Talisman Herald

What a lot of Talisman we've got!

So what's new?

Well, the web has been a blur of new information regarding the new edition of Talisman and much more.

A release date of the 1st October 2007 has been given as the global street date for the release.

If you want to buy this new edition it will cost you either £35, $50 or €45, depending on whereabouts in the world you are.

News of an expansion in the works came from the GAMA Trade show in Las Vegas.

A digital adaptation of the 4th Edition game is in development by Big Rooster Studios for Capcom.

Slated for release in Q4 2007, it will be available for play on the PC, XBox Live Arcade and Playstation Network.

Pricing information is only known about the XBLA version, which will be 800 Microsoft Points.

It also looks as though the PC version will be distributed using the Steam Network.

Marc Gascoigne, head of Black Industries, announces that Talisman will be available to buy BEFORE the official release date at GenCon Indy, GenCon UK and Games Day 2007.

A home-brew version of Talisman for the GBA was made public this month and is proving very popular...

... and in the same breath is taken offline at the request of GW's Legal Department.

UK Games Expo 2007

Over the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of June, Elliott and myself were lucky enough to be able to help out at the UK Games Expo in Birmingham with the running of the Talisman table.

Creating the Runes

Back in Issue #1 of the Herald there was an article on casting Paul Scott's Runes in resin.

Now here's the low-down on creating some Runes for yourself.

Hunter and Hunted

The free miniatures given away on the front of White Dwarf #321 show some real character.

Talisman on the move

The story behind the development of Talisman for the GBA is told by oldschoolgamr.

Now it has been discontinued, the article is being left as is, for posterity.

Alternate Reality

News on a couple of miniatures you might like to get hold of for your collection .

Rune Cards Expanded

Peter Hansson has created some more cards to add to the Runes expansion that was first shown in Issue #1.

Yahoo Group News

Some of you may have noticed that the group's title has recently been changed to the Talisman Boardgame Discussion Group.

A new image has also been added to the homepage to try and make it plain that, although the name of the group is still "*talisman_2nd_ed*", we support any and all versions of the game.

Not a member? SUBSCRIBE TODAY!!!

No time for Talisman?

Why not try your hand at oTalisman - http://www.occasionalgamer.co.uk

Your articles wanted

Have you got anything that you would like including in the Talisman Herald?

Send me an email with your ideas and we'll see what we can do.

I would never have believed that you could get so tired just sitting around playing boardgames all day and most of the night.

After a pretty late night on the Friday we arrived bright and early at the Halls and took up our positions alongside the chaps from the GW store in Birmingham who were a really nice (or mad) bunch of guys.

It started off a little slowly as people were trying to find out where everything was, but we soon had a couple of eager onlookers who fancied a game, which led to even more people watching and wanting to play.

Right - Richard Massey is proud to be the first ever Toad!!

Elliott finally succumbed to tiredness at about Midnight on the Saturday, but I lasted until just after 2am, when our game finally finished in a dazzling display of skill and nearly falling asleep for the three remaining players.

Sunday was somewhat quieter than Saturday, and we only managed to complete 2 games, though these were allowed to run on a little longer than the previous day.

All in all, I think it was a great first outing for Talisman and all the people I saw thought it looked and played very well. You can see more pictures taken at the weekend in a gallery on Talisman Island. Roll on October 1st!!!!!

Right - Components from the new incarnation of Talisman.

Talisman Road Trip

A whole weekend of playing the new version of Talisman sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

Elliott and I had an absolutely fantastic time showing the game off to people in Birmingham and some were lucky enough to actually play the game!

All I can say is the game is looking fabulous. The artwork is stunning and the rules are shaping up nicely to avoid any confusions like in the older versions of the game.

Left - The Assassin Dices with Death in the Inner Region.

We decided that we would run the games using some of the new "Quick Rules" from the new edition, by setting a time limit for the games and then awarding the game to the person whose character had increased their stats the most and had accumulated more new objects etc.

This worked out rather well, though the time limits were not strictly adhered to when it looked like people were very close to winning.

Even so, we managed to get 6 games finished during the day and another 2 that evening at the Thistle Hotel where some games rooms had been set up for after the Expo.

Left - Matt Green grins like a madman after beating us all.

MAKING TALISMAN RUNESTONES
by paulvonscott

Hello there, and welcome to today's edition of "Making Talisman Runestones" with me, your host, paulvonscott!

You too can make these delightful little 3-dimensional additions to your Talisman games. They are relatively simple to make and cost very little. Making a set should take you an afternoon, but by all means do this at your own leisure.

First of all you will need the proper tools, I would suggest a craft knife, this doesn't have to be too sharp, and as always, be careful. You'll also need some wooden cocktail sticks or `toothpicks' as I believe the Americans call them.  You will also need some 25mm round plastic slotta-bases or some other base for your model.  And finally, the clay.  A small packet of `sculpt and bake' clay such as Fimo or Sculpey is available from all good craft shops in a variety of colours (not important) for no more than a couple of quid or a few dollars.

Before you start, take a good look at what you are going to build. Get out your Second Edition Talisman Board and visualise the Runestones in three dimensions, try and get a feel for them, and always refer back to them while sculpting.

Comparing your model with the board will show you exactly where your model needs some work.

Now to begin. `Sculpting' makes it sound scary, when it really isn't, it's just like playing with clay as a kid. Cut a square of clay from the block, and cut that up into three blocks as per the photo. Two will form the supporting stones, will the third will be the arching one. Trim them down, or add more clay to them to make them the right size and shape them back into squarish blocks. Though you'll probably need less clay than you might imagine.

Don't proceed till you feel you have the dimensions right, or forever shall they haunt you.

Next you need to make them less blocky and regular, these are ancient stones, carved by an unknown race with primitive tools and weathered across millennia. Just using your fingers, gently mould them into a slightly irregular shape. Smoothing the corners and making the lines less geometrical, but you should still be able to make out that once these were new and had perfect dimensions. The supporting stones will probably be just a little wider at the bottom that at the top. The arching stone will be thinner and flatter.

If you feel your first efforts are substandard then you have plenty more clay left, so try again. At the end, you can roll up any unused clay and put it away till next time and you have as long as you want.

Don't be too hasty to crumple up your model, but also don't get too precious about it either.

Cover one of the 25mm bases with clay, shaping it into a shallow mound, this is going to form the grassy base of the Runestone.

Make two depressions in the mound for the standing stones and gently press them in, the lay your arch across the two. There you have a nearly finished runestone! Didn't take long, did it? Compare it to the one on the board and see if it looks the part. If it's a bit `overweight', give it a little trim with the craft knife and mould it back into shape. This is your last chance to make any difference to the overall shape, if it doesn't look right now, it never will.

And now, to make the detail, which couldn't be simpler!

For the grass take the blunt edge of the craft knife blade and gently press it into the mound (DO NOT HAVE YOUR THUMB ON THE BLADE!), keep doing this, overlapping the strokes until you build up a grass like pattern. Alternatively, you may wish to cover the base with flock, or any of a dozen different ways to decorate it. Whatever you chose, as long as you are happy, that's fine.

And now, the ancient carvings, made by a weird and ancient sculptor. That's you. Take your cocktail stick, and referring loosely to the board, gently carve spirals and curves into the standing stones and arch. As long as they look good, they don't have to match the board unless you're a terrible stickler!

Clay will keep building up on the tip of the stick, so keep wiping it regularly back onto the block of clay. If you make a false move, simply smooth over the stone with the side of the point.

Your runestone should now be complete, but there is one last slightly tricky stage to get through. You need to remove the stones from the plastic base. This clay needs to be baked to harden it (see the instructions that come with the clay) and the plastic base will melt, so it needs to be removed. Using a sharp clean craft knife blade, cut away the model from the base. Slow firm pressure is best. However hard you try the base will warp a little, but you should be able to smooth it out and quickly neaten up any dented grass.

Once it's baked (usually only 15 minutes or so, it comes out of the oven a little soft sometimes but then hardens up), glue it onto a fresh plastic base, undercoat it, then it's ready to paint! If you're using Citadel paints, then Bestial Brown and Snakebite Leather are a good combination and you can use Brown Ink to pick out the carvings. For the grass, start with a dark green and lighten up, throwing a little yellow into the mix.

Your runestones will fit over the (admittedly very nice) drawings on the board quite well, and should complement the board.

And once you have made your Runestones, you may like to try making more other scenery. All it requires is a little imagination and work. Best of luck!

Miniatures of Character

Back in White Dwarf #321, GW gave away two miniatures to go with the launch of Battle for Skull Pass, the starter set for budding Warhammer players.

As these miniatures were effectively free, I figured it would be a good idea to try and make some characters for Talisman 3rd Edition with them and the results are shown below.

Next month sees the release of the new Empire Wizards boxed set for Warhammer and I already have some ideas for converting those for use with Talisman!

GOBLIN HUNTER

SPECIAL ABILITIES

1. Take a battleaxe, helmet and shield from the purchase card deck at the start of the game.
2. You need not roll a die in the Crags unless you wish to. If you choose to roll, you must accept the result.
3. You are not allowed to evade combat with a Goblin under any circumstances. If you encounter a Goblin, you must fight it.
4. You may add one to your die roll when in combat with a Goblin enemy or character.
5. You are not affected by the Maze and the Siren.

START IN THE **TAVERN**

NEUTRAL ALIGNMENT

GOLD 1

STRENGTH	CRAFT	LIVES	EXPERIENCE
4	2	4	0

▼ OBJECTS ▼   ▼ FOLLOWERS ▼

NIGHT GOBLIN

SPECIAL ABILITIES

1. Take a shield from the purchase card deck at the start of the game.
2. Instead of moving, you may use your spear to stab a character or enemy, in your current space, in the back. If you do, your opponent does not roll a die for the battle. Instead you roll one die and if you roll a 4, 5 or 6 they must lose a life. They may not use any armour, shield or helmet to save the life.
3. You are not affected by the Siren.

START IN THE **GRAVEYARD**

EVIL ALIGNMENT

GOLD 1

STRENGTH	CRAFT	LIVES	EXPERIENCE
2	3	4	0

▼ OBJECTS ▼   ▼ FOLLOWERS ▼

A CODER'S TALE

by oldschoolgamr

My history with Talisman runs pretty far back. During the summer of 1990 I worked at a camp where one of the counselors had an imported copy of the 2nd edition - I was instantly hooked! Having grown up drawing D&D dungeon maps on grid paper and buying almost every roleplaying rulebook and module I could find, the questing aspect of the game was amazing to me. [At one time I think I owned the rules for D&D, Indiana Jones, Star Frontiers, Marvel Superheroes, Paranoia, and Torg].

I constantly wanted to play these games, but was always deemed dungeon master/referee/game master and responsible for taking my friends through dungeons and on adventures. Talisman changed all that. For once, my friends could participate along side me - no narrator required. Furthermore, the random card mechanic made every game different, with numerous card combinations and possibilities, the "story" that each character - win or lose - unfolded during a game was awesome. This deep lasting appeal in a structured adventure setting was, and still is, quite rare. Additionally, the fact that the game was played WITH the instructions: cool artwork on each card with tiny text that explained exactly what was possible, truly made it a pick up and play adventure quest!

So, that summer I copied the board onto poster board and cut out cards from stock. Since I couldn't get all the text onto each card I used a code that referenced a page in a spiral notebook, into which I transcribed every card description. Well, the game played, but without the artwork and with the constant looking up stuff, gameplay struggled quite a bit.

I went back to high school and didn't think much about Talisman for awhile (weird, I know). Then, while browsing a hobby store during my junior year at college (1995), I bumped into the third edition. I immediately dropped what ever cash was necessary, picking up the main game, and all three expansions. My friends got hooked as well and we had many a gaming night with that set. We began recording win/losses of each character to track how much we had played - Talisman GBA has the same mechanic built in. I love the design of the game, and yes even the artwork. I tried to present the art of the game as a priority in the GBA version which, given the limited screen size, was a challenge.

The coding side of it began long ago as well, having grown up coding basic on my family's Atari 800. I did some flash programming after college, but had always wanted to make my own actual video game. After reading the book "Lucky Wander Boy" (cool narrative on the symbolism of classic video games), I tinkered with the whole MAME thing (Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator) and then stumbled across HAM, a development platform for the GBA (www.ngine.de). After getting a flash cart and seeing my very own "Hello World" demo appear on the screen, I knew I had to try making Talisman GBA a reality. The friends I played with had moved on and the thought of playing versus computer controlled players was captivating. However - porting all 400+ cards, characters, and interactions - not to mention AI - was daunting.
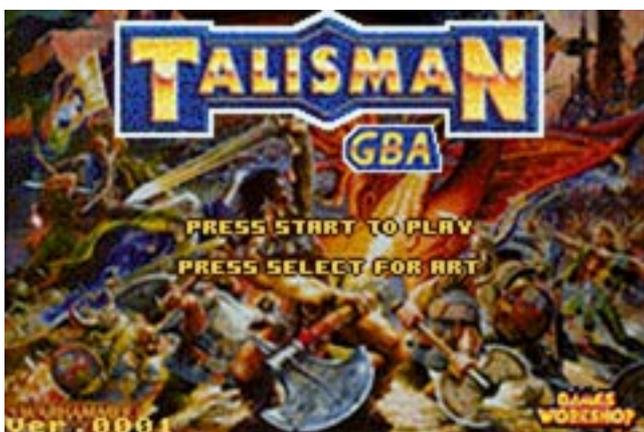
The start screen for Talisman GBA showing the boxart from the 3rd Edition Game. You can unlock new artwork and bonus characters as you play through the game.

The game interface is very well designed and most intuitive. This screen shows the object of your quest; to kill the Dragon King.

Another in game shot showing board detail and options.

All you need is a PC emulator or a GBA with a flash cart.

Over two years later, I have the beta version that is out now. My motivation to actually finish the whole thing has been low recently, so I thought I would release what I have and see what feedback it got - perhaps enough encouragement could motivate me to finish the PvP... which seems to be the biggest remaining mechanic - not counting improvements to the AI (as some have reported already, they aren't so smart when it comes to ditching the Poltergeist). Now, I know how I feel when game developers release early and fix later, but hey - this is homebrew, right?

One of the things I wanted to do was design the game in a way that would allow multiple people to play on the same GBA. Recall the 20+ minutes it takes to set up the board, shuffle the decks, and arrange the cones... now do the same with the flick of a power button... not a huge draw for the purists - but now do the same in a car during a roadtrip! Networking and on-line approaches were over my head at the time (and pretty much remain as such now), considering that sprite handling meant nothing to me then, so I opted to use the "Spell Flip" mechanic. Since most the cards in Talisman are face up during play, multiple people could watch the screen during a game - with privacy only required during spell viewing. So - hide the GBA, press UP, and the spell flips for viewing - release, and it flips back over... It's a bit harder on a PC - the other players kind of have to look away, but it was intended for handheld play.

The other funny thing about spells is how the game must ask anyone with a spell if they want to cast reflection/counterspell. I didn't want to have a pause button that interrupted a player's turn, so I made it mandatory to answer if you wanted to cast it or not, just so other players wouldn't know if you were saving it for later... It may appear repetitive, but the alternate mechanic would have been much more bulky and cumbersome (not to mention difficult to code...). A similar issue comes up with Preservation... however I altered the rules to have the spell apply to only a player's last life and to the life of the Dragon King. I did not want every successful battle to end with a round of "Do you want to cast Preservation?" for each player with a spell. Instead, I limited the rules and hopefully made the version play smoothly without detracting from the original gameplay.

The AI is only a start... Computer characters may not appear that smart. The type of AI I am using - conditional tempered with randomness - builds on itself slowly and should get better with future releases. It takes a lot of code to program strategy and right now the AI doesn't always consider the options. (You will see good characters stop on the graveyard, for example.)

Finally, I wanted to provide a reward for people who regularly played one player games, giving players a goal for finishing games and playing solo - thus solo points, with which you can unlock title screens, mini pics, and additional characters. The rewards given at the end of a solo game are modeled after the approach of Super Smash Bros. where the craziest things can get you points, and each reward description keyword may not be 100% clear, on purpose.
All in all, it's fun. It was a lot of work, and it's still not quite complete, but hopefully there are some people out there having fun with it. If you are - let me know via the website (www.mywiferocksproductions.com) and if you find bugs, misspellings, or annoyances, I would love to address them in future releases. Ver. 0002 has been posted on the site (mywiferocksproductions.com) and any previous version savefile will be compatible with all future releases (if this changes I will be sure to post it clearly and perhaps distribute a conversion tool).

May your experience rise quickly and your followers never leave...

Enders | oldschoolgamr | OSG |
mywiferocksproductions.com

Note: The name of my "production house," MY WIFE ROCKS PRODUCTIONS - is an acknowledgement to the patience and support that my wife has given me when it comes to the coding, bug hunting, playtesting, and general mindwandering related to the development of Talisman GBA. Since May 2005 she has listened to me blather on about Fingers of Death, Fountains of Wisdom, and Gauntlets of Might - to name a few. She is an amazing woman and I can't imagine what my life would be like without her.

Of Trolls and Assassins

Those familiar with collecting miniatures for Talisman 2nd Edition will know that alternate figures were released, mainly in the US, for the Elf, Knight, Warrior of Chaos, Samurai, Warrior and Witch Doctor.

Over the past few years I had seen examples of alternate figures purporting to be official and the majority of these are taken with a pinch of salt as they had nothing to back these claims.

However, from time to time certain figures would turn up, usually as part of collections or boxed sets. Notably the three miniatures which I, for my own purposes, now class as "*official*" alternates.

First up is a miniature which was sent out as a replacement for the standard Assassin. The figure is actually the Highwayman from the Citadel C46 Townsfolk range.

Then there are two Troll miniatures, the first of which is from the Marauder Miniatures MM40 range and the second being a Marsh Troll from the Citadel Troll range.

I am sure there are a few other examples of miniatures having been sent out by GW Mail Order over the years, and if you have one then I'd like to hear about it.

Images of the miniatures taken from scans held at the fantastic Stuff of Legends archive - http://www.solegends.com

Runes for Talisman - Part Two

ADVENTURE

PLACE   6   **PLACE**

CROP CIRCLES

You may spend 1 Rune to gain 1 Life, then roll a die. If you roll 4-6 you gain 1 more life.

TCS 2.0

OBJECT- Magic   5   **-OBJECT** Magic

RUNE SCROLL

You may discard the scroll to draw two Runes.

TCS 2.0

STRANGER   4   **STRANGER**

BLOOD SHAMAN
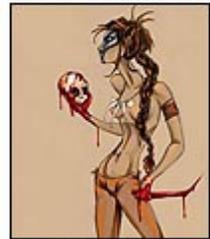
The Blood Shaman knows 3 Rune Recipes.
1 Death Rune, 1 Strength: Add +5 in next combat
1 Death Rune, 1 Craft: Add +5 in next psychic combat
1 Death Rune, 1 Gold: Gain 1 life

TCS 2.0

STRANGER   4   **STRANGER**

ELVEN SCHOLAR

The Elven Scholar will trade you 1 Rune for any other Rune (search the deck). She will move to the discard pile after a trade.

TCS 2.0

ENEMY- Dragon   2   **-ENEMY** Dragon

RUNE DRAGON

STRENGTH 7
If you defeat the Rune Dragon you may draw 2 additional Runes.

TCS 2.0

ENEMY- Spirit   3   **-ENEMY** Spirit

DARK MASTER

CRAFT 3
If you defeat the Dark Master you may take 1 Death Rune.

TCS 2.0

FOLLOWER   5   **FOLLOWER**

IMP PRINCESS

She will follow the first player to give her a Death or Universe Rune.

When you draw runes, draw one extra then discard one of the just drawn.

TCS 2.0

RUNIC DWARF

STRENGTH 3   CRAFT 3

GOLD 1   LIVES 4

ALIGNMENT: NEUTRAL
START: RUNES
    SPECIAL ABILITIES

1. You gain runes from Enemies of Strength 4 and Enemy Spirits of Craft 4.

2. You may spend any 1 Rune in combat or psychic combat to turn re-roll you die.

3. When you land on another character you may steal any 1 Rune from them.

TCS 2.0

OBJECTS   FOLLOWERS

RUNIC DWARF

TCS 2.0

This is the second set of cards for Peter Hansson's Runes Expansion, copies of which are included in this issue's associated zip file download.

Look out for more Runebound Items and additional rules for the Runes Expansion in the next issue of the Talisman Herald.

For more on Runes and Peter's many other expansions, visit the Warpzone at http://www.randomdice.com/games/talisman/