irregular

TUTORIAL
SNOW BASING

FIGHTING FANTASY

STALINGRAD

SINS
RPG

PLUS MUCH MORE INCLUDING
BLAST FROM THE PAST
REVIEWS
MORE TUTORIALS
INTERVIEWS

Contents

Editorial

Jason

We've come to the end of 2011 and have hit 2012 - for a lot of folks the last year has been a tough one, what with natural disasters and economic failures, but rest assured we can always rely on our hobby to help soothe away the stress.

So what's in store for 2012? According to a lot of people out there, the apocalypse will begin this year - but will it be caused by climate, financial meltdown, war or solar flares? Personally, I think it is going to either be a zombie outbreak or an invasion by aliens. I'd better start melting down the metal miniatures and making that sword I'll need - or in the case of Mr Barker he could make an artillery gun and ammunition with the amount of metal miniatures he has [I've seen the pictures, and Jason isn't joking - Ed].

During the course of the year we hope to bring you plenty of great articles, painting tutorials and even more Tuk Tuk. The new regular painting competition will be run in every issue with prizes to be won. We will endeavour to bring you some great gaming articles over the coming year, as well as some interesting interviews with people who work in the industry.

Well that's all folks, I hope you enjoy this issue and that I'll see you over the course of the year.

We are always looking for new contributors, so if you fancy writing or illustrating for Irregular Magazine then send us an email at the usual address - irregularmagazine@gmail.com

Nick

Welcome, readers, to the first issue of Irregular Magazine for 2012! If we're lucky, we'll be releasing issue 15 in January 2013. If the Mayans were right, of course, then this won't be happening.

Q4 has been fairly quiet for me on the hobby front, though it kicked off with a bang with Derby World Wargames, where I was manning the Sheffield Irregulars stand in a sunny corner of the show. Like last year, DWW proved to be a great show with a good variety of stands. I took the opportunity to pick up the rules for Secrets of the Third Reich, as well as a new aluminium case from KR Multicase.

The second major event for me took place in early December when the play test for the beta version of Sins, a new d8-based roleplaying game, began at Patriot Games. I think this is the only game I've seen with the d8 as core dice type. We've got a design diary from the lead developer later in the issue. The game is proving interesting thus far, and assuming everything runs according to plan we should have a review later in the year. Our resident comic artist, Will Kirkby, is also providing some of the artwork for the core book.

On the electronic front, we've taken the plunge and set up a Google+ page for Irregular magazine- if you're on that social network, why not add us? We'll be looking to add more content making use of the features on there, possibly including Hangouts with the editors and writing staff if we get enough interest.

I'm also running a challenge on the Privateer Press forums, in the form of A Tale of Warmahordes 2012. The simple aim is for participants to paint 50 points worth of models over the next year. It sounds simple, but keeping motivated for twelve months is tricky. So far we've had over 100 people sign up (including Jason), meaning that if everyone hits their goal we'll have well over 5,000 points of models painted.

Finally, a quick date for your diary, IMP 2012 will be happening on Sunday 22nd July 2012 at the Workstation in Sheffield, the same venue as last year. We're still finalising details at the moment, but I hope to be able to give you more details next issue. In the meantime, make sure you keep that date free...

SI Painting Challenge

sheffield irregulars

The staff at *Irregular Magazine* have teamed up with *Sheffield Irregulars* to sponsor a regular quarterly painting challenge.

Every issue we will announce a new challenge based on the theme of the magazine. You then interpret that theme and build and paint a model, duel or diorama. Basically, you're free to build and paint whatever you like as long as it fits the theme.

The theme for the first challenge will be **Heroes & Villians**

All entries are to be emailed in to us at **irregularmagazine@gmail.com**

The closing date is March 16th.

All entries must include an image of the finished entry and one next to a screen of the current issue of Irregular Magazine. These pictures will need to be accompanied by a short description of how you developed your idea, built and painted the finished entry.

There will be a prize awarded to the best entry.

The results will be announced in the following issue of the magazine and on-line.

Stalingrad 1942

A Call to Arms:
Star Fleet

Stalingrad 1942

Words: Jason Hubbard
Photography: Alex Garbett

Stalingrad was one of the major battles that became a turning point in WW2 on the eastern front in Russia. Hitler decided to launch a new offensive in July 1942 with the aim of taking Stalingrad. General Friedrich Paulus, who commanded the 6th Army, was given orders to capture the city. Stalingrad was the centre of all rail and water communications for Southern Russia which made it a prime target for capture.

In the summer of 1942 the German army advanced towards the city with 250,000 men, 7,000 artillery and mortars and 500 tanks. Progress was slow as fuel was rationed, with priority given to Army Group A. By the end of July Paulus was forced to call a halt due to fuel shortages at Kalach; supplies would finally arrive on August 7th. This prompted Paulus to preserve food and only order out the XIV Panzer Corp towards Stalingrad. The Red Army attacked forcing the Panzer Corp to halt just shy of the city. In light of this delay Paulus moved the entire army towards the city encircling Stalingrad. With the city surrounded, the German army delayed any attacks until the 7th September. The first wave of attacks came from the Luftwaffe with a large scale bombing killing thousands of civilians.

Stalin gave orders that the city should not fall into German hands and should be held at all costs. If Stalingrad fell it would open the way for the German army to advance on Moscow, and in all likelihood this would have meant the fall of Russia.

The Russian war machine went into overdrive with a million infantry troops drafted into the area with support from tanks, aircraft and rocket batteries. Factories in the Urals also went into overdrive to produce the necessary armour to defend the city. Stalin gave command for the defence to the undefeated General Georgi Zhukov.

As the Germans advanced into the city, they were forced to fight for every street, house and building. The fighting became intense and brutal, troops on both sides fought amongst the rubble of the city, dying in their thousands. The deeper they managed to drive into the city the more fierce the fighting became, then the more deadlier it became with casualties amongst both forces rapidly increasing daily.

The 500 German tanks became useless as the fighting progressed deeper and deeper into the city. Infantry became the driving force for the German advance. With the fight taking place amongst the ruins of the city, the Russian army made use of snipers deploying them all over the city. On the 28th September the German army raised the Swastika over the local government buildings in Red Square though the fierce street fighting continued. Hitler commanded Paulus to take the city regardless of the cost. General Kurt Zeitzler, chief of general staff, was opposed to the idea. He wanted the 6th Army to withdraw but Hitler refused. Since entering the city the German army had incurred 40,000 casualties. On the 4th October Paulus requested more troops.

A few days later five engineer battalions, along with a Panzer division, were sent to the city. Stalin in turn ordered three more armies into Stalingrad. Heavy rain in October slowed down supplies reaching the German army in the city.

Winter and the snow arrived on October 19th. The Germans were making good progress by November, controlling around 90% of the city. Troops were running short of food and ammunition when Paulus decided to launch a new offensive. For two days the Germans took heavy casualties. Worse was to come in the form of a Russian counter attack which forced them to retreat southwards giving up much hard-fought ground. They reached the airfield at Gumrak, and Hitler gave orders for them to stop and hold their ground even though this would risk the army being encircled. Paulus was reassured by high command that the Luftwaffe would drop sufficient supplies, though several of Paulus's senior officers doubted that they could actually airlift the much needed supplies in the middle of winter. They also made a request that the army try and break out of the city before they became trapped. Paulus refused saying he had no choice but to carry out Hitler's orders.

All through December the Luftwaffe continued to drop 70 tonnes of supplies a day - the army required a minimum of 300 tonnes a day. The army were placed on 1/3 rations, which forced them to

slaughter the remaining horses just to survive. By the 7th December the situation had become dire, with food rations really low. The 6th Army were at risk of starvation and surrendering. Hitler ordered the 4th Panzer Army under Field Marshall Erich Von Manstien to make a rescue attempt. Though they were within 30 miles of the city, the Russian army managed to halt them forcing them to retreat. The German army lost 28,000 men in December. Due to a lack of food Paulus gave the order that the 12,000 wounded soldiers could no longer be fed. Manstien ordered Paulus to attempt a breakout.

On the 30th December Hitler promoted Paulus to Field Marshall and told him that no German Field Marshall had ever been captured expecting Paulus to order his troops to continue fighting. The next day Paulus surrendered. On the 2nd February, the battle for Stalingrad was over. The German army suffered 150,000 dead and 91,000 captured. The German prisoners were forced to march to Siberia where a further 45,000 German soldiers died en route to the prisoner of war camps. At the end of the war only 7,000 had survived from the original 250,000 men.

A Call to Arms: Star Fleet

Words & Photos: Alex Garbett

With the imminent release of Mongooses Publishing's 'A Call to Arms: Star Fleet' (http://www.mongoosepublishing.com/miniatures/ctastarfleet.html) I've been getting planets, stations and ideas together for when I can get my hands on the amazing looking miniatures. They are produced by Mongoose Publishing in a joint venture with Amarillo Design Bureau, Inc., under a strict contract with Paramount Pictures Corporation, with rules by Mongoose's very own Matthew Sprange.

Star Trek, as everyone on the planet knows, was created by Gene Roddenberry and was first produced back in the mid 60s. The original series, as this came to be known, followed the adventures of Captain Kirk, Mr Spock, Doctor 'Bones' McCoy, Scotty, Chekhov, Sulu, Lieutenant Uhura and the United Star Ship Enterprise herself on their first five year mission to, as Kirk famously quoted each episode, "explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilisations, to boldly go where no man has gone before".

A massive hit spanning three series, Star Trek was more than just another TV show. It was a chance for Gene Roddenberry to put his ideas down for the future; peace amongst the nations of earth, no racial segregation as shown by the international mixed-race crew of the Enterprise (something never before done on television) and exploration of the stars to

So now it is time for Mongoose to show us their take on the original series of Star Trek with their rules and resin miniatures produced with Amarillo Design Bureau, Inc., under their STARLINE 2500 series line. Alas at the time of writing I'm still waiting on these being produced and manufactured, the rulebook being printed and items arriving. So between now and then I thought I'd put together several articles about my preparation towards the arrival of my new A Call to Arms: Star Fleet rules and miniatures.

name but a few of the themes running through the original series.

Star Trek also gave us many ideas of current modern day technology - your mobile phone/smart phone, for example, is taken straight from Captain Kirk's gold and black communicator, which he used to speak with the ship and landing parties on planets.

It was so successful as an idea and TV series that now almost 50 years later we are still enjoying Star Trek and all its offerings. It has spawned four additional TV series based on the original, the latest being Star Trek Enterprise which is a prequel to the original series. There are multiple computer games across many platforms, board games, merchandise (figures, ships, clothes, books, props and more) seen only by the the likes of Star Wars …heck there is even a trivial pursuit game of Star Trek.

Star Trek has also been available as a miniatures game for some time under FASA and Amarillo Design Bureau, Inc. At one time Games Workshop also produced miniatures and rules for space combat in the Star Trek universe.

Sins Development Diary - Part 1

Advanced
Fighting Fantasy

Development Diary - Part 1

Words: Miquel Tankard
Artwork: Miquel Tankard & William Kirkby

We've been given an opportunity to talk with the readers of this magazine about the journey to completion, and the nature of our new roleplaying game, Sins, which is due to be released in Autumn 2012.

Sins is a game of epic survival horror. It places the protagonists in the roles of powerful beings known as the Nemissaries, surviving in a future of our own world after it has been ravaged by a nightmarish enemy known as the Brood.

The game draws on strong post-apocalyptic and horror themes. It takes things in a new direction by making the characters both durable and powerful by presenting them continuously with threats which cannot be solved by physical force alone. The characters in Sins possess great power.

It is a game about personal horror and each Nemissary, as an entity, has defied death. Driven by a will to live they are plagued by their own fears and doubts trying to drag them back into the welcoming embrace of death.

Sins as a project has eaten up a considerable amount of our time, but it's been a labour of love. It had its inception about two years ago amidst a rather interesting discussion between myself and a colleague about two very different games and their natures. One was a very grim post-apocalyptic setting and the other was almost a high-fantasy setting but with a strange sort of deathless edge to it all. The catch was, at the time, that neither setting truly worked. Both had some great ideas on the table. The Brood, the Nemissaries and all

the other elements of the setting were there, but there was nothing to make them stand apart. Both games felt a little hollow.

Almost as a joke we merged the two and found something really unique came out of that discussion. It took months of discussion, a lot of sketching, more than one whole setting worked out and then dumped before we got close to the version of Sins that is to be released.

It's amazing how ideas can grow and change. It's ironic now how different the game ended up to its original concept, but every step we've taken we hope is for the better.

We found on this journey that it's very easy to get lost. A lot of people stumble. When making your own world and ideas, it's very easy to put things into a game just because you think they're cool, rather than because they work. This is one of the reasons that working as a team is such an advantage.

For most of the project there have been three primary people working on it: myself, Rusty and Gavin. Together, we've fleshed out various concepts and brought the world closer to life. Of course, building a roleplaying game from scratch is a massive undertaking, and frankly when we began we hadn't a clue what we'd let ourselves in for. It's amazing the sheer scale of

difference between sitting around a table with friends hammering out a workable system, and creating a game that someone else can run.

Of all of the things that this project has involved, writing the rules has been the most challenging. The HOPE Engine which powers the game is intended to be the root for more games than just this one. It's also a fairly interesting system with its own unique mechanics. One of the biggest hurdles in the whole development process was sorting out the 'engine under the hood' so to speak.

Most gamers are likely to be familiar with a lot of the basic concepts of the HOPE Engine. It evolved from a lot of the systems I've liked. It uses statistics and skill combinations and the various other conventions we've become familiar with and enjoy.

What it does differently - that being perhaps the most important bit - is its take on combat and opposed actions.

In my time I've done more than a fair amount of re-enacting, not to mention actual fighting and some firearms training. Most rule systems that involve combat have never quite sat right with me. In my mind, combat is less a series of blows against a static defence, or blow against block, but rather a fluid situation where one combatant tries to overcome the other. Even in ranged combat this holds true; targets move and shift, always trying to gain the advantage on one another. The HOPE engine simulates a lot of this, meaning that combat can be resolved swiftly and with a degree of realism without sacrificing fun or excitement.

The first real hurdle we faced happened earlier this year with the Alpha book. This was a kind of proof of concept, but it was still a massive undertaking. In many ways it was an unfinished mess, but to the backers we had and that have stuck with us, it was the proof to move on to the next phase - the construction of a Beta book and an eye towards beginning the final fine-tuning and Beta testing

Of course, fine-tuning everything is still an ongoing process, and at the time of writing this, we've reached what we would consider the second true milestone in that Beta Testing is just about to begin. In the next few days, the first groups, other than ourselves, are going to get to experience the whole world of Sins and the HOPE Engine. I tell you, there's a hell of a lot of anticipation on our part. Even now, in the last few days we're still making revisions and corrections, adding setting information and trying to make things clearer.

Beta-testing is going to take place over two phases during October-December 2011 and then January-February 2012. We've laid everything out in such a way that we can make final changes before the book is ever released. One of our great aims with all of this has always been to listen to constructive criticism and to not get too caught up in ourselves not to change. To be honest, we've come into Beta testing now with the resolution that if we have to re-write the whole damn book, so be it. What's important to us is that Sins is the best product possible when it hits the shelves.

Rules system aside, the world of Sins will be a rich setting and I can't tell you the amount of research into mythology, history and even geography that's been going on to bring it all to life. In some ways, writing for a world like this is even more challenging when it's essentially a mirror of our own. In a fantasy setting you can largely do as you please, as long as you keep things reasonably consistent, but when dealing with a

real place, the weight of not screwing something up is so much greater.

As we get closer to the day of launch, we'll be beginning an online developers diary and there will be some pretty sweet goodies to give out nearing the time of release. For a start, a full free 32-page adventure called

'Dead City' will be up online with the release of Sins. This was previewed at Furnace last year and will be available with the final game to help people ease into the system and the world. On top of this, whilst we're committed to print books in bricks and mortar shops, we also plan to support our product online thoroughly. We'll be uploading various free additions to the game every month or so, and not just random things either. We've got some really cool things planned.

For example, one of our intentions is to release free updates on various regions of the world, allowing us to slowly build up the world of Sins and for GMs to get information on new locations without having to fork out for a new book. We're also planning an expanded bestiary and armament supplement, again for free with the release, which will allow groups to represent pretty much every weapon they could hope for.

In the end, I can only say that I hope Sins is the best possible success and that through doing it we can share our journey with everyone. As I've said, Sins launches later this year, and for those looking for more information, you can join us online at Patriot Games.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Advanced Fighting Fantasy
An Adventure

Words: Dave Barker
Artwork: Dave Barker & Peter Szabo Gabor

In the last issue of Irregular Magazine, I reminisced about playing Fighting Fantasy games in my youth. I also mentioned that I had picked up a copy of the latest edition of Advanced Fighting Fantasy which is available from Cubicle 7/Arion Games.

Well, I haven't really stopped reminiscing since I wrote that article. Having played a bit with my kids, In the last issue of Irregular Magazine, I reminisced about playing Fighting Fantasy games in my youth. I also mentioned that I had picked up a copy of the

This is just a small dungeon, just eight areas, all accessed from a small cave that the adventurers can stumble across wherever they are in your adventures. It is written to be used with the Fighting Fantasy rules, but if you wanted to use it in a different RPG that shouldn't be too hard!

Entrance
The entrance is a cave set about 8 feet up from the bottom of an escarpment. The entrance is easily accessible via three ledges that effectively form a short staircase from the escarpment's base.
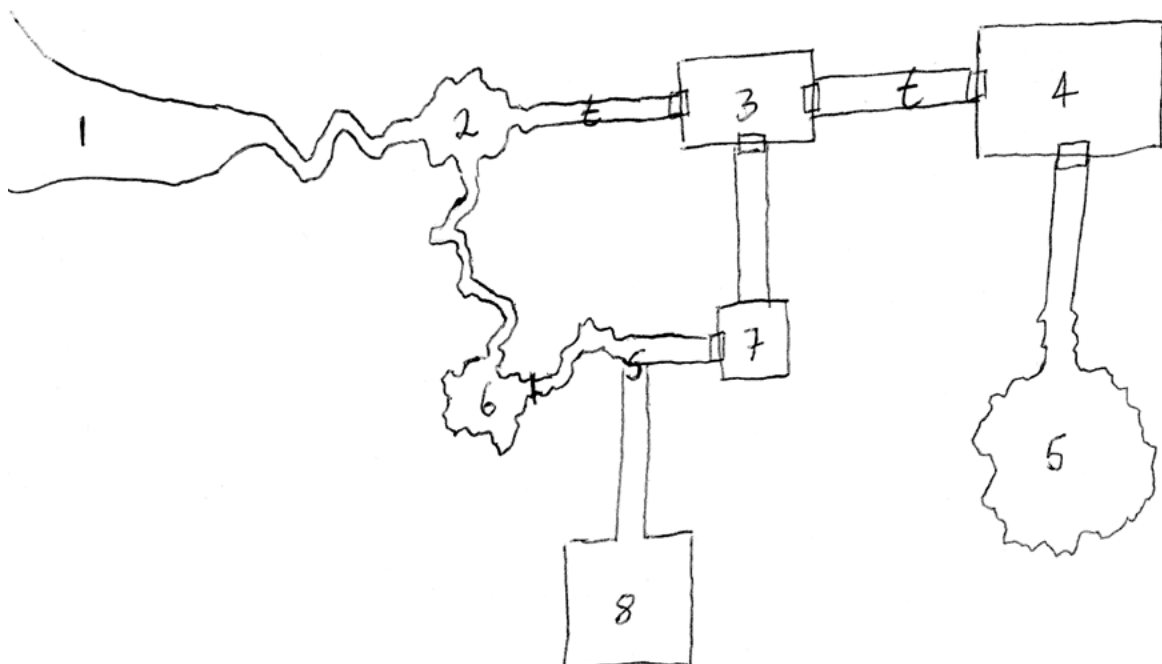
1 Cavern

This cavern looks like the abandoned lair of a bear - or at least you'd better hope it has been abandoned! Much wider near the front entrance, about 30 feet back and to the east, the cavern narrows to a winding tunnel that leads into the gloom. The whole cavern smells foul, of long-dead meat and abandoned kills. A cursory search reveals the bones of a number of animals, but nothing of value.

2 Cave

This is a dark and gloomy cave, illuminated only by whatever light the adventurers have brought with them. Stark shadows are cast by the plethora of large stalactites and stalagmites that adorn the ceiling and floor of this cave. These sparkle and glitter as the light catches both the quartz and the water that fills the cave. It is difficult to tell properly without illumination, but the cave seems to be about 30 feet across.

A small pool is hidden amongst the stalagmites to the north side of the cave. It appears to be quite deep and light does not seem to penetrate into it.

Further winding tunnels head out of this cave to the east, west and to the south.

If the adventurers have not brought any illumination with them, then the cave will be pitch black and effectively impassable unless they have night vision. They might also get wet if they stumble into the pool!

If the adventurers choose to investigate the pool (or fall into it!) then they will find that it is about an arm's length deep. A search of the pool will turn up 3gps, 7sps and a rusty sword.

2-T-3 Trap

As the adventurers proceed down this darkened corridor they should each in turn be asked to Test For Luck. If they pass then nothing happens. If they fail then they are dropped 10 feet down into a previously hidden pit causing 2 stamina damage.

3 Orcs

From whichever direction the adventurers approach this room, they will find a rather old looking, closed wooden door at the end of the corridor.

If they listen at the door they will hear muffled grunting and what sounds like the clatter of bones on stone.

Inside are three orcs engaged in some gambling game involving throwing bones, although what they are gambling for is anyone's guess!

On entering this room, the adventurers surprise the orcs, but they will quickly spring to their feet and fight!

3 Orcs	Each of							
Skill	6							
Stamina	5							
Weapon	Sword							
Dice Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Damage	2	3	3	3	3	4		
Armour	Light							
Dice Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Protection	0	0	0	0	1	1		

After defeating the orcs, it can be seen that the room is about 30 feet by 20 feet and was once tiled with neatly cut slabs although now many of them have broken and cracked from long use. The walls are rough-hewn, though, with just a couple of sconces still holding the burning torches that illuminate the room.

The orcs had been sat at what at one time was a high quality table, though it is now covered in bones, filth and several sets of crude dice.

There is nothing else of interest in this room, even if it is searched, and wooden doors lead east, west and south out of the room.

3-T-4 Trap

As the adventurers proceed down this corridor one of them (Director's choice - but a Dwarf if there is one in the adventurer's party) should be asked to Test for Luck.

If Unlucky, the adventurer will be surprised and struck by the trap suffering 4 Stamina damage.

If Lucky, the adventurer will spot the holes in the wall that indicate there is a blade trap. A Difficult (-2) Skill test will disarm the trap and any one of the party may attempt this. A failed Skill test has the same effect on the person attempting to disarm the trap as if they had been Unlucky (4 Stamina damage).

4 More Orcs!

At the end of the corridor is another wooden door.

If the adventurers have not set off or disarmed the 3-T-4 trap, then the sound of snoring can be heard from behind the door, otherwise the occupants of the room have been alerted and are ready for someone to open the door.

When the adventurers open the door they will find themselves in a very large room, about 40 feet by 50 feet.

It has an old flagged floor and rough-hewn walls like room 3, but is occupied by a dozen rough beds and two, once high-quality tables.
If the adventurers have not set off or disarmed the trap, they will find six orcs asleep in the beds. If they have disarmed the trap, the orcs will be ready to fight as soon as the adventurers enter the room!

If asleep, the adventurers can either choose to try and sneak past the orcs (all party members will need to pass a Skill test) or they may attack the orcs - in which case the orcs will have -2 Skill in the first round of combat and will not be able to damage the adventurers if they win the combat.

6 Orcs	Each of							
Skill	6							
Stamina	5							
Weapon	Sword							
Dice Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Damage	2	3	3	3	3	4		
Armour	Light							
Dice Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Protection	0	0	0	0	1	1		

After defeating the orcs, if the adventurers search the room they will find an awful lot of rubbish and filth! There is also a total of 12gps and 20sps in the desks as well as a mysterious scroll. Anyone passing a Magic Lore test will know that this an Invisibility Scroll (effect as per the Wizardry spell of the same name).

There are wooden doors in the south and west walls.

5 Shaman
After opening the wooden door from the orcs' barrack room, a corridor leading south slowly changes from dressed stone to a rough-hewn passage. The corridor doesn't so much as end as turn slowly into a large, low-ceilinged cavern, which despite being about 50 feet in diameter, is only just high enough for a human to stand up in!

The cavern is entirely lit by candlelight from nearly a hundred candles scattered randomly around the cavern, but the dominant feature is the 10 feet wide, ugly and badly carved image of some unknowable orc god. Before this carving is a wild-eyed orc shaman who is clearly outraged that you've entered his shrine. Wide-eyed and unarmed, he charges straight for you!

Orc	Shamen						
Skill	8						
Stamina	12						
Weapon	Bare Hands						
Dice Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Damage	1	1	1	2	2	2	

Assuming that the adventurers defeat this enraged orc shamen, they will be free to search the cavern.

If they search around the image of the orc god, then they will find a lot of trinkets and worthless sacrifices. But hidden amongst these is a very nice-looking magical +1 dagger.

6 Bear!

This is yet another a gloomy cave, dark except for whatever light the adventurers are holding. Bold shadows hide between the many stalactites and stalagmites, of all sizes, that have formed throughout this cave. These flash and sparkle as light reflects from the tiny particles of quartz in the rock.

This chamber is much drier than the previous cave, although it smells really, really bad. But that would be because of the bear whose lair you've just invaded!

Bear								
Skill	9							
Stamina	8							
Weapon	claws x2							
Dice Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Damage	2	3	3	3	4	4		

Once the adventurers have defeated the bear they can take time to look around the rest of this cave. There is very little here apart from the remains of some of the bear's previous meals and nothing of value.

In fact, the only things of note in this cave are the tunnel leading north and the tunnel leading to the east. The easterly exit is secured with an iron gate. An unlocked iron gate at that. Very secure!

6-S-7

The passage between areas (6) and (7) turns slowly from a natural passage leading from the cave (6) into a slightly decrepit, once well-dressed stone corridor as it approaches the door to room (7).

As the adventurers proceed down this corridor one of them (Director's choice - but a Dwarf if there is one in the adventurer's party) should be asked to Test for Luck.

If Unlucky, the adventurer is bitten by a large spider, with no ill effect but the Director should not necessarily tell the adventurer there is no effect. Make them sweat!

If Lucky, the adventurer will spot that the passage just doesn't seem right around the point where it changes from a tunnel into a corridor and notice that there is a secret door heading south.

7 Store Room

This still 15 feet square room contains nothing but piles and piles of wooden boxes, none of which have lids! The vast majority of theses boxes seem to contain candles, although a good number of them also seem to contain food and a scant few contain books written in what appears to be Orcish.

Wooden doors lead out of the room to the west and the north. If the adventurers decide to search the boxes, they will also find a leather hauberk and a small leather shield, both of which appear to be in good condition.

If any of the adventurers can read Orcish script, all of the books seems to be either learn-to-read books, or tales of thrilling adventure - all featuring an heroic orc monk!

8 Hidden Cell

The secret door opens into a corridor which extends for 50 feet before an arch opens into a 20 feet square room. A bed, a desk, bookshelves, chairs and a couple of storage boxes all clearly indicate that this is a living space for someone, but no-one is here at the moment.

The desk and the bookshelves both contain books in a wide variety of languages, although all of the ones you can read appear to be of a religious nature. If the adventurers search the room, they will find 27gps hidden in a pouch under the straw mattress of the bed.
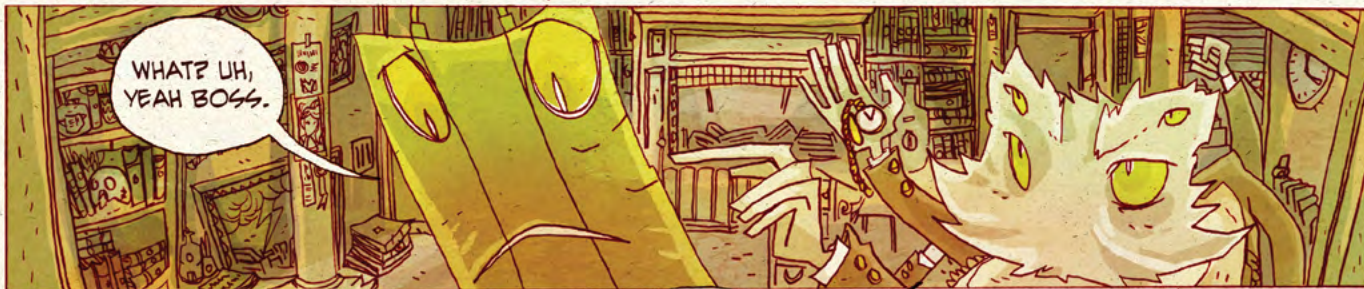
Community

Artist Showcase
Lucillia Lischetti

Mordheim: City of the Damned

Airship Pirates
Behind the scenes of an RPG

Artist Showcase: Lucillia Lischetti

Words & Images: Lucillia Lischetti

1) How did you get interested in illustration?

I recall that when I was little I drew a lot of doodles on every book in the house. I drew on the faces of beautiful dolls that I was given and my parents got so desperate that they didn't know how to stop me. I remember also when I started to do my first comic books at primary school and when I won some art medals in high school.

I started to think consciously that art could be my career when I finished high school and had to choose a path. I heard the child in me that scream that I have to do that, the little child that you love inside you and you must take care of constantly, if not he could make you suffer a lot, so I think it's a sort of a vocation.

2) What are the most important parts of any image?

I believe that the most important element of a work of art is to communicate an emotion and the ability to capture it and make people forget, if only for an instant, the real world.

3) What methods do you use in your work?

Really I don't have a particular method.

Usually my steps are these: first I do some initial black and white sketches in the form of thumbnails (done on paper or directly on a digital canvas) so I

can research the idea and concentrate on the feeling that I have in mind and try to find the best composition to express it. After this I submit the sketches/ideas to the commissioner and get feedback from the editor or team. When I get their suggestions and they choose the sketch I research photo references that will help me through the process to solidify my artwork, then I paint on Photoshop CS4 with my Wacom Intuos tablet.

4) What size/scale do you prefer to work at?

2000 x 2000 pixels, 300 dpi.

5) Tell us about the character on the cover of issue 10

The editor asked me to do an apocalyptic illustration. I tried three different sketches and asked him which one he liked best. I was so lucky that he approved the Valkyrie theme. I'm in love with Valkyries! They are beautiful battle maidens, fragile and beautiful as swans but at the same time strong and noble warriors.

I imagined for this cover a Valkyrie during the end of the world, the Ragnarok, ready for the final battle. I made sure that she expressed a serious look that was also melancholic.

6) Who and what influences you and your work?

Everywhere I see influences. It can be a movie, a historic documentary, a book, a game, a comic book, my pet, a walk, etc. Also people that are near me especially my great artist companion Giordano Pranzoni. He is a precious source of constant inspiration for me.
Also I really enjoy drawing while listening to Celtic music or videogame official soundtracks by great composers such as Jeremy Soule and Nobuo Uematsu.

7) Do you have a preferred genre - fantasy/historical etc?

Yes, fantasy is the salt of my life, the joy of my existence.

8) Are you a gamer?

Yes, I'm a video-gamer. I've played a lot of RPGs on Playstation, PC and XBox 360.

I really love Guild Wars, and now I'm enchanted by the incredible world of the Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim.

9) Is there anyone you would like to work with or for in the future?

I would like to work as an illustrator for Wizard of the Coast, for any great videogame company or in the animation industry as a concept artist.

10) Which artists do you find exciting at the moment?

Daniel Dociu, Kekai Kotaki, Maciej Kuciara, Nicolas Bouvier, Claire Wendling, Akihiko Yoshida, Yoshitaka Amano. But also I love looking to historical art masters such as John Singer Sargent, Boldini, Caravaggio and so many more.

Blast from the Past Mordheim: City of the Damned

Words and photos: Alex Garbett

Gather round for I tell you the tale of the fallen city… 'twas the imperial year 1999. Life in the Empire was hard; we fought many wars against terrible foes and fought amongst ourselves over the vacant throne.

The land was torn and we had lost hope until a great star, a comet, twin-tailed it was - a sign of Sigmar to our people. The news broke and joy filled our hearts all over the Empire.

It was then that we all travelled to Mordheim as it was where the comet and Sigmar was to arrive back in the old world.

Thousands flocked to the great city and thousands more came. We filled the streets, taverns and houses. Songs were sung and praises given for the return of Sigmar and his return to the throne.

All were happy and joyous, none cared for the troubles soon to be gone and in this time of joy, darkness and depravity crept into city. Mankind gave himself over to worldly temptations, lust and worse. Demons walked the streets disguised as men, evil and corrupt had the city become.

On New Years Eve did the comet fall. It was not the joyous return of Sigmar as all believed but his wraith that fell on Mordheim.

His wraith became fire and smoke as the comet hit driving deep into the ground. Ash and smoke and

smog and darkness covered everything. Thousands died and thousands more perished in the aftermath. Fear swept the land and we all thought that he had deemed us unworthy.

News soon came though that people were flocking to the city again. Searching the ruins they were for a special stone, many said it was black and swallowed the light but gave a green glow, some say it had powers. All I know is that many are looking for it and even more will pay a high price for them magic stones.

Never saw it though myself, would never go back to that place either, not for my weight in gold, never again………not to Mordheim….not to the city of the damned!

Released back in 1999 by Games Workshop, Mordheim was a skirmish game based around the fallen city where gangs fought over the ruins and for possession of Wyrdstone (Warp Stone), fame and fortune!

I got one of my first White Dwarfs while I was on holiday, which had several articles on Mordheim. This was way before the game was released and I remember the pieces on foam board buildings, gangs, concept rules and more. Then several issues later the special edition White Dwarf came out with the free miniature (Aenur the Sword of Twilight) and from then my imagination was hooked on the look, background and city of Mordheim.

Game Play

The game features skirmish rules for fighting, shooting and movement with your war gang/party that you prepare beforehand from a set amount of gold you can spend on wargear. A good side effect of this was having very customised miniatures with ropes, pistols, swords, shields, bows and more all on the model. This made for a WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) style of gameplay that my friends and I really enjoyed.

There were several war gangs initially available and these were increased over the years with newer models, additional races and special characters and miniatures from the Warhammer Fantasy background.

Some of the miniatures being personal favourites still to this day!

Friends and I often looked to add an extra element of roleplay into the game and between games, usually at school and college, discussed character development and overall story plot, mainly taking what we had learned from running a good game of Heroquest and Advanced Heroquest.

What I liked most of all though was the terrain and buildings supplied. Made of cardboard and plastic details they were extremely cool, very easy but satisfying to assemble and were fantastic for playability and game accessibility

The printed card terrain also looked like something straight out of the Warhammer world and the back story of Mordheim with the flame marks on walls and themed buildings like the inn - just fantastic in my eyes then and even now.

I've been fortunate to have two copies over the years along with the Blood In the Streets additional building pack. I still have the buildings tucked away safe in a box along with the war gangs in the attic.

While the boxed set is long out of print now you can still buy a good range of the miniatures online from Games Workshop and the rulebook is a free PDF which you can find from keyword searching in Google. You can also get your hands on lots of second hand Mordheim products on eBay and from gaming shows like Triples. Sometimes you're even lucky enough to find a boxed, sealed copy.

Final Thoughts

For me Mordheim is one of those special boxed games of old. Special for many reasons; the memories of days and days spent playing on the dining room table with the awesome buildings, the adventure and RPG aspects of the game, creating their names, background then throwing them into danger and having our heroes run over bridges, dodge arrows, fight monsters and get the precious Wyrdstone.

I think most of all it is special for the time my friends and I spent at each other's houses over the summer, painting our miniatures, swapping bitz and modelling that awesome pose for our heroes to venture and fight again in Mordheim - the city of the damned!

Airship Pirates
Behind the scenes of an RPG

Words: Ken Walton
Artwork: Phantoms Siren, MANDEM

n 2010 our company, Cakebread & Walton, approached the steampunk band Abney Park with the crazy idea of creating a pen-and-paper role-playing game based on their songs. Much to our surprise they were very enthusiastic. It also turned out that Angus Abranson of Cubicle 7 Entertainment, our publisher, was an Abney Park fan, and he was very enthusiastic too. We soon found ourselves working with 'Captain' Robert of Abney Park, who volunteered to do the graphic design and find artists.

And then the art started coming in. We were gobsmacked. This wasn't just good stuff, this was great stuff! Before long, we were getting to know some of the artists via email and working on what turned out to be very much a shared vision for the role-playing game; Robert's vision for the world formed the framework on which we could build an edifice of steampunk goodness in words and pictures.

Three of the artists who we worked with and got to know are Phantoms Siren and the two-person team at MANDEM. In fact we got to know MANDEM so well that they're now working for our company, not as artists but as proof-readers for our other game line, the 17th century clockpunk historical fantasy, Clockwork & Chivalry - truly they are a gestalt entity of many talents!

The Abney Park's Airship Pirates RPG line so far consists of the 300 page full colour core rule book and 42 page adventure, Ruined Empires. We've just begun work on Blasting the Past, a full-colour time travel supplement, and work is also ongoing on Underneath the Lamplight, the first of the 'culture' books for the game world.

You can find out more about Airship Pirates and Clockwork & Chivalry here: http://www.cakebreadandwalton.com

It's available from all good games stores, and also from Cubicle 7's own online shop:
http://shop.cubicle7store.com/
and in electronic PDF format from DriveThruRPG:
http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com

Much Abney Park goodness, including (of course) their music, can be found here:
http://www.abneypark.com/

And now, we'll let the artists speak for themselves...
  – Ken Walton, co-designer, Abney Park's Airship Pirates RPG

MANDEM: Mythpunk Art Noir
http://www.MythpunkArt.com
Phantoms Siren: Steam Nouveau
http://www.phantoms-siren.com

Interview by Allie Marini

"Here's where I get to be a little Marxist," explains one part of the Tallahassee-based art collective

MANDEM, leaning over the couch. MANDEM are actually two separate people - Maize Arendsee and Moco Steinman-Arendsee - but for the purposes of this interview, that hardly matters, because, as they explain, "We didn't notice when it happened, but one day it was like we woke up and realised, 'Goddamn, we're one being with two heads.'" They describe their relationship as a 'sort of Vulcan mind-meld' and if you spend any amount of time around the duo, you realise that a) it's the absolute truth and b) you're sort of envious of it, because this two-headed monster is doubly intelligent, talented and insightful.

Joining into the discourse via the wonders of high-speed Internet is the UK-based artist Phantoms Siren, so in a manner of speaking, I'm privy to being at the center of an artist's roundtable. A significant portion of the art showcased in the newest offering from Cakebread & Walton, Airship Pirates, has come by way of these very artists. I'm intimidated until MANDEM's nine month old daughter Kitsuko beans me with a Cheerio, reminding me that great artists rely on the human element of their existence to create the art that drives them. So how did an informal interview go from Marxist ideology to Cheerios and back again? Read on, my friend...

Q: 'Mythpunk Art Noir' (MANDEM) and 'Steam Noveau' (Phantoms Siren) - these are the terms that you use to describe your artistic style, vision and philosophy. What do these terms mean to you and to the casual viewer?

PS: The name 'Steam Nouveau' first came about when I was trying to devise a good looking name for my blog, but over time my work has grown into it. My work isn't really defined by its steampunk elements, the 'Steam' element isn't a required factor in all work, but the 'Nouveau' is present in almost everything that I do. I've studied Art Nouveau, specifically Alphonse Mucha, since A-Level (US Advanced Placement) and I find its structure the most natural one for me to work within. For the viewer I hope it acts as a visual cue to a bygone age, placing the work in a familiar realm in order to make the modern or usual elements that bit more surprising, and an effect which is most effective in my steampunk work.

M: Our work primarily deals with transmutation and evolution, on trying to capture the metamorphic moments in life where everything suddenly changes. We want to visually tell the multi-textured stories and the main thematics we keep re-visiting and

re-imagining are myth, and noir, sort of the darker side of these stories, but flipping them and changing them, that's where the 'punk' element comes into play.

Q: So, as for education and training, the lot of you come from pretty diverse backgrounds and while academic instruction has definitely played a part in your work, collectively, it seems you're all well established as self-taught and self-disciplined. With that in mind, what's the intent that you hope audiences will 'get' from your work?

M: Well, [Moco] rejects the ideology of the higher education system. She sees it as a way to enforce the status quo and force students to incur exorbitant debt. Most traditional (and even radical) academia squelches differing views and unique approaches to learning, so she favors pursuit of academics on her own terms and without the perceived legitimacy a college degree supposedly bestows. That said, [Maize] is completing a Master's degree in Inter-disciplinary Humanities, with a focus on alterity/otherness and gender. One needn't have a degree to be educated and intelligent and independent in thought, nor does one require traditional training to create art.

PS: I have a degree in Art History, and I have a lot of respect for artists who make deeply meaningful work, but that isn't my aim. I want the viewer to be inspired by a piece in their own way, free from my own intent or meaning. That isn't to say that I don't include symbolism in my work, last year I made a wedding gift for friends in which every colour and flower was carefully chosen for their luck and meaning. If the recipients only notice that the model is holding gladioli because the groom is a fan of Morrissey, well that's fine too.

In a lot of my work I've tried to capture the spirit of an idea or a location such as steam or electricity or the Abney Park 'Change Cage' cities but I want to leave the details of the character up to the viewer's imagination. I was very pleased when a buyer recently bought one of my posters 'SteamPunk' because it reminded her of the character Amy Pond from Doctor Who. The piece was actually made back when David Tenant was still The Doctor, but it was great to see how a piece could inspire and excite a person independent of my intentions when I made it.

Q: Tracing your work back to its origins, what was your first piece, and how did it start? Since that first

piece, how has your art and artistic platform grown or changed?

PS: My first digital, fully Art Nouveau piece was a portrait called 'Ariadne'. It was inspired by a song by the band The Cruxshadows and by a stunning piece of stock photography by the incredibly talented Mizz Draconia. I learned a huge amount of technique in that one piece, particularly how to shade fabric and skin and how slight variations in line weight can truly capture the proper style of the era. Most importantly I learned just how much work goes into these pieces (between 14 and 30 hours) and what happens if you don't save for three hours, then you kick the power cable out of the back of the Mac. That piece was made on a G3iMac, the brightly coloured tiny monitor kind, with Photoshop CS2. I've upgraded a few times since then and I'm now lucky enough to run CS5 on a widescreen. I've streamlined the process a great deal but the better resolution and screen size have driven me to add more detail, so it balances out. Mizz Draconia remains as one of my main artistic influences and I've done several series with her as the feature model.

M: Like most children, we played with crayons growing up. [sarcastic smiles]. No, seriously. When we first started really finding our vision as an artist, a lot of our early work was photo manipulations and digital collage. I mean, I'd been learning on Photoshop since it came out. [Maize] I originally went to Oberlin to study creative writing, and visual art ended up being just an extension of that to illustrate the stories. As we went along, and as the technology got better and we got better at learning all the tricks and tools there were, we made the transition to a stylus and graphics tablet. Eventually the work evolved to the stage where most of the original photograph was gone, and if any of made it into the final piece, it was so different than what it had started out from that we realised it wasn't photomanipulation or digital collage anymore, that the finished piece was a digital painting instead. Now when we work, we often don't even have photo references, unless we need a specific pose or action (which happened more often when we were working on Airship Pirates). Now, we start with a photo manipulation first, like combining six or more images into a rough mock-up of what we want the final work's composition to be, and using that as the reference piece, rather than using it as the piece itself. Most of the time, when we feel the piece is 'finished', there's little or nothing left of what we started working off, but that jumping off point was a crucial step in the brainstorming and 'working' phase of the piece.

Q: Tell me about your work in Airship Pirates. What challenges have you faced and how did you overcome them? What's been fun and why? How has working on Airship Pirates changed your art, your process or your overall game plan?
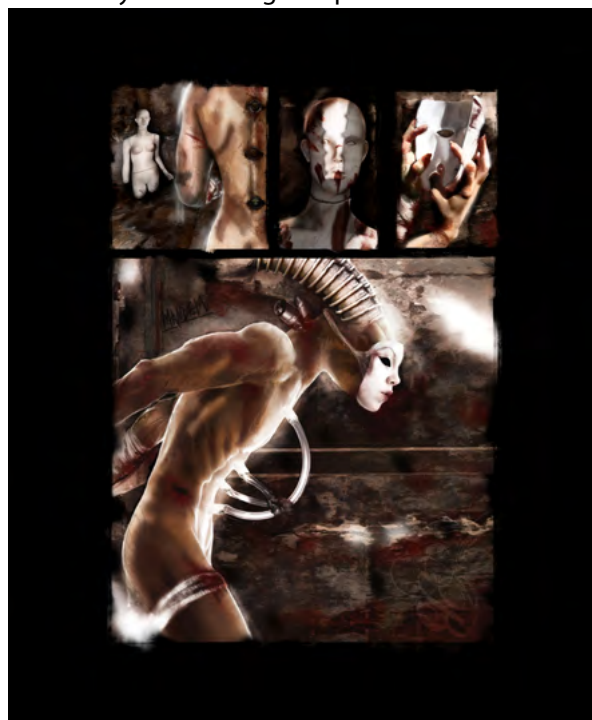
But with Airship Pirates, the needs of the project were completely different to our usual style or subject material. It challenged us to extend ourselves outside of that comfort zone, to connect to what the authors intended for the subject matter of the book and to fuse that cohesively to the MANDEM artistic philosophy, to get that 'relational' aspect, the real meat of the story. That's the real challenge of steampunk art, because there's often less focus on the human aspect and more emphasis on the gadgetry, the complete opposite of how we usually work. We usually focus specifically on not just what something looks like, but what that moment felt like and here, while that was a definite consideration, there was a lot more necessity to get the details of the look right. At one point, [Maize] lit [Moco's] shirt on fire without warning to get both the burn pattern of the shirt and the expression of surprise at having been lit on fire - right. [Interviewer's note: MANDEM are not in the habit of lighting each other on fire for artistic integrity. I think.]

PS: Initially the direction from the editor and writers was quite free, which was a relief since sometimes a piece simply won't come together and there have been some that I had to walk away from entirely. As specific pieces weren't expected there was less pressure but more space to make really high quality work. I've enjoyed working on the project because art for RPGs of this kind suits my artistic philosophy. The art should provide the necessary clues to atmosphere, class and character without restricting the readers imagination. One of the most interesting moments was when some of MANDEM's work was released and I realised that we were using totally different models for the character of Herr Drosselmeyer's Doll. I'd never pictured that model in that role and it was a surprise to re-imagine the song with her in the lead. In the end I made a new piece based on the same model as they used and it's now one of my favourite pieces, though my original piece was used in the book.

Q: As artists who work in a digital medium, how do you overcome the industry's resistance to recognising this as 'real' art? How do you deal with the issue of artistic legitimacy? Does that even register, or are you able to brush off the critics, knowing that time will take care of that issue?

PS: If you spend a lot of time in online art communities you sometime get the feeling that fan-art isn't on quite the same level as 'proper' art, so it was nice to really let loose with inspiration from the music without worrying about references not being understood. Probably one of the nicest high points of my career was listening to my favourite radio show and presenters. And just before I signed up to the Airship Pirates project I was sent one of the band's videos that used my old Herr Drosselmeyer's Doll piece. I had no idea that they'd used it. It still had my water mark on it so they must have grabbed it from my site. That was actually what convinced me to apply for this project; it was a big confidence boost knowing they already liked my stuff.

M: Okay, so here I get to be a little bit Marxist. There's an industry and academic tendency to judge art by the barriers to its entrance, a lot of that is based on school selectivity and personal views. What we're doing, both in this project, and overall as artists, is breaking through those antiquated ideas about art. Digital art, and Photoshop especially, makes it easy for anyone to create something. It's an easy 'cost of entrance' and that, unfortunately, makes it get taken less seriously. Sadly, it's not because it's

easier to create because it isn't. It's just less expensive, it's accessible and it's affordable. What we do digitally would be cost prohibitive if we were doing it in paint, oils, watercolors, even acrylics. Canvas and pigment raise the bar for who can create just based on cost alone, not taking creative drive or talent into the equation. That ease of access is exactly what photography was up against when it started to become a true, recognised artistic form. And over time, digital artists who continue to create innovative works that truly resonate with viewers, that will be what brings legitimacy to the form, I think.

Q: So it'd be safe to say that Airship Pirates is something that's going to change the face of not just the niche market it appeals to but many artistic visions - music, art, gaming and everything that falls in between and crosses over between genres. Now that Airship Pirates is out, and receiving some great press you're all working on the supplement to it, Blasting the Past, is that right? How's that going? How is it affecting your other projects?

M: Well, Blasting the Past is definitely continuing to make us push against the comfort zone and bringing a new set of challenges, but it's fun to be in that experimental phase of creating. Our most recent piece, for example, is based on the Romantic era, and we haven't really worked on a lot of 'art-historical' projects before. Now, we're doing things like naval battles and figuring out how to visually express time travel by grafting together distinct era styles so that's fun and challenging to be in the thick of. PS: In addition to working on the Airship Pirates pieces, I've spent a lot of this year working on a short Christmas film with a friend that hopefully that will be released this year. Animation is a totally different process to ordinary illustration. I'd love to do more but it's exhausting so probably one per year is the maximum. I'm also working on illustrations that II hope will eventually become a steampunk children's book. The contrast between the two projects is huge but intentional as I don't want to accidentally confuse the two genres!

What I take away from this, as someone who is appreciative of but fairly unfamiliar with both the steampunk world and the world of roleplaying games, is that Airship Pirates is something of a unique convergence of many worlds that is inclusive of many and exclusive of none. Though it's decidedly a project that's by and for the steampunk community, it's also one that welcomes newcomers and stands on its own. It's a labour of love created by 'Captain' Robert Brown and Cakebread and Walton that invites thought, fantasy and imagination into the worlds of music, gaming and art. It's visually striking, well-written and challenging to both its creators and it's consumers, and reviewers are acknowledging it as one of Cakebread and Walton's most innovative publications - and this, for a company known for publishing one-of-a-kind, thought-provoking work. To say that it is visually striking is a massive understatement; to say that it's a balanced fusion of fantasy, alt-history and technology would be doing it a disservice, as well even though all of those things are truthful and accurate representations. Airship Pirates is an anomaly in what can often be an ocean

of conformity; it neither capitalises on the steampunk trend nor seeks to distance itself from the very people who would enjoy it most. It throws off the constraints of conforming to antiquated ideas about art and fantasy, while inviting the players to immerse themselves in futuristic worlds that reference classical and historical past worlds, to get lost in the music, to enjoy something beautiful to look at that makes them think a little harder, dig a little deeper and find something to take pleasure in. It's sneaky, it's a distraction from the modern world that forces you to think while you're being entertained.

Q: One last question, in five words, summarise MANDEM and Phantoms Siren and relate it back to the Airship Pirates experience.

M: Metamorphosis, luminescent, transmogrification, liminal, symbiotic.

PS: "Super prismatic tonic of artistic endeavour"- Phineas P. Moneyload, Rogue Financier

And on that note, it's time to start picking Cheerios out of my hair.
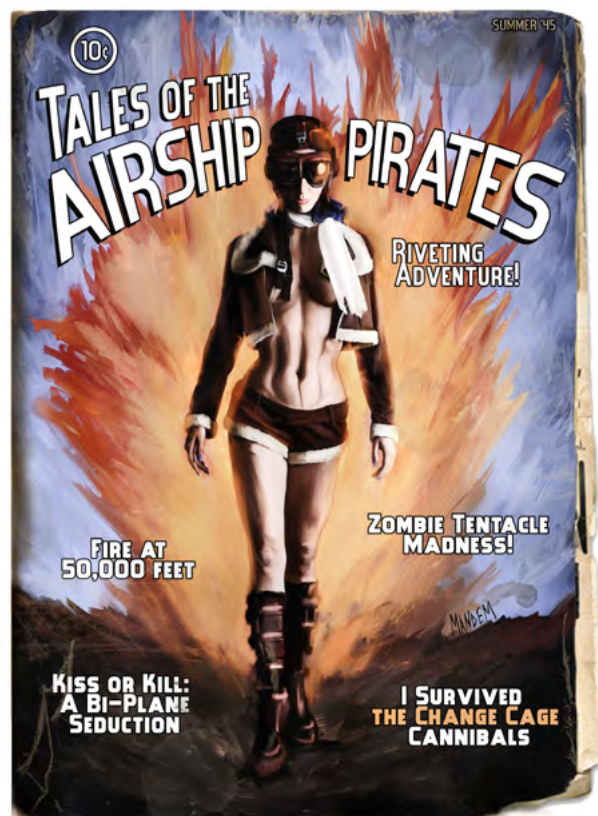
Coffee!
it's really rather lovely!

LIKE A CUDDLE FROM A KITTEN WHILST SITTING IN FRONT OF A ROARING LOG FIRE ON A COLD WINTER NIGHT. OR NOT. IT'S UP TO YOU REALLY.

Snow Bases

Making planets, celestial bodies and space stations

Snow bases

Words & Photography: Dave Barker

Adding snow effects to the bases of my miniatures was something that I kept putting off. Something about it made me think it was difficult. Perhaps because real snow is really such a wonderful and complex substance. Even now, at the age of 36, I still find it to be fascinating and fun to play with. As an adult I am even more aware of how complex (and dangerous) snow can be; where a snowfall builds up a weight of snow, where it partially melts, changes and refreezes, all causing changes in appearance and danger during the time that a fall of snow lies on the ground.

There are just so many varieties of snow! There are the many different types of snow fall; from the fat flakes that descend rapidly and quickly build up to a thick layer of snow, to the tiny little flakes come with a bitingly cold wind that fail to stick to anything but leave a thin trace in the corners it is blown.

Then, once snow has fallen it can have just as many different types, and these are the ones that we normally attempt to represent on our miniatures. It might be thin layers of light snow or thick, white banks and drifts of the stuff. We might want the dirty brown, piled-up banks where gritting machines and snowploughs have moved it about on the road or perhaps the hard-looking, glittering snow deposits, where a crust of ice has formed as the result of an overnight frost. Or perhaps you want an effect that looks like the soft, sad-looking, partially melted piles of snow that have nearly completed their inevitable return to being just water once more.

For years all this, and many other states of snow I haven't covered here, contributed to me not adding snow effects to my miniatures. But, once I did try it I quickly realised that like so many things in our hobby, if you give it a go and think about what you're doing, it isn't nearly half as hard as you think it is going to be!

So, how to 'do' snow, then?

Well, as always, try and think about what you want it to look like and what state the snow is going be in on your miniature. This, more than anything else, will tell you exactly what snow technique to chose. If you have a reference photo of the kind of snow that you want to replicate, even better!

Here are a few of the different types of snow effect I've tried:

Very light snowfall

The technique is obvious and deceptively simple, just a repeated light dry-brushing of white paint applied to the areas you want the snow to have fallen. Rather than just pure white, choose or mix something that is ever so slightly off-white so that your white paint has a hint of grey or blue in it. This tends to work a little bit better than pure white.

I find this to be one of the hardest effects to achieve and whilst I have seen other people execute this really well, I've never been able to make it work for me.

I always think it just looks like bits of white under-coat that I haven't painted properly. Hopefully, you can do better than me!

Partially melted

This is perhaps one of my favourite effects and is very easy to achieve. I mix together approximately equal parts of bicarbonate of soda and PVA glue with a coffee stirrer, in an old blister pack, until it is a paste. Add more PVA or water if it becomes too thick, or more bicarb if too wet. Adjust until you're happy you can spread it. Then I use the same coffee stirrer to apply it to the base of my miniature in suitably shaped features.

When the glue dries it has that slightly soft appearance of snow starting to melt and since the bicarb is very rarely distributed evenly through the PVA, you get some parts that a whiter and some parts that are more transparent than others.

This effect is shown in on the pointing leader of my green soldiers.

Fresh snowfall

For the appearance of a fresh snowfall, apply the same technique as for partially melted snow. As soon as you're happy that it has been applied to your miniature's base correctly, cover completely and extensively in dry bicarbonate of soda. Gently tap off the excess before leaving to dry.

You may find that you also need to brush the dry bicarb out of the cracks and crevices of the non-snowy parts of your miniature as it gets everywhere!

Once dry, the white sparkly bicarb coats the outside of your snow. Its grainy and reflective texture works nicely in looking like freshly fallen snow.

This effect is shown best on the base of the robot, shown in the picture at the end of this article.

Refrozen snow

The main difference between refrozen snow and fresh snow is that refrozen snow almost always has a smoother, shinier texture. To achieve this kind of effect I again follow the method for partially melted snow but unlike for fresh snowfall, I sprinkle just a few pinches of dry bicarbonate of soda over the snow effect. Although most of it is smooth and shiny with a varying transparency, the surface does have a little bit of texture and a bit of reflection. Again, knock off the excess and get any stray bicarb out of the crevices in your miniature.

This effect is shown on the green soldier with his assault rifle at held at port arms.

Big snowdrifts

In a big snowdrift, the snow on top usually still looks pretty fresh even when some of it is melting. Rather than build up a big pile of snow with PVA, even in successive layers, I would recommend that you build the snowdrift structurally first with something like Green Stuff or Milliput. Then, paint it white before applying the fresh snowfall effect.

Salted snow (brown road snow)

This is a great effect for a vehicle base and is very simple to achieve. Simply follow the partially melted snow technique, but as you're mixing the snow

'paste' add a very, very small amount of either light brown paint or burnt umber ink. Be careful here as too much brown is likely to ruin your batch of snow. You should be able to see when it looks right.

Hits and tips

Snow effects and varnish

Where possible, snow effects that use bicarbonate of soda should ideally be added after a miniature is varnished as some varnishes can have a yellowing effect on bicarb and make your snow go 'off'.

Underlying paint

Occasionally, the colour of the paint over which you're adding your snow effect can seep up into the PVA snow paste mix ruining the whole effect as it dries. However, all is not lost if this happens. Let it finish drying, then paint it white before applying a further thin layer of snow. This should solve this problem. (Props to Andy Orki for this tip!)

Bicarbonate of soda and baking powder

These two things appear to be very similar. They appear next each other on the supermarket shelf, have a very similar effect when you're using them for cooking, and are pretty much the same price. However, for modelling snow there is an important difference, bicarbonate of soda is more glittery than baking powder, which is relatively matt. This makes bicarbonate of soda preferable, in my opinion, for snow effects.

Re-use of bicarbonate of soda

After I've dumped a load of bicarbonate of soda onto my wet PVA for one of these techniques, then just as I do with flock, I recover the excess for re-use in the future. However, it is important that you keep your store of 'snow bicarb' separate from your 'cooking bicarb' as you don't want to be eating bits of paint, or worse, bits of lead alloy in your cakes!

Other white materials

Although I prefer bicarbonate of soda for snow effects, there are a number of other things that can be used, as well as a number of dedicated snow effect materials on the market for modellers.

All of the other snow effect materials I've come across are used in pretty much the same way as I use bicarbonate of soda. If you like any of them better, or even if you find you prefer baking powder to baking soda, then go for it! They're your models after all. The only thing I have experimented with that really doesn't work is salt. This is because the salt just dissolves into the PVA and the end result just looks like dry, clear PVA.

Materials

PVA glue - just regular old white glue.
Bicarbonate of soda - also known as baking soda or sodium bicarbonate ($NaHCO_3$). Sold in supermarkets along with the other things that are used for making cakes. At least that is what I assume its real purpose is. My wife is in the WI and is the cake making expert, not me!

Making planets, celestial bodies and space stations

Words & Photography: Alex Garbett

As many know I've been making wargames terrain since before time began. One of those areas not really covered very often in hobby magazine articles is space terrain. With my continued preparation for Mongoose Publishing's A Call To Arms Star Fleet release, I thought it would be a good chance to show you just how easy it can be to make planets, moons and space stations.

It all starts with ideas. There are lots of images out there for planets, moons, asteroids, space stations and more to get the imagination firing. For me it always starts with doodles on paper linked with a picture in my head of what I want or what I think would work.
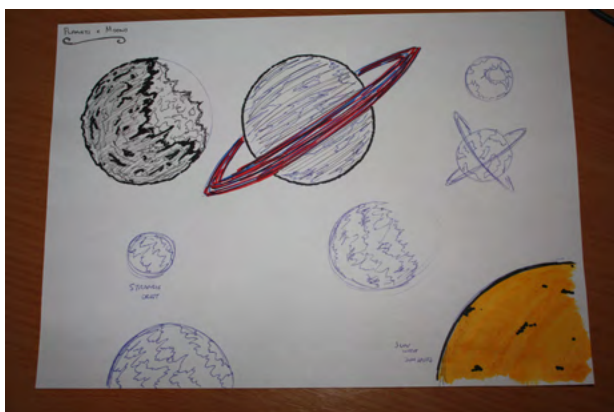
Next comes the hardest part in my experience, the gathering of materials with which to build and construct. Planets tend most of the time to be spherical (duh!) and asteroids rock-shaped so polystyrene is a must, be it balls from Christmas decorations, bits from hobby superstores or the internal packaging from large household goods.

Piping and tubes make for good space station parts and docking bays. Appropriate kits are available usually at a high scale, for example 1/7000. AMT make a K7 Space Station kit for around £30 which is a great starting point to either construct or convert your own station from. When designing them it is best to link everything round a central hub or large block and then have linked smaller hubs or docking bays spread out from the central point.

Lastly get your hands on some flying bases too, so you can mount all manner of space terrain on them, and PVA glue to connect them to the polystyrene.

Making a moon

Having gathered your materials now comes the time to build. I found a Christmas tree bauble 'make your own kit' from the high street shop The Works for under £3. The kit consisted of six approximately 75mm to 80mm round balls. I quickly removed the ribbon which was to be used for hanging them onto the tree. Once removed it provided a great hole for connecting to the flying base. I wanted these smaller baubles as moons for larger planets I'd buy later down the line so thoughts moved to my pad of ideas for moons.

I next used a trick I found out in error years ago when trying to glue polystyrene homemade terrain together. At the time I used Polycement, not knowing that Polycement and Liquid Poly melt polystyrene.

Carefully and outside in the back garden (as this creates a small amount of fumes) I gently covered the outer surface of the polystyrene balls in a thin coat of Liquid Polycement. Before my eyes within ten minutes the surface of my future moons appeared before me.

Once dried you need to paint the exterior which is now covered in cool-looking craters. These couldn't have been achieved by carving away at the surface. This method also leaves no polystyrene mess on the floor which people who make polystyrene terrain will know about! Spray paint will melt polystyrene too so I grabbed a large-headed brush, opened up a pot of black paint and began to cover the moon's surface.

I next used a medium grey paint, mixing this in with the still wet black and working up darker and lighter patterns across the moon taking care to leave the darker patches in the craters but making the crater rims lighter.

After using the medium grey I used Dheneb Stone and highlighted the top detail taking care to make the crater edges again lighter than the surroundings until finally using Skull White to finish off the final highlights with a gentle dry brush across the whole moon.

Once you've done your first moon you'll be ready to try even more crazy ideas. I dug a chunk out of one side, again using the same Polycement melting technique and painted as above to give a blown away core sister-moon to my first.

I also made a red moon imagining it hovering above a gas giant like Jupiter, made of a different element and core, then being bombarded by other asteroids and rocks caught in by its parent's gravitational pull.

Overall this is an easy project which takes around two hours to complete. It can be done after work one evening or left for a weekend where you'll be able to batch produce five or more. It's a great funky project which gives you a unique look every time producing really accurate looking moons and celestial bodies which can be replicated at ANY scale - moon, earth-sized planet or bigger.

Wikipedia is full of stellar articles on suns, planets, exo planets, space stations, satellites, probes, gas giants….well a universe full of stuff be it man-made or otherwise. Once you get going you'll have all kinds of terrain to use on your board and specialised terrain for unique missions.

Next time we'll cover asteroids, until then enjoy!

Reviews

Polemos S.P.Q.R

Conquest of Nerath

Discworld - Ankh-Morpork

A Call to Arms: Star Fleet

The Revenge of the 47 Ronin

The Kerberos Club

Polemos S.P.Q.R
Baccus 6mm

Words: Nick Johnson

Polemos S.P.Q.R is the latest in the Polemos series of wargaming rules, produced by Baccus. The core rules do not rely on you using models of a certain scale, they work off a standard set of base depths (BD) and base widths (BW) to determine distances and ranges. While the imagery is based around the Baccus line of 6mm figures, there is nothing stopping you using them for a 2mm game, or even a 54mm one, so long as people use a consistent set of measurements for their bases.

S.P.Q.R is the first Polemos book to look at the Ancients period, focusing primarily on the expansion of the Roman Empire from the reigns of Julius Caesar to Marcus Aurelius. While this is quite a narrow window to look at within the Ancients time frame, I understand that we're likely to see further books covering other Ancients periods in the future.

Up until taking a look at this Polemos book, all the wargames I'd looked at had been points-based rules sets such as Warhammer, Warmachine or Flames of War (Hmm - wargames with 'war' in the title - there's a shock! - Ed), where the majority of games revolve around a pair of equal-sized armies turning up in a field and charging at each other. Polemos, in
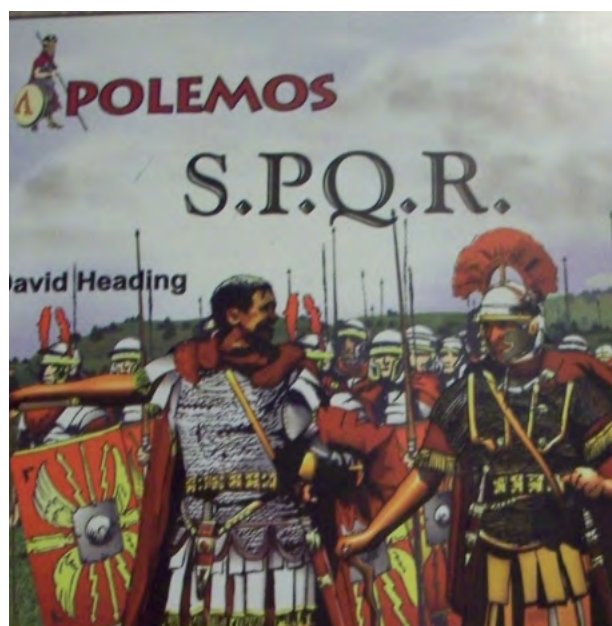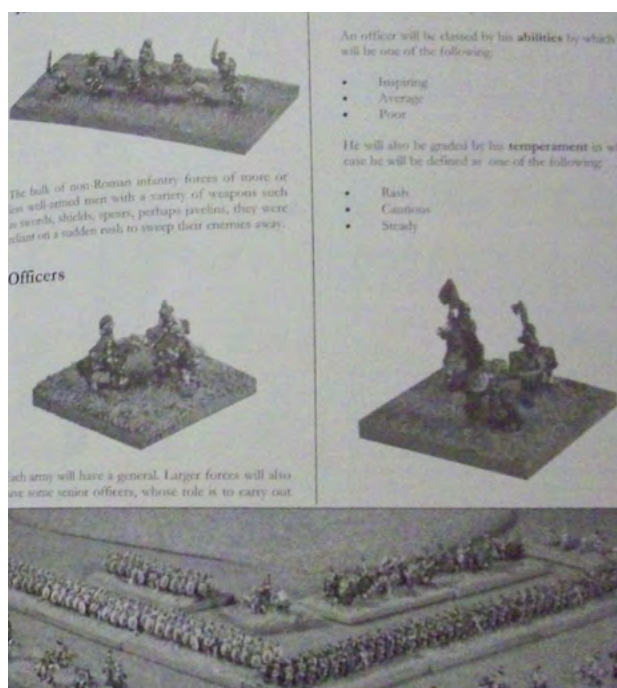
contrast, does not use points, and is far more interested in scenarios than random carnage. In fact, the Appendices in Part Five include two pre-generated scenarios for you to use.

If you are wanting to play a more off-the-cuff game, the options are included in the book with army generators for eleven different factions. With an agreement between the players of how many bases you're going to roll for, you can quickly generate a random army - with all the challenges that that can entail. Equally, there are tables to allow you to randomly determine terrain if you don't want to set up terrain fitting with a particular area.

This emphasis of scenario over a 'balanced' game is very interesting, and I'm sure that with some research online or in a library I could come up with some ideas for scenarios. I'd need to check the dates, but it sounds like the Roman invasion of Britain would fit within this period, and there are several interesting battles to be re-fought there.Overall, I like the look of the Polemos S.P.Q.R rules, and am looking forwards to designing and playtesting a few scenarios. I've already been working on painting up my 6mm Romans, so I just need to sort out some opponents for them and away we go. If you're wanting to try a historical game that doesn't concern itself with points values but is all about the feel of the period, then I'd certainly recommend one of the Polemos sets.

Polemos S.P.Q.R
Author: David Heading
ISBN: N/A
RRP: £15

Conquest of Nerath
Wizards of the Coast

Words: Paul Moore

For anyone who has played any of the 'Risk' style board games, Conquest of Nerath will have a familiar look to it. For anyone who plays any of the many 'Dungeons and Dragons' products there will also be many recognisable elements. Don't let either of these points be the reason you would or wouldn't buy this game. Look further...

This game is aimed at 2 to 4 players and has a good range of options, making it very playable for 2, 3 or 4 players. The basic format of the game is a turn-based conquest of the map on the main gaming board. You gain victory points for taking control of enemy regions. This is where the comparison with 'Risk' begins and ends.

The map also contains the locations of Dungeons, which can be explored by the players using special characters. There are many rewards available for successfully exploring a dungeon, but there are also risks, and they tie up resources you could be using to defend your provinces or attack other players. It is finding the balance that adds to the appeal of the game.

Due to the fact that different game pieces (Dragons, Giants, Elementals, Wizards, Elves and Orcs to name a few) have different special abilities, and the inclusion of naval warfare, you should not take your eye off the map! Like any dice-based game there are elements of luck involved, but these do not detract from the fact you can adopt many different strategies and tactics to achieve your goal.

Add to this the fact that each race (faction) within the game has it's own special traits and starting positions, and the inclusion of an 'events phase' at the start of each players turn where they receive and play 'event cards' drawn from an 'event deck' which can help you or hinder your opponent. Playing each of the factions gives you a different set of choices within the game, and choosing to play a 'short', 'medium' or 'long' game via the score board means you end up with an excellent mix of choices and game options, making this game very enjoyable to play time after time.

The box, packaging and pieces have been well designed for use and storage. No extra bags or boxes are required to store. Everything is well laid out and even those who have never played a board game before should find with a little patience they can pick this game up. For anyone with previous strategy board game knowledge, this comes highly recommended.

Discworld - Ankh-Morpork
Tree Frog Games

Words: Nick Johnson

Ankh-Morpork is a game for 2-4 players, which will normally take up to an hour to play. The premise is that Lord Vetinari has disappeared and various big names are making their play for control of the city. Each player has their own victory condition, drawn from a pool of seven Personalities (Lord Rust, Lord de Worde, Lord Selachii, Dragon King of Arms, Commander Vimes, Lord Vetinari and Chrysoprase). You might have to control areas within the city, cause trouble, get your minions in position or just stall until your boss returns, in Vimes' case. Just to make things interesting, the character you are playing as is kept a secret, leading to the possibility of bluff and double-bluff.

If you've never read any of the Discworld books, or watched any of the TV adaptations, you need not worry, a knowledge of the Discworld is not required to play the game. While there are in-jokes around how some of the characters appear on the action cards, such as Nobby Nobbs being the only member of the Guard who doesn't allow you to remove trouble from the board, you don't need to know why that is in order to play the game.

Each player has a hand of action cards (usually a minimum of five), of which one can be played per turn. Each card has symbols across the top which dictate what they can do. They may allow you to position your minions, assassinate those belonging to other players, draw cards, play additional cards, etc. The cards of the wizards usually trigger a random event to occur, which could be anything from a fire, to a flood, to Demons from the Dungeon Dimensions showing up.

I like to describe the game as complex, but not complicated. Yes, it will take a couple of games before you get the hand of playing to your victory condition while trying to deny other players the chance to get a victory, but once you get the hang of it I think the game is great fun. Let me put it this way - I ran five or six games for demonstration purposes one

Saturday, and if I had had a copy (and some people to play it with) I'd have been more than happy to play a game or two that evening.

Before I finish with this, a quick word about the art, the board has a great map of the city, while the cards feature illustrations of the appropriate character/location/event. As far as I can tell, this is all new art too, so you won't be seeing the usual Paul Kirby interpretations of characters here - though some do seem close. Still, if you ever wondered what some of the minor characters looked like - such as Ruby (Detritus' wife) or the Lecturer in Recent Runes - then the cards with this game will give you a good idea.

RRP: £29.99 (Standard Edition)
Players: 2-4
Recommended ages: 12+

Magic: The Gathering - Innistrad
Wizards of the Coast

Words: Richard Tinsley

Magic the Gathering, also known as MTG or just plain 'Magic', is the granddaddy of all Collectable Card Games (CCGs). Richard Garfield, the games inventor, released his monster on the world in 1993 in conjunction with Wizards of the Coast (commonly known as Wizards or WotC, pronounced 'what-see') a small games company owned by Peter Adkison. Wizards have been a subsidiary of Hasbro since 1999 but still seem to have virtual autonomy when it comes to the development and direction of Magic. Magic, as a game, sees you take on the role of a powerful, near immortal wizard called a Planeswalker. A Planeswalker has the ability to travel by exerting the will between the planes of existence, from the original plane of Dominaria to Kamigawa and Ravnica.

The above may be a much potted history of the last 18 years but it is important to know these facts as we come to today's review of their most recent offering. Magic has gone through a big change which began in July 2009 with the release of Magic 2010 (M10). M10 was the first ever 'core' since the first Alpha set to contain new cards specifically made for that set. And what cards they were, M10 gave us Baneslayer Angel, Djinn of Wishes, Doom Blade, Elvish Archdruid, five new dual lands and many other new cards. On top of this we saw the return of such old time favourites as Lightning Bolt, Fireball, Ball Lightning, Fog, Ornithopter and many other classic cards. Suddenly the traditional reprint-only core set was a thing of wonder and excitement for players both old and new.

It is at this point that we need to look at the anatomy of a Magic player to understand what makes them tick. WotC recognise that we fall into three established pools of players - Timmy, Johnny and Spike. Timmy loves to play big trundling creatures which stampede across the table to destroy his opponents. Johnny is a combo player, who bides his time until all the pieces of his diabolical scheme are in place and in one turn he reveals what the heck his deck does and you are left broken and bloodied unless you have the right answers. Spikes know it's

all about winning, they don't care what they play really as long as they win. Usually this involves playing control, lots of control...

So, I hear you think, what has that got to do with the review of Magic 2012 (M12) and Innistrad? Magic is not a game which lives in a bubble. With a plethora of formats which can be played each card has to interact with the other 17,000 plus cards, which at times can cause problems...

M12 is the third of its kind, i.e. a core set which has new cards in it rather than just re-prints. Due to the way Magic is now planned, the cards and meta game of M12 are based on the reaction people had to M10 rather than Magic 2011 (M11). M10 was a landmark set at the time but the bar was seriously raised with M11 which took some old ideas and made them better namely Fauna Shaman (Survival of the Fittest on a man), Overwhelming Stampede (like Overrun just much better), Baneslayer Angel (back for a second outing) and the cycle of Titans - Fire, Frost, Primeval, Grave and Sun.

As a result M12 is a bit of a disappointment. Overrun is back and the far more playable Overwhelming Stampede is gone, Baneslayer bids a sad goodbye to be replaced with an enchantment called Angelic Destiny and the Titans return for another year. The titans have dominated the play environment for twelve months and now look set to do so for another twelve. On top of this we have a cycle of illusion creatures which are over-powered for their cost but die as soon as you look at them. A Lord of Illusion card (is it me or does he sound like something out of Yu-gi-oh?) gives illusions the new 'Hexproof' mechanic which means that you are not allowed to look at them! Don't get me wrong M12 is not a 'bad' set, it is just that it had such a class act to follow in M11 that it leaves one with an inner feeling of loss and yearning. Even the Titans, which were the cards to play, seem a little bit jaded this time around and their prices have matched this. Primeval Titan circa 2010 cost £35 in the singles market, while in December 2011 it is about £9.

The product that WotC have been kind enough to send us comes in two forms, 15 card booster packs

and a starter deck for the Innistrad expansion called Spectral Legions. Starter decks have a reputation for being just that, only any good if you are just starting, but I was very impressed with this particular product. The continuity in the deck is far better than those in the past and has a number of cards currently making the grade in standard decks like Midnight Haunting and Doomed Traveller (he really is doomed one way or another). It is unclear if this has something to do with Innistrad or just a slight change of direction for the product as a whole.

These cards are all 'Standard Legal' i.e. they are legal to play in the current standard tournaments. Standard is one of the most widely played formats and features the latest core set (M12), the block which first came out in October 2010 (Scars of Mirrodin block) and the latest block which began with Innistrad in October 2011 (but more about that in a minute). There are many formats in Magic other than Standard: Legacy (nearly everything legal except the Power Nine of Mox Sapphire, Mox Emerald, Mox Pearl, Mox Ruby, Mox Jet, Black Lotus, Time Walk, Ancestral Recall and Time Twister), Modern (all cards in the modern card frame from 8th Edition onwards, except for a long banned list to keep out the worst of the combo decks from ruining the format), Vintage (everything goes with the odd exception and some cards are restricted to one copy per deck) and Extended (currently all the cards from the Alara block including M12 and Innistrad).

WotC have also produced a number of different casual products and formats to satisfy its huge casual player base in the form of mini-masters, Planechase, Archenemy and battle packs.

The starter deck and some of the boosters are from the latest release of Innistrad. Innistrad is a plane in turmoil. Its one-time protector, the archangel Avacen, has gone missing of late which has allowed the plane's monstrous inhabitants to run amok. As with M10 before it, Innistrad is a first in the multi-verse of MTG, a set where flavour takes centre stage. Every card in Innistrad is just dripping with the stuff! A set packed with every available piece of horror you can imagine from Leatherface (check out Abattoir Ghoul) to the un-dead plague marine which is Grim Grin! On top of this the set is a joy to play in draft with numerous options to allow for a diverse draft environment. Innistrad truly is a marvel of design cleverly hiding a real depth of game play. The art work is fantastic capturing the many aspects of horror bought into this set and many of the cards have already stamped their mark on the standard

tournament environment. The only problem so far with anything in the set is the 'flip' werewolf and other transforming cards. However, new rules have been added to the draft format to make allowances for these cards being public knowledge. Players of CCGs tend to be fans of horror and science fiction so this set appeals to its target audience beautifully.

Innistrad more than makes up for the disappointment that is M12 and makes you excited to tap some cards again and once more destroy your opponents. In fact, Innistrad is nearly a perfect piece of fun and an engaging product that makes you want to play cards more except for the recent invitational card which makes it into the set, Snapcaster Mage. Snapcaster is no big deal as a part of the set in isolation but when given his ability to whizz in and give your cards in your graveyard 'flashback' - allowing them to be played again from your graveyard - he makes blue control and tempo strategies even more effective than ever before. Earlier this year WotC banned Jace, the Mind Sculptor and Stoneforge Mystic because they were just too damn good and CAW Blade was taking over the format. Snapcaster is in danger of doing the same. Blue is already the colour of choice for all the Spikes out there and it now goes to new heights with the inclusion of Snapcaster Mage. Twelve counter spells in your deck? Well here's Snapcaster which gives you the potential to make it 24! Being a man he dies (quite easily) after you have flashed him in and used his ability, but you then get him back out of your graveyard and bingo you can use him again! I personally find Snapcaster a far more negative play experience than I ever found Jace, the Mind Sculptor, which has now been banned in most formats.

Overall the future looks bright for MTG. During a time when we are in grave recession and unlikely to come out of it for some years, Magic has vastly increased its player base and the amount of product it is selling. Wizards have realised that the Kitchen Table casual player spends more money on its product than many pros do so is trying to make more products appeal to this market with duel decks and Commander and speciality decks like the all-foil Graveborn. As Magic approaches its twentieth anniversary in 2013, products like Innistrad (even with Snapcaster Mage) seem to suggest that its ability to grow and learn mean it will be here for another twenty years to come.

Raid: The Revenge of the 47 Ronin - Edo, 1703
Osprey Publishing

Words: Nick Johnson

Before I start talking about this book, I wish to confess two things. Firstly, prior to reading The Revenge of the 47 Ronin for this review, I hadn't read one of Osprey's books all the way through. Secondly, most of my exposure to the samurai culture has come through playing Legend of the Five Rings, with a dash of Seven Samurai thrown in on top. With that off my chest, onto the book.

As the title may have indicated this Osprey offering details one of the most famous events of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the revenge raid of the 47 ronin against Kira Yoshihisa, the Shogun's master of ceremonies. Their master, Asano Naganori, claimed a grievance against Lord Kira, but had failed to kill the elderly samurai when he ambushed him. When news reached Lord Asano's loyal retainers of his seppuku (ritual suicide) less than a day later, they planned and executed one of the most daring raids in Japan's history even though it lead to their deaths as punishment.

This book serves as a good guide to the whole raid, distinguishing between fact and the variety of rumours, legends and plays that arose after the event. There is plenty of background, looking back to the early days of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the days leading up to Asano Naganori's attack on Kira Yoshihisa. I do find it intriguing that no-one has ever figured out what the grievance was that Asano claimed as justification for his attack.

Osprey go into plenty of detail on the raid itself, looking at the planning of the raid, its execution and the aftermath. There is a nice double-page spread with a hypothetical map of what occurred based on testimony and the estimated layout of Kira's compound. I was surprised to find that the author was even able to list the preferred weapon of each of the 47 ronin involved in the raid. It is that attention to detail which I feel is the main strength of this book. Well, that and the artwork, featuring a mixture of contemporary illustrations, photos of wooden sculptures in Japan and some very nice paintings, two of which are printed as double-page pieces.

I can see myself using the material within this book in the future. I can't help but feel that there is the basis of a great RPG scenario or skirmish game within the details of the raid. I don't think I'm the only person in the gaming world taking inspiration from this raid, either - two of the ronin from the raid, Oishi Kuranosuke Yoshio and his 15-year-old son Oishi Chikara Yoshikane, seem to have appeared within the Legend of the Five Rings CCG in the forms of Oishi and Chikara.

The one thing I'm not so keen on about this book is the price. No matter how nicely done they are, £11.99 for 80 printed pages feels too high. However, the book is very detailed and both the printing and binding feel of great quality. If you're interested in Japanese culture and how the bushido code developed among the later samurai, then I'd say it is definitely worth a read.
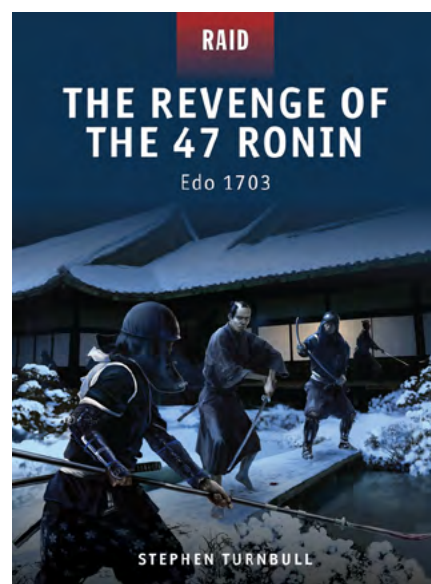
The Kerberos Club
Fate Edition

Words: Jim Freeman

"…Imagine the Industrial Revolution if it were coupled with a consumer boom allowed by cheap faerie labour, and imagine the economic consequences when workers were made redundant, where freak-science allowed mass aviation and air travel sixty years early…"

And that's just the start of your worries!

The Kerberos Club is a Victoriana setting book with a difference. The world of Queen Victoria has been touched by 'The Strange', an outside influence that, over the course of Victoria's reign, changes the world and the people in it.

Setting books are a popular indulgence of both publishers and RPG writers. If you look on the shelves in the RPG section you will find a wealth of these types of books, most of which are lovingly created but ultimately pretty standard fare. The fact that this book represents the third incarnation of The Kerberos Club suggests in itself that this is more than just another piece of standard fare. If you take the time to read it you will be pleasantly surprised at just how good it is. Not only does it give you the feeling of having been both lovingly created and well written, it also adds the strength of a well-researched and well-developed take on the 19th century and the times of Queen Victoria.

At 373 pages Kerberos Club offers a wealth of helpful information for both players and GMs alike, ranging from a fully fleshed-out background to detailed tips and advice on how to structure your games, NPCs and player interactions. There is a fully developed adventure at the end of the book that will be enough to give even the greenest of GMs an inspiring start to their own campaign.

Why FATE?

As previously mentioned, Kerberos Club has had two prior incarnations, first as a setting for Wild Talents, which as you read the book you can definitely see how it would fit nicely into that system, and once as Savage Worlds, which like the FATE system, is ideal to run a setting such as this. But, and for me it is a BIG but, I think FATE adds something better to the setting than either of the other systems.

With Wild Talents, you are expecting primarily a supers game, and, with Kerberos that's something that you could definitely do. Think Civil War Victoriana (Ed - Marvel's Civil War event, not the English Civil War), with pro- and anti-Registration factions - it's all there in the background and is very much the way I would take the game if I was using Wild Talents. With Savage Worlds, your scope is much wider; you can do supers, but you can do so much more, and your options are almost boundless. With Fates, you have the added bonus of the subtlety of the system at handling everything from politics to supers and back again.

When it comes to dealing with the shades of grey surrounding the ethics and moral codes of people in the class war of the 19th century, and the effects - physical, mental and socio-political - of the "Strange"

on that everyday struggle (not to mention the constant future shock) I just find FATE to be the perfect choice to give you a gaming experience of greater depth and fulfilment. The possibilities for great drama and intrigue using the to and fro of fate points and aspects, both compelled and invoked, is endless. With the collaborative nature of scene setting and story that is inherent in FATE, there is a real chance for everyone to get fully involved in the story and deeply entwined in the overall plot.

What exactly is FATE?

Well that is a good thing to be asking before you purchase this book. FATE is an evolution of the Fudge system that in my opinion elevates it to a fantastically playable RPG rather than a distinctly mediocre one. Kerberos Club does a good job of explaining the system, and although perhaps not in an exhaustive way, it is definitely a complete product. By which I mean that you do not need another book in order to use it. FATE as a core system doesn't actually exist as an in print book (Ed - yet - see www.faterpg.com for more details), but the good folk that spend time putting such things on sites like Wikipedia have given you everything that Kerberos misses, which in fact is not much, although reference to spin in a few sections with no explanation of what that is could prove irksome for some readers.

Bad points

(Of which there are few. But there is yet to be a RPG book that had a flawless execution.)

Example characters, villains, minions etc.
Yes, that's nice, and even helpful, but in this day and age, an entire chapter (59 pages no less) of stuff you could do yourself in an in-print book, is nothing short of ridiculous.

(Whereas a 59 page free download is a wonderful bit of product support.)

Why should I need to pay for a book that is 59 pages more expensive for things that I really don't need? RPG books are expensive luxuries today, and a little thought by the publisher would make this book a little more affordable. Having said that, I'm sure many people will find a great deal of use for pre-made NPCs and bad guys, but I would much rather be downloading an "extra" to get those.

The Skill Trappings Chart, and more directly the page leading to it.

A description of a slightly overly complicated way of costing trappings (the twiddly bits that skills do in Fates) that makes it all sound like one of those flat pack furniture items that came with the wrong instructions. I don't know what the author was thinking when he decided to put that chart in, but seriously, nothing in a book like this should make you breathe a heavy sigh the second you cast your eye over it. My advice is, skip that page, read the chart , the key and the sidebar and you will be able to use the chart from that information alone.

The Good Bits

By which most of the book is described. The content, as mentioned is very good. The layout is nice and really quite clear. The art is that modern predilection to the over use of 3d studio software, which normally makes my eyes sad, but is somehow not out of place with the content and does grow on you the more you go through the book.

Conclusion

Having read the book, and although I have a PDF copy, I am definitely going to purchase a print copy of this book. I am a confessed fan of the Victoriana genre and this makes a welcome addition to my RPG resources and options on that front.

The in print price is not insubstantial (in my mind a core rpg book should still be no more than £22.99, even though I know that is never true outside of WoTC products) But it is a high quality piece of work with a pretty good page-count (59 pages of npc's not withstanding) and with the Bits and Mortar initiative, you can claim a free pdf when you purchase the in print book from a bricks and mortar store.

Kerberos Club – Fates Edition is currently available direct from Arc Dream Publishing, but will be published by Cubicle 7 at a later date.
RRP $39.99 for a print & PDF bundle

Raid 25: Ride Around Missouri – Shelby's Great Raid 1863

Osprey Publishing

Words: Dave Barker

I know that even though I think of myself as being a wargamer, and that one of the most popular periods amongst the community of wargamers is the American Civil War, it is not actually a conflict that I know an awful lot about. Of course, I knew the broad-brush facts and some little bits of detail, but I've always found it to be such a large and complex conflict that I've found it intimidating to try and learn more.

But Ride Around Missouri might be a title that has helped me. After reading this title in order to write this review, I definitely now want to start learning more about the American Civil War in general, but also more specifically about the Trans-Mississippi (west of the Mississippi) theatre of this war.

The subject of this book, Colonel J.O. Shelby's Great Raid of 1863, is covered in considerable detail. With just a few hundred men, two artillery pieces and a scant twelve wagon trains, Colonel Shelby led his raiding force from Confederate Arkansas deep into Union-held Missouri. His raiding force travelled over 1,500 miles in just 41 days, destroying infrastructure such as bridges and telegraph lines, tearing up railroad tracks and attacking forts and blockhouses, taking supplies and fighting a number of hard-fought skirmishes until finally being forced to head back to the Confederacy.

As you would expect, the great raid itself is well detailed, with an extensive description of the details and events of the raid. This is presented as quite an engaging narrative, with the raid's events laid out in chronological order. There are also maps of the raid as well as of the cornerstone battle of the whole adventure, The Battle of Marshall.

However, whilst the focus of the book is indeed Shelby's great raid, this is placed in its context of the American Civil War west of the Mississippi - how tensions in the region rose around issues of slavery, through the events of Bleeding Kansas to the start of the American Civil War when Shelby founded his "Iron Brigade" of cavalry. Some details are also given of the first raids in which the Iron Brigade participated. It also provides some biographical details on how Shelby developed from a slave-owning industrialist with no military experience whatsoever to being considered one of the greatest Confederate cavalry commanders of them all.

A consistent and refreshing theme throughout this book is the reminder that most of the details about Shelby's great raid come from the accounts of Shelby's adjutant Major John Edwards, better known in later years for building up the folk hero and outlaw, Jesse James. Whilst many of the details of the raids appear to be accurate, many of the figures reported by Edwards, such as the value of damage caused, number of men killed and wounded on both sides and the number of men recruited or who deserted on the raid do appear to be skewed (or spun, to use a modern term) to make Shelby and the Confederacy appear in a better light.

As with all of the Osprey titles I've ever come across, Ride Around Missouri is plentifully illustrated with many photographs, illustrations, artwork and maps, all of which are relevant to the parts of the book in which they are found.

If you have little to no interest in the American Civil War, then this book is almost certainly not for you at its RRP of £11.99. But as someone who has been looking out for a title that would help me start to gain a better understanding of this complex conflict, I found it really quite engaging, as well as an inspiration to go and get myself some suitable miniatures for re-creating some of these kind of smaller scale raiding and skirmishing actions in the Trans-Mississippi theatre of the American Civil War.

Just, please don't mention to my wife I'm thinking of buying more miniatures! (I think she takes that as a given when you read anything, Dave - Ed)

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