

If the party return to the village from the Oracle inquiring about the Stone of Safe Passage, Carrock will tell them either to take the south path out of the village in search of a map to the whereabouts of the stone, or will give them the map and send them off to find the stone. (Only the strongest parties will be sent to search for the map).

2a. The map

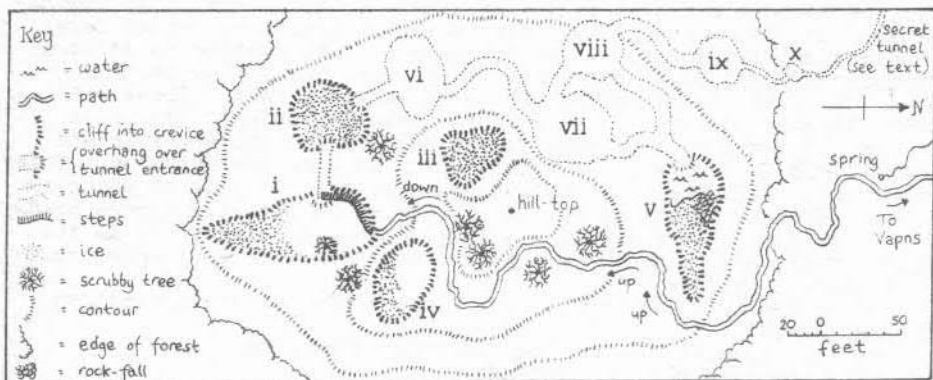
The south path from the village leads almost directly south for about 3 miles, climbing steadily. It then comes out on an open hill-top with a few old yew trees. Across the hill are great rents in the ground, crevices each about 30' across and 50' deep with nearly sheer walls hung with dripping ferns.

The path leads between these fissures to the largest crevice and here rough-hewn steps lead down. The base of the flight disappears beneath an overhang. The floor of the crevice has a bank of ice - no sun ever reaches it.

The steps lead to a tunnel linking i and ii. ii also has ice in the bottom, and large pawmarks can be distinguished passing across the ice to an entrance beneath an overhang on the north side. This leads into a system of caverns (vi-x).

iii and iv are similar crevices, each containing ice, but neither has any access other than by climbing. The sides are slippery.

v is a long crevice with a pool (4' deep) of melt-water at the west end and a rock-fall against the north side. This is quite easily climbed. There is an entrance to the caverns at the west end, hidden from above by an overhang.



vi-ix These are all rough-walled natural caverns, about 20' in height, occupied by a stone giant (4/3-18, hurl rock for 3-30/39;9+1) and his two pet cave bears (6/1-8,1-8,1-12,hug for 2-16/33,36;6+6), who unknowingly guard the map to the Stone of Safe Passage.

vi is the main entrance chamber and is used by the giant for storage. Hanging from the ceiling are two dead mountain goats. On the floor are several boulders (for throwing), a large pile of firewood, 2 goat skins and a barrel of wine stolen from the village.

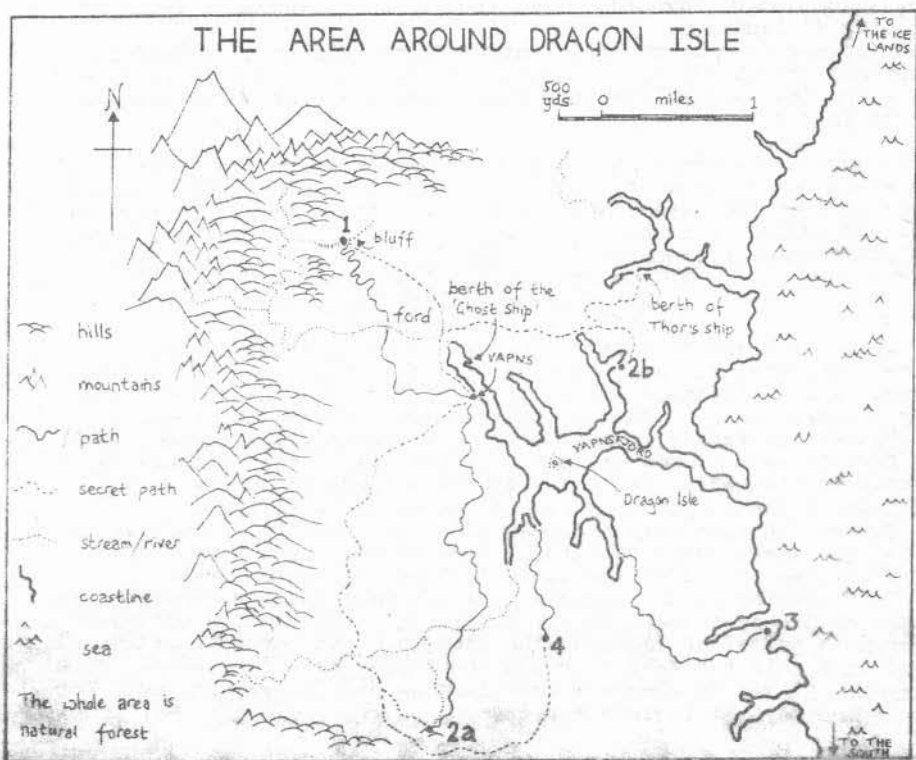
vii is the main living chamber. There is a 10' x 5' stone table in the centre on which is a large jug of water and a number of wild root vegetables. The two cave bears are eating these. It is very dim and light can be seen flickering up the west passage.

viii is the giant's bed chamber. There is a deep fox-fur rug on the floor on which reclines Hrafn the Giant, clad in furs, a bronze medallion around his neck (60 gp) and a large silver goblet (275sp) in his hand. By his side is a large stone club.

ix is the giant's treasure chamber made up of spoils from previous adventurers. It contains, scattered on the floor: 3 suits of chainmail (human size), a +1 small shield, 5 brass helms (30gp each), a silver-studded belt (450sp), 4 pairs of elf-sized boots, an axe, 3 long swords, 2 short bows and a pike, 370gp, 2450sp, a gold chain (50gp) and 5 empty flasks. Hrafn has blocked the narrow north passage (which is too narrow for him to pass through) with rubble.

x is a small chamber, 10' high with a central pedestal on which is the map. The villagers have access to it via a secret passage. The entrance to the passage is deep in the forest to the north, and it enters x through a secret door. If the adventurers find this, they may begin to catch on about the villagers.

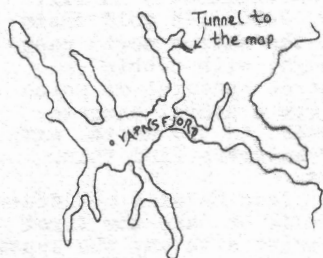
Hrafn is true to his alignment - neutral. Thus he will not necessarily attack adventurers; should anyone intrude or make the first blow, he will respond fiercely, but he will parley with any who appear friendly. He does not know that he guards the map but he will allow very persuasive adventurers to look around his caves without having to fight for it.



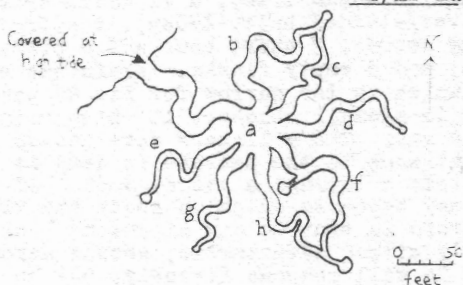
2b, The stone

Once the adventurers have the map to the Stone of Safe Passage, either as a gift from the villagers or gained in test 2a, the villagers will lend them 2 rowing boats from the harbour and send them off to find the Stone. The adventurers' map is as below; the G/M should copy it for the players.

Adventurers' map



G/M's map



The adventurers' map shows a tunnel in the side of the fjord. At high tide, the tunnel is submerged and only at low tide (twice a day) is the passage revealed. Even then it is filled to a depth of 6' leaving 4' headroom.

The passage is very rough in shape, though the stone itself is slippery and smooth due to the action of the water. The water flows slowly along the passage from the fjord into the rock. The passage opens out into a.

a is a circular cavern with about 10' headroom above the water level. The water enters from the fjord and disappears slowly down tunnels b-h. It is quite easy to hold a boat steady in here. In the centre, projecting 1' above the water, is a circular pedestal. The following words are engraved on the top;

"Follow the ancient lode
to the Stone of Safe Passage,
All other ways are death."

b-h Above each tunnel leaving the cavern is an inset stone, all alike. However, the one above passage f is lodestone, a magnetic stone. All the tunnels are about 10' high (ie 4' headroom) with very slippery walls. They quickly narrow, causing the water to run faster and faster. Once 30' into a passage, the current is too fast to swim or row against. At the end of each passage is a pot-hole down which the water thunders hundreds of feet. Anyone passing down a pot-hole has no chance of survival.

Tunnel f however has a branch about 25' down it. Steering in to it, the adventurers' boat will come to rest on a flight of steps leading up out of the water. These lead into cavern i.

i This chamber is 10' high, as is the only passage entering it. In the centre on a small marble table is a silver chain (55sp) on which is a jet stone (100gp), the Stone of Safe Passage. This stone will calm the waters around the wearer in a 30' radius, upon command. It has 20 charges, each lasting 3-6 turns. The only way out is the way the adventurers came.

Note; the adventurers will have a maximum of 1 hour to get in and out while the tide is low enough. They may be trapped in i for a few hours, although this is safely above the high tide mark.

(14) However, there is only enough air to sustain 6 people between the low tides.

Test 3, The map of the channel

Once the party has the Stone of Safe Passage, the villagers will secretly reconsider the strength of the adventurers. If they believe the adventurers to be sufficiently weakened, they will give them the remaining 2 requirements and send them off to Dragon Isle. If, however, they desire to weaken them further, they will tell them that they must go in search of the map of the channel through the treacherous rocks encircling Dragon Isle.

Carrok tells the party to row to the second inlet south of Vapns, just past Dragon Isle, then to take the left fork of the inlet and take the only path leaving it. Carrock tells the party (falsely) that he does not know what lies along the path and (truly) that no villagers have ever gone along it.

If the adventurers follow Carrock's instructions, they will find the inlet bound by high rocky cliffs save for in a small cove. From a small patch of shingle, the path climbs up out of this cove and into the forest. Passing eastward, keeping to the same height, the path opens out after little more than a mile on to an open cliff-top. On three sides, cliffs drop 100' to the sea, while the fourth side is bound by the forest.

In the centre of the clearing stands a small circular, domed temple. The temple has a single door facing east but no other aperture. There are stone gargoyles around the perimeter of the roof while on the top of the dome sits a real gargoyle, still as stone. The gargoyle (5, +1 weapon or better to hit/1-3,1-3,1-6,1-4/21;4) will attack any who approach within 30', or any that shoot at him. He serves the inhabitant of the temple, Helgi the hermit.

7th level Monk; S 16, I 05, W 16, Co 16, D 14, Ch 10, Lawful Evil, AC 5, 32HTK, +2 spear, Ring of Contrariness (additional power; Invisibility, with in-audibility (see Ring of Contrariness and Ring of Invisibility in DMG)).

The temple contains a single room, 15' diameter and 15' high. In the centre is a granite tablet set into the floor, in which are engraved the words;

"To find the map to Dragon Isle,
The way to the secret is nigh;
Hid in the twist of a tongue,
By kopoacinth of the rising sun."

Helgi has spent several years here trying to work this out (well, he's only got 5 intelligence). He is particularly hostile to any strangers, fearing that they may attempt to find the map before he does, and he will use his ring to combat the adventurers, should his pet gargoyle not frighten them off.

Apart from the tablet, the room contains a rolled mat, a hookah, a pot of burning incense, a pike, a basket of roots and berries, and scrolls of scrawled illegible writing.

The verse should lead the adventurers to the easternmost gargoyle ("...the rising sun") on the roof of the temple. They will find that it possesses gills on the side of its neck (hence "kopoacinth"). By twisting the long, rolled tongue of this statue, a cavity will be revealed beneath it containing a rolled map, the map of the channel to Dragon Isle.

The map shows the island and all the surrounding rocks, both above and below the surface, and the only way through them, starting on the west of the island. A note on the map says that the channel is only passable at high tide.

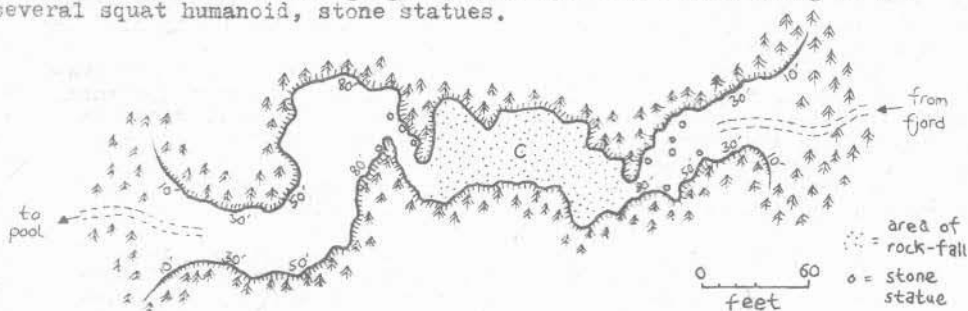
The villagers possess two of these maps, one at the village (to give to weaker parties) and one hidden at the temple for the above test.

Test 4. The key to the treasure chest.

Once the party has the map of the channel to Dragon Isle, the villagers will again secretly reconsider the strength of the adventurers. If they now believe them to be sufficiently weakened, they will give them the last requirement, the key, and send them off to Dragon Isle as quickly as possible, thus preventing them from recovering their strength. If, however, they desire to weaken them still further, they will tell them to go in search of the key to the treasure chest on Dragon Isle.

Carrock tells the adventurers to row to the first inlet south of Vapns, then to take the left fork of the inlet and take the only path leading out of it.

Following Carrock's instructions, the party will come to a 'beach' of boulders at the end of the inlet, from which a path climbs steeply into the forest and then passes south for about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. The path then enters a gorge, 30' wide and 80' deep with sheer sides crowned by the forest. The floor of the gorge is bare rock and dotted along it are several squat humanoid, stone statues.



When the adventurers reach C, the centre of the gorge, the statues animate with one purpose, to kill the adventurers. Four converge from the west, six from the east.



AC 4 (only vulnerable to blunt weapons)
Move 6"
Hits 20 (treat as 5HD)
2 fists for 2-8, 2-8
Resistant to all mind-based spells.

If all the stone statues are destroyed, the gorge begins to rumble and the ground to shake. After one turn, the walls of the whole of the central part of the gorge begin

to crumble, killing anyone still within it.

The path climbs out of the far end of the gorge back into the forest and comes almost immediately to a pool. The water is very dark and the surface very still; no stream enters or leaves the pool and it has a stagnant smell. A large key from which bright light radiates can be seen lying in the bottom of the pool, but the rest of the pool is too dark to see into.

The pool is inhabited by a marsh hag (TBH 14)(7/1-4, 1-4, strangle for 2-8 per m.r., fear/18;3) who will attempt to pick off one member of the party.

The pool is 3' deep and the bottom is covered in mud. Lurking in the mud are 5 2HD giant leeches (9/1-4 + (50%) disease (note; bite is anaesthetised, therefore not felt)/5,6,9,10,17;2). Hidden in the mud are the spoils of the hag; 2 rusted suits of chain mail, 3 rusted longswords, 450sp, 1050ep, 200gp, a large iron chest and, lying on the mud in the centre of the pool, a large, glowing key. The chest, when cleaned, is seen to have the following written on it;

"Open with the glowing key,
Turning once for evil.
Turning twice more evil find
But thrice, the key of Dragon Isle."

If the key is turned once in the lock, the lid springs up (unless held down) and a wight (5/1-4, drain 1 level/21;4+3) jumps out and attacks. If the key is turned twice and the lid is allowed to spring up, a wraith (4/1-6, drain 1 level/28; 5+3) jumps out. If however the lid is held down until the key has been turned three times, the chest will open to reveal a small silver key, the key to the treasure chest on Dragon Isle.

Once the adventurers have the three requirements (stone, map and key), Carrock will speak to them again, saying;

"You now have the map of the channel to Dragon Isle, the Stone to still the waters, and the key to unlock the ancient treasure chest. You must go to the Isle this night and wait for the rising sun for tomorrow the sun rises in the hour of the Dragon Lord, and this occurs but once per year (Carrock says this regardless of what day it is, because the 'hour of the Dragon Lord' was merely devised by the people of Vapns to help hurry the adventurers and prevent them from resting and recuperating). For according to the ancient verse;

'In the fire of the rising sun,
the hour of the Dragon Lord,
the treasure's grave all golden glows,
on Dragon Isle of Vapnsfjord.'

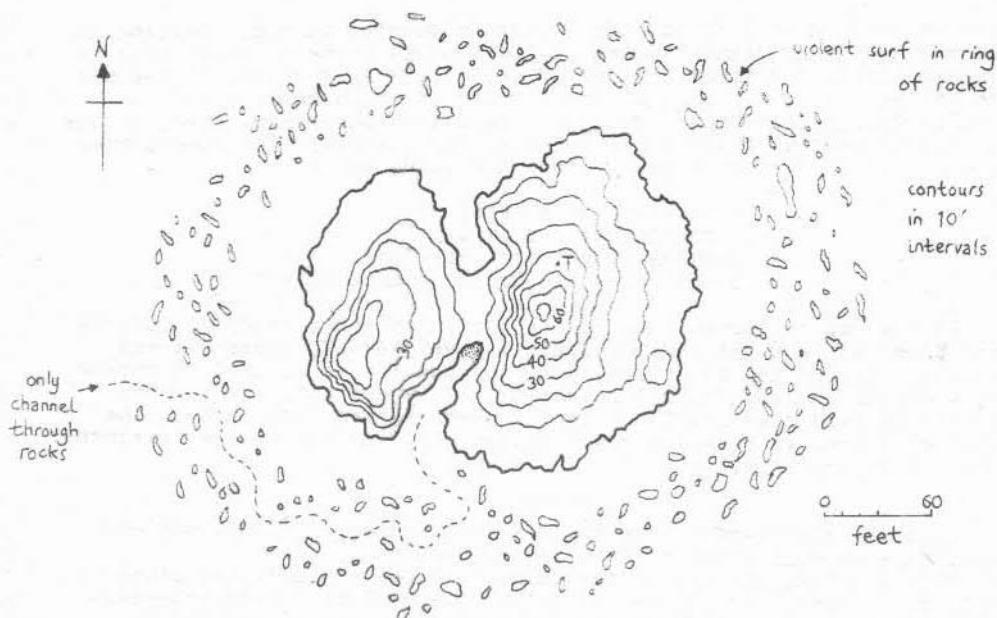
We will lend you two of our boats and I wish you good fortune. But beware, the Dragon Isle is said to be haunted.

DRAGON ISLE

Dragon Isle is a rocky isle barely 200' across, rising to 70' above the high tide mark. It has two peaks, east and west, separated by a narrow gap joining the inlet on the north of the isle with that on the south. It was once a highly magical isle, having been placed here centuries ago by a Great Druid and surrounded by treacherous rocks. The isle has now lost most of its magical power though still the rocks defend it, and, in the light of the rising sun the rock under which the treasure lies (T on map) still glows (hence the villagers may make the 'hour of the Dragon Lord' on any day). The glow is very dull and can only be seen up to 100' away.

Dragon Isle has no vegetation (other than kelps) and the rock is bare and rounded by the sea. There is only one place where it is possible to land; on the south of the island in the small inlet.

The isle is usually covered by a thick sea mist in the early morning and will definitely be covered whenever there are any people on it (this is due to the remnant magical power of the isle).



At night, Dragon Isle is used as a meeting place by giant crabs (3/2-8, 2-8/-; 3) and there is a 50% chance of 1-4 coming ashore each hour between 11 and 4.

When the sun rises at 8.30, it is a ball of fire through the heavy fog that has descended over-night. Visibility is down to 30' though lights can be seen at 100'. The rock T glows for only one minute. T is a large boulder that can be rolled aside while it is glowing by a combined strength of 48. When it is not glowing, it requires 200 to move it! Beneath it in a hollow lies an oak chest, bound in strong iron bands. The chest is locked and cannot be picked; it can only be opened by the small silver key (see test 4). It contains ancient Norse treasure;

12000gp, golden goblet (350gp), 6 silver medallions (275sp each), coral chain (160gp), pearl-studded belt (2050gp), silver crown with large emerald (2000sp + 3400gp), an iridescent ioun stone, scroll of protection against lycanthropes, scroll of Cure Disease, Summon Insects and Water Breathing, scroll of Dispel Magic, Glyph of Warding and Remove Curse, Ring of Swimming, Staff of Withering (15 charges), Wand of Paralyzation (10 charges), Sling of Seeking +2, sword +1, +4 vs reptiles, +1 shield, Bracers of Defense AC 4.

MEANWHILE...

AS soon as the adventurers leave for Dragon Isle and are out of sight and sound, the villagers of Vapns set about preparing for the kill. The whole elaborate operation is organised so that should any adventurers escape, they will truly believe that Dragon Isle is haunted, and will not suspect the villagers in the least.

18 of the men from Vapns, including Veld, Carrock and Thorvald, take the three remaining rowing boats and row to a hidden cave just

north of Vapns. Here they've hidden a long-ship, 8 oars down each side and a single central sail. On the prow is carved a dragon head and on the sail is painted a black dragon. At the stern is a single rudder, and the sides are lined by colourful shields. This is the 'Ghost ship'.

Two men are left at Vapns to protect the women and children against any wild beasts.

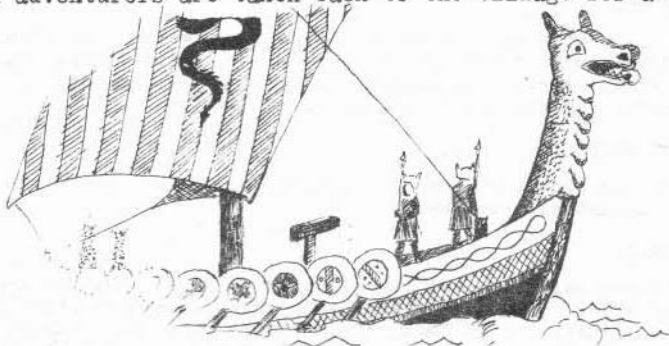
THE GHOST SHIP

The men have stored viking clothing in the ship. This they put on, becoming viking ghosts to haunt Dragon Isle. Thor is the Dragon Lord; he wears a copper breastplate (AC 5) and is armed with a +2 spear and a +2 axe. His bronze helm has a golden dragon coiled around it. Veld and Carrock wear thick leather armour (AC 7) and are armed with axes and +1 spears. All the other warriors are AC 9 and armed with spear and hand axe.

Lanterns are lit at prow and stern, and the Dragon Ghost Ship sets off for Dragon Isle. Its arrival is timed for sunrise; the adventurers will have had time to find the treasure, but not to examine it, before they hear the harsh cries of the 'ghost vikings' and see their lights coming through the mist. The prow of the ship bears a Stone of Safe Passage and the ship follows the channel through the rocks and comes to land just after sunrise. The tide is high at this time.

If the adventurers have been manipulated well by the villagers, they will die at the hands of the 'ghost vikings'. However, a clever party may have one or two tricks left. It is very unlikely that the adventurers recognise the vikings as villagers, for they are well disguised with their clothing and face-paint.

Murdered adventurers are taken back to the village for a feast!



NOTES

This scenario would be greatly enhanced by wanderers and other occurrences in the forest and in the fjord. For ideas, see TBH 5, Legend of Leshy or TBH 6, Of Brae-Land and Wold.

To encourage the players, extra experience could be given for passing each test. The average party (eg 8 3rd level adventurers) will probably do all but test 2a.

W O T

by ANON

Role-playing attracts a very varied (some would say "wierd") crowd of people. Here I present the "Observer's Guide to RPGers".

THE ROLE PLAYER

Although almost everyone in the hobby calls themselves a role player only a very few actually are. This is the kind of person who doesn't care so much what happens to his character as long as the action taken fit in with that character's assumed personality. The ultimate role player is someone who will allow his character to die by doing something that that character would do, even though the player knows the likely consequences. Role players with paladins don't often last long.

THE AMATEUR DUNGEON DESIGNER

I'm sure we've all got terrible memories of some of our very first dungeons. Some people never quite seem to grow out of that stage though, do they?

OVER THE TOP (MONTY HAUL)

Anyone with a character over level twenty, with more than 4 Rings of Three Wishes or more than one artifact. Anyone who claims to have rolled a monk on the standard 3d6 method. Anyone who asks their DM a question on the lines of "How do I become a god?" (it happened to me!).

THE QUOTER

A real pain this one. Someone who believes every last word of the latest editions of various TSR books to be gospel truth, and knows them off by heart. Recognisable by their famous warcry of:- "Hey, it doesn't say you can do that, so you can't."

FANZINE EDITORS

Some of the nicest people you could ever wish to meet (I know how to get an article published!)

THE KILLER

Very common and rather self-explanatory. Never tries to negotiate or plan ahead, just steams into every situation with sword flashing. Quite a pleasure to be DMing an adventure with one of these taking part because their brash attitude and obvious predictability makes them easy victims for even the simplest little trap.

THE SNOB

Claims never to play D&D, or at least not the advanced version. Likes to quote Tolkien and go on about how great Runequest or C&S is. ("This seems a bit unfair"...Mike) They often hang out together at conventions in "mutual admiration societies".

THE ENEMY

Most non-RPGers. Recognisable by such sayings as: "Bit childish isn't it?", "Well, I thought Lord of the Rings was pretty boring actually" and "What's the point of playing if no-one ever wins?"

MINOR MISHAPS

Early on in my DMing I encountered the problem of how to have something happen to characters without making it obvious that there was something afoot to the players. If a character was ever hit by a charm person, for instance, they would have to make a save. However innocently asking someone to roll a d20 does rather give the game away. This is an interesting point to think about for a while though. If someone is hit by a spell and makes their save should they know that they've done so and could they tell what spell they just saved against? In my opinion a player should be told that something is going on and given the chance to try for a save, but they shouldn't know exactly what's going on (unless it's an MU just in front of them firing a lightning bolt at them!). Obviously the situations that this applies to is a hidden MU attacking a party unaware of his presence.

Anyway, trying to get back to my main point, players often know more about a situation than their characters would. Very good role players (in the strictest sense of the term) don't take advantage of this sort of thing, but most others do all too often. The question is how to make a surprise really work, without taking too many things out of the players' hands? One answer which I came up with was the use of "minor mishaps". Just think of the vast number of things that could happen during a dungeoneering adventure: a backpack strap breaks, someone drops something or trips over, a mouse scuttles by in the shadows, a cold draught blows down a corridor, etc, etc, etc. These are all very small things but throwing them at players once in a while will very soon put them a bit off balance. All too often players come to accept that if the DM says something it's because it's a clue that there is a monster approaching. The first time I threw in a few minor mishaps to an adventure the players were soon petrified, convinced that some MU was following them around causing all these things to happen. Of course the next stage of the story was that they became blasé to all these things, and that's when some of them started to be real warnings, etc. When everyone is convinced that a creaking door doesn't necessarily mean there's a monster coming through it, that is just the time when a monster will be there.

Now, the above ideas shouldn't cause too much worry to D&D purists but I expect the next one will. I believe in creating circumstances and coincidences once in a while, if they are going to put players into an interesting/exciting situation. I personally do not think there is anything wrong in, for instance, having someone accidentally drop and smash a potion that would have enabled them to walk all over some monster or trap. Players often get too cock-sure of themselves and knocking out part of their plan with a minor mishap, thereby making them have to rethink their ideas and face a problem that would have otherwise been no problem is a very enjoyable part of DMing. Maybe some people would think that this was too much DM interference in the play of the game but if it makes playing more interesting and challenging who cares? D&D is only a game and having fun is (believe it or not) the main object. In my opinion the ends justify the means.

MAGIC JAR

MESSAGE FLIES

Invented and later mass-produced by the MU Racasan these useful little objects have the appearance of very large bluebottles (4 inches long) made from shimmering blue gemstones. For their decorative properties alone they are worth 450gp each. At the rear of the body they have a small catch (which may be mistaken for a sting) which, when pressed, causes the body of the fly to open, revealing it to be hollow. Small objects or messages written out on parchment can then be placed here and when the body is closed again the next name spoken by the fly's holder will be where it will immediately take off for and fly to at 36" speed rate. On reaching the person the fly will buzz around them until they put their hand out flat in front of them for the fly to land on. Once this is done the body will open and when the contents are removed the fly will take off again and fly back to its owner. Note that it can be rather worrying to be "buzzed" by one of these if you don't know what it is. If someone tries to attack one they count as AC-4 with only 1 hit point.

ASSASSIN FLIES

With the widespread use of message flies the assassins' guild realised that there was a good chance for them to take advantage of them, with a new weapon for their arsenal. This led to the creation of assassin flies which have the same appearance as message flies put rather than carrying objects in their bodies they carry one dose of poison. They operate just as above, but on landing on an open hand they will inject their poison and then fly off. Note that if you can keep up with it the fly will lead you back to the assassin who sent it.

CRYSTAL CREATURES

These look, to the uneducated, to be merely very finely-shaped models of various animals, on roughly a 1:40 scale. The most common examples are beetles, scorpions, spiders and snakes. Being made from fine quality marble they might be considered rather fragile, but are actually quite tough, which is a good thing because when they are smashed (a 10' drop or equivalent being needed) the crystal cracks away revealing a live creature inside, which will grow to its full size in 2 segments (12 seconds) and attack the nearest creature. Note that the examples given above will grow to full giant size.

FREEZE BLOCKS

These are very beautiful but potentially deadly items. On discovery they look like 6" cubes of transparent material with spheres of irregular shape like miniature suns at the centre. They are in fact very localized time-stops cast on fireballs just at the moment of explosion, and given permanency (of sorts). As objects of beauty they are worth 1400gp each. Unfortunately they have a catch (of course) which is that any sudden decrease in temperature around the block will cause the mini-fireball to expand, cracking the block and thereby releasing its, with all the effects of a full 10 dice fireball, centred where the block was. Nasty!

FLOAT CARPETS

Called, rather unkindly, by some people the "poor man's flying carpet" this item is similar in size, shape and appearance to that more useful creation, but it cannot actually fly. Instead it has a permanent "Feather Fall" effect upon it as per 1st level MU spell. The most common use for a float carpet is as an "elevator" for travel down pits and shafts, which will be carried out at the usual leisurly pace (as with all f.f.ed objects). However if the carpet is overloaded (see Carpet of Flying) the f.f. will not be able to cope and the carpet (and anything on it) will descend at normal speed.

SWAP BOTTLES

More of a one-off player-puzzler than magical item these are usually found in pairs, two potion bottles, one full of brightly coloured liquid and the other empty. Both bottles will be stoppered. When someone eventually tries to pour the liquid out of the full bottle it will reach the lip, and then vanish, to appear in the empty bottle. If they go on pouring the full bottle will soon empty, and the empty bottle fill. All very clever and nice to look at but not terribly usefull! The only way to get at the liquid is probably to smash one of the bottles. Note that it is very unlikely to find that the liquid is a magical potion. Who'd waste one in a "toy" when coloured water is just as good?

LIVING BOOTS

From Jack Vance's "Dying Earth" (part of the inspiration for D&D) these are the items which MUs tried to copy with "Boots of Striding and Springing". They are superior in as much as they have a base movement rate of 15" instead of 12", but have an inbuilt disadvantage in that if they are used constantly for more than 4 hours there is a chance they will die! Chance is 5% cumulative per turn over the 4 hours.

HELM OF THE SAGE

Apparently a normal (but magical) helm the true function of this item will only be revealed when it is put on by a character or INT 14+. Whilst wearing the helm such a person will be able to call on the knowledge of one sage, who has previously owned the helm and had the aid of a high level MU. The knowledge of the sage should either be predetermined by the DM or rolled randomly on the sage tables.

BELT OF THE DECEIVER

This is a thick leather belt with a large buckle, which holds one averagely-sized gem. If the gem is pressed whilst someone is wearing the belt they will immediately come under the effects of a feign death (as per 3rd level MU spell) that will last until the belt is removed. When this is done the person will recover in 2-5 turns time. Sneaky (or evil!) DMs can have a lot of fun with this one!

MAZES

When designing a dungeon it always seems like a good idea to include some form of maze system in it. An interesting challenge for the players? No way. Usually mazes just degenerate into boring lengthy mapping efforts, finally resulting in the whole maze drawn out and none of the hoped for confusion. What are needed are methods of preventing players from just dawdling about and give them a race against time, or something similar, to make some tension. Maps should also be invalidated to a certain extent by moving walls, on/off illusions, etc. However do not take this too far. It is very easy and not very clever for a DM to trap a group of players in an ever-changing maze with no chance of escape. There must be some clues or method to the maze's operation so that with a bit of thought and a little trial and error players will be able to escape.

If you are a glutton for punishment try DMing a party through a maze which splits the players up. Teleports, sliding walls, on/off force fields, etc are all very useful for seperating people, and once you've got them by themselves the problems of being lost really hits them, especially with the occasional appearance of some nasty monsters. It might surprise you how much players take for granted the "united we stand" aspect of D&D, when split up you've got no friendly cleric to heal you, or no fighter ready for if the going gets tough. You've got to stay alive using your own abilities and DMing a group who are all going through different can be a great (if somewhat exhausting) experience. It is, of course, important to make sure the players don't know what is happening to everyone else and accurate time-keeping is also of the utmost necessity. There is nothing as satisfying as seeing players just miss each other as they wander through the maze or be scared off by a noise which you know was made by one of the others, just round a corner.

Mazes can have a variety of basic constructions. Outdoors they may be formed from lines of thick hedges, although the problem with this is that players will insist on slicing their way through, rather than trying to figure out the maze's pattern. In a dungeon a maze will probably be rather like a normal mass of corridors, but more tightly packed and with no doors or rooms, just passage after passage. There'll also be dead-ends of course and, if you're feeling nasty, the odd teleporter, which sends the hapless player back into the middle of the maze somewhere. On an even more exotic line you can have a 3D maze with gravity-shafts, trapdoors, stairs, etc to add an extra dimension (groan!) to the game.

Given enough time anyone can escape from a maze. They will either have mapped it all out or come across the exit by chance (sure to happen eventually). This is no fun in D&D, players must be hurried and constantly under pressure. Ways to achieve this are: traps (pits usually), passages which have moving walls which will make it harder for players (especially dwarves!) to move about by moving together, monsters teleporting in or using well-hidden secret exits, etc.

One tactic players often come up with is marking passages in certain ways to show which directions they've been, and enable them to find their way back to their starting positions if necessary. The best way to prevent this is with a group of invisible creatures, kobolds being quite appropriate, that move these marking, or change them. All corny stuff it may be, but it sure makes for an interesting game!

INFO

We've had quite a few letters recently asking about where you can get copies of this mag, and possibly find a back issue or two as well. So, for those people, here's a list of all the shops in the UK which stock "The Beholder":-

GAMES WORKSHOP, 1 Dalling Road, Hammersmith, London W6
ESDEVIUM GAMES, 2 Morley Road, Farnham, Surrey
GAMES OF LIVERPOOL, 50-54 Manchester Street, Liverpool
TANGLEY MODEL WORKSHOP, 89b/c Woodbridge Road, Guildford, Surrey
FOREVER PEOPLE, 59 Park Street, Bristol
DUNGEONS AND STARSHIPS, 45 Summer Row, Birmingham
GAMES GALLERY, 13 Forrest Road, Edinburgh, Scotland
D.G.KAYSON, 5 Braunstone Gate, Leicester
GAMER, 18 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex
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0473 51727 / 0473 58356 / W-o-T 22284.

Now, please don't assume that these shops will all have back issues of TBH. However if you are desperate to get hold of a certain issue these are the people to try, unless you only want an issue from a month or two ago in which case write/phone Mike 'cos we've probably got some copies lying about somewhere.

The CIRCLE BATTLEGROUP (Board and Wargames Club) is holding its yearly open day/show known as "GAMES GALORE" on the May Bank Holiday Monday at 623 Kingstanding Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham. The event will be open to the public between 10.30am and 10pm and is sponsored by DUNGEONS AND STARSHIPS (address above). Included in this years events are: tradestands, open tables, participation games, competitions, etc.

MINI DMS CORNER

SUPRISE: Sometimes a situation will be enhanced by giving the monsters a large degree of surprise, perhaps so that someone can be captured (always an interesting scenario trying to get them back). The easiest way to do this is with the use of a specially prepared room which has such features as on/off darkness and silence spells. Hidden animals and magic mouths are also very useful for drawing the players' attention to the wrong place at the right time, i.e. just as hoards of orcs come charging through the secret doors!

BACKFIRES: As mentioned before in TBH it can be most interesting to include in a dungeon NPC MUs who have researched new spells, which players obviously won't be expecting. Well, this is all very good, but the business of creating new spells is (or at least should be) pretty risky. Therefore it isn't unreasonable to expect there to be a few examples of "experimental failures" wandering about (the Owlbear being a prime case). Other examples are upto you, but how about a permanent invisibility with the only catch that it doesn't make the bones of the recipient invisible? This enables the use of "skeletons" which also have the powers of any type or level of character.

ILLUSIONS: Many DMs use illusions to deter players or worry them. Rooms seemingly full of snakes, flames, etc or apparently bottomless pits can easily be created by illusions and are useful tools for directing players' actions how you want. However they can of course be used the other way, although in my experience they rarely are. How often have you used an illusion to hide some monster or trap? Try it some time, but be warned that they can be a bit deadly if you try and be too clever. Although if your "dungeon" is the inner sanctum of some high level MU or the like he'd have the brains to come up with some nasty stunts, so you should put a few in.

STILL AVAILABLE: The Beholder Supplement 1 - GLOSSARY OF MAGIC

The GoM has been selling very well and we only have a few copies left (although a reprint is probable). In case anyone doesn't know the GoM contains all the magical items from TBH1 to 10 plus many completely new ones. All in a high quality booklet for just 50p (P&P included). Send cheques/POs made payable to J.P.Stoner to 29 Parkway, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1EX.

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