



ISSUE 15 / SUMMER 2013

irregular

INTERVIEW WITH
RONNIE RENTON
STARGATE UK

BUILDING A
ROMAN VILLA

ARMY SHOWCASE

PLUS MUCH MORE INCLUDING
TERRAIN BUILDING
ARTIST SHOWCASE
REVIEWS



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Irregular Magazine Issue 15 2013

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Issue 15 Summer 2013

Irregular Magazine

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Sorry that this issue is running late....had some issues regarding the computer, it succumbed to its final blue screen of death. So I had to wait until there were enough pennies in the old bank to replace it.

Its been an interesting few months since the last issue. There was the verdict in the Chapterhouse Vs GW court case, which closed in favour of Chapterhouse. It will be interesting to see what occurs within the hobby as a result of that case.

In this issue we have two new features in the community section; Painter Showcase and Army Showcase, if your're interested in showing off your painted work, then drop us a line at; irregularmagazine@gmail.com

Over the next few issues we plan to over haul the magazine, with a new look and new features. We will still bring you the usual tutorials, short stories and reviews. We intend to have more gaming related articles as well.

So what have I been upto, well not a lot to be honest. I have been trawling through my game horde, and slimming down its size. I decided a while back not to build large armies any more. So out have gone the rule books for large scale wargaming, along with miniatures of periods I no longer intend to game. Along with some periods I bought on a spur of the moment, and now wonder "why the hell did I buy those". I have painted a number of miniatures recently mainly for pending campaign games and one off's.

One of the areas we look at in this issue is Kickstarter, and this is something I've not really paret taken in that much. I've managed to keep my money in the wallet so to speak and have only pledged to three kickstarters; one of which was the Empress Miniatures kickstarter and I've gone for the PLA and I will bring you a review of them when possible.

Well that's all for now folks...see you again in the next issue.

British Stargate

Uncovering the Distant Past

January 1928, Giza, Egypt

During January 1928, Professor David Phillips is leading a British archaeological expedition in Giza, Egypt, discovering a large circular cover stone and a ring-shaped device (Stargate) underneath it. Nearby they also discover a large, pedestal-shaped device (the DHD).

Professor Phillips expedition also finds several hundred smaller artefacts, including a gold pendant that has the eye of Ra etched on it. Professor Phillips gives his daughter Victoria Phillips the necklace and she will always wear it, believing it is a good luck charm. Her father was quite happy for her to have the necklace.

Professor Phillips, realising that another archaeological expedition from another county may try to take these artefacts, begins preparations to leave Egypt with his finds. Professor Phillips firstly sends two of his researchers back to London to arrange space at the British Museum. Secondly, he arranges for the transportation of all the artefacts back to the UK. This is all done before he begins the process of packing up the artefacts.

After the preparations are complete, Professor Phillips immediately packs up the artefacts and sends them to the British Museum in London. Once here, all the artefacts are placed in an underground vault. This is one of the largest storage vaults the British Museum has and allows for the ring-shaped device (Stargate) to be placed upright for study.

This allows the large circular cover stones to be

placed upright as well. In late 1928, Professor Phillips and his daughter Victoria Phillips take a long journey back to the United Kingdom. This will allow time for the British Museum to receive and unpack his artefacts for study by the time they return.

London, British Museum, 3rd March 1929

As Professor Phillips and his daughter enter the vault that houses the artefacts, they can see that the ring-shaped device (Stargate) has been placed upright for study with the DHD nearby. Professor Phillips twelve-man research team are already looking at the artefacts, especially the three largest ones, the cover stone, the ring-shaped device and the DHD. What no one knows, yet, is that the ring-shaped device draws its power from the DHD and that the ring-shaped device is now ready to be activated again after being buried for thousands of years ago.

Around the rest of the vault are the other artefacts that were also discovered in the area of the Stargate. These are hundreds of these artefacts. They already being numbered by Professor Phillip's small staff so that they can be properly catalogued for study at a later date.

Victoria says, "Father this will make you famous, it must be the most amazing discovery ever."

Professor Phillips smiles at his daughter's enthusiasm and replies, "It may well be Victoria, but until all of these items have all been catalogued and studied, who can say what these artefacts will reveal about ancient Egypt."

Victoria says, "Yes father, I would assume that it would be okay for me to help you catalogue all of this?"

Professor Phillips who is still smiling at his daughter replies, "Of course you can Victoria, you are a very good student, you know almost as much about ancient Egypt as I do." Victoria, with a growing smile on her face says, "Thank you father, we have a lot of work to do and I still have a lot to learn."

Professor Phillips says, "Well, we do know that most of these items seem to relate to the Egyptian God Ra from the symbols on the various artefacts. This would be as good a place to start as any."

As Professor Phillip's small team begins the long process of cataloguing, Professor Phillips decides to leave the three largest pieces to last, the cover stone, the ring-shaped device and the DHD.

He has decided to keep the number of people helping with the cataloguing to a bare minimum as he does not want his discovery to come out yet. To make sure his staff keep the secret, Professor Phillips has promised to name all of them in his research. This promise will keep them quiet as they all wish to be known for helping with the greatest find in Egypt.

Professor Phillip's team consists of himself, Victoria and twelve research assistants. The doors to the vault are kept locked at all times with only Professor Phillip's team having been given keys.

London, British Museum 1st December 1929
With all the smaller artefacts catalogued, Professor Phillips has turned his attention to the three largest artefacts. Professor Phillips and his team are looking into the cover stone while Victoria has been assigned to the DHD to make drawings of the markings on the surface and to take photographs with her camera. Victoria is standing on top of a wooden box to do this.

As Victoria is taking pictures, part of the wooden box gives way causing her to stumble forwards. She reaches out to stop herself from falling, as she does so she touches one of the symbols on the DHD. This symbol lights up and the Stargate begins to rotate until the equivalent symbol is aligned and is activated. The Stargate waits for the next symbol.

Professor Phillips looks in amazement at what his daughter has found out by accident. Victoria pushes

another symbol and the process repeats itself, then again and again until seven symbols are highlighted. Then she presses the red glowing dome in the middle of the device (seems the natural thing to do to her), the DHD then shuts down.

Victoria looks across at her father and says, "I would say that this is much more advanced form of technology than the ancient Egyptians had."

Professor Phillips grinned at his daughter's understatement and replies, "Looks like we have a new puzzle to solve. I have finished the translation of the outer script, it says 'A million years into the sky is Ra, Sun God. Sealed and buried for all time, his Stargate that did not make any sense until now.'"

A slightly shocked Victoria who has jumped to the conclusion says, "You mean that aliens from another world built this device, like that book, War of the Worlds by H.G Wells?"

Professor Phillips now in a very serious tone replies, "I do not know Victoria, it does sound a bit far fetched as an idea, but I intend to find out whether it is right or not. We need to concentrate all efforts on this device. I would assume that this is the Stargate referred to in the text."

For the next few weeks, they try various combinations, then they break for the Christmas week, agreeing that they will restart their work in the New Year. After they have had a break they should be fresher.

London, British Museum 10th January 1930

Due to a chance incident (reading a book on the stars and astrology that was given as a Christmas present) during the Christmas break, Professor Phillips has discovered that the glyphs on the DHD are not words to be translated, but are instead star constellations.

In the vault, Professor Phillips is explaining his discovery to his small research team. He is saying, "First, all this 'Stargate' has a group of glyphs spaced around the inner ring and nine chevrons spaced equally around the outer edge. These two features are used as a coordinate system for the gate to target and form a connection with another gate. Each chevron is locked to a specific glyph, thereby allowing the gate to connect to another. The first six glyphs would represent points in space forming three-dimensional coordinates in space. The sev-

enth represents the point of origin, a glyph which is unique to each of these DHDs."

One of his fellow researchers says, "I can see how that can be the correct interpretation Professor, but there must be thousands of combinations, and we do not know the 'point of origin' glyph."

Professor Phillips replies, "It is a good working hypothesis to start with. If it does not work then we will need to look again. If I am right, the point of origin symbol has to be here somewhere, all we need to do is look for it."

Victoria who has been looking at the partially covered cover stones, suddenly says, "Father, I think I may have found the 'point of origin' glyph" pointing towards a glyph on the partially covered cover stones. [Author's note: can only see the point of origin glyph, the rest are covered.]

Professor Phillips looks at the glyph his daughter is pointing to. He says, "You are right Victoria the glyph has been right in front of us all the time. Well it looks like my theory might be the correct one after all. If it is this will open up a whole new level of technological advancement for Britain and the Empire, perhaps even a new industrial revolution."

Mark Hughes in an excited voice says, "All we need to do is find the right six symbols and we will be able to travel to another world."

Over the next few months, Professor Phillips and his research team 'dial' several hundred combinations using, what they think, is the point of origin glyph that Victoria found. The combinations that fail are all noted down. They are being very methodical about the glyphs they use and the order that they are 'dialled', but none of them seems to work. Then just as all hope seems to have faded...

British Museum, London 12th April 1930, 10:34pm

As Victoria 'dials' the next set of glyphs, the Stargate dials, as Victoria dials the last glyph (point of origin) the Stargate activates, Stargate produces a violent burst of energy, then settles down, into what appears to be liquid in appearance. For several moments, no one says anything they all just stare at the Stargate then Victoria picks up a measuring stick and approaches the active Stargate.

Victoria 'pokes' the liquid with the stick, withdraws the stick, then examines the stick and says, "Father,

this is not water, there is none on the stick. It may be a field of energy of some kind."

Professor Phillips who is now standing beside his daughter, looks at the stick and says, "You are right Victoria, this must be some sort of 'doorway'. When you step through you go to another planet, that is if my theory is correct, though I have no idea how this technology works."

After a few minutes of poking the 'liquid' with the stick, the Stargate shuts down after being left unused for several minutes. Victoria again 'dials' the set of glyphs and once more the Stargate activates. This time, however, the gate is left alone and after several minutes of inactivity, it shuts itself down again.

One of Professor Phillips researchers, Mark Hughes asks, "What now Professor?" Professor Phillips replies, "Now we need to see what is on the other side. Someone will need to go through to see if there is another pedestal device on the other side."

Mark Hughes asks, "Who will go?"

Professor Phillips looking around the vault at the others and replies, "Volunteers only." Then looking at Victoria who is about to volunteer and says, "That does not mean you Victoria, you will be staying here."

Victoria who now has a scowl on her face replies, "Yes father."

Mark Hughes looking at the now deactivated Stargate says, "Well this is the opportunity of a lifetime, I will volunteer, after all this could be fun."

Professor Phillips replies, "Thank you Mark, any others?"

Three others also volunteer. They are Tim Watson, David Smith and Luke Edwards, after that it is decided that only these first four will go through the Stargate. It is also decided that they should have with them plenty of provisions along with firearms for self-defence.

Preparations will take several days as they do not wish to 'tip off' anyone in the Museum about what they have found. As far as the museum staff is concerned, Professor Phillips is cataloguing his artefacts and keeping his discoveries to himself for the time being, until he is ready to publish. This action not considered unusual by the museum staff.

The supplies will be brought in over the next few days, with the shotguns brought in 'broken down' into their component parts as not to worry the Museum staff.

London, British Museum 16th April 1930

At 11.55pm on the 16th April 1930, the team led by Mark Hughes, is now ready. They have enough supplies to last them a month if necessary. They also have a portable radio and batteries to see if signals can be sent through the Stargate. If they can this will enable them to communicate.

Professor Phillips says, "Good luck to you all and may God be with you. Victoria, you may begin dialling the address."

Victoria dials the address and the Stargate activates, then Mark Hughes steps through the Stargate, followed by Tim Watson, David Smith and Luke Edwards. Shortly afterwards, the Stargate shuts down.

Professor Phillips looks at his watch and says, "One hour from now we will dial the gate to see if we can establish radio contact, everybody try to get some rest until then."

No one during the next hour will leave the vault, everyone will try to get some rest, but with the amount of nervous energy that everyone has, this proves to be impossible..

Planet Heliopolis

On the other side of the wormhole, the four explorers have found themselves in what appears to be something of a castle perched dangerously on outcropping rocks over a stormy sea under a thunderous sky. The stormy season on the planet of Heliopolis was just coming to an end, though they do not yet know this.

What no one yet knows is that this planet was once the meeting place for an Alliance of Four Great Races.

Tim Watson is the first to speak he says, "Well I suppose that the first thing to do is set up the radio."

David Smith replies, "Yes, let's get started."

Tim Watson looking at his watch says, "We have just under fifty-five minutes before they try to get

through."

Mark Hughes who is looking around to room, points at the pedestal and says, "At least the dialling device is here otherwise we would be here for a very long time." Walking up to the pedestal-shaped dialling device he says, "the symbols are different to the ones in the vault, though that is to be expected if we are on another planet."

Tim Watson says, "Come on Mark, we need to get set up. We will have plenty of time to look around later."

Mark Hughes replies, "Okay, okay I'm coming."

All four of them begin to set up the radio equipment near the Stargate in preparation for the radio message.

Fifty-five Minutes Later

Exactly fifty-five minutes later the Stargate activates, Luke Edwards listening on the headphones smiles and says, "Test signal received, sending reply." Then Luke Edwards, after listening to the reply, says, "Message from Professor Phillips, he says well done and will contact us again in twenty-four hours."

Mark Hughes looks around at the other and replies, "That is fine by me and I would assume everyone else?" Tim Watson and David Smith both nod in agreement. Luke Edwards says, "Message sent and acknowledged."

The Stargate shuts down, leaving the four of them to start exploring the building. They will soon discover that they are on another planet.

They quickly find out the building that they are in is a castle. From the state that the castle is in they determine that it constructed several thousand years ago. Since then the castle has not been occupied and so is in a state of disrepair.

They also find a special room where a central device, when activated by Tim Watson, projects a light-display into the air. The light-display turns out to be a representation of atoms and basic elements. On the four walls are four types of writing, and all four of them quickly agree that this must be some kind of meeting place for four great alien races of the past.

That is when David Smith realises that the atoms are a kind of universal language to ensure universal comprehension. The language has been reduced to basic elements common to all life. There turns out

to be many pages of this 'book' and David Smith becomes obsessed with copying it down.

David Smith will spend his entire life studying this book.

British Museum, London 20th April 1930

With the team of four sending reports back every 24 hours via radio through the Stargate, Professor Phillips has decided that this is too important a discovery. He must inform the authorities especially after the reports from the team that there are at least four alien races.

Professor Phillips has decided, after some deliberation, that he will inform the War Department as he considers the current government and politicians untrustworthy. He knows the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir George Milne.

On the 20th April 1930, Professor Phillips briefs Field Marshal Milne of their discovery. The Field Marshal can hardly believe what he is hearing and if it were anyone else saying what Professor Phillips is saying, Field Marshal Milne would have had them ejected from his office (or have them committed to an asylum).

On the 21st April 1930, Professor Phillips shows Field Marshal Milne the Stargate in operation. Field Marshal Miles goes to the museum in civilian clothes. After seeing the Stargate in operation, Field Marshal Milne states that this is now classified, getting all of Professor Phillips' staff to sign the Official Secrets Act. Field Marshal Milne leaves to see about getting some security for the Stargate along with the necessary funding.

On the 30th April 1930, Major General Wilson Smith has been assigned to what will be known as Project Phoenix. This project is listed as a Research and Development project of the War Department, to keep the true nature of the project secret.

Major General Smith has been ordered to find a more isolated base for the Stargate and its associated finds and personnel. With little time available and virtually unlimited resources available to him, Major General Smith can get things organised very quickly.

The second part is to get troops to protect this new base of operations. These troops must be very carefully selected, but as he has access to the War Department's lists of all serving soldiers, this should

not prove to be a problem.

On the 5th May 1930, Field Marshal Milne briefs the Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald on the newly created Project Phoenix along with what they have discovered. The Prime Minister is shocked, once he gets over the shock he agrees to keep the true nature of the project from the rest of the cabinet and will give Project Phoenix his full support. This will set the trend for the future.

Field Marshal Milne has managed to get over the biggest hurdle in getting the support of the Prime Minister and getting the Prime Minister to keep the true nature of the project from the rest of the cabinet. This will also assure the funding for Project Phoenix, as the Prime Minister is the only one who can veto funding on secret projects like this one.

Planet Heliopolis, 25th June 1930

On the 25th June 1930, the four-man team on Heliopolis manages to successfully dial back to Earth. This was quite simple once they had figured out where they were by studying the stars. They had also found the point of origin symbol in one of the rooms. After they had found the point of origin, it was just a matter of working through the various combinations until they hit the right one.

Once the four-man team step through the gate they are met by Professor Phillips and Major General Smith. The four men are informed of the changes that have happened since they have been away.

They had been aware of the military's involvement via the daily radio reports. They are informed that the Stargate and the other artefacts are to be moved to Borthwick Castle, in Scotland. This castle will serve as base for the Stargate and the personnel. The move will commence immediately, though it will take several weeks to transport all the artefacts to Borthwick Castle. The Stargate and the dialling device will be sent first so that missions can restart as soon as possible.

The cellars of Borthwick Castle are already being converted into a base for the Stargate and the dialling device, the rest of the Castle is being converted into a military base. The cellars of Borthwick Castle should be ready to receive the Stargate and the dialling device by the time both devices arrive.

The great adventure has just begun.

Borthwick Castle Command

With the Stargate and the dialling device in place by the 30th July 1930, operations restart through the Stargate. Borthwick Castle in Scotland has become a hive of activity. From the outside of the castle, nothing can be gleaned of what is truly going on inside. Around the castle parameter itself there is barbed wire fencing. With only one entrance/exit to the base, there are random army patrols along the parameter to keep unwanted visitors away.

The nearby village of Borthwick has had a considerable boost in income (especially the local pub). Though the soldiers that visit the pub say very little about the work that they do at the castle (except for the cover story that they are all given). The locals are not stupid and do not press the soldiers on what they are doing at the castle, after all the locals do not want to lose this valuable source of income.

Borthwick Castle

Borthwick Castle is being leased from the Borthwick family by the War Department for classified military work. It is located twelve miles southeast of Edinburgh, to the east of the village of Borthwick on a site protected on three sides by a steep fall in the ground.

The castle is considered an ideal base for the Stargate program, as it is isolated enough to keep unwanted visitors away, but close enough for supplies to be delivered from Edinburgh. The other reason is the underground cellars can be and are being enlarged to fit the Stargate. The castle is also large enough for the current Stargate, British Army troops and personnel, along with the ability of taking on additional troops and personnel if needed in the long-term.

The Stargate, when it is located underneath Borthwick Castle, will be shock-mounted to absorb the tremors when the gate is dialled, this will stop the mini earthquake happening each time the Stargate is dialled. This idea will be adapted by the next generation of Royal Navy submarines to reduce the vibration noise of their engines. This will make them some of the quietest non-nuclear powered subs on the planet for decades to come. This new submarine noise reduction technology is one of the first tangible benefits of Project Phoenix with many more benefits to follow in the years to come.

Nearby the Stargate is the large circular cover stone (now covered with a large dust sheet), with another Stargate address. So far no one has taken much notice of the cover stone with all the attention being focused on the Stargate.

Borthwick Castle Command, 1st July 1930

With the program under the control of the War Department, Major General Wilson Smith's command is relatively small, but has access to a large budget (if needed), thanks to some covert funding from the Treasury. This covert funding means keeping parliament in the dark about what is really happening at Borthwick Castle. So far this has presented no problems.

For cover purposes, this will be known as Borthwick Castle Command. This will keep the locals at bay along with the fencing and the armed guards. As there is already a number of military bases in Scotland another one will not raise any suspicions. Officially, Borthwick Castle Command is being used to test small arms in an underground firing range (not the best cover story, but it did have to be done in a hurry). This accounts for the expansion and sound-proofing of the underground facilities.

The Treasury is happy to fund the Project Phoenix as the Project Phoenix personnel have brought back gold and silver items to the value of just over one million pounds from the other side of the Stargate, from Heliopolis. This is just a small fraction of the gold and silver that will be discovered inside the castle in areas that are currently inaccessible. Along with the long-term advances in technology that will eventually come from the electronic book (and other sources) in the castle, this could be worth more than any amount of gold or silver.

The current establishment of Major General Wilson Smith's command consists of 100 Army engineers. These engineers are currently repairing the castle on Heliopolis and making it structurally sound. Fortunately, for the engineers they have many months before the storms return and by then their current repairs should be good enough to withstand the next storm season. After that, repairs that are more permanent can be made, until then both the Stargate and the dialling device have been moved to a more structurally sound room in the castle. There are also 200 British Army troops, with 100 guarding Borthwick Castle and the other 100 on Heliopolis, these troops on Heliopolis are heavily

armed and well-supplied. They have positioned themselves near the gate room and patrol the castle walls.

Major General Smith has very carefully selected these troops over the past few months to make sure that they all know how to keep their mouths shut and that they are loyal to the crown.

It has been emphasised to Major General Smith that security is paramount. This is the beginning of Project Phoenix's paranoia about maintaining security.

All in all Major General Smith's command maybe small, but it is well-equipped and should be able to deal with most threats even if it is just to hold the threat off until they can withdraw through the Stargate back to Earth.

These 200 British Army soldiers, are roughly divided into sections of twelve soldiers. Each section is lead by a Lieutenant with a Sergeant as second in command and a Corporal as third in command. These twelve man sections are equipped with 8 SMLE Mk III* Rifles along with four Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). Each man also carries a .455 Webley service revolver.

These twelve-man sections will eventually go on to form the main exploration arm of Project Phoenix (thought this is many years away) once they discover that they can travel to other worlds beyond Heliopolis. For now however, their main purpose is to guard both Borthwick Castle and Heliopolis Castle, along with exploring are around Heliopolis Castle. These fifteen sections are numbered one to fifteen and are being rotated between Earth and Heliopolis. The remaining troops are rotated into these fifteen sections, along with assisting in maintaining all the military equipment in both castles.

Project Phoenix Team Members

The leadership and roles of the senior members of Project Phoenix are already well-defined. This will remain a small command structure for the time being as this will also ensure the projects security as well.

Head of Research - Professor David Phillips
Personal assistant to Professor David Phillips and nominal Deputy Head of Research - Victoria Phillips (will be enrolled at Edinburgh University while helping her father in her 'free time')
Head of Military Operations and Security - Major General Wilson Smith
Deputy Head of Military Operations and Security -

Colonel Richard Thomas
Deputy Head of Research - Victoria Phillips (although very young and a woman) has proven herself to be very capable and has impressed Major General Smith. For these reasons and many others (including keeping the number of people involved in this project to a bare minimum) are why Victoria Phillips was made Deputy Head of Research.

Professor Phillip's twelve research assistants - Mark Hughes, Tim Watson, David Smith, Luke Edwards, Colin Grant, Richard Williams, John Thompson, James Timpson, Stuart Green, Anthony Jones, Tom Oliver and Lewis Drake. All of these research assistants have skills beyond archaeology as Tom Oliver is a linguist (speaks four languages, so far, soon to be many more) and Richard Williams is a good inventor and engineer.

Project Phoenix is off to a good start, with a good mix of personnel and equipment, along with nearly unlimited funding available, Major General Smith can get almost anything or anyone (after a full background check) he wants. Major General Smith however is not going 'mad' with all the resources that he has available instead he is taking the slow path in building up the resources and personnel of Project Phoenix, this is to keep the project secret.

July to December 1930

Between July and December 1930, most of the work involves completing the work to Borthwick Castle and by December 1930, the work on Borthwick Castle is completed and is now operational as a military and research base for Project Phoenix.

Between July and December 1930, a complete survey of is made of the castle on Heliopolis, along with securing the castle. During this detailed survey they find a corridor blocked by a collapsed ceiling. Once the rubble is move away, they find a room filled with gold and silver bits and pieces. None of the gold and silver has any markings on it. It appears as if the gold and silver has just been dumped and then forgotten about, as if someone was discarding rubbish.

Between the beginning of November and the end of December 1930, the gold and silver is properly catalogued. The estimated value is thought to be equivalent to around about one hundred million pounds, though this is only a rough estimate. It will be melted down (using an acetylene torch) into ingots rather than the heavier bars and then shipped through the Stargate to Borthwick Castle. After that

it will be shipped to London to the Bank of England to boost the country's gold reserves, while initially the silver will be sold. This will be done over many years so as not to arouse any suspicion from any unwanted quarter. After all if the British Government were to announce that they had suddenly acquired one hundred million pounds of gold and silver that would raise too many questions. This initial plan for the gold and silver will not last long and will be changed.

Until the ingots, need to be transported to London they will be held at Borthwick Castle. It will become Britain's secret reserve store for gold and silver with only a few select members of the government knowing of Borthwick Castle's true nature.

August 1930

Major General Smith and Professor Phillips take their first trip through the Stargate to experience this for themselves, along with seeing progress that is being made in Heliopolis Castle.

Once on the other side, Major General Smith says, "That is a most usual experience Professor." Professor Phillips replies, "Yes it is General" looking around the gate room. Professor Phillips says, "Mark Hughes and the others were right. It is a castle from the look of stonework in this room."

At this point Mark Hughes enters the room and says, "Welcome to Heliopolis, allow me to give you the 'grand tour' of this castle" indicating the door he has just come through.

Major General Smith and Professor Phillips follow Mark Hughes through the castle. As they go Mark Hughes gives a running commentary on what area of the castle they are in, he also points out that some areas of the castle are off limits due to structural problems.

Mark Hughes shows them the outside of the castle and the sky. This sky and the stars are very different to the ones when looking up at the sky on Earth. This convinces Major General Smith that they are now on another world.

Last, but not least they are shown the electronic book that David Smith and his team have begun to study. They copy each page so it can be studied back at Borthwick Castle.

At the end of the tour, Major General Smith is convinced now more than ever of the value of this

project and has become a firm supporter of Project Phoenix. Once they have returned through the gate, Major General Smith heads to London to verbally report to Field Marshal Milne who is also impressed with Major General Smith's report.

Field Marshal Milne lends his full support to this 'exciting project', as he puts it.

By early September 1930, a routine has been established by the troops and personnel assigned to Heliopolis Castle. This consists of four weeks on duty and then four weeks back on Earth for leave.

When the troops and personnel are recruited, they simply tell their families that they are part of a secret project and that they cannot talk about it. This has the effect of keeping the existence of the Stargate a complete secret from the entire planet. Even though most major powers are aware of the British military base at Borthwick Castle, they are not aware of its true nature.

With the wealth of material coming from the electronic library from Heliopolis Castle, the research program has identified new elements for the periodic table (though none of this information will be made public). No one can yet understand these new elements, they will in the long-term open up new fields of research.

Heliopolis

A duplicate of Borthwick Castle command structure and records have been set up within Heliopolis Castle, with a rotating command from the military personnel from Borthwick Castle.

Heliopolis Castle is still being explored, though so far no more rooms filled with gold and silver 'scrap' have been found. All the remaining rooms are empty, as if when the four races withdrew from this castle they took everything with them, only leaving the electronic library behind and the gold and silver 'scrap'.

What no one yet knows is that the DHD on Heliopolis has updated the DHD in Borthwick Castle to allow for stellar drift. This will allow for dialling to other worlds without the need to compensate for stellar drift. The Heliopolis Stargate has been connected to the 'Stargate Network' even though it has not been used in a long time.

The DHDs and in fact pedestal-shaped computers are placed on almost every planet in the 'Stargate Network'. They establish a wireless link with the nearby Stargate and act as a control device allow-

ing any intelligent species to dial it without having to rotate the gate manually or develop their own computer interface.

The DHD is used to specify which other Stargate to connect to when opening a gate or wormhole to another location. The external symbols on the DHD represent star constellations surrounding the central activation button. The DHDs are composed of control crystals used to store memory and information. Despite the apparent simplicity of function, the DHD performs incredibly complex calculations within seconds every time it is dialled to account for stellar drift and other potential problems, assisted by information from its automatic update command.

Therefore, if anyone on either Earth or Heliopolis dials another Stargate, they will not need to do the calculations for stellar drift, this means if/when they discover the gate address for Abydos (by pulling down the dustsheet covering the cover stones). Then they will find out how vast the Stargate network really is. For now however, they are concentrating on the link between Earth and Heliopolis.

15th January 1931

On the 15th January 1931, a briefing between Professor Phillips and Major General Smith, along with Victoria Phillips being present takes place. This will be one of many regular briefings on the state of the project.

Professor Phillips is saying, "With all the gold and silver now catalogued, we estimate at the current value there is over one hundred million pounds of 'scrap metal'. This is much higher than our original estimate."

Major General Smith replies, "That will please the Treasury. We will also need to store the ingots here until they need to be shipped to London. As you know I have already set aside a secure room in this castle for storing them."

Professor Phillips says, "Yes storing the ingots here would be a good idea, as the fewer people who know about what we have here the better." At this point, Victoria interrupts and says, "If I may, why not just keep all the ingots here until they are needed? That way, security of this project is maintained."

General Smith replies, "That is a good idea Victoria, I will put it forward, thank you." Professor Phillips

says, "The next point is the electronic book. At the moment each page of this electronic book is being copied by hand for study. This is a time consuming process but I can see no way of speeding it up." General Smith replies, "I agree, the electronic book is of the greatest importance to this project. As we know the elements of the periodic table will have to be added to."

Professor Phillips says, "Yes they will. We have managed to identify a total of 146 elements in this electronic book. Though I think that we have only touched the very basic information in this electronic book. This book could contain thousands of pages, perhaps even tens of thousands of pages. Our team studying it is working around the clock taking extensive notes, though at even the current rate it could take decades to note everything down, possibly much longer."

General Smith replies, "Yes I have seen the electronic book when I visited Heliopolis. The technology to create such a book is well beyond anything we have on Earth."

Professor Phillips says, "Yes it is and once we begin to understand this technology it will give the British Empire a considerable technological lead over every other government. Though, as I have stated before that could be many decades away, possibly beyond our lifetimes."

General Smith nods in agreement and replies, "Duly noted professor, now to the next point, do you think that there may be more of these Stargates out there?"

Professor Phillips says, "Definitely though I do not have any proof of this. Just building two of these Stargates seems to be very limiting, logically there must be more. Without accurate addresses, it could take decades to hit the right combination, we only managed to stumble upon the first gate address by random dialling."

General Smith replies, "That is a pity."

Professor Phillips says, "Though I do have another theory, that the electronic book may have Stargate addresses in it, so focusing on it is the best option for the next few years to see what turns up."

General Smith replies, "Agreed, that would be the best option, I would suggest that we keep going with the electronic book rather than random dialling

until say the end of 1940. Then if it turns up nothing, we should try random dialling."

Professor Phillips says, "Yes that is a good idea, it could also give us a good chance to see if we can do a best guess at dialling rather than just randomly dialling. After all we know the correct combination for the planet Heliopolis, we can use that as a start. Then we can see if we can extrapolate any gate addresses based on the stars in the sky."

General Smith nods at Professor Phillips idea and replies, "Yes that would be the best approach. We could do some limited work up to 1940, to give us a start and then from 1940 onwards we can focus more resources into this new sub project."

The meeting goes on for another few hours mainly discussing the need for additional personnel, though this process is very slow due to the need to check out any new personnel very carefully. During the meeting Major General Smith states that additional weapons are being delivered to Borthwick Castle, these include Thompson sub-machine guns, Vickers Machine Guns along with supplies of ammunition and spares. These Vickers Machine Guns will be deployed on the ramparts of Heliopolis Castle, just in case of attack along with light mortars.

Along with these weapons, there are the various scientific instruments to study the planet of Heliopolis. A full survey of Heliopolis is planned, especially any minerals that can be mined. This will be better than bringing all the resources needed through the Stargate, though this is a long-term plan for Project Phoenix.

5th February 1931

On the 5th February 1931, Chief of the Imperial General Staff Field Marshal Sir George Milne visits Borthwick Castle under the guise of visiting various military establishments across the United Kingdom.

Field Marshal Milne is driven alone to Borthwick Castle from Edinburgh Castle by a driver from Major General Smith's command to maintain security.

Once at Borthwick Castle, he is given a tour of the castle, then is taken to the Stargate for a trip to Heliopolis. Field Marshal Milne is amazed by the trip and by the fact that he is able to visit another planet. Looking up at the sky from the ramparts of the castle, Field Marshal Milne can see a different sky also a very different landscape as well. There is no

longer any doubt in Field Marshal Milne's mind that the reports he has been reading about the discoveries in Heliopolis castle are true.

Field Marshal Milne is also informed of current theory that there may be more of these Stargates on other planets and the long-term plan of action to try any locate these Stargate addresses. He approves the plan and congratulates all the members of Project Phoenix for their sterling work so far.

By the end of his visit, Field Marshal Milne is a firm supporter of Project Phoenix and he will continue to give this project his full support.

Throughout the remainder of 1931, more and more information is coming from the electronic book, though so far only a very small fraction of this information is clearly understood. This information has however opened the door to more and more possibilities in numerous areas of scientific research.

A better way of researching the information coming from the electronic book is needed, but for now, secrecy is the key problem if this information is sent to outside research bodies within the United Kingdom.

However, as with everything to do with Project Phoenix, only a small trickle of information will be released and even then, only after careful consideration. This level of secrecy is both good and bad for Project Phoenix - it keeps the project secret, but it also slows the research to a crawl.

1932 to 1938

Between 1932 and 1938, Project Phoenix continues to make more discoveries from the electronic book on Heliopolis. David Smith, who is becoming Project Phoenix's 'expert' on the electronic book, is now leading the team studying the electronic book. The prospects of the technologies that the electronic book may eventually reveal are mouth-watering to those few in the government that knows Project Phoenix's true purpose.

The funding for Project Phoenix continues to increase steadily year on year, to allow for a small increase in the number of personnel along with the growing amount of equipment that is being used by the project.

Equipment is much easier to get than personnel as everyone that directly becomes part of Project Phoenix needs to go through an extensive screen-

ing process. If that person fails the screening process then a new person needs to be selected and the process starts all over again. It can be months or years in some rare cases, before new personnel arrive. This has led to multi-tasking by the current personnel (both military and civilian) to try to speed certain areas of research up a little.

1932

By mid 1932, another 100 British Army troops (from various commands) have been assigned (after full screening) to guard Borthwick Castle increasing the number of troops to 300. Also several civilian researchers have joined Project Phoenix after being carefully screened over the past year. This brings the total number of personnel involved to just over 700 with more personnel due to be assigned. This paranoia over security is both a help and a hindrance to the project.

The amount of information that is coming from the electronic book is growing in size day by day. Most of this material is beyond their current level of understanding, though the researchers will continue to study the copies of the electronic book made by David Smith and his team.

David Smith reports that the number of elements of the periodic table that his team has counted so far is 146. This is the maximum number that will be found though they will still keep looking for more.

The periodic table from the electronic book is giving the Project Phoenix research teams new ideas into various research fields that they would never have considered before. Though it could take decades to fully utilise this information, they do have a head start over every other country on the planet.

Some of these elements discovered in the electronic book, will eventually be passed onto outside government research labs on Earth. But this will not be for a few more years, as every bit of information that is put outside of Project Phoenix must get the same screening as a new member joining Project Phoenix. The reason for this is that they cannot just drop a new bit of research on a government research lab, as the first question would be "Where did you come by this?" This could not be answered truthfully, so a cover story needs to be devised that will stand up to certain questions.

When all of this is done then the first bits of infor-

mation can be released as 'inventions' from various secret research project research centres across the United Kingdom. The UK government will benefit financially from these new inventions as some of them (the non military ones) will be offered for licence for a fee. This will provide another source of income. This in turn will please the officials from the Treasury.

1933

The 30th January 1933 - the beginning of what will be referred to as the Dark Times in Europe. In Hindenburg's office Adolf Hitler is sworn in as Chancellor of Germany.

On the 20th February 1933, Field Marshal Sir Archibald Montgomery-Massingberd replaces Field Marshal Milne as the new Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Field Marshal Montgomery-Massingberd is privately briefed about Project Phoenix, by Field Marshal Milne. Field Marshal Milne states that Project Phoenix should continue to receive full support of the Chief of the Imperial General Staffs office.

After getting over the initial shock, Field Marshal Montgomery-Massingberd agrees to give Project Phoenix his full support, this news is passed onto Project Phoenix leaders.

Field Marshal Milne has by this act, set the procedure for how each new Chief of the Imperial General Staff will be informed. None of the future Chiefs of the Imperial General Staff will stop Project Phoenix from continuing its work.

On the 2nd March of 1933, Tom Oliver who has been studying the writing on the walls (one set of writings per alien race) is the room where the electronic book is located. He discovers that one of the alien races is linked to the various Norse Gods of the Vikings. However, this does not help with the translation of the alien language, but it does indicate that one of these races may have visited Earth in the distant past. This reinforces the conclusion that there must be more Stargates out there.

On the 23rd March 1933, the Reichstag passes the Enabling Act making Adolf Hitler dictator of Germany. This is very worrying for Major General Smith and for the members of Project Phoenix. The security of Project Phoenix is constantly reviewed every six months.

By the end of December 1933, Heliopolis Castle has

been made structurally secure and is no longer in danger of collapsing into the sea. The British Army engineers have done a fine job of making Heliopolis Castle structurally sound. They will now start to repair those sections of the castle that were damaged due to the structural problems allowing full use of all areas of Heliopolis Castle.

This will allow the members of Project Phoenix that are based in Heliopolis Castle to move into more liveable conditions than they currently have at the moment. Making more rooms available will be of great benefit to the project as a whole as more equipment and supplies can then be stored in the castle.

The British Army engineers will start on those rooms and areas that are the easiest to make habitable and work towards those rooms and areas that need the greater amount of work. It is estimated that this work will take several years to complete. It is hoped that by the end of 1940 Heliopolis Castle will be fully habitable again, along with the growing encampment just outside of the castle. This will allow most of the research to be conducted at the castle without any security risk, as everyone coming back through the Stargate to Earth is thoroughly searched.

Plans are already under consideration in building additional buildings on the peninsula where Heliopolis Castle is located. This will enable all the research to be done on Heliopolis in the long term rather than the work being split between Heliopolis Castle and Borthwick Castle. This idea for the research to be done on Heliopolis is proposed by Professor David Phillips and accepted by General Smith, though like everything with this project it will take many years before these facilities will be up and running.

The long-term plan is to have Borthwick Castle as a conduit and admin base and use Heliopolis and Heliopolis Castle as the main research and development base. This makes more sense and they have an entire planet to expand onto. On Earth this would be a limitation due to the need to find a secure location. This includes that addition of roads, workshops, living areas, research labs and power generation to name but a few construction projects that are planned on Heliopolis in the years to come.

These actions by Professor David Phillips also show the early signs of Project Phoenix doing long-term planning, something that will become common for Project Phoenix in the decades to come.

1934

During most of 1934, Project Phoenixes British Army sections have carried out a detailed survey of the area within one hundred miles of Heliopolis Castle using motorcycles brought through the Stargate; they find very little of interest.

Most of the land within one hundred miles of Heliopolis Castle has very little vegetation, there are no indigenous animals of any kind and planet life is limited. The planet appears to be deserted as far as any larger life forms are concerned.

On the 2nd August 1934, Adolf Hitler becomes Fuhrer of Germany, becoming head of state as well as Chancellor. With these worrying signs coming from Germany all those of German nationality are removed from consideration when being invited to join the Project Phoenix or being involved/informed of Project Phoenix in any way. This decision has been on the cards for some time with the rise of the Nazis in Germany though it is considered a bit heavy-handed by some.

At the end of 1934, a twelve-month survey covering two hundred miles from Heliopolis Castle by land and not sea is being planned. No date is yet set for this extended exploration to start. This twelve-month survey is planning to use several aircraft. The logistics required in getting even a single aircraft through the Stargate are immense. First of all the plane has to be disassembled then shipped through the Stargate in pieces making sure that these pieces can be moved through the doors in Borthwick and Heliopolis Castles and finally assembled and flown. This is a real headache for the leaders of Project Phoenix. A longer term plan is needed to make the transportation of a disassembled aircraft (and other large 'objects'), assembly and support facilities easier. A small airstrip on Heliopolis is needed just outside the castle, along with support facilities.

The aircraft that has/had been chosen is the de Havilland Tiger Moth. It is an ideal aircraft for this type of work as it can operate from unprepared runways or even a straight and relatively flat bit of ground as is the case on Heliopolis.

Dream Date

Text by; ShaNeil Harada

Work was, if nothing else predictable. I showed up, clocked in, and sat at my desk. Calls from angry customers washed over me like a flood until I was swept away in the everyday tide of call centre work. I was past the point of caring at this point, I had long ago accepted that this was my life, take it or leave it.

None of the phone calls stood out until I decided to go to lunch, just as I was reaching for the button to take me out of the queue, my headset beeped to indicate a new call. Barely restraining my sigh of frustration, I greeted the customer. She sounded like a sweet old lady, but she had a bite to her words that quickly managed to cut deep into the thick skin I'd formed over my years of call center work.

"Do you even know what you're doing?" Mrs. Baker demanded for the third time.

"Yes ma'am, I know what I'm doing. I'm changing your services as we speak. I just need to confirm with you what you ordered," I managed through clenched teeth.

"You don't need to confirm anything, I told you what I want," she barked.

"Ma'am, I need to confirm this, it is our policy that I can't make any changes without confirming that I understand completely," I nearly growled. This was my third time saying it and my patience was growing thin.

"Don't ma'am me! Just do what I told you."

I took a deep breath, "I would be happy to make these changes for you, but first I need to read them back to you."

"Fine! Read them!" She practically yelled.

I read through the list of changes as quickly as I could so that I could get through them before she interrupted again.

"No! I never said I want to pay for installation. My husband can install it for me."

I couldn't help the snarky bite to my tone when I said, "It's a good thing we reviewed this order then, isn't it."

There was a cold silence on the other end of the line and I knew I'd gone too far. As the silence stretched on I began to sweat. Had she hung up? Would she demand to talk to my supervisor and try to get me fired? I cleared my throat to ask if she was still there, and to see if there was some slim chance that she had missed my attitude.

"You just cancel my order girl," she said softly.

My heart sank. Jim, my supervisor, would not be happy. I opened my mouth to try to cajole her when she spoke again, "May all your dreams come true."

The dial tone followed her odd statement and for a long moment I just sat there listening to the persis-

tent hum. Finally I clicked the end call button and logged out as well so that I could finally take my lunch. A full hour late thanks to that weird call.

As I grabbed my bagged lunch and found a seat in the back corner of the break room, I couldn't get that woman's last words out of my mind. They'd had such an odd timbre, almost like she was intoning a prophecy or casting a gypsy curse. But then, it was such a nice thing for her to say, surely it couldn't be a curse. Maybe she felt bad for being so difficult and wanted to wish me the best or something.

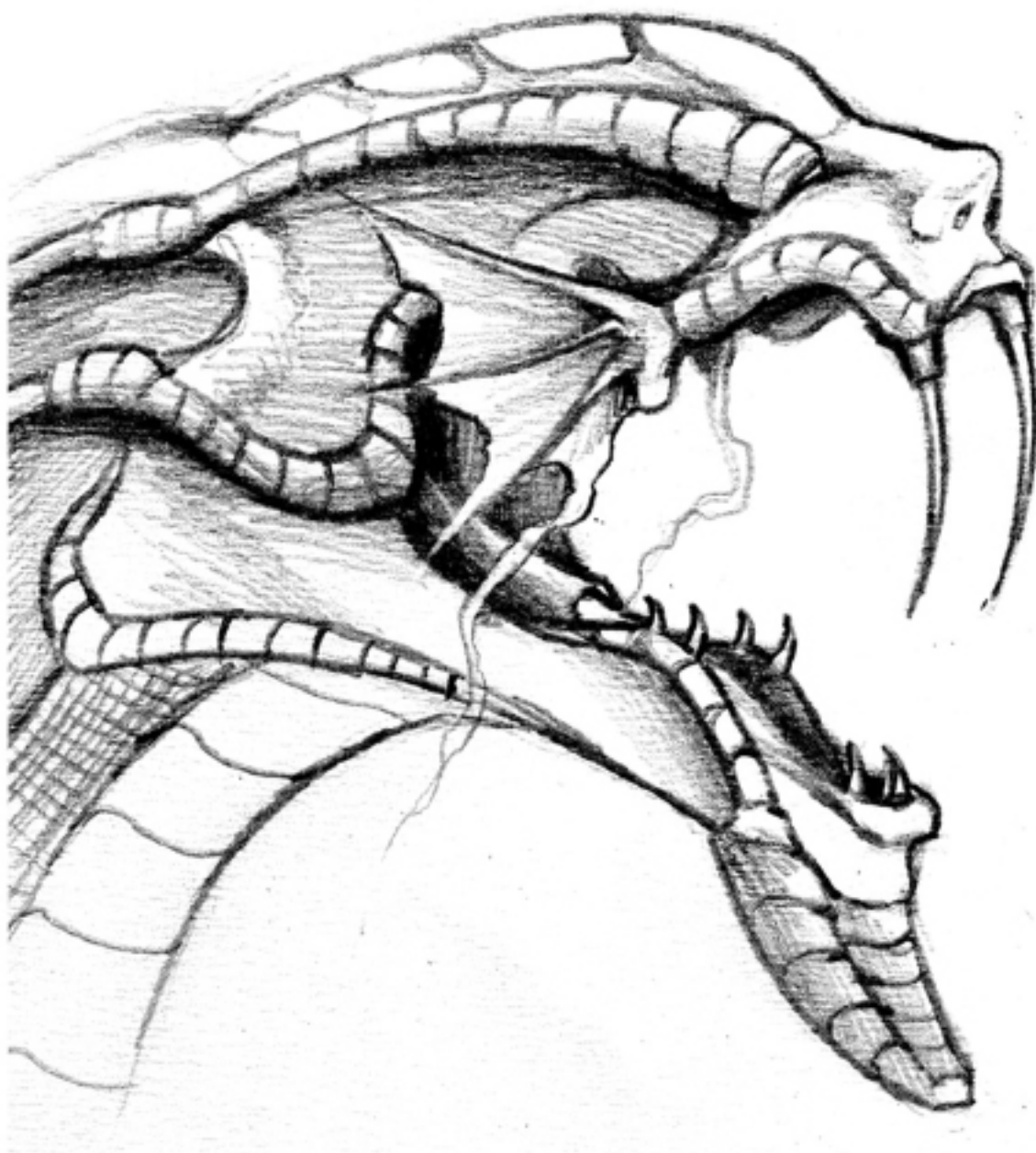
My thoughts were interrupted when Nick Davis pulled out a chair across from me and sat down.

"Hey Shayla, how's it going?" He asked, digging into his microwaved enchilada.

I had to work to keep my jaw from dropping. Nick was by far the best looking guy in the entire three-hundred employee call center. We'd exchanged polite hellos occasionally but to be honest I was pretty certain he didn't know my name. But here he was, voluntarily sitting across the table and talking...to me.

"Umm...good, how're you?" I asked, trying to keep the suspicion out of my voice.

"Not too bad. Listen, I was wondering, do you want to grab a cup of coffee after work today?"



This time I couldn't keep myself from staring, "Me... with you?" I finally managed. He chuckled, "Yeah, I thought it might be nice to get to know each other better. What do you think?"

He was so smooth that I found myself grinning like a fool and nodding my acquiescence long before the fog lifted from my brain and realisation set in. Nick Davis had just asked me out. I thought the anxiety might make me sick, but he just grinned again and I forgot that I had anything to be anxious about.

He finally cleared up his plate and cast me one last grin saying, "I'll see you at 5:30 then." "Okay," I whispered. Once he was gone my mind started whirling again, as did my nerves. This was a dream come true, literally. I couldn't count the number of times I'd day-dreamed this exact event taking place. That thought sent a chill through me. It was a dream come true, just like the old woman had said.

Rolling my eyes at how ludicrous that thought was, I dumped my mostly uneaten lunch in the garbage and headed back to my desk. This had nothing to do with the crazy lady's final words to me. Nick was finally seeing the light.

The rest of the work day dragged on, though Nick asking me out wasn't the only strange thing that happened. I was called back to the office and berated for a bad call, and then not fifteen minutes later the same supervisor called me back to praise my performance and inform me that he was giving me a raise.

I ignored the small voice that pointed out that technically both of those were things I'd dreamed about, though the berating had always been more of a nightmare. When 5:30 came, Nick appeared beside my desk as if by magic, ready to escort me out to coffee.

We took Nick's car to the coffee shop, where they announced that they had just discovered the most delicious calorie-free devil's food cake, and to celebrate they were giving everyone a slice for free. Nick and I talked for hours and discovered that we had many things in common. I loved to write books and Nick was working on an English degree. He asked if I would let him proofread some of my work, for practice and I readily agreed.

The voice in the back of my head was nagging me incessantly by now about all of the things that seemed to be dreams come true. Fine, I acknowl-

edged to the nagging voice, maybe these are 'dreams come true,' but who am I to complain about that? This was the happiest I'd been in as long as I could remember. The voice reminded me about the old adage, "be careful what you wish for." But this wasn't wishes it was dreams, and for the most part I had no control over my dreams. I might as well enjoy it.

After coffee, Nick drove us up to 'Lookout Point,' a popular teenage make out spot that looked out over the sparkling city lights. I had a vague feeling that this too was familiar and I wracked my brain to remember the dream and what happened next. Part of me wanted to just sit back and relax, but that annoying voice in my head kept reminding me, forewarned is forearmed.

Nick reached out and brushed the hair from my face and for a moment I melted. Then the dream came back to me as he leaned towards me and opened his mouth. Glistening sharp fangs extended below the rest of his teeth. "Stupid Buffy reruns!" I growled as I fought with my seat belt. Just like in the dream, the belt was stuck. Nick moved even closer and I opened my mouth to scream. Then a new nightmare monster with gruesome slimy scales and long blade-like claws slammed its ham-sized fists into the windshield and pulled Nick out, throwing him aside.

I stared in horror as it turned its attention on me. I remember that this dream always ended just moments before he tore my heart out with his claws. I wondered if he would disappear at that point or if this dreams coming true thing meant he would finally be able to finish his gruesome task. The monster reached through the windshield, but was hanging at an odd angle, so it flailed about, trying to climb inside. It kicked the gearshift and the car began coasting forward, closer and closer to the edge of 'Lookout Point.'

I frantically fought the seat belt, while desperately trying to scream through the lump in my throat. My final thought as the car fell towards the rocky shore below was, "Maybe it was a curse after all."

Cheap Terrain: Street Sweeper



Text by: Alex Garbett

Terrain can be expensive or cheap. Here is the first in a series of articles on getting terrain and table filler obstacles cheaply and easily off the high street leaving more money for those all important miniatures.

Cost - £3 or \$4.50

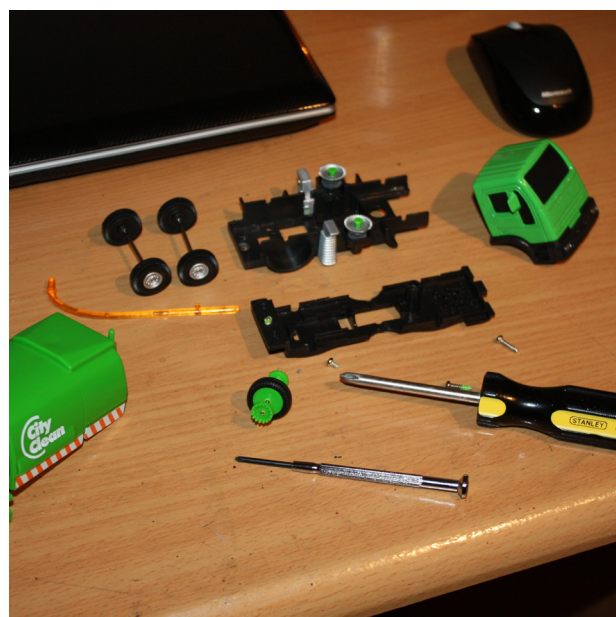
Location - High Street Store - Wilkinsons

Build time - 2 hours

I spotted this while browsing the arts section in my local store located in the city centre of Sheffield. Initially the store offered the Road Sweeper but also a Fire Truck and for £3 each it was a score. I decided to go for two Street Sweepers at the time and took them over the checkout with my other supplies and handed over the cash.

Typically, street sweepers here in the UK have been yellow so a repaint was necessary and to do this I would need to dismantle the kit. I had thought about just dirtying and weathering up the green job but the 'plastic toy feel' was too prevalent so I proceeded to break and unscrew down into its com-

ponents pieces. Surprisingly, quite a lot of the toy itself was diecast, which gave a nice weight and feel to the vehicle when I began to paint.



Once dismantled, I undercoated the green parts with a grey primer and when it had dried I applied yellow foundation and high pigment paints to the parts - lighter over darker colours.

After coat three I got to a yellow I was happy with and decided to add a brown wash to the recesses of the cab. That gave it a more used feel.



Next came one of my most favourite techniques - sponging. Taking the foam from a blister pack and ripping it into a smaller piece, I used several colours across the sweeper from browns, blacks and greys to add weathering, scratches and muck over the major colours.



Now the cab was done and weathered I reattached it to the main frame of the sweeper and repeated the process over the back half. I wanted to add something else so I decided on a chequered black and white pattern and painted this and divided it with a light grey.



With the painting done and dry I reassembled the sweeper but felt that something was missing, there was a little too much empty space on such a big area. So after a suitable search on the Internet I decided to print off a nice 'CAUTION - RADIOACTIVE' sign and shrunk it down in Microsoft Word till I got to the size I wanted. Then it was simply a case of printing this off, sticking it on with some glue and a little sponging effect again to get the weathering onto the sign.



Overall, I'm very happy with this one, a quick project, something I could be a little rough and mucky with. I certainly can add more detail if I want down the line but for its purpose as a terrain piece I feel it does well and provides plenty of cover and interest on the board.

Try it yourself - find a cheap kit, paint it up and fill the board with terrain.





Ecce, Romana Villa!

A Step-by-Step Guide to Making a Ruined Roman Villa

Text by: Scott Hibberson

Friends, Romans, Model Enthusiasts - lend me your ears!

What follows is a step-by-step guide to making your very own ruined Roman villa suitable for 28mm scale miniatures. Why ruined you might ask? Simple, the focal points of this villa are the beautiful mosaic floors of the rooms; floors which you would not be able to see if the villa was roofed and intact. Besides, in many ways a ruin makes a more dramatic set piece for a tabletop battlefield, should this model be used for war-gaming.

In the interests of authenticity, I should point out that although the model described in this article has many elements of a Roman villa, there are a couple of inconsistencies that have been necessary in order to avoid making the model overly complex. For wealthy Romans, houses were lavish affairs, replete with many rooms typically built around a central atrium. The mosaic floors of the main rooms symbolised the wealth and power of their owners, and

interior gardens, servant quarters and so on were all typical features.

However, to have included all these elements would have required far more time, expertise and materials than are set out here, so I hope the classicists and ancient historians amongst you will allow me a certain amount of latitude in this respect. Instead, I've focused on three key rooms: immediately through the main entrance flanked by columns we have the dining hall (triclinium) where the owners would have draped themselves on couches and entertained guests, this leads to a corridor that takes us first to a kitchen (culina in Latin, hence the word 'culinary') and then to a bedroom (cubiculum). Next to the villa I've attempted to recreate something of a tranquil garden scene (hortus). It is not strictly necessary to include this, but it is worth the effort if you have the time and resources.

Before we go through the steps, here are a few materials you'll need to buy if you want to make your own model:

The standard kit of a mini painter (paints, brushes, varnish, craft knife).

- Graph paper and pencil.
- PVA Glue - available from all good arts and crafts stores, regular mini painters will no doubt already have some.
- 3-5 small bags of mosaic stones - available from all good arts and crafts stores. I got mine from Hobbycraft who also have an online store. You will need at least one bag per room costing you roughly £5 for each.
- Mosaic tile cutter (optional) - these retail at around £15, but are not strictly essential. It all depends on how detailed you want the designs of your mosaic floors to be, as ideally the mosaic stones will need to be cut to ensure detail. Having said that though, if you go for a geometric design with straight edges you can get away with not needing these. More on this later.
- A couple of A4 pages of card - alternatively, if you want to cut down costs beer mats work just as well.
- 1 spatula - don't go to any expense here folks, an old blunt knife works just as well.
- 1 bag of dowling caps - you should be able to pick these up from a good DIY store for a little over a pound.
- A long strip of 15mm square wood for the walls and a hacksaw to cut it.
- Sandpaper
- Dowel rod to recreate the columns.
- Access to the internet and a printer to print of images of mythological scenes to serve as frescos on the walls.
- Seven model conifer trees - you can get these at most good model shops, I got mine from Woodland Scenics.
- Foliage mix, available from Gale Force Nine.
- A power drill
- Imitation grass

- Stone tiles - from a good tile outlet.
- Various scrap pieces of plywood for the base.

Step One: Draw the rooms of the villa and choose the mosaic designs

The main point to stress here is carefully measure the dimensions of each room using graph paper and layout the mosaic designs before trying to glue them to the cardboard to ensure the design you opt for will fit the space required. The Make a Roman Mosaic Online website will help you with planning the design and also give you plenty of ideas if you are in need of inspiration.

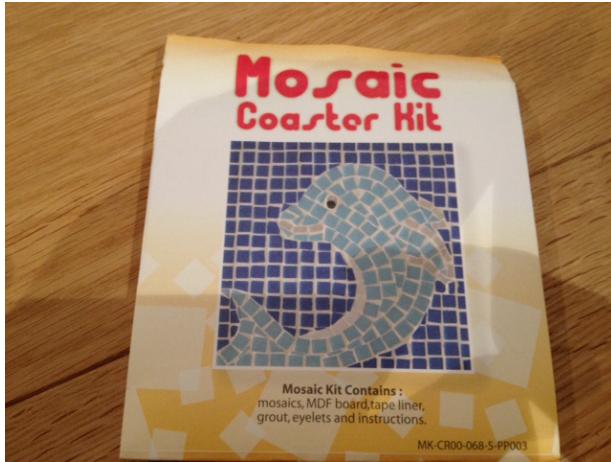
I chose a geometric design for two of the rooms and the corridor and a more pictorial design for the remaining room. The geometric designs have the advantage of not necessarily having to use the tile cutters, whereas if you go for something more pictorial, you will almost certainly need some cutters to ensure the mosaic stones (called tesserae) fit to create a realistic picture. This may be a factor to consider, depending on your available budget.



Step Two: Prepare the Card

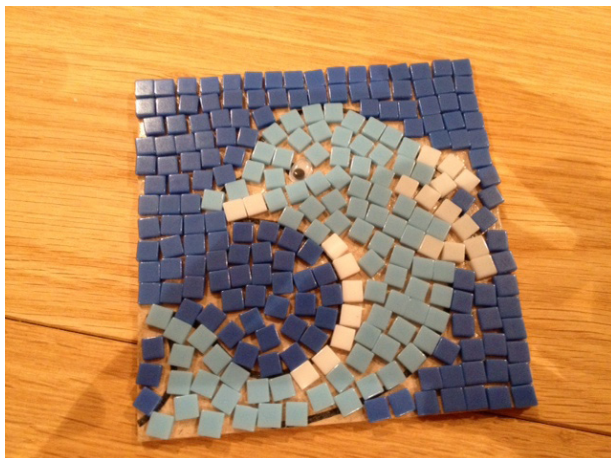
Okay, so you've measured the dimensions of the rooms and cut the card accordingly to fit each room and act as a base for gluing the tesserae. A word of warning here, the card used needs to be rigid enough not to bend too easily. My first attempt at this was to cut up a cereal box and use that - no good, the card waves too easily, which is actually fine if you want to create the floor to a Roman villa that looks like it has been struck by an earthquake (not as odd as it may sound, you are building a ruin after all), but for ease of gluing you might want to opt for something a little more rigid than a cereal box. I'm all for keeping the costs down, so I ended

up using square beer mats which were perfect! Of course, you can buy plain card from any good arts and craft store if you prefer.



Step Three: Apply the Tesserae

Without doubt, this is the most painstaking and time-consuming part of making the model, but it's also the most enjoyable. Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day! If you've never made a mosaic before (as I hadn't) there's an excellent guide available online by Hobbycraft, which I couldn't improve upon.



Using the spatula, apply a thin layer of PVA glue to the card and place the tesserae according to your design choice from step one. Remember to lay out the tesserae in design form, allowing for slight margins between the stones prior to gluing to ensure that the design will fit the card. The example below is a simple geometric design I used for the triclinium.

A brief note on the different types of mosaic tiles you can buy here. You can just buy tesserae of a specific colour, which are cheaper, or you can go for a mosaic coaster kit which comes with all the tesserae required to make a set picture, as in the example be-

low. Although the first option appears the cheaper one, the second option comes with its own bag of grout, which may save you money if you don't already have any (there's nothing special about the grout, if you have some left over from recently tiling your kitchen or bathroom that will suffice). The challenge in going for the coaster kit option is to find an appropriate image for a Roman villa, as many of the designs that come with these kits are too modern, making them anachronistic.



Step Four: Grout and Varnish

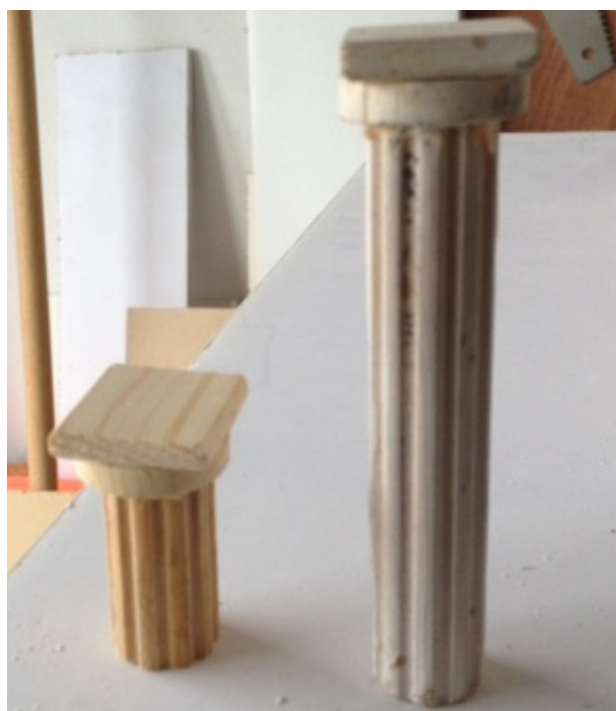
Mix the grout with two parts water and stir into a paste. Then using the spatula apply a thin layer over the surface of the tesserae. You need to ensure that the grout gets into all the margins between the individual tesserae. Leave for approximately 45 minutes until the grout starts to harden. Next, gently apply a damp sponge to wipe off the excess grout until you can clearly see the surface of the mosaic.

After removing the excess grout I'd recommend leaving the mosaic overnight before varnishing to make sure the remaining grout has dried out thoroughly.



Step Five: Build the Walls

In order to create the layering effect of rows of stone blocks on top of one another, take the long strip of square 15mm wood and saw to the required length using the hacksaw. It's important to do this step after you have made up the mosaic floors, because the walls need to fit snugly around the perimeter of the floors, as the latter can't be altered after they have been made. Once you have the base layer, use a ruler and craft knife to mark the wood at set intervals to create the illusion of stone blocks. Then simply glue diminishing layers on top of the preceding layer to make the overall structure appear derelict. There is no exact science to this as such, you're creating a ruin after all and it's really down to you how complete (or how incomplete) you want the finished villa to look. The sandpaper also comes in handy here to smooth off the rough edges of the wood and make it look more stone-like prior to painting. The window frame and the roof at the back of the villa have been added for decoration - this is optional.



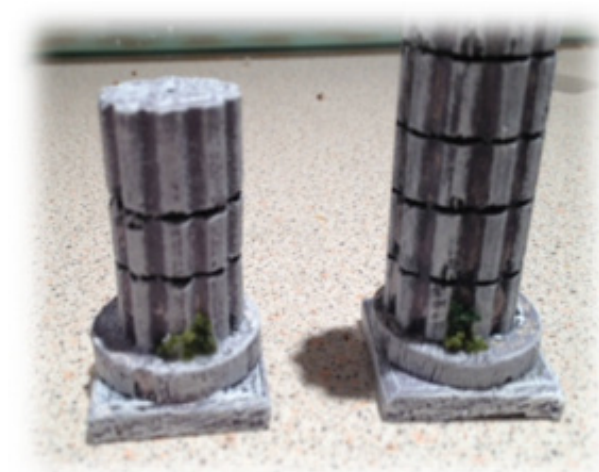
Step Six: Erect the Columns

Ancient Roman architecture was comprised of three main orders: Doric, Ionic and Corinthian, all borrowed heavily from the Greeks. The least ornate of these three styles, and the simplest to reproduce for a model, is the Doric style. The tops of the Doric columns, called capitals, are far less ornate than both the Ionic and Corinthian orders, and can be

reproduced in wood relatively easily.

To recreate the Doric columns take a piece of dowel rod and cut to the required size. Such columns were typically composed of a series of drums placed one on top of the other. To create this effect the same technique that was used on the walls has been applied here - use the ruler and craft knife to mark the column at set intervals to make the column look like it's composed of drums prior to painting.

There are a number of useful links on weathering on the Sheffield Irregulars blog. The weathering effect on the columns here was achieved by priming with heavily watered-down black to seep into the crevices between the column drums, followed by a light layer of grey before dry brushing in white.



Step Seven: Paint and Add Detail

There are various things you can do to add detail to the stone walls after you've applied the undercoat and base paints and what follows are a few suggestions:



a) To create the effect of moss growing between some of the stone blocks, glue some green foliage mix into the cracks (available from Gale Force Nine). This was also applied sparingly to the columns above.

b) I used a lighter to do the ubiquitous sections of blackened walls to make the villa look like it had been ablaze at some point. If you plan to do this please make sure a responsible adult is present - I wouldn't want your house to catch ablaze whilst attempting this effect!

c) I found a great website that gave details of real graffiti found at the ruins of Pompeii and thought it would be equally plausible to include graffiti on the villa too, in the original Latin. The Lucius pinxit roughly translates to 'Lucius painted this' which is the ancient equivalent of the modern day 'Lucius was here'. The Suspirium puellarum Celadus thraex was found scrawled on the walls of the barracks of the gladiators at Pompeii and is of a far racier nature - I will leave you to google the translation!



Step Eight: The Amphorae

To make the culina more authentic you could add some ornamentation in the form of amphorae. Amphorae were large containers used extensively throughout the ancient Graeco-Roman world to store and transport all manner of liquids and foodstuffs, typically wine, so it makes sense to have them in the culina. I've used the two dowel caps to represent the amphorae.

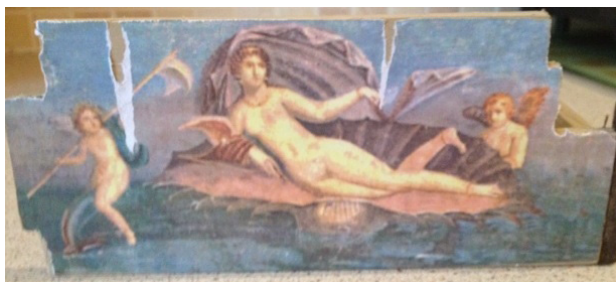


You may want to broaden the openings in the amphorae and create a smoother finish with some sandpaper prior to painting in a terracotta colour. After painting, the greek key design round the neck of the amphora was printed off the internet and stuck in place with glue.



Step Nine: Frescos

Historically, fresco paints were made up from plants, natural stones and animal dyes, which were mixed together with egg whites to thicken them. The paints were then applied to wet plaster to make them more durable. Now, there comes a point with any model-making when convenience takes precedence over authenticity – you've guessed it, I didn't mix any egg whites or plant extracts to recreate the villa's frescos! The fresco in the villa is an image printed off from the internet and the tears were simply done by hand to produce an incomplete look.



Step Ten: Gardens

Assuming you're taking the time to include the gardens (horti) alongside the ruins of the villa, there's a couple of things you'll need to take into consideration. First of all, be sure to draw out the dimensions of the gardens beforehand (as with step one for the villa), so you can rest the entire model on a single piece of thin plywood, made to measure. This makes transporting your finished model much easier. The second point to consider is designing the pathways that criss-cross through the gardens and in front of the villa. This has been achieved by placing actual stone tiles onto the plywood base from a tile outlet, the type you would buy if you were tiling your kitchen or bathroom. The availability and size of these tiles will vary, depending on what your local outlet has in stock, so save yourself the headache of having to buy an expensive tile cutter by ensuring your base has been cut to a size that fits your tiles beforehand.



The broken perimeter walls around the gardens were achieved in exactly the same way as the walls to the villa (step five above). Again, there is no exact science to this, feel free to add as much or as little to the walls as you deem fit. The imitation grass sections to the garden are available from most good model/hobby stores and to make the grass more realistic I've sprinkled the borders with sand (available from Citadel) stuck down with PVA glue. The conifers

are from Woodland Scenics - they weren't the cheapest I could find, but they were the best, as cheaper model trees I had bought previously tended to fall apart too easily. To secure the trees rigidly to the base I drilled small holes into the plywood and then inserted the trees along with a liberal splash of PVA glue.



I'd just like to say a special thanks to my father for persevering in the garage during the cold winter months by cutting the various pieces of wood to size and my former Latin teacher, Dr David Noy, for checking the grammar in the title of this article - gratias multas to both!



Why Kickstarter?

An Interview with Ronnie Renton

Text by: Alex Garbett

Kickstarter is a phenomenal platform for launching and improving a game. Every time you do something you're constantly fighting against what's realistic versus what you would really like to do. For example, DreadBall was only ever going to be two plastic teams in the box with a separate metal RefBot and two metal teams. Because of Kickstarter, we're going to have 12 Plastic Teams, more than 20 Plastic MVPs and a vastly improved core game with plastic hex bases, plastic refbot and more figures than we were normally able to put in the box.

Not only that but it gives you a community from day one. There were more than 2700+ copies of DreadBall in circulation by the end of the year and that really generated a pull through for our retailers. Kickstarter facilitated, to a degree, even instigated, the biggest product launch we have ever had and is instrumental in its continuing success.



Q What did you hope to achieve?

A The first season in plastic - there's always hope you can go the whole hog and so you do come up with crazy ideas for what to do next. We had ideas for Season 2 and Season 3 but never thought we'd be able to do both in 2013. With Kings of War, it was a risky thing to do, so we just hoped to hit our goal!

Q What was the best part of the experience for you?

A The community reaction and engagement. We spent many hours a day just talking to people, answering questions on forums, Facebook and on Kickstarter. There were plenty of late nights and early mornings, Chris had only four hours of sleep between the last Saturday and the last Sunday for DreadBall.

Q What do you feel about the community's response?

A It is exactly what we hoped it would be. We feel like the community is empowered. They really picked up the ball and ran with DreadBall. People are hungry for more Kings of War miniatures (to the point that even though we're still in the process of launching DreadBall, they're demanding attention).

Q Was it as big a success as you'd hoped?

A Both Kickstarters exceeded our expectations.

Q Which was your favourite stretch goal and did you expect to go through so many?

A The trolls for Kings of War because that was when it really clicked in our heads and we put a formula together which worked. For DreadBall,

I've a soft spot for some of the MVPs like Nightshade, Helder and The Praetorian because they were ideas that developed organically under time pressure. I think the craziest one we did in DreadBall was the completest goals right at the end for the alternate sculpts. It's a lot of tooling for quite a small goal, but it feels good to finish up on something everyone wanted.

Q Given the kickstarter was almost six months ago where do you stand now with development and production of the new items and stretch goals broken?

A Nearly all of Kings of War is currently in tooling with only the Elf sets and the unique heroes left to do.

With DreadBall, Season 2 has been sculpted and is being tooled for the second shipment, and we're hard at work on the miniatures for Season 3 - I've seen sculpts of giant apes and some turtles in my inbox just this morning!

Q How has the kickstarter money been used? New moulds and machines etc.?

A New sculpts, tooling and shipping. We're actually tooling so many new sets we're struggling to fit them all in for a retail release this year!

Q Going forward will we see other Kickstarters for Warpath and possibly a second Kings of War/Dreadball?

A There will be a Kickstarter for Warpath but it's one we want to go right so that probably won't be this year. We are looking at doing something set in the Warpath universe however and I've an idea for DreadBall too...



Deadzone Kickstarter

Text by: Alex Garbett

As this issue is being put together Mantic, the creators of Kings of War, Warpath and DreadBall gaming systems have just initiated their third Kickstarter for a new game within the Warpath Universe called Deadzone.

The Game

Deadzone is written by Jake Thornton, the creator of DreadBall. It features four factions fighting in the ruins of fall colonies and worlds ravaged by a mysterious plague brought on by alien artefacts. The plague transforms its victims into mutated creatures of varying sizes, their only goal to spread the infection further.

Due to this seemingly unstoppable plague, the Corporation, the most powerful entity in the Warpath universe, has dispatched the elite Enforcers to battle this threat.

Rebel factions are keen to do battle with the Corporation, growing in numbers and recruiting more aliens into their ranks. The 'Rebs' are also discovering this new plague and are trying to deal with the

infected while the savage Marauders seem keen to only pillage and loot the sector's and infected planets, crushing and smashing anyone who gets in their way!

The Kickstarter

As with DreadBall and Kings of War, Mantic are laying this down through Kickstarter and looking to use the money and funds raised to release more product sooner and with the help of the community, make additions to the game through characters and more.

The Kickstarter for Deadzone went live on the 26th of April and after barely 24 hours it already smashed through its funding barrier needed at \$50,000 to its current standing at \$187,937!

So far three stretch goals have been broken through and the fourth is almost hit for a new character design with a cool backstory.



www.kickstarter.com/projects/1744629938/deadzone-the-sci-fi-miniatures-board-game

With so much money pledged within the first day could this be the game which takes Mantic to the next level. Will we see a breaking of \$1,000,000, dare I say a \$1,500,000? What new characters, kits etc. will be unlocked through the pledges and stretch goals?

Best to get yourself online and follow this Kick-starter. Become a backer and help drive a new game to new heights with plenty of fantastic new models and kits as a reward for your support

Enjoy!

I'm personally a backer on this one already and am looking forward to seeing the new models and game as it develops. And don't forget all the stretch goals broken and models to get my hands on (loving the new re-designed Enforcer troopers!).

If you're excited and want more information visit the site below or Google Deadzone Kickstarter for more details, updates on stretch goals and news of this amazing new game.





My name is Conor Nolan. I'm a recent college graduate and illustrator working out of Brooklyn.

Q How did you get interested in art?

A I became interested in art, as I'd presume many artists would say, at a young age. I was, and still am, an avid comic book reader and always really enjoyed drawing. I would use construction paper pads as sketchbooks or use entire post-it note pads to tell sequential stories. When my parents caught on to this and motivated me to pursue it, everything fell into place.

Q What methods do you use in your work?

A Before I start illustrating anything, the most important stage is concept drafting. Because of its importance I usually spend a long time on it. Spending so much time in this stage allows no room for error or problems when I execute the final. In terms of medium, most commonly I'll use ink and color digitally. However, I have a soft spot for fully rendered images. An example of this is the magazine cover I did for *Irregular*, which is done in charcoal and graphite then finished with ink washes and digital coloring.

Irregular Magazine Issue 15 2013

Artist Showcase; Conor Nolan

Q What are the most important parts of any image?

A What the image isn't telling you. As an illustrator my job is to tell you the story, but not the whole story. I'm a huge graphic novel fan and I enjoy idea that a panel of a comic represents a very small frame of time. In-between those panels exists a story that you're making up when you're reading that graphic novel. In the end, its interpretation is yours.

Q Please tell us about your research.

A Largely I search online and keep an extensive collection of images for reference or inspiration. For the cover I went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and took pictures of armor and different statues. From that, I piece together a reference sheet and pull from that.

Q What size/scale do you prefer to work at?

A I work usually at twice the size that the published work will be. That way I can ensure I get the line quality I want. This of course depends entirely on

the deadline I am given and whether or not larger makes sense.

Q Tell us about the character on the cover of issue 15, The Faceless Warrior?

A I recently began watching Dr. Who and one of the episodes had characters called 'weeping angels' in it. If you haven't seen the show, the creatures take the form of a stone angel, similar to those found in cemeteries, with its face in its hands as if it were crying. When the victim lays its eyes on them it sets off a series of events that is less than fortunate for the victim. I really enjoyed the idea of a stationary character having the power of fear and foreboding so I wanted to include that. I created this armoured soldier with a raven upon his finger, completely unaware of the impending doom behind him. The setting is a wintry sundown and the spectre rises from a thorny thicket, its intentions wicked behind unmoving eyes.

Q Who and what influences you and your work?

A Many of the golden age illustrators inspire my work such as J.C. Leyendecker, N.C. Wyeth, Norman Rockwell, Howard Pyle, Charles Gibson. Modern artists like Paul Pope, Tomer Hanuka, Sam Weber, and Jillian Tamaki do as well.

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

A I like fantasy illustration a lot; it's always fun and immeasurably imaginative.



Q Are you a gamer?

A Absolutely. I wish I had more time for it. By true gamer standards I'm probably more of a casual gamer.



Q Is there anyone you would like to work with/for in the future?

A For fantasy illustration my dream would be to work with, of course, Wizards of the Coast. That dream however seems far-off as editorial illustration is primarily what I do. With that in mind I'd love to do work for the New York Times and Rolling Stone. A partial side note; a dream for me is to do a concert poster or advert for a metal band. It's because I have always enjoyed the music but also the aesthetic.

Q Which artists do you find exciting at the moment?

A The artists at the moment that I find exciting aren't exactly current or even alive - John William Waterhouse, Edwin Austin Abbey, Charles Robinson, and Sarah Weber really captivate me as of late.

Painter Showcase; Ian Powell



I'm Ian and I run a miniature painting service in the UK. I specialise in Warhammer 40k and Fantasy mostly, but have painted everything including Warlord Historicals, full sets of Talisman figurines and custom Zombie survival Dioramas to name a few. I absolutely love my job and the life I lead painting every day for people all over the world. There's nothing more satisfying for me than seeing a customer's elated reactions, or disbelief in the paint work. I pride myself on three things in my painting, I paint fast, I love the wargaming community, and, I hope, my skills speak for themselves. My best work comes from a passion for the models and making each and every one of my client's wishes a reality.







Hazmat Guspilla & The Red Skull Tribe

Painted by Graham Shirley

Hazmat Guspilla and his small but growing Whaaagh terrorise Man and Dwarf alike around the foothills of the Border Princes. From Barak Varr to The 'tasty' Moot, Hazmat roams endlessly looking for a 'proper' fight.

I've always had an affinity for the Greenskins. They were the first army I ever collected and now returning to gaming about 15 years later, they were the obvious choice. I can never work out just why I love them so much. Is it the background fluff or the way they play on the table top? Plenty of ways to win and plenty of excuses if you don't. What's not to like?

I think the main reason is that I've just always loved painting them. Back in the 90s, when I was first playing, they had the best models there were, in my opinion. Beautiful sculpts with plenty of brutish violence but also a pinch of comic relief. It's great to smash some brains out, but it's important not to take yourself too seriously while doing it.



Painting

As a fairly novice player I started painting whatever I wanted, whatever I thought looked cool. So my first stop was a unit of Orc Boyz, I never had much truck with these 'new-fangled' Savage Orcs. I wanted mine covered in dirty armour and armed to the teeth with scavenged weapons - the bigger, heavier and rustier the better.



I've painted these with dark green skin to make them look mean and battle-hardened. They're all in plain, rusty metal armour and leathers, saving any fancy war gear to make the heroes stand out (particularly red helmets/hoods as a tribal tradition). I also went for shields, just so I could paint the Red Skull motif which is also echoed on the banner.



The Night Goblins are from the previously conquered/bashed into submission Four-Eyed Tribe. Hence the extra two eyes on their hoods. I tend to paint all my Goblins in a much lighter skin tone to differentiate them from the more 'gnarly' Orcs. The horde of 40 includes unit fillers of squigs and massive mushrooms to make it more interesting and (lets face it), to give me a break from just painting Gobbos for a while!



Although the vast majority of my collection is of Citadel Miniatures I just couldn't help painting up some cheeky GameZone goblins. These are lovely sculpts and fit in perfectly with the rest. I've done the 'Offensive Goblins' which is another command group but with bottoms on show, and their Standard Bearer holding aloft a strangled dummy which I use as my BSB 'Viszog the Uncivil'.



After these two units, I concentrated on some more fun stuff. Firstly the Doom Divers. These were a bit of a labour of love. I don't like just painting war machines and plonking them down on the table, so I spent a while making them into little dioramas, complete with snotlings (one of them even making a squig stew). That said, they are magnetised to their bases so can be removed to be placed in awkward terrain or on top of buildings. Very satisfying!



I've tried to lavish extra attention on my special characters. Nazgob the Shaman, Eadsplitta the Black Orc Boss, Bloodsnot and Frazzles the Night Goblin Shamans. All were painted to the best of my ability. I'm especially pleased with Hazmat himself who earned me a finalist pin in Golden Demon 2012.

Most recently, I've finished my centerpiece 'Warwick the Wanderer', my giant. I've always loved this mini (if you can call it that) from back when I was a nipper. I finally got around to painting him, but have still to test his mettle in battle. Or lack thereof!

Next, I've got three Goblins Chariots which are days away from completion, and I can't believe I'm going back on what I said earlier, a unit of Savage Orcs because they're so hard it seems...



D&D Dungeon Command

Wizards of the Coast

Text by: Jason Hubbard



Over the last few years Wizards have been slowly building a range of board games set within the world of D&D using game mechanics based on the RPG. The latest venture is a cross between a board game and a skirmish miniature wargame, entitled D&D Command.

It's based around a set of core rules (the rules can be downloaded in PDF) and additional faction

sets. Each faction pack consists of figures, cards, maps and tokens and is designed to be used by a single player, which means that players will need to purchase their own factions. One of the surprising elements of this game is the fact that its completely diceless, yep, I did say no dice.

So what do you get in each faction box? There is a rule book, yes it can be downloaded, for those who would rather use a PDF on a mobile device, but a hard copy is always useful. It will also come supplied with Commander Cards, which describe two possible leaders for your faction. There is also a selection of map tiles which can be connected to tiles from the other faction boxes, thus increasing the gaming area. They are marked with one inch squares, allowing them to be used with D&D RPG. So finally, you get 12 non-randomised figures in the set. These are pre-painted, unlike the miniatures in other board games by Wizards, and are exactly the same as other pre-painted minis for D&D. Now this is my one bugbear with this product, as a painter I prefer unpainted minis as I like to add my own creativity to the hobby via painting. I know a lot of folk out there prefer the figures to be pre-painted, it's just my preference so I won't harp on about it too much.



There are also cards and counters supplied for the different monsters, these explain the various feats, action and skills etc. for each of them. This is a fast-paced game.

The sting of Lolth is basically the Drow set, consisting of an assassin, priestess, wizard, spiders and Drow house guards. The miniatures in this set are quite nice, a good combination of miniature types. I particularly like the Drow spider.

The Tyranny of Goblins box set is well, you guessed it, a goblin faction. This is the third faction set from Wizard's and has some very cool pieces including a troll and a horned devil. This was a set I'd definitely repaint, the goblins were just ugly with the pre-paint job on them. The troll could easily be fixed up by shading and highlighting. The one model in this faction I really did dislike was the hobgoblin sorcerer, it's just an ugly looking miniature and no amount of repainting will fix that in my opinion.

My favourite faction set, and as far as I'm concerned the best so far, is Curse of Undeath. The Dracolich is a nice mini although it could definitely do with repainting. On the whole, this set has a good selection of miniatures. Let's be honest who doesn't love undead minis on the table. This set also has an Hypnotic Spirit which is a great miniature.

Overall Dungeon Command is a great little skirmish game that can be easily set and run very quickly. So if you have only a limited time to grab a game then this is seriously one that you should think about having to hand. My only disappointment is the fact that the miniatures are pre-painted and I've never been a fan of the pre-painted range. Though if you are like me and prefer to paint your own miniatures then these can be touched up or replaced over time with alternatives.



Helldorado

Cipher Studios

Text by: Jason Hubbard

"1634 ... The voluptuous language of war flames lick the heart of man ... We kill for faith, for wealth, for power, for glory...In the mud and rubble, a gateway to the underworld has opened and they are engulfed by the dozen. Missionaries, conquistadors, settlers, soldiers, great captains... Below is a new world that awaits them. A world of hope, a world to plunder, to build a world. A world populated by demons who do not yield an inch of their territory. A world filled with other humans, from the East to find the result of their mystical quest. A world where unspeakable creatures lurk, lost to all humanity. This world is that of Helldorado, and now you're new horizon!" Cipher Studios

Helldorado is a 28mm heroic skirmish game set during the 17th century. It's a fantasy historical war-game. Players take control of a small war band who have entered hell or dwell within its realms. War bands are made up by soldiers and settlers who are seeking their fortune. There are also demons and immortals who dwell in the hellish realms giving players a wide variety of war bands to choose from.

Helldorado was originally owned by French company Asmodee Miniatures, but the company folded for various reasons. Subsequently, Helldorado was acquired by Cipher. They started by re-releasing the old line of miniatures, then they produced an English version of the rule set so they could market the game to the English speaking world.

The world setting is an alternate 17th century version of our own where the gates of hell have opened up. This has led to various factions and people entering the realms to explore and seek their fortunes. Once many had entered they discovered that the Saracens had discovered another gateway. Time within the realms of hell slows down and freezes which means some of the Saracens have been there for centuries.

The game itself is a fast-paced skirmish game of war bands with 7-15 miniatures a-side. Games can last up to two hours but this is all dependant on the numbers of minis each side has and the terrain. The game uses six-sided die and is played on a 30 by 30 inch board which allows for a faster style of play. The rules are very easy to pick up, though can get complex once you start using the special abilities some of the miniatures have. One of the great aspects of this game is that you can activate your miniatures special abilities during your opponent's turn.

The miniatures are what attracted me in the first place to this game. I bought several prior to seeing the rules. Most are excellent sculpts and great to paint, and with this being a skirmish game you don't require a huge army, just a small war band. This means you can spend longer painting your band of warriors up to a superb finish. I decided to go with the Immortals, mainly because they reminded me of Medieval Chinese. Several of the miniatures are really nicely sculpted. Next issue we'll be taking a look at Anima Tactics.

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Issue 16 / Autumn 13 out October