

THE ORIGIN OF TREE WORSHIP



Issue 5

Being an Occasional WFRP Gazetteer by Tim Eccles

EDITORIAL

I seem beset by printing calamities, to the extent that perhaps I have to accept that I might be the incompetent one! I will just blame my lack of technical expertise, but good old-fashioned cut and paste should not be this hard. **Lac Ta 1**, my Farscape RPG fanzine, had a horrible time with its graphics an issue that broadly has not affected my Warhammer FRP fanzines since I have generally avoided pictures of any sort! However, the second edition of **All Quiet in Kislev** somehow managed to lose its fonts, corrupting the pagination, and emptied out an ink cartridge during printing. The printer then managed to foul up the originals so badly that I will need to start them all from scratch for a third edition. Mind you, since the poor plans were the only criticism (so far!) received directly to me on the adventure, then this might be a popular move; unfortunately, it *will* necessitate time that I do not have. If things have gone to plan, a third edition *might* be out as you read this. **Origin of Tree Worship 4** was worst hit of the lot. I tried two different printings, and fell out very badly with one printer, as the first suffered skid marks and black edges, whilst the second had not only this but also a lopsided page and some sentences that had mis-spaced letters. Quite how my printer did this when Word showed the lines up perfectly I have no idea. This is a roundabout way of apologising for the various delays resulting from these mishaps and if you were not completely happy with the presentation. I hope that the content made up for it and - touch wood - that no such problems have happened here. I should also apologise that these delays further delayed **Homeward Bound**, since I had promised that both would be out before **HB**. At least that is completed, printed and distributed now. I have already thanked everyone who has bought the Private Wars Campaign, but particularly to those of you who have supported the pre-sell system and bought blind, my sincere thanks to you all. It has been fun, notwithstanding the many less pleasant parts of the production process!

All the articles here are my own, except the attributed 'Chaos in the Warhammer World'. I am not sure whether this is through choice or chance! In many ways it is easier for me to write the articles than engage in a convoluted editorial process and I certainly have no wish to upset anyone by rejecting their own valued attempts. Still, it is going to get steadily harder to write all the articles myself if **Origin of Tree Worship** is going to maintain two issues per year. I have touted a round for articles and will continue to do so. All artwork is from out-of-copyright manuscripts - except for the rear cover, which is courtesy of Sean Hamill.

My pitiful attempt at a 'Letters Page' (or should that be *your* pitiful attempt!) has led me to ponder a little on the nature of fanzines, particularly with reference to the Internet. One 'criticism' constantly of my stuff is that it should be free on the Internet, rather than sold as hard copy. People will gladly read my pieces for nothing, but do not want to pay for them. Thanks guys! I also seem to receive very little feedback, and almost all completely positive. That is, of course, wonderful! However, it is unlikely to be the whole picture and I would genuinely like to receive comments on all my fanzines. If nothing else, is **Tree Worship** even worth persevering with? I am only continuing as a couple of good friends have persuaded me that **Tree Worship** has a place in the WFRP fan arena. The Internet seems able to generate a fair degree of comment, debate and criticism; so why not fanzines generally? The immediacy (an obvious advantage) of email and Internet boards can lead to a 'shoot from the hip' attitude, which I would like to think paper fanzines can overcome. The use of 'handles' ensures anonymity and this also probably encourages correspondents to be more critical and offensive.

Someone pointed me to a thread on rpg.net about the future of WFRP, which evolved into a debate on **A Private War**. Let's face it, I have been very critical in my time (though I would like to think fairly and with an appropriate line of argument), but I have always done so under my own name. That is quite likely to have created people who will gladly return the compliment. On this particular thread, three different critics posted (which out of 400+ sales is pretty good in itself). Two of them simply did not like the language employed in the book ('too dry'). To be honest, I think that I would agree - although one of the three was using English as a second or third language. I would like to think that **All Quiet in Kislev** and **Homeward Bound** were written in a more approachable style, but **APW** was written originally as a proposal for **Hogshead** - and we all know how one sentence in a WFRP product can be taken as evidence for all sorts of opinions! I was simply attempting to be clear and non-contradictory at the expense of an instantly approachable style. This was an error I will hold up my hands to. All three effectively agreed that the style was why the proposals were rejected. I do not accept this, since I *could* quite easily have written it in any number of different styles to order. My opinion is that the book was good enough as a basis for an editor to have ripped it apart and put together what was needed in a commercial product. Indeed, the book is now deliberately full of all sorts of things that would never have made a commercial product; but that is because it was not (by then) a commercial product.

The final, and more effusive, critic ranted all over the place about all sorts of my writings, and so is someone that I have perhaps upset at some time. No shortage of candidates, there! He even seemed upset at my use of what he regarded as 40K fungoid orcs in what was meant to be a humorous story told by one of the NPCs! The idea is actually derived from a set of rules published by Tabletop Games (written by the people who were to become WFB and WH40K) in which fungoid trolls appear. I was left uncertain exactly what the issue with using the "40K" (sic) idea was; is not Warhammer 40K's gothic darkness perfect for WFRP? This then led me to ponder material generally, what was in the right 'spirit' of the game and particularly where the humour has gone. Funny writing is very difficult; can we as amateurs reinvigorate the humour back into the game? It is very clear that **Hogshead** product could not!

Still, this leads me back to my original reflection at the start of the paragraph. I really would like to receive comments, good and bad, on all my fanzines. I think that they are pretty good, and my players enjoyed them. Ultimately, that is all that matters to me. Publishing is obviously an egocentric activity anyway, so I have to learn to take the rough with the smooth. I publish as I think (and hope) that others can have as much fun with the material. If you do, then I want to know - but I also want to know where you do not. That way, I can try and improve or simply not bother - saving me a lot of time and effort! So, please do respond to rpg.net, Critical Hit, Strike-to-Stun or the WFRP List - but to me as well. *Please!!*

By the way, the primary sustained criticism on the **Private Wars Campaign** is on the numbers of NPCs and lack of cross-referencing to them. I appreciate this, and I do have it in mind to produce a 'Who's Who?' fanzine. However, this will obviously take a lot of time, and I am not sure how useful it really is this late on and whether it is the best use of my time. Is such a booklet more interesting or useful than producing **A Pass Too Far** or issue 6 of this fanzine or a piece for **Warpstone** or even something completely different? Equally if anyone has started such a thing and is willing to let me produce it, then please contact me.

With luck (and that seems to be a common phrase in this editorial) this issue has been printed in time for Dragonmeet. I decided not to take a place on the fanzine table this year as, evidence notwithstanding, I do not really regard myself as a fanzine editor. I play games, run campaigns and write about them and material for them, hopefully so that others can have as much fun as I did. Fanzines are rather more than this and I do not have the commitment to gaming in general of a Robert Rees or John Foody. I think to claim otherwise would be dishonest. That said, I have offered to help out and this fanzine is primarily intended for sale at their table. If you are reading this at Dragonmeet I should be around somewhere, so look me out and say 'hello' - which was the only decent part of doing the table last year. With luck (again, and given the paragraph above, I deserve some luck this year!) I also will not have the flu this time.

My thanks to anyone who voted for me in the Origins Awards as a write-in. Obviously, I dived without a trace but that does not mean that I do not appreciate those of you who did bother to vote for me. I never expected to win (obviously) but was hoping for some publicity out of it, and in my own small way to keep the WFRP banner waving. This is probably also a good place to thank everyone - once again - for continuing to support my various musings. I genuinely appreciate the fact that a sizeable number of gamers continue to shell out their cash for what I am producing. It is nice to know that Hogshead was wrong and that not everyone supports the whole D20 miasma. It is also the ultimate method of putting all criticism into context. Thank you.

Tim Eccles
November 2003



A Bretonnian receives his just reward for the attack on Marienburg - more inside!

CHAOS IN THE WARHAMMER WORLD

By Alfred Nuñez Jr. and Anthony Ragan

Background

We wrote this article as a writing sample that accompanied our formal proposal to write the Realms of Chaos sourcebook for Hogshead Publishing. This piece actually represents the entirety of the History chapter. A good portion of the text is a summary of the information contained in some of the 4th and 5th edition WFB army books.

Games Workshop was not particularly pleased with the paragraph where we detailed the time before the collapse of the wargates. In their view, the text was too definitive for a period in which the events should be hazy at best. We intended to answer GW's concerns by presenting this legendary period of history as some heretical theory put forth by two renegade Verenan scholars. In this manner, we hoped to stake out a reasonable view without compromising anything GW was developing.

Introduction

The following text is based upon the ramblings of the late Brother Frederich Schliemann, may Mór protect his soul. The unfortunate Verenan scholar had been plagued by nightmares over the past few years which drove him mad. He was taken to the Great Hospice in Frederheim where the Shallyans sisters did what little they could for the former Professor Emeritus of Imperial History at the University in Altdorf. Brother Frederich did have moments of lucidity and the Verenan cult sent Brother Joachim Weissburg to record everything Brother Frederich had to say in the hopes of gaining some insight into the nature of his ailment before he succumbed to his fate.

There are some who claim that Brother Joachim fabricated the information in the hopes of making a name for himself. The truth will never be known as the good brother died violently at the hands of a suicidal maniac several weeks before this work was published.

The Coming of Chaos

"All right, where were we?" Theophilus Hochmütig inquired on a sunny day in the middle of Marktplatz in Nuln. "We were discussing how Chaos came into the world," replied Ludovicus Buchbinder with the hint of exasperation in his voice. "I believe that you were going to explain your theories."

"Ah, right. Thank you, my good man," said the taller scholar. "With what was available to me in Nuln and Marienburg, I have deduced that tens of thousands of years ago, long before Man walked upright or the Elves were anything more than savages, the Old Slann (or Old Ones, if you prefer) left a now-forgotten home world, much like this one, to travel among the stars. Through their powerful magicks, they conquered the vast distances between suns by learning to travel in the Warp, a realm of limitless probability that lies beneath and behind all reality. Mastering the laws of this other-realm, their voyages in the aethyr were reduced from centuries to just a few days or weeks, thus allowing the Old Slann to build an empire that spanned the Heavens. On each world they settled, they built great gates at the north and south poles to ease their ships' entries and exits from the Warp."

"Blinded by hubris, the Old Slann never realised that among the infinite possibilities inherent in the Warp was self-awareness – that the other-realm itself could become sentient. Serene in their great ships, it never occurred to them that the psychic patterns left behind by their mighty minds would merge and coalesce with the mental echoes of millions of lesser beings in the eddies and currents created by their passage. Nor that this growing intellect, the mind of the Warp itself, would hate them."

"I see," commented Ludovicus. "So, you theorise that this 'mind' was a powerful deity? What happened next in your estimation?"

Theophilus pulled himself a little more erect before continuing. "The attack of the Dark Entity, as I style him, was sudden and violent. Hundreds of ships were destroyed in an instant, the psychic death screams of their crews adding to the life force of this new-born god. But it played its hand too strong and too soon, and weakened itself to the point that the magic of the Old Slann proved superior. They obliterated the entity, scattering it into millions of psychic shreds. Reassured of supremacy by their victory, the Old Slann were still blind to the truth: the mind of the Warp could never be wholly destroyed, for a portion of all living beings exists within it. Lesser eddies of these psychic shards form the beings we know as gods, spirits, and daemons."

"Isn't there a contradiction in your views?" countered Ludovicus. "If the Old Slann were so powerful that they could defeat this 'Dark Entity', where are they now? Why do we have Chaos in the world?"

"I'm getting to that," replied Theophilus. "That's the problem with the world today. Too many of the younger people don't have the patience of their elders."

"Elders, my foot," retorted Ludovicus. "You're bloody only 46 years old..."

"... and I'm still a year and a half older than you," completed Theophilus. "So I am your elder. Now allow me to continue. As I see it, the scattered fragments of the Dark Entity flowed in the tides of the Warp until they encountered other sympathetic remnants. These bits and pieces began to coalesce on their own, forming new psyches. The first to gain awareness was the Blood God, Khorne, who some argue (incorrectly, I might add) is the most powerful of all. He was followed quickly by Tzeentch and Nurgle. The last of the Powers to gain awareness was Slaanesh. Other, smaller beings gained consciousness during this time."

"Right. And where do the other gods fit in?" snorted Ludovicus impatiently.

"That's a tale for another day," remarked Theophilus. Where was I? Oh yes. The Four Great Powers retained enough of the Dark Entity's memories that they inherited its loathing of the Old Ones. Khorne wished to strike immediately, but Tzeentch the Schemer urged him to delay.

Their power was rising while that of the Old Slann would surely decline in time. The Four slowly created their daemoniac followers, hiding them from the Warp-travelling Old Slann, waiting for the day when they could tear reality apart.

"Through his cunning, Tzeentch slowly corrupted the mechanism of the Warp gates over the polar regions. When the time was ripe, they failed suddenly and exploded in a million colours, tearing great gashes in the heavens above and below our world. Great winds from the Warp blew its dust across the world, corrupting and twisting many of its inhabitants, making them slaves to the attackers. With these newly formed allies as the vanguard, the forces of the Four poured through the gates to destroy the Old Slann."

"You realise, of course, that such a view runs opposite of what the good cult of Sigmar teaches its priests," observed Ludovicus.

"No doubt," smiled Theophilus followed by a cough. "Damn, the air's getting a little thick hereabouts. At any rate, the forces of Chaos soon encountered lesser beings who shared this world with the Old Slann. The northern kingdom of the Giants was swept aside and their kind scattered. The Elves of Ulthuan were battered by the initial attack, but did not break. To the east, the Dwarfs marched from the safety of the mountains to take up the fight. But, these battles were merely side-shows to the real war."

"Kingdom of the Giants? You've been reading those inane Norscan sagas again, haven't you?" Ludovicus criticised.

"I've always said that there's some truth behind the old myths of the world," rejoined Theophilus. "My throat is feeling a bit parched at the moment. What I wouldn't do for a pint of ale. Oh well, allow me to continue."

"By all means, fellow scholar," replied Ludovicus. "We have little time."

"Indeed, friend, but I am almost done expounding upon my conclusions," reassured Theophilus. "The utter destruction of the Old Slann was the only goal of the Four – all else meant nothing compared to it. They themselves engaged their ancient enemies and their servants, the First Spawn Slann, while Greater Daemons led the Chaos armies against the other Slann and their Lizardman warriors. The war devastated the land which later became Naggaroth as the titanic forces clashed for mastery. The Old Ones threw all their resources into the fray, but they were tired and decadent: it would not be enough to defeat the Lords of Chaos."

Yet, within the infinite possibilities of Chaos are the seeds of its own destruction. One of the Daemon Princes, Hashut, revolted against the Lords of Chaos. Khorne swatted Hashut away and sent other Daemon Princes with their retinues to slay the defiant daemon. As the forces arrayed against the failing Old Ones scattered, the divine Children of the Earth Mother entered the battle against Chaos. They were soon joined by the Law Gods, beings from the Void whose sole goal was the freezing of Chaos in one set pattern – something that would mean the deaths of the Four. The forces of Chaos were pushed northward until a stand-off was reached."

"Yes, and we know the rest, do we not. Allow me to finish since your throat seems so parched," stated Ludovicus, who then cleared his own throat. "The Elves and Dwarfs contributed to victory over Chaos. Many Elf sorcerers gave their lives to create the vortex that drained away most of the Warp winds, while the Dwarf Ancestor God Grimnir journeyed to the collapsed Warp gate to seal it with his bare hands. Though denied outright conquest, Chaos had taken hold in the world and its roots sank ever deeper."

"Now, allow me to point out where I disagree with your views..."

"For the love of merciful Verena, gentle sirs, please," interrupted a pleading third voice. "This is not the time to debate your views on how Chaos came to the world. We are *being burned at the stake!*" "This is no time for hysterics," reprimanded Ludovicus. "Bloody librarian..."

History of Chaos

Fought to a standstill after the First IncurSION, the Lords of Chaos embarked on a millennia-long plan to corrupt, weaken, and destroy the peoples of the Warhammer World. Each proceeded in its own way, biding its time, sometimes fighting each other, waiting for the moment when the Warp expands again.

Tendrils of Chaos

The Corruption of the Elves: the Cult of Pleasure

The seeds of the downfall of the Elves were sewn during the aftermath of the Great Disaster. In the midst of the fighting, the grieving Phoenix King Aenarion rescued the beautiful Lady Morathi of Nagarythe from a Slaaneshi warband. To everyone's surprise, he took the cool and proper noblewoman for his wife and settled his court in her homeland in Ulthuan. It was here Morathi gave birth to their son, Malekith.

Malekith inherited his mother's beauty and his father's stature, and he came into his own after the death of Aenarion. Though Aenarion's first children were found and his daughter became the new Everqueen, many wanted to see Malekith crowned Phoenix King. The Ulthuan Princes decided differently and crowned Bel Shanaar instead. Malekith was the first to bend his knee before the new Phoenix King in homage. In return, Bel Shanaar named Malekith as his First Ambassador.

Malekith travelled the world as the Phoenix King's representative. When he returned to Nagarythe, he found that the decadent Cult of Pleasure was prevalent throughout the region. The cult had grown so bold it performed obscene rituals of living sacrifice as a public entertainment. Malekith led a crusade to crush the vile cult despite (or perhaps because of) the rumour his mother was a founder and High Priestess. Fear gripped Ulthuan as rumours hinted the Cult had spread to other parts of the ringed island and increasingly associated the name Slaanesh with it.

In a war council called to debate the threat of the Cult and Nagarythe, Malekith openly accused the Phoenix King himself of being member. Overwhelmed by the accusation, Bel Shanaar poisoned himself. Malekith took the crown from Bel Shanaar's head, proclaimed himself Phoenix King, and released hidden assassins to murder every noble in council. Malekith was so certain of his destiny that he entered the sacred flame of Asuryan as the first two Phoenix Kings had done before him. Instead of emerging unscathed, the fire burned Malekith with an intensity to match the presumptuous of his soul. Wracked with unbearable pain, Malekith was rejected by the sacred flame. His followers took his broken body to Nagarythe to heal.

Once recovered, Malekith the Witch King made war on Ulthuan to regain his birthright. Arrayed against him were the armies of the new Phoenix King, Caledor the Conqueror. The war raged across Nagarythe with the followers of the Witch King slowly losing ground. Malekith then tried a dangerous gambit, attacking the Vortex itself in hopes of tapping into the Realm of Chaos directly. The wizards caught within the vortex fought desperately against the Witch King. The raw magic force unleashed was tremendous and the whole of Ulthuan shook under its might. The ensuing tidal wave drowned much of Nagarythe and Tiranoc, killing thousands of Elves. The Witch King and his followers escaped in the disaster's chaotic wake and fled overseas to a land they renamed Naggaroth.

This event has become known as "The Sundering" and forever fragmented and weakened the Elven people. The Civil War has continued through the millennia to the present day, ensuring that the full might of the Elves would never again oppose Chaos and its designs.

The Destruction of the Goblin Kingdoms

Before the Great Disaster, the region now known as the Dark Lands was a well-watered and fertile region between the Worlds Edge Mountains and the Mountains of Mourn. Nomadic tribes of Orcs, Hobgoblins, and Goblins roamed the land as hunters and gatherers. They fought each other with weapons of stone and bone, each wanting the land for itself.

The Goblins were the more organised and numerous. They were the first to establish kingdoms on the fertile plains and trade with the Dwarf clans that had migrated from the Worlds Edge Mountains. The Hobgoblins, on the other hand, were cunning hunters, skilled at ambush and setting traps. They were also more likely to cheat Goblin traders than deal with them honestly. In contrast, the large and brutish Orcs simply took whatever they wanted and killed anyone who stood in their way. Their love of fighting one another kept their numbers low, a fact for which the more civilised but physically weaker goblins were ever grateful.

The Chaos IncurSION ignored the Dark Lands until Hashut's revolt against the Lords of Chaos. Fleeing from the Daemon Princes sent by the Blood God to destroy him, Hashut made his stand in the Dark Lands. The savage battles they fought boiled away the rivers and left the land a desiccated ruin. The servants of the Daemon Princes destroyed Goblin and Hobgoblin villages to deny Hashut any possible allies. The Goblin kingdoms crumbled under the onslaught and their people fled to the Orc villages for safety. The Hobgoblins retreated into the Mountains of Mourn to save their own skins. Only the Orcs fought back, gathering into larger tribes and joining the battle with relish.

These new (though unwitting) allies gave Hashut the opportunity to turn against his pursuers. He killed many, but Khorne always sent more. Knowing they would eventually overwhelm him, Hashut withdrew into the underground darkness to rebuild his strength. Khorne's slaves followed and finally cornered their quarry in a large underground cavern. Suffering from their own wounds, the followers of the Blood God imprisoned Hashut behind a great door of brass and darkened iron to hold him till Khorne saw fit to exact his vengeance in person.

As the Warp winds drained into the Elf-created vortex, Khorne's minions in the Dark Lands began to weaken. A huge Orc army descended upon the retreating Khornates and the bloody battle further devastated the land. Both sides suffered horrible losses, but the simple and brutish society of the Orcs survived the war against Chaos. The more advanced Goblin culture was destroyed, forever leaving the Goblins as slaves of the Orcs.

The Corruption of the Dwarfs: the Oath-breakers

Unlike their western brethren, the Dwarf clans of the Mountains of Mourn didn't receive Grungni's warning before the Warpgates collapsed and Warpdust seeped into their settlements. Yet, the eastern Dwarfs realised that something was amiss and closed their doors. A surge of Warp matter obliterated the Dwarfs' surface entrances and entrapped them below. For hundreds of years, the Dark Lands Dwarfs were trapped underground. No matter where they tunnelled, impenetrable rock prevented them from reaching the surface. The Dwarfs burrowed ever-deeper, always seeking a way past the rock that trapped them.

They eventually tunnelled into a magnificent underground gallery with walls of obsidian. Carefully exploring the cavern, the Dwarfs found a huge sealed door made of brass and darkened iron with arcane writings inscribed on it. Rune Lord Grimdalf the Grey took it upon himself to translate the glyph learn what was beyond the door. After many years, Grimdalf successfully read the script and, as he mouthed the last syllable, the resulting blast tore him apart. The sound of it reverberated throughout the tunnels, as did the roar of whatever it was Grimdalf had set free.

The thing from behind the door was free and Dwarfs were dying. Even when they finally tunnelled out of the earth, the killings continued during the night. In time, fewer died and some Dwarfs were even allowed to return to their fellows with tales of a gigantic creature from the Darkness. With their Dwarfking dead (one of the beast's first victims), the remaining clan leaders selected a delegation to approach the creature in its lair to learn its intent. It told them that its name was Hashut, Father of Darkness, and that he would grant them great power if they worshipped him alone. Hashut told the Dark Lands Dwarfs that their Ancestor Gods abandoned them to the onslaught of Chaos. Should they refuse, promised Hashut, their lines would come to an end and their achievements would be forgotten.

A heated argument broke out between those who saw wisdom in Hashut's words and those who saw forsaking the Ancestor Gods as the first step to damnation. At the height of the debate, weapons were drawn and Dwarf slew Dwarf. Seeing the fight from afar, Hashut granted sorcerous power to those elders who favoured him, tipping the battle in their favour. To honour their new god, the victors sacrificed many of their brethren to Hashut, while they gave others to him as slaves. Some of these he mutated into the beasts that serve him: the Great Taurus and Lammasu. Hashut also took the most ferocious fighters for his cause and shaped them into the Bull Centaurs, his distinguished servants. Lastly, the victorious clan elders were permanently rewarded with powerful sorcerous abilities, which they used to Hashut's glory.

In a final desperate act against their now debased rulers, the remaining Runesmiths revolted against Hashut's new order. But, the corruption of the Dark Lands Dwarfs had even affected the power of the Runesmiths. The battle raged for months, but the Sorcerer-Priests were too strong. The Runesmiths were broken and enslaved, while the more powerful among them were sacrificed to Hashut after several days of ritual torture. With the last vestiges of their former culture removed, the corruption of the Dark Lands Dwarfs was completed. Hashut rewarded them with tusks to mark them as his own, while he granted the most devout cloven hoofs and horns.

Though they remained unknown to the Dwarfs of the Old World for millennia, the Chaos Dwarfs proved to be their nemesis. The campaigns of the Dark Land denizens forced the greenskins' western migrations that led to the ruin of several Dwarfholds and the decline of the Dwarf Empire of Karaz Ankor. The Old World Dwarfs never recovered from their loss.

The Rise of the Skaven

Scholars have written that one of the results of the magical vortex centred on the Ulthuan's Isle of the Dead was the formation of the moon Mörrslieb. Another was the creation of isolated pools of Chaos matter spread across the world. One of the larger pools was found in the underground caverns located beneath the fertile plain between the Tilean Sea and the Irrana Mountains.

More than two thousand years before Sigmar, several Human tribes forsook the worship of the Earth Mother to follow other gods, including Solkan, Law God of Retribution. They were forced to migrate to the plains north of the Tilean Sea where they founded the city of Tylos. There was the first civilisation in the Old World. As the Tilean civilisation grew, the Chaos mass coalesced into a single malevolent entity. It knew of the Human activity above and came to hate the surface dwellers.

Dwarf clans joined the Tyleans in their plan to build a mighty temple in honour of Solkan. They sank the foundations deep into the earth, unknowingly breaching the domain of the Chaos entity. Wallowing in its hate, it plotted and schemed as the towers of the temple grew ever higher. When the Tyleans finished the temple after a hundred years of construction, the thing struck. Warpstone rained down from Mörrslieb and the ground buckled and ruptured as the Tyleans sought shelter in their stone houses. Many died in the destruction, while those who didn't came to wish they had. At the height of the storm a tremendous explosion from below tore Tylos' centre – the birth of a god. Tall as a mountain, the entity burst forth and took shape as the Horned Rat.

Some Tyleans survived, but they could not resist the effects of the Warpstone about them. There was no escape from the devastated land, which, within a year, had sunk and become an abysmal, disease-ridden swamp. The city itself settled into the marsh, its spires twisting into horrid shapes and swarms of giant rats roaming the ruined boulevards where Tyleans once walked with pride.

But, the Horned Rat was not quite finished. It wanted no less than to become one of the Lords of Chaos, but for this it would need worshippers. It changed the giant rats into parodies of the surface dwellers and blessed its creations with some of its own essence, including its hatred for the chosen races of the Old Ones: Elves, Humans, Dwarfs, and even the Orcs and Goblins. He the strongest of his new servants the power to wield the raw magic of Chaos while resisting its mutating effects.

The Skaven burst upon the rest of the world soon after. In the wake of the War of Vengeance between the Elves and Dwarfs, earthquakes and volcanoes ravaged Karaz Ankor. The Dwarfs reeled from the upheaval, and it was then the Skaven attacked from below, apparently co-ordinating their actions with the above-ground attacks of the Orcs and Goblins. Several Dwarfholds fell over the next thousand years before the Dwarfs stabilised their defences across the World's Edge Mountains. By then, the Skaven had begun their war against the Goblins, while searching far and wide for Warpstone for their Grey Seers. Ever since, their lives have been dedicated to conspiracy and secret war, all in the service of the Horned Rat.

The Seduction of Man

Humans were few in number during the First Great IncurSION of Chaos, mostly confined to the south and east of the Old World. Though their involvement in the War was minimal, Human development was greatly influenced by Chaos. Warpstone fell far and wide when the Warpgates collapsed and no part of the world was spared. The influence on Man was subtle. In place of the complacent subjects of Old One experimentation, the Humans developed the ambition and drive that would enable them to eclipse the declining older races.

Human population exploded as they mastered the ability to make tools and weapons. Some tribes migrated to the Old World while others congregated elsewhere. In time, Human civilisations first arose in Nehekharra, Cathay, and Ind, while the worship of the Earth Mother spread throughout the tribes of the Old World, led by wise priests called Druids.

The religion of the Earth Mother, the "Old Faith," was the common element binding the first Old World tribes together. Inevitably, it attracted the attention of Chaos. The fertility rites and symbolic sacrifices of the Old Faith were a lure for Slaanesh's corruption. In some isolated tribes, these expressions of religious devotion devolved over time into wild orgies and Human sacrifices. During the second century IC, the hierarchies of the dominant cults (Taal, Ulric, and Sigmar among others) were appalled when they learned of these practices. The cult leaders mistakenly assumed these sick rites were typical of the entire Old Faith and declared a crusade against the Druids and their religion. Those that escaped fled deeper into the remote areas of the forest and borderlands where they survive today, deeply suspicious of the dominant cults.

In the first thousand years of its existence, the Empire of Sigmar became the richest and most powerful realm in the Old World. But the quality of the later Emperors never measured up to Sigmar and Sigismund II the Conqueror. With the hand of Chaos shaping the decadent opulence of life in the Imperial court, the early Empire reached its nadir during the reign of Emperor Boris Goldgatherer "the Incompetent" in the twelfth century. Lusting for the riches of the sorcerous orders, Boris conspired with the Grand Theogonist of Sigmar and the other High Priests of the Imperial cults to arrest the wizards and charge them with heresy. Many sorcerers died screaming in the flames of the stake while Boris carefully counted their wealth and properties.

The Lords of Chaos were smiling at the looming destruction of Sigmar's legacy when the Skaven unleashed the Black Plague in the Empire. The Horned Rat's play for power almost ruined Chaos's game as their premature assault reunited the land under Mandred Skavenslayer. The Skaven tried to salvage their victory by assassinating Emperor Mandred, but Chaos had lost its great chance. Not all their efforts were wasted, though. In the wake of Mandred's death, the arguments over the succession plunged Sigmar's Empire into the Age of Wars.

Though fragmented, the Empire remained a powerful bastion against Chaos. More time was needed to let the corruption run deeper and the fissures widen so the road to damnation would be inescapable. One great step was taken in the twentieth century when many wizards were seduced by daemonic promises of power and eternal life. The ranks of daemonologists and necromancers swelled as sorcerers openly made pacts with Chaos. Merciless Witch Hunters and Templars fell on these slaves of Chaos in what came to be called "The Wizard's War," but it was still a victory for Chaos: sorcery was repressed once again and its practitioners banned. Many nobles and city-states took this excuse to settle old grudges, ending any pretence of central authority in the Empire.

Minor Incursions

While the schemes of Nurgle, Slaanesh, and Tzeentch plotted to divide the enemies of Chaos, bloodthirsty Khorne lashed out. Subtlety was not his way: direct and violent action was the only plan.

The Dark Elves of Naggaroth were the first to feel the Lord of Slaughter's fury. Battles along the border marches were fierce and bloody, but the Dark Elves won each battle while all the time suffering terrible casualties. Khorne's armies suffered as well, but they kept the Dark Elves from exploring the lands north-west of Naggaroth, which held several ancient and unexplored Old One sites that might harbour secrets valuable to Chaos' foes.

In time, Khorne's armies sought other targets. Bretonnia looked ripe for the picking and the Khornates attacked it several times. They laid waste to the land and slaughtered whole towns until a last great host of Bretonnian warriors appeared. Having spent their strength in wanton bloodshed, they themselves were cut to ribbons by Breton steel. Though they had saved their land, the Bretonnians had won but a small victory. The real war was still in the future.

The Second Great Incursion

Anarchy spread across what had once been the Empire during the Dark Ages. The great provinces made war against each other and their own rebellious subordinates. It seemed Sigmar's dream had failed at last. Fear, despair, and suspicion fed the power of Chaos. Across the land, dark prophets openly proclaimed the coming end of the world.

In 2301 I. C., the Chaos grew so strong that the Wastes quickly expanded out from the polar regions. The Dwarfhold of Karak Vlag was overrun and vanished as if it never existed while Praag and Karaz-a-Karak were besieged. Having allied themselves with Chaos, the Dark Elves attacked the their ancient enemies in Ulthuan. The millennia Chaos had spent dividing and weakening their enemies at long last looked to be bearing the fruit of ultimate victory.

Alone amidst the panic one voice sounded a cry of valour and hope. Magnus von Bildhofen, known as "the Pious", was a firm believer in Sigmar's dream and a gifted orator. He quickly united and energised the people of Nuln and the Reikland, convincing them it was their sacred duty to help Kislev and fight against the Chaotic invaders. Word quickly spread and people everywhere rose in support. Opposition to this upstart son of a minor noble withered even in Ulrican strongholds like Middenheim and Talabheim. The Dwarf High King of Karaz-a-Karak swore allegiance when he learned of Magnus' inspirational words.

The Dwarfs of Karaz-a-Karak repulsed the invaders at their gates after two months of heavy fighting and pursued them northward, but doomed Praag itself fell to the Chaos invaders after holding out for months without reinforcements. A second Dwarf army was sent to give aid to the Tsar of Kislev and they arrived before the triumphant Chaotic armies moved south to lay siege to the city of Kislev. Dwarf Engineers worked feverishly to strengthen its defences. They completed the task as the gigantic Chaos host arrived. The fortifications held in spite of a fierce initial assault. The Siege of Kislev had begun.

Magnus gathered more troops in his Great Imperial Army while encamped near Middenheim. Having learned of the siege of Praag, he split his forces in two. One, with most of the lancers, would march towards Praag with the aim of relieving that city while the other Magnus would lead to Kislev.

When Magnus arrived, the Siege of Kislev was well underway. He knew time wasn't on his side so he launched an attack on Chaos' western flank early the next morning. The initial strength of the charge broke the Chaos battle line, but the foul creatures rallied and counterattacked. A breakout led by the Dwarfs from Kislev's gates also stalled after early success. The battle was turning against Magnus when the force he had sent to Praag arrived from the north and immediately attacked Chaos' rear. Taken by surprise, the Chaos army crumbled and scattered in panic. So great was the slaughter that the River Urskoy ran thick with inhuman blood.

The same swing of fortune repeated itself in Ulthuan. The Dark Elves and their Chaos allies enjoyed early successes and forced the High Elves southward. The atrocities the invaders committed solidified Elven resolve and their military and magical might began to tell. With the borders of the Wastes contracting a gain, the strength of the Chaos armies waned. The Dark Elves retreated to Naggaroth as Chaos fell before the High Elves.

Chaos failed even in the Dark Lands where Khorne sent a portion of his warriors to exterminate the Chaos Dwarfs, followers of his immortal enemy Hashut. The battles were fierce with neither side giving nor asking quarter. The Chaos Dwarfs survived, but their race was decimated.

The Chaos alliance was disintegrating on all fronts. Followers of Tzeentch battled the servants of Nurgle while Khorne's slaves attacked everyone, especially the followers of Slaanesh. Elements of the Human, Elf, and Dwarf armies pursued the vanquished Chaos forces in their quest for complete victory. The remnants of the Chaos army rallied in a forested region known as Grovod Wood, north of the River Lynsk and Erengard. Here Chaos made its stand, for its generals knew what fate awaited them in the Wastes for their failure.

The thick woods prevented the massed formations preferred by the Imperials, forcing instead the use of small armed bands to eliminate pockets of chaotic resistance. The conditions so favoured Chaos and the battle progressed so poorly, the Imperial commanders considered withdrawal. Demanding vengeance for Karak Vlag, the Dwarfs refused to retreat and accused their Imperial allies of cowardice. With the Alliance army about to fall apart, the situation was saved by the arrival of the Norse Dwarfs and Kislevites from the Translynsk territory. These fearsome warriors had their own axes to grind with Chaos and were determined to avenge the loss of their lands and the destruction of their families.

The fighting continued for several months and, by the time winter's first snowfall arrived, only small elements of the once mighty Chaos host roamed the vast forests of the Empire and Kislev. The devastation wrought by the Great Enemy would take years to overcome, if at all.

Today: the Chaos Wastes become active again

The defeat of Chaos by the Imperial army and its allies was far from decisive. Small bands of Chaos Beastmen and Warriors still roamed the dark forests and mountains. Country nobles hired mercenaries to dispatch these marauders and defend the isolated villages and farmsteads in their lands.

In spite of the occasional regional trouble, the Empire reunited under the firm and just rule of Emperor Magnus the Pious. The provincial Electors recovered their power and prominence, once again bringing stability to politics. In fact, the Empire as a whole entered a new age of prosperity and security that hadn't been seen in over 1300 years.

This "New Golden Age" has lasted over 200 years, but underneath its lustre lingers the darkness that many hoped had been overcome. Unknown to the broad masses of the Old World realms, the insidious tendrils of Chaos has begun to grow again as the Wastes in the north pulsate with renewed energy. Complaisant in their comfy homes, the people are blind to the clues about them. Cults grow again despite the warnings from a few that Chaos remains a threat to all. Even lands untouched by the Second Great Incursion of Chaos are now vulnerable to the Enemy Within.

Salvation – the Victory of Magnus the Pious

In the latter part of the 23rd century, the Nuln cell of the Tzeentch cult of the Rainbow Plume was worried. The date of retribution, as foretold in their sacred book "*Liber Dominicus*," was fast approaching and there was much to do. The first task was to decipher accurately the sometimes contradictory, often confusing clues and form a coherent plan of action. Years of guesswork and study finally yielded a single event: a young man steeped in the self-righteous babble of a false god would rise above his decadent class and unite the fragmented Empire to oppose the Great Mutator's schemes.

That narrowed the likely candidates to a few dozen individuals in Nuln alone. Killing the right person at the prescribed time posed a bit of a problem, however. Several members of the Rainbow Plume had different interpretations about when the crucial event should take place. After much debate (and a bloody nose or two), the cult settled on the earliest possible date. The leaders assigned cultists to shadow the identified individuals in the hope that the right one was among them. The great day was fast-approaching and time was of the essence.

Magnus von Bildhofen was a strong believer in Sigmar and the unity of the Empire. A gifted orator, Magnus studied a wide range of subjects at the University of Nuln. He excelled at History, Theology, and Tactics. His close friends included the scions of other noble families such as Sigmund von Krieglitz, Lorenz Haupt-Anderssen, and Anton von Liebewitz. Though their futures looked bright, Magnus' thoughts were filled with foreboding for the future.

Not long after, Magnus and his friends realised they were being followed. The stalkers were hardly students, nor from well-to-do families. They also quickly disappeared whenever they found themselves noticed. Wary but unsure of the meaning behind it all, the friends continued their studies. Then, it happened. The band of fanatics attacked Magnus and his companions. The assassins were babbling gibberish, but Magnus clearly heard the name, "Tzeentch."

Failing to kill the four, the cultists grew frantic. They still weren't certain which of the young nobles was the one foretold. They also hadn't realised how formidable these four dandies were with swords. The Rainbow Plume needed more men, but there wasn't any time. A decision had to be made quickly, the leader of the cultists knew. With his faith in Tzeentch and risking all, the leader pointed to one of the nobles and proclaimed, "he's the one!" The cultists focussed all their effort on this one young prince and overwhelmed him. The man fell dying on the street while his companions wreaked their revenge on the cultists. Only one or two managed to escape into the night.

Magnus knelt down beside Anton von Liebewitz as von Krieglitz and Haupt-Anderssen made short work of the remaining assassins. All he could do was cradle his friend's head as Anton bled to death. "Trust in your dream," Anton whispered to Magnus, "for you are surely Sigmar's chosen and great things await you."

"Your inspiration and Sigmar's blessing will see an end to Chaos," Magnus replied. "In your honour and memory, I dedicate all my life to see that this is done. Sleep now, my friend, and may Mórr protect you on your final journey." Anton gave Magnus one last squeeze of his hand before the light in his eyes dimmed forever.

Fortifications: Why?

This article is essentially a two-fold one. Firstly, I want to show why I think that castles, city walls etc are not well developed within the WFRP milieu, and secondly I want to offer a little bit of 'colour' to both illustrate my idea and provide something vaguely useful as background material for games. Hopefully, you can take the rest and apply it yourselves to the description quite easily. Since cities and towns are central to WFRP adventuring, I think it is essential that we gave them all the colour and vibrancy that we can. As things stand the archetypal Medieval castle and city wall are mundanely trundled out for just about every settlement. Not only is this boring, but it fails to recognise the nature of fortifications in the gunpowder era that is Warhammer 2512IC.

Why Fortifications?

There are a number of solid works within the fantasy literature querying why magic-based societies continue with low technology castles of very limited practical use. Since WFRP is a very low-magic work, these criticisms are probably less relevant to us. There are not likely to be many enemies on flying steeds that can swoop over walls or druids that can shatter walls at the click of their fingers. However, WFRP has its own version of magic - and that is gunpowder. Gunpowder weapons make city walls and other fortifications effectively redundant. They certainly require defences to undergo serious re-design and strengthening - something palpably not true of Warhammer defences as presented in official (and unofficial) works. What I want to discuss is what these fortifications should look like to visitors. I am not interested in discussions of prosecuting an actual siege, since that is outside the remit of most adventures. I will mention siege processes when they seem relevant, but my primary focus is on describing what a PC would likely see as they approach a city or a fortification (such as a castle).

Fortifications in the 'Modern' Age of 2500

The key to defence is to keep the enemy away from the walls, so that they cannot bring their cannon to bear upon the walls or the people within the city. The primary method of doing this is with a field army. Ideally, your army should beat the other army and win the war! Of course, this is not always possible and generalship should actually be more about avoiding battle and maintaining the integrity of the field army than seeking to destroy them in a grand battle. The loss of your own field army would lose the siege and so the key is to keep the enemy worried about attack at all times and waste its resources guarding against such an event. Therefore, your own army can arguably be best placed well outside the defences, threatening the besieger's rear or supply lines. Sometimes the besiegers themselves might also be besieged! None of this actually effects the infrastructure or what the PCs might see on approaching a town, and so is less relevant to my argument. However, the second alternative is to entrench the entire field army. As armies become less feudal (such as that of The Empire) armies become more a mixture of seasoned professionals and experts, and conscripts. Conscripts need to be treated very carefully, and the simplest way is to use them as defenders of an entrenched position.

In essence cities and fortifications would seek to defend in depth. This keeps the enemy at distance from the walls, can be achieved cheaply and utilises the mass of conscript soldiers and forced labour at your disposal. Put bluntly, all cities and fortresses would be surrounded by earthworks. These are quite easy to build with sufficient labour and would be very complex and very big, subject to resources. A series of trenches, strongpoints and redoubts should be scattered throughout the environs of the city (or fortress), each controlling ground and every one covered by the fire of supporting positions. Cannon and large mounted muskets are then embedded in the emplacements. Indeed, many of these might be in such poor shape that they cannot fire or fakes from wood - what matters (at least initially) is their looks. Make your towns a veritable maze of earthworks - or at the very least have the surrounding countryside retain the scars where such things were dug in battle past.

The next complaint is that Warhammer fortifications are medieval ones. Cannon would blast them away in minutes; literally. Therefore, designs need to be updated. Walls should be reinforced at the base with skirts to deflect cannon balls and other shot. Towers should be rounded for the same reasons. Buttresses should also be used. None of this belies the fact that the walls will not replace a field army and a motivated defence. Really, most cities would dismantle their walls, or allow them to fall down, due to the excessive maintenance costs and the value of the stone in them. Indeed, they would probably have to patrol their own walls to stop people stealing the stone!

Improvements are once again possible with that most wonderful of substances - earth. The walls themselves should be built up by earth in front of the stone, in part held up by wooden framework and in part by additional earth. Walls would have additional wooden support work to help mount the large numbers of heavy muskets and cannon necessary for a defence. In certain places, particularly around entry points, there will be an additional outer wall, built squat and thick. Ideally, if we are to keep walls they should all be built like this - the replacement of pre-gunpowder tall and thin 'medieval' walls by shorter, thicker firing platforms.

To reflect battle long past, places can be named (or incorporate the names) *schans* and *schansen*, the German for earthwork(s).

Conclusions

WFRP is not about wars and battles, except inasmuch as the many internal rifts might occasionally flare up into outright war. However, these are simply the tapestries over which our PCs adventure. WFRP, however, does involve predominantly urban settings over the dungeon environment. To this end, this article simply tries to offer a more 'realistic' interpretation of what parts of those settlements should look like. Our own history provides a clear template for this and I urge GMs to examine this. For those in the UK, the English (British) Civil War(s) offer many examples of makeshift fortifications and urgent remedial work to long disused medieval fortifications. Similarly, in Europe there is the Thirty Years War with similar examples. Those in the Netherlands have the evocative wars Orangist against the Imperialist occupying forces. Even those in the US can plunder the War of Independence and the Civil War for earthworks, trenches and fake guns. The key here is, of course, not to use history as an end in itself but as a rich source to plunder for background colour to our world. It would be wonderful if RPGs could consistently create original thought, but that is simply not plausible. So, dust off the history books and look around your local environment for examples of fortifications - and do not simply regurgitate the medieval stereotype.

Fortifications: the Case of Middenheim

This is one example of my comments on Warhammer fortifications. Why on earth does a city sitting atop a sheer precipice conceivably need walls?! I developed this into a bit of colour for the city, particularly aimed at use with Power Behind the Throne. The irony is that the cover picture is far more evocative than the final city map.

A Report to Marshall Schutzmann

Recently a pamphlet has been circulating the City denouncing the current taxation proposals, pointing to a number of alternative methods of raising funds and to areas of wasteful expenditure. Whilst the actual paper itself is lurid and aimed at providing maximum impact, it seems to be written by an informed source. Firstly, there are papers within the Collegium Theologica archives criticising the building of the city walls, and, secondly, the particular plans referred to are correct.

There have been a number of debates over the centuries concerning the walls. Primarily, these seem to have fallen into three categories:

- (a) Since the city is built upon a precipice, it is impossible for traditional siege techniques to be employed against the walls or a conventional assault to be attempted in any manner.
- (b) The walls are outdated and could not withstand modern weapons in any event, although how guns could ever be angled to hit them is unclear. However, the lack of skirts, buttresses and smoothing makes the walls redundant today.
- (c) As the chosen city of Ulric, there is no need for a mundane defence. Ulric has provided the city with a natural and impregnable defence. For humans (and dwarfs) to attempt to improve upon these is sacrilege.
- (d) Better use could be made of the rock, so expensively brought up to the top - including public buildings, defensive strongpoints and a reinforced ~~wall~~ *entrance*.

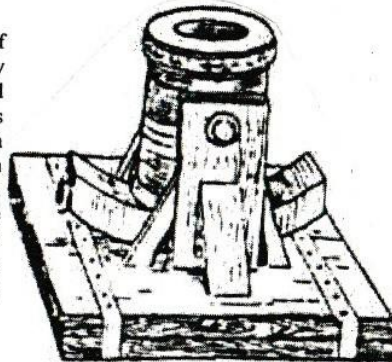
Central to the discussions was the expense of building and maintaining the walls and the size of force necessary to realistically defend them. Money saved by not building walls or (in later arguments) not maintaining them, could be used to

- (i) Provide the treasury with a store of wealth to buy additional soldiers if required. One recent writer in particular believes the key to holding the city is a strong field army to prevent an army approaching the city at all.
- (ii) Reinforce the passages under the city, a far more likely cause of assault and a major weakness in the city's defences. There was only one reference to this. My investigations into the issue have met with a very strong rebuttal. This in itself is suspicious and I plan to equip a secret expedition to investigate under the city from which I will have returned by the time you receive this, my preliminary report.
- (iii) Build extra granaries and increase the city's store of food. Starvation is believed by all the various writers throughout my researches to be a much more likely offensive tool than assault on the walls.

- (iv) Provide artillery bastions and firing platforms utilising the height of the Fauschlag to bombard any attacker's positions.

The second part of the pamphlet is correct, since apparently Marshall General Schwermutt has indeed been granted authorisation to install siege mortars within the city walls. You are more likely to be aware of the background to the decision, but my information suggests that this is, in part, a political accommodation to garner the General's support for the taxation proposals. It would seem that Marshall von Genscher opposed the implementation as "wasteful" and even presented argument similar to those presented within the pamphlet that you asked me to investigate.

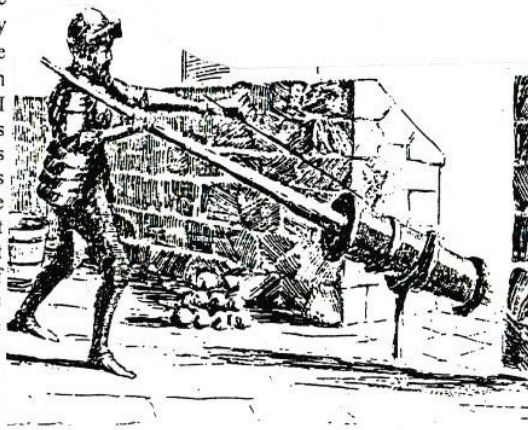
I have obtained a copy of a drawing of the proposed mortar. It is of relatively small bore and sits on a sturdy bed banded with iron strips. It has trunnions and is fixed between two posts. Beneath the mouth it is proposed to decorate with religious scenes to the glory of Ulric. There is a wooden arc allowing the piece to be elevated by some 10° from the vertical. Simplicity in both maintenance and ease of use are the primary motivations to the design.



As requested, I am progressing my investigations into who has accessed these papers and have removed the Collegium's librarian to our facilities. The Collegium has made a formal complaint. The relevant paper work will be mislaid by the Worshipful Guild of Legalists, but this will only delay matters. Since they regard themselves as operating under Religious Law, you should expect a visit by the Cult of Ulric.

Note from Marshall Schutzmann to Marshall von Genscher

Further to our discussion, I have obtained outline designs from my engineer concerning the guns to be mounted at the public places agreed with yourself and our Templar colleagues. I believe that we are agreed that it is imperative that these are regarded as Watch positions rather than military ones for political issues. I have buried the approvals within the Kommission, but that does not preclude some bureaucrat uncovering them at some stage. The Graf remains adamant that secrecy is paramount so as not to cloud his image as a liberal ruler, but it is clear in these times of increasing unrest that measures are taken to obtain the capacity to control public disorder.



From the Archives

This is intended to be a regular column in which some historical manuscript or similar is presented for your delectation. This will offer insight into some aspect of the Old World with the aim of helping flesh out some piece of colour and background, perhaps offering also some idea for an adventure. Frequently, they will simply be an excuse for me to use some evocative medieval manuscript illustration. This first piece is a letter from the Imperials Scrolls, now rather tattered (hence the gaps) and of uncertain origin. Its political importance, should it become known, is self-evident. It came into our hands from an agent of dubious representation known only as 'the correspondent'. For the sake of our own safety, we have excluded the originator of the piece and her recipient, but as can be seen it is at the very highest level.

Your Imperial Highness,

The primary source of danger to your position is the Electors, and to them in turn their own lesser nobility. This is quite simply as these groups have their own personal armed retinues, loyal only to them personally and with no higher duty. The Empire consists simply of a collection of hired thugs employed by your underlings, but with an implicit threat to their nature.

As we discussed, the most obvious option is to maintain an Imperial Army, centrally controlled and loyal to yourself and your position. However, having discussed the issue with the Chancellor this is simply unfeasible economically at this time. Our current income consists of ...*the paper has apparently been censored here for some reason.*

The reality of an Imperial Army loyal to the Emperor in his own right is also politically unenforceable, since the electors would immediately recognise the danger to their own position. It would clearly represent a mechanism for the creation of the Emperor has a hereditary position through force of arms by such an army. Whilst Your Highness would have no such inclination, the army would equally be a balance to the power of the Electors and thus resented by them. Should any wish to do so, they would be forced to act prior to such an army becoming viable. In essence, therefore, the creation of an Imperial Army might force a civil war or (at least) the Electors to forcibly prevent this. Our agents have posited the following scenarios concerning plausible reactions of the Electors, and it is not pleasing reading to your Highness. Only the Grand Duke ... *this entire section, apparently over a page long, has been removed.*

My findings do, however, suggest a plausible course of action. Despite the unrest to be found within The Empire, it is clear that such disquiet is solely aimed at the individual rulers of particular regions, seen as responsible for the cause of the troubles. Your own Divine Personage is uniformly praised and loved. Put bluntly, the people love you and regard you as their benefactor and protector. This, then, shall be your army. We will create militias throughout the land, who will swear fealty to Sigmar and The Empire (and thus to you). These groups will form a balance to the private armies of the Electors, since they will limit the physical threat, both locally and nationally. The costs have also been estimated and are appended (...*again these have been lost...*) but in summary consist of supporting small local arsenals wherein can be stored weapons. By national edict, your subjects can be required to provide their own weapon, armour (by choice) and to undertake training in it.

Games Workshop 2003

I have consistently argued for a couple of years now that Games Workshop (GW) was likely to regain control of WFRP in-house, even before I became aware that Hogshead was to return the licence to GW. My reasoning for this is quite simple: it states this in their annual accounts. GW has for the past 2-3 years adopted a corporate strategy of retrieving their 'intellectual property' and developing it internally; in other words, Hogshead would have been refused an extension had they not handed it back. Since WFRP is now firmly tied to GW once more, I thought it useful to peruse the GW 2003 annual report for any further interesting hints about future events. Please note that what follows is simply my interpretation and should not be taken as fact - or as the basis for investing!

Their accounts now come in two different parts, apparently as a cost-saving measure. The first is a colour booklet ("brochure") about the "GW Hobby" and the second a plainer annual report. I do not see how this saves money, since one is sent both anyway. The overall tone of the report is very peculiar. Tom Kirby's style is rather prosaic for a formal annual report and contains much of little substance and some that is contradictory to the numbers. The overall impression, if he is to be believed, is total confidence in the GW business, regardless of (tacitly admitted) past mistakes. On balance, I am probably convinced that the senior management knows what it is about and has improved the Group's position over the last couple of years - though that is (in part) due to some dire figures a couple of years ago.

There is one very interesting development on the very first page. GW has always argued that they 'market a Hobby' involving 'model soldiers'. It is very clear that GW is not a retailer, but a 'Hobby'. This Hobby (always in upper case 'H') is about model soldiers. However, in 2003 there is an addition to this simple statement to acknowledge associated products. No longer are GW simply promoting model soldiers, but anything that helps develop these model soldiers - and the annual report lays much emphasis on books (Black Library) and CCGs (Sabretooth). In other words, model soldiers, 'the Hobby', is now more than simply the figures, but anything that helps flesh out their worlds. This shift could be very exciting for WFRP, since it infers that if WFRP is perceived as part of the 'Hobby' gestalt then it could be well supported. Certainly, Black Library is much trumpeted, as are many 'new' ventures. This is not to suggest that figures are still not GW's central core, but it does recognise a shift in their absolute preoccupation.

This year there is also a second shift in emphasis, in accepting that GW is moving (back) towards awarding licences to develop royalty income. This is the opposite of previous years and infers that WFRP might be seen as a saleable commodity via royalty agreement with a third party. At the same time, however, the acquisition of Sabretooth and Warhammer Online (technically 85% and 71.25% shareholding respectively) belies this. I infer that the prime decision on licensing is for computer games, since projects are announced for a line of 40K games to be produced by THQ Inc. The decision to develop computer games in-house always seemed to me to be ridiculous. I also suspect that the interest in royalties is in part linked to their diversification into purchasing licences too. In addition to Lord of the Rings, they have purchased the Everquest licence for a CCG, for example. However, Black Library is being pushed in this field having "entered into various third party licensing arrangements to publish novels and other related products." Again I read this as positive for WFRP. It offers two possibilities. I still favour an in-house development,

but at least GW is now considering external developments again, which can only be good for any possible future for WFRP. We get double the chance.

One point that I have seen bandied around in online discussions is refuted here. It is often stated that GW aim at 13 year-old kids, assume a 3 year relationship and then bring out a new edition for the next wave. The annual report claims that GW aims at creating customers "for life". Their intention is to get customers *and keep them*. GW's strategy is based upon maintaining their "niche business", long term growth and expansion into products that expand (and not "cannibalise") existing sales - a "new and different group of gamers" (as they described their move into CCGs in 2002). To my mind all of this bodes well for WFRP. RPGs are clearly a different source of customers and a well developed market; GW describes the ideal as a "pre-selected, quality obsessed, narrow customer base". WFRP fits easily into this mould. The only remaining issue, of course, is the return. Are RPGs, and is WFRP in particular, capable of producing a satisfactory return? In all other ways, WFRP is a perfect product with a committed long-term market, a focussed niche and is well embedded within the existing GW business model. We have shown that the game can survive 20 years through no support and then with amateurish product development. Longevity of the market has been proven.

There is nothing too earth shattering in the numbers, but they are not the interest of this article. Turnover and operating profit are both up on last year. The annual report is very upbeat. With regard to their general operations, they still perceive the US as the major growth area - despite a minor fall in sales (due to currency fluctuations). Actual sales growth came from continental Europe and the UK. However, the 'extrapolation' is for a tripling of European and American sales. The contradiction in the numbers and the spiel over the Americas is not explained, although much is made of their expansion of production and warehousing facilities. I wonder if any American readers would care to comment on this from their own experiences? Were I an investor, I think this would concern me. An aside about massive UK growth is made, but again not explained. Any thoughts on why UK is massively up and the Americas are down? Sales from GW stores and independent retailers are pretty similar, though the UK and Asia buy from the former and Europe and the Americas the latter.

I am not entirely sure what it says about GW or UK universities, but Tom Kirby, GW's chief executive, is a visiting professor at the University of Derby. His total pay (including a bonus-three-year scheme) was £1.266 million (plus £26,000 paid into his pension).

The Treaty of Helmgart

The Treaty of Helmgart was signed in 2500 securing the neutrality and independence of Marienburg. It is noteworthy for two things: Marienburg was not a signatory, although an elfven representative was; and it was broken two years later by Bretonnia, causing a shift in local political relationships. Of course, we should expect little better from the Bretonni!

The premise behind the treaty was simple: Bretonnia and The Empire both harboured ambitions over the city, but were far more worried about the other obtaining it than their own territorial desires. Equally, both had other border worries at the time, coupled with certain internal concerns, and desired to stabilise this particular disagreement to mutual benefit. Marienburg itself was left out of the negotiations, although it is possible that they were aware of them, perhaps even behind them. However, this is less likely given that an elf signature was also penned to the treaty. It is still uncertain exactly what the elves sought to gain from such a treaty, particularly one without the consent of the city's human authorities. However, doubt was also (later) cast on the precise nature of the authority of the signature that was made. Rumours later circulated that this had been a wood elf, rather than a sea elf, party to the treaty - which seems even more bizarre.

The Treaty itself was technically broken in 2502, when Bretonnia appeared to make military moves against the city state. These were officially described as military manoeuvres against local anti-Royalist forces, but were seen elsewhere as a clear test of strength. Marienburg itself proved its expected defensive frailties, when much of its mercenary defence force deserted claiming pay and conditions breaches to their contracts. At the same time, a sea elf fleet materialised off the coast and local Sigmarian militias proved far more efficient at deployment than had been suspected. When Empire merchants arrived along the Reik with their bodyguards, including much of the Carroburg levy and local Imperialist army units, the Bretonnians declared that their rebels had been defeated and retreated. The action was later officially blamed upon 'the rash ambitions of a rogue general who had spent too long patrolling the desolate Marches of Couronne'. Given the politics of Bretonnia, it is perhaps true - but was not accepted as such by anyone else.

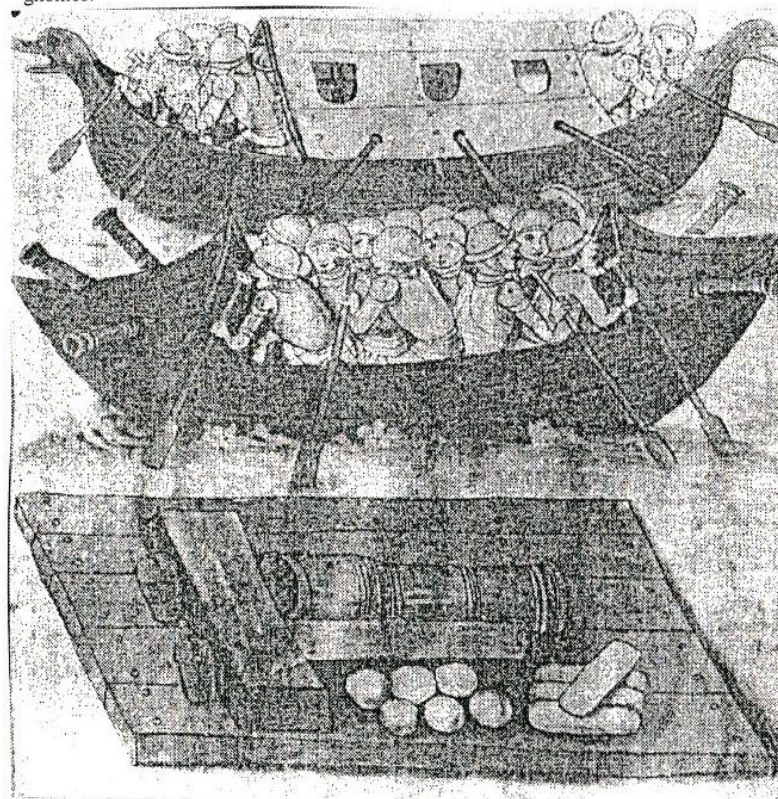
This Bretonnian skulduggery resulted in Marienburg moving back towards the Imperialist fold, or at least away from their vocalised anti-Empire rhetoric. Certain benefits were granted to the Sigmarian sects in the city and state. However, distrust between the human political rulers and the sea elf princes were reinforced over their part in the treaty. Marienburg also allegedly supported Imperialist investment in a small river navy based in Carroburg through the cancellation of certain debts contingent upon its construction and operation. However, normal relations were resumed when the Imperialists armed their boats with small cannon and even created a floating gun platform since Marienburg regarded these more as siege weapons than a fast defence force (to be used in their interests). The Empire refuted this, arguing that a modern field force needed artillery and that cannon were a primary deterrent against a force of heavy cavalry, such as that which would be likely fielded by Bretonnia.

I suppose that we should mention that the Annals of the Kingdom of Bretonnia describe the event as Bretonnia's attempt to protect the independent Wasteland from the rapacious armies of the Graf of Middenheim. Their Chronicler claims to provide what he described in published correspondence as "the correct and impartial historical account". However, an investigation by the Senate of the University of Altdorf found this account "riddled with inaccuracies and polemical irrelevancies".

One casualty of the skirmish was General Johann von Foodee, the Graf of Middenheim's then mercenary captain, who died in a tragic accident some days after the furore when he was said to have fallen upon his sword.

The Carroburg fleet is pictured below, in what is a rather poor quality engineering manuscript. Of particular interest is the fact that the crews are facing both ways and rowing against each other. This might be a stylised representation, or a joke by the Bretonnian engineer responsible for the sketches.

It is unlikely that the cannon would be fired from the raft and the Empire argument does seem plausible. Indeed, it later emerged that most of the cannon on the ships were wooden fakes and that much of the money loaned by the Marienburg Directorate had been spent on re-paying other loans - owed to a cartel of Bretonnian-based gnomes!



Whiff of Grapeshotte

From Richard Iorio II: As always another interesting issue of The Origin of Tree Worship, and it is because of the crunchy bits found in the 'zine that I always look forward to whenever an issue is published.

I read with interest the round table discussion "Warhammer FRP: RIP?" I agree with most of what was discussed but there are two things I would wish to add to the discussion: lack of new blood and the Hogshead glacial pace. For me, it is these two that I feel doomed Warhammer FRP and really leaves a black eye for Hogshead.

One of the chief failings of Hogshead is their seemingly lack of interest to bring in fresh blood. Yes, one can argue that there was fresh blood, but honestly those who were brought in, were part of the online fan community that sprung up around the WFRP List. Those brought from this pool shared the same views and really had little desire to forge new ground or break away from their preconceived notions. When Hogshead did break out of the inbred fan base as they did with Robin Laws, they choose someone who, though talented, had little knowledge or either the rules or the background.

Granted some will think that I am just a bitter fan who dreams of "making it big" in gaming, but when Hogshead did try and bring in new blood their glacial pace between communications killed anything new or innovative. Out of the four proposals I submitted to Hogshead, one was rejected because of concerns Games Workshop would have over my treatment of Altdorf, while one was returned unread. The other two withered and died on the vine due to lack of focus and communication from Hogshead. Both of these were liked, and worked on, and after refocusing them were liked even more. Both of these proposals would have brought something new to the table, and covered areas not covered already. One was a book dealing with cults of the Empire, and the focus was not exclusively on Chaos, but other groups as well. This was a proposal that would have been welcomed, and writers were lined up that not only loved and knew the background, but also were new to the game. The other was our adventure. Three of these proposals once reworked will see the light of day from other publishers.

As a fan, Hogshead never seemed committed to the game. Oh yes, they reprinted old material, but there was no active release schedule. Hogshead failed, as many small publishers do, because they did not treat it as a business but as a hobby. For me, Hogshead will be remembered and missed for the New Style line and for Nobilis. I always will be thankful for the opportunities and the advice James gave me. Still I wish he would have devoted either more of a focus to Warhammer FRP, or had the desire to seek help to keep it going.

In the end there is one good thing you can say about Hogshead's stewardship of Warhammer FRP; they got Realms of Sorcery out. Whether you love it or hate, it is out. Granted some of it was too WFB centric, but there was still a lot of good found between the covers.

Tim: I think we ought to be up-front here. Richard and I had done some work together on a scenario that offered some new insights into the nature of chaos and had some merit (even if I say so myself). I think that what it desperately needed was a critical analysis by Hogshead of what was needed (from their perspective, by the market, even

by some gamers who would be the target audience) and what was not to help us bring it to fruition; our ideas were sound, but the idea needed an outside pragmatic edit with a sharp scalpel. This never came. To my mind, serious editing of proposals is a fundamental need of any publisher, particularly one who has a very particular view on its audience. By that I mean that no one that I play with has ever, for example, played Doomstones and they mostly thought it was very poor. Therefore, choosing to release the conclusion of this campaign as your company's flagship new WFRP product (at the time) suggests a view on WFRP that needs to be inculcated into submissions and prospective writers. Instead, Hogshead simply ignored this and approached a small cabal of known writers, who as Richard says quite blatantly knew nothing of WFRP. To my knowledge, of all the authors who write and have written for Hogshead's WFRP only Alfred Nunez Jr is a current player of the game.

From 'Twisted Moon': I was a little disappointed with 'Origin of Tree Worship 4'. The discussion of Hogshead Publishing's contribution to WFRP had been amply covered on-line at the time of their revoking the license, and I did not think that anything new was added. I would have much rather seen the space used for an article such as your previous discussions on the Cults of Shallya and Sigmar, or how to incorporate changing currency into the Old World etc, although I realise that this would have put another demand on your time. The 'Battle of Wolfenbourg' article was interesting and I shall try to incorporate this piece of history into my game somehow. Alfred Nunez's article on the skaven was alright as far as it went, but I did not feel it added much to the material within 'The Book of the Rat'. I hope this criticism is constructive and can help with the writing of issue 5!

Tim: I am genuinely interested in all feedback and not just gushing praise! Whether it helps with issue 5 is for you to decide, but I was already well on with it before I received your letter. It is certainly food for thought, in part as I am not terribly sure where Origin of Tree Worship sits in general, or for me personally. Whilst I do not see it as a 'sink' for failed Warpstone articles, the pieces you mention were very intensive and worked over a long period of time for a magazine that is 'professionally operated'. Origin of Tree Worship is not in that bracket and will always tend to produce less 'polished' pieces. I do not intend that to mean worse, in any way, but they will be different - and that includes "chattier" pieces and short 'throwaways' - like the Wolfenbourg story that you liked. One thing that I do feel Origin of Tree Worship 4 fell down upon was my attempt to simplify pricing to a one all-in fee. This did not work (and has been scrapped for future issues), and resulted in UK subscribers subsidising those in the US. At £2 perhaps the expectation level is higher than at a £1 pricing point?

With reference to your specific points, I did recognise the problems of the dialogue piece, but I thought that it avoided much of the hyperbole of what little I saw on-line on the issue. I am not spending a lot of time on-line and most of that is on Critical Hit as I find their 'thread' system easier to navigate in limited time. As I wrote in my editorial, the 'thread' system and anonymity does have its drawbacks. Also, my own experiences of selling my Private Wars Campaign is that there are a lot of people who are interested in Warhammer and do not use the Internet (or at least visit WFRP on it). For example, approximately half my sales have been directly through Warpstone magazine in some way, and not any website (including theirs). My second source of sales has been eBay. Whether these people read Origin of Tree Worship is, perhaps, a moot point but I do think that Origin of Tree Worship probably ought to be willing to discuss these same issues as much as any other forum. Your comments on the skaven piece are noted, but I am not entirely sure that is the issue. What I present in issue 4 is

part of what *would* have been the 'official' skaven sourcebook. To that extent, I wanted to present a piece of history. I can understand that in itself this does not fit well with the 'Book of the Rat', but, realistically, there is no way that I can meld the two differing viewpoints. The fact that, as absolutes, one is preferred to the other, or is perhaps more complete, is a problem that I accept. What you have in issue 4 is simply a version of the skaven that was within a whisker of being (part of) the 'one true version' and one that I hope Origin of Tree Worship can help preserve in some manner. Personally, I think the sourcebooks - official and unofficial - have all gone down the wrong route, and dwell far too much on simply 'converting' WFB material, rather than developing what is needed for WFRP. I have had this argument - many times! - with Alfred Nunez (the author of the article) and he tells me that this is what GW will allow and what the market wants. Who am I to argue with those parameters? For the record, I dislike the Book of the Rat and it certainly does nothing for my games. I much preferred this view on the skaven, albeit that I think it owes too much to WFB and not enough to WFRP.

Please do not take these comments as an entrenched defence, but more as an explanation. As I said, I want feedback, good and bad, so that I know if Origin of Tree Worship is worth continuing and with what content. Hopefully, I will continue to produce the sort of pieces that you want to see, and in greater numbers. If I do not, then come back and tell me.

From Dave Keyser: The future of WFRP article in Origin of Tree Worship #4 was quite interesting.

Okay, I'm printing Dave's comments to offer a counterpoint to Twisted Moon and in support of my reply. However, it is also a good example of what I need to know. I won't print every one-line piece of feedback, or at least I hope that I will have more next issue, but do *please* let me know what you think.

From Stephen Jepson: Good fanzine and worth £2 of anyone's money. I think that the 'Future of WFRP' piece was the right level for a fanzine like this, the Skaven was a bit dry. One question: was Empire in Flames set in 2512 as your battle report suggested? When we played it, we were well beyond the starting year. I think we had gone into 2514. Irrelevant, but you asked for feedback.

Tim: Technically, Empire in Flames is set in 2513 according to the inferences in the briefing on the major noble NPCs. I was not actually intending to date the battle in that year, as much as make it clear in the title what I was talking about (i.e. Empire in Flames). If you played The Enemy Within straight through and ignored the Kislevan aside (highly recommended!) then it could easily be set in 2512. I actually played it as each part was originally published, so we had lots of side adventures from White Dwarf and the GM whilst we awaited the publication of the next instalment and these would certainly extend the timing. I think it would be more appropriate to say that I have been pleading for feedback! Thank you for yours.

From Glen Sharman: Thanks for sending me Origins of Tree Worship, I found issue 4 to be a really good read. The discussion of the events at Hogshead was very interesting, raising a host of points to consider both on and off the main topic. I have to admit that a few of Robert Rees' comments had me fuming but credit to you for including someone in the panel who was not a dedicated WFRPer! One point I found

particularly thought provoking was that the Warhammer background would continue to expand whether the WFRP community liked it or not and that this should be a strength, rather than the threat it is often viewed as. Even though most GM's campaigns will never stray far from the Empire, I for one like to have at least some understanding of the rest of the world. This satisfies my need for completeness while also putting the Old World in context. If a character meets an Arabyan merchant in Marienburg what would the trader say when asked of his home? If they meet a Norscan mercenary what rumours could he tell them of Lustria? As these areas will likely never be detailed in official WFRP books the WFB fluff is the best we get.

I was a bit mystified at first by the short segment on the Battle of Wolfenburg as there was nothing to explain how it fits with other WFRP material. I'm guessing it has to do with events described in Empire in Flames (which I have not read). Enjoyable nonetheless.

The jewel in the crown had to be the Rattus Mutatus article by Alfred Nuñez Jr. To my mind this is the most focused work on Skaven to date, providing the details a GM really needs to include the rat men in their scenarios. A bit more background would also have been welcome but I guess there are restrictions on space, and in any case this is already available elsewhere. It is just a shame that a full Skaven sourcebook expanding this material will not get into print for some time, if ever.

You raised the question, "is Tree Worship worth continuing with?" If doing so gives us access to the notes that Alfred and others were developing for Hogshead books, not to mention encouraging your own prodigious WFRP output, the answer is an unqualified yes. I suppose the material may have seen the light of day through Warpstone, Strike to Stun or the respective authors web sites but I'm unwilling to take the risk by suggesting it. One idea though. I have no particular feelings about the fanzine medium itself and so I wonder if making old Tree Worship issues available at a later date as PDFs might spread it to a wider audience.

Tim: The panel over the discussion was a vowedly not a scientific selection. At the same time, I am not sure that Robert is not a WFRPer. True, he does not play it to the exclusion of everything else and he supports a variety of other games. As you say, that prevents at least an extreme of WFRP fan incest in the piece. I am open to any other comments over the next few issues, just as Richard Iorio II has done above.

The Wolfenburg article is linked to Empire in Flames. Thank you for reminding me that I cannot assume that everyone has the entire out of print material! My aim with that type of article is really to offer fluff to flesh out an event. By (hopefully) making it plausible and realistic, players do not see the join between the adventure 'proper' and the background colour.

Nothing here will see the light of day anywhere else or at least in the same form. I might occasionally use a few pages to float a draft of some ideas for feedback before I work up a piece for Warpstone, but that will be rare (if ever). Obviously, my other contributors can do with their submissions as they wish elsewhere, though the two pieces from Alfred are more what might be described as 'historic pieces' than articles that will be produced anywhere else. At the same time, as you state, it would be nice to hope that chaos and skaven source material is produced elsewhere at some stage for the game. My question really was whether this material was worth seeing at all (no Origin of Tree Worship, no material).

I have droned on a few times about using the Internet for publishing. I still believe that when people give nothing for something they value it at that price - i.e. nothing. If a reader has some effort in producing that zine, even if it is only paying to cover its printing or an email or letter, they are more likely to value, read and (dare I say!) contribute to it. The more copies of Origin of Tree Worship that I can sell, the more that I can print and the cheaper each unit cost becomes. I am also far more likely to persevere with it if I receive feedback, good and bad, that shows me that at least some WFRP community are taking the time to read (and use) it. Because of its very narrow interests, I do think that gaming can retain its collegial communitarian structure and as long as I feel that, then I can find the time to produce another issue. Were I simply writing 'in the dark' and punting out material, I would give up. In other words, without people such as you buying the fanzine and commenting upon it, then I see little point with continuing. My feeling is that Internet publishing encourages a form of disinterested support. I would rather have a small, interested audience than a larger one. Maybe that is selfish? Anyone else have thoughts on this? I'm currently working on this idea more in my editorial for next issue, although it might turn into an article in itself! By the way, due to the support of a friend, I have a few copies of a reprinted issue 3 available for sale at the time of writing this.

Farewell

Well, that is the end of another issue. I hope that you enjoyed it, and please write with any feedback on the themes covered in the zine.

UK copies of Tree Worship 5 can currently be purchased for £1 including P&P in the UK. Please make the cheque payable to Tim Eccles. Origin of Tree Worship is available only courtesy of a grant from Nuln University and the gracious support of the Guild of Engineers. Orders should be sent to:

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You can also email me at timothyeccles@hotmail.com but please put 'Tree Worship' in the subject title, so that I do not mistake your mailing for one of the 20+ daily 'spam' mails I get at that address. Overseas copies can be purchased for £2 including P&P via Paypal. Please email me to confirm details.

The fanzine is not-for-profit, so please bear with me if I do not get an order to you by next day delivery. I only produce short runs of the issue and might need to re-print. If a particular issue is no longer available, then your cheque will not be cashed. Please provide an address with your payment and on a separate piece of paper so that when I pay the cheque into the bank, your address does not go with it. Please make it legible. If you include an email with your address, I can let you know if there are any problems.

My gaming club has a website at www.shadow-warriors.co.uk. This usually has details of what I am up to plus summaries of my current campaign. This is maintained by Gerald, to whom I would (once again) like to express my thanks. There is also a link to my Farscape campaign, or what there currently is of it! My dedicated Farscape RPG website is at <http://homepage.mac.com/concretered/LacTa/>. This is maintained by Nancy, who also deserves thanks for putting up with the whole mess surrounding my establishing the site in the first place. Please support the sites.

Any comments, letters or issues that you would like to submit for printing and discussion then contact me as above. I would be pleased to hear from you.