



ISSUE 12 / SPRING 2012

# irregular

ALARIC  
& THE GOTHS

BACCUS  
BASING SYSTEM

TUTORIAL  
PAINTING FEMALE FACES

HEROES AND VILLAINS  
FOR TRAVELLER RPG

PLUS NEWS, REVIEWS AND MUCH MORE







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Issue 12 Spring 2012

Irregular Magazine

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**Editorial**

Well folks, it seems it's that time again - another issue of Irregular Magazine is on the virtual shelf, and what a jam-packed issue we have for you all. There are plans afoot for a new venture starting next year and we've started preparations for IMP 2012 as well. I've also started making a go at painting my grey army, beginning with some War of the Roses miniatures.

It's been a busy last few months, what with the show season starting. I recently attended Salute, and we hope to bring you a report next issue. Recently I decided to start commission painting, and took as my first commission a 120mm Anime resin figure, a first for me to paint such a large scale. In the next issue of Irregular I'll be letting you all know in an article how my first steps in to the world of commission painting are going.

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

The overall theme for issue 13 will be Tales from the East, so any potential contributors should consider that as a guide. Space, fantasy and historical are all potential possibilities. So get the old thinking caps on, and all contributions should be emailed to [irregularmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:irregularmagazine@gmail.com).

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

# sheffield irregulars



IMP 2012

Sunday July 22nd, 10am - 4pm

Sheffield Irregulars, in association with Patriot Games and Baccus 6mm, are proud to present Irregular Miniature Paintfest 2012. This is our fourth annual show, being held at The Workstation in Sheffield for the second year.

As with previous years, our main attraction is the Golden IMP Awards, our painting competition, and we'll also be running our usual Speed Painting Challenge. This years Golden IMP categories are listed below, and full rules can be found on our website.

Golden IMP Categories:

- Best single figure
- Best unit
- Best monster
- Best vehicle
- Large scale
- 6mm army - sponsored by Baccus 6mm
- Impling - 16 and under only
- Best in Show

We're still finalising games and traders, but information will be going up on the website as they are confirmed. Our aim is to provide you with a great range of participation and introduction games so you can try your hand at new systems.

In addition to the painting competitions, games and traders, we're hoping to bring back the seminars we ran at last year's event. Again, as we're able to confirm these, the information will go up on our website.

Finally, we'll have an array of painting demonstrations on offer for you to have a go at, including the Sheffield Irregulars and Dr Mike's 6mm Painting Studio.

For more information, visit our website at <http://www.impevent.co.uk>.

We also have a Facebook event at <http://www.facebook.com/events/322930554421964/>

Google+ page at <https://plus.google.com/u/0/b/107218693459988112850/>

where you can be apprised of updates.



R.P.G.

Lost Empire

Notables of Flathead's Romance :  
Heroes and Villains for Traveller RPG

# Lost Empire

Words: Griffith M. Morgan III

My experience of fantasy role-playing and war games is somewhat unique. Before ever having seen a copy of Dungeons and Dragons and only once having tried to play Panzer Blitz, I was playing D and D as well as multi-player combat games using computers. This seems normal to today's gamers, but this was long time ago before the age of the Internet and personal computing had come to fruition.

In 1976, I was introduced to a computer system called PLATO, which was an acronym for Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations. Initially I was part of a learning group - I am not sure what the purpose of this experiment ever was. At the time, I was enrolled in a school for students who didn't perform well in regular schools and which was comprised of kids with family troubles and kids who were so bored in school they did poorly; this was before the time when terms like 'learning disability' were being bandied about. My suspicion is that they were trying to see if computers could be used as aids for learning with students who performed poorly in traditional school environments.

I believe the person who was overseeing our group was a gentleman named Sherwin Gooch who worked in computerized music; I only ever saw him once, while I was in his office as his girlfriend was giving me lessons in programming. I might add that she was not much fun to be around, and my lessons were as painful as having to do scales on a piano while your friends played outside the window. My lessons lasted all of two sessions, if that, before I was

cut loose and left to my own designs. Perhaps they monitored what I was doing on the system, since I would see them poking their heads into the lab to check on me at times. Hard to tell; all I know is that my life was changed forever.

Although PLATO was primarily a learning system, a lot of creative effort was being directed at game designing. Officially, the system was for learning, and games which became popular and had too many users hogging up CPU time were banned from regular hours and could only be played late at night - I think from 9 or 10 pm to 7 am. It wasn't long after my initial exposure to PLATO that I began to use it as a gaming platform. To be honest, I don't think I ever used it much for proper learning, but exposure to computers so early on had a big impact on my learning. I expect many of the users did school work but also snuck in a lot of game time, because there were so many games to explore on the system.

Although most people consider such things as plasma displays to be a modern technology, Plato had those already in the 70's. Most of the communication tools found on the Internet today were used on PLATO. Personal notes or P notes functioned like email does today. There were chat rooms and one could show a friend what he was doing by using monitor mode and sharing the screen with them as they worked, although it also came in real handy for showing someone new tricks in games. PLATO even had touch screens.

My main interest was always gaming. My first games discoveries were games like Lunar Lander and board



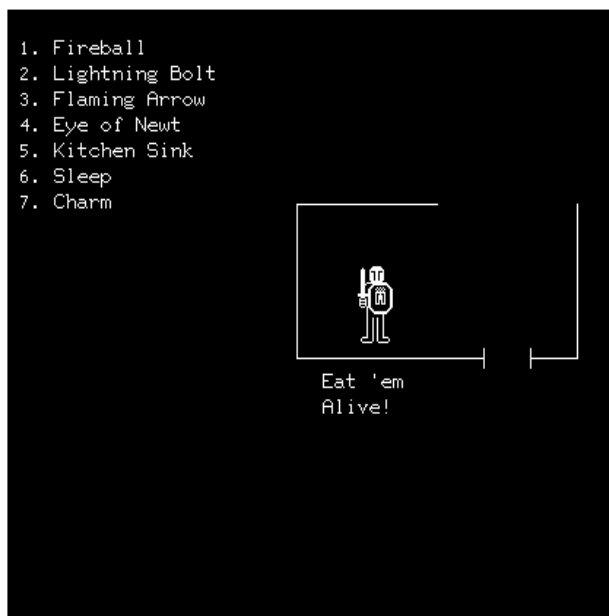
games that had been programmed into the computer. They were ok, but not very exciting. It was their D & D games that attracted me. The games in those days had top down dungeon wall displays and figure designs called chars for characters and monsters. They were basically solo dungeon crawl games, and part of the fun was mapping the dungeon levels. They later spawned games where users could co-operate and the graphics display was a 3d wire frame of walls. My two friends Justin Grunau and Michael Stecyk programmed The Pits of Baradur (a reference to The Lord of the Rings, which was another of our obsessions at the time). They even let me design one of the dungeon levels.

Plato had 3d games that used primitive wire frame models; I believe the coin operated battle zone originated on PLATO. Another game was called Spasim for space simulation; it was a 3d Star Trek game. And Airwar, a combat flight simulator with multi player head-to-head capability.

PLATO also featured the first multi-player online game called Empire; a Star Trek-based battle game where players each flew their own space ship. It



had up to 30 players on four teams: Kazari (changed from Klingons when the programmers were threatened with a law suit); Orions (originally the Vulcans); Romulans; and of course the Federation. Players viewed their ship from a 2nd person top down perspective with instrument readouts on the screen and a radar-like screen shot of the action. PLATO was somewhat limited visually because it had to re-plot the entire screen and this would only happen about once a second. This caused the graphics to not be animated so much as updated. But you have to understand that in the 1970's, even using a computer to play space games was a completely novel idea and we loved it.



The goal of Empire was simple. The team who took over the universe, comprised of twenty-five planets and five suns, would win. This was done by taking over enemy planets and making them your own through bombing and transporting armies. Every five minutes the planets would “pop” some new armies so armies could grow in number over time. Of course, taking over the universe was difficult because enemy players would be trying to blow up your ship while you traveled around, and, of course, you were trying to do the same to them.

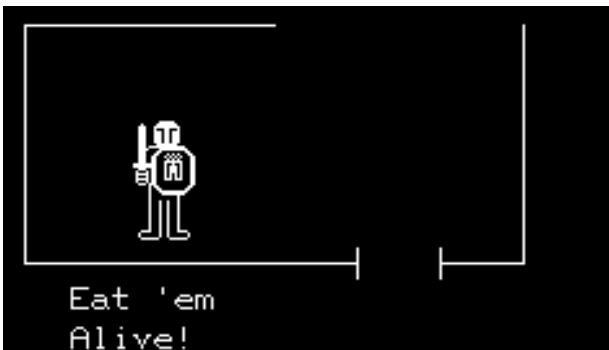
Once my friends and I discovered Empire we were obsessed. We would go to the computer building, named CERL (for Computer Education Research Laboratory), around 9 pm and stay till the sun came up. Eight full hours of Empire - it was glorious.

I remember being 13 years old and walking to the McDonalds near CERL after a long night of fighting the bad guys and waiting for the sun to rise while standing in the middle of the street on the main drag with no cars coming. I felt like a character in one of those sci fi movies where everyone but a few people mysteriously disappear, leaving an empty world behind.

The user community was very egalitarian. It was the seventies and good feelings abounded. As much as people like to make fun of the seventies, there was a general feeling of good will that came from no more Vietnam War. As teenagers most of our parents were getting divorced and going to group therapy, while us kids were given the liberty of discovering who and what we were about.

Initially our accounts had been limited accounts called student accounts. With those accounts we couldn't have free access to everything, especially Empire. Somehow, without asking, the word got out that we needed full access accounts and some guys came up and said "Here, have an Author account." They were older computer types. Probably college students, but they were willing to give us sort of pirate accounts on their user groups.

My group of friends also did a lot of exploring. Things weren't very high security back then and we found our way up stairs and down hallways to rooms that were off limits. How could any teenager resist an empty building full of halls and rooms with hidden computer terminals? When we did find rooms with terminals that were in off limits areas of the building, of course we'd go in anyway and use the terminals, until one day an older student came in and asked us for our Sign On names and cancelled our accounts. The next day I went to CERL and was just hanging around watching other people use the terminals. I thought I was done. Everyone



was focused on their screens and I wasn't part of it anymore, so I wandered out to the hall to sit on a bench and wondered what the hell I was going to do. A few minutes later an older college student came up and asked me what had happened. I told him my story about the mean grad student, whom I described with dirty words. He said, "Yeah, I know the guy. He's a jerk". He took me into the computer lab and set me up with a new account right on the spot. (In retrospect, I might have been a pawn in some kind of power game at CERL.) I was in awe, and he acted like it was no big deal, smiled and patted me on the shoulder before leaving. I never saw him again. Within 24 hours of having lost my pirate account I had a brand new one; that is the kind of environment that PLATO provided.

I also met a lot of people who are probably influential in the computing industry to this day. I remember one night we met this guy, and he took us to his apartment. We had to sit on the bed to talk with

him. It was just wall-to-wall metal racks and electronics gear like ham radios and cobbled together computer stuff.

In 1977, my family moved away from Champaign-Urbana. I didn't realize the implications this would have. It was only afterward that I came to understand how privileged I was living in the same town as the PLATO mainframe. Since I had no friends yet, I would sit in my room and draw Empire ship battles on pieces of paper; I really missed my computer friends and computer games.

Although I never thought I would play Empire again, I ended up finding a hobby store in my neighborhood and I bought a set of miniatures and a dungeon game from a small game company, as well as a copy of a tiny game called Ogre that had just been released. After that it wasn't hard to link up with other like-minded kids, as this was 1977 when D and D was just starting to become popular. About two years ago I was reminiscing about Empire and decided to search for things about it on the



Internet. The first things I found were a post on Wikipedia about it and a video on Youtube showing how the game is played. The Wikipedia article had a link to the cyber1 network site, the organization that is working to preserve PLATO and also providing a live server of the system for users. Within minutes I had sent a request for a sign on. A few days later I was on PLATO again and playing Empire for the first time in 33 years.

Empire is exactly as I had remembered it: clunky, visually primitive, and incredibly fun. The entire interface is made up of keyboard commands; there is no mouse for control on the system. Game play is glacially slow with moments of blinding speed and intensity during combat; the 2d environment makes it somewhat like a World War Two naval battle. It is also very hard to play. It took me a year or more to become an average player. Most of the players are old hands and play at a very high level of proficiency



which means a new player may feel picked on and pretty much helpless because they can't beat most of the regular players; I have met some new players who gave up the game because they couldn't master average competence with ship to ship fighting. My approach was to attack the best players in the game: Billy the Kid, Rob the Rebel, and JPaley.

Playing Empire requires a strong sense of humour. The Empire community is the most argumentative and divisive bunch of gamers I've ever encountered online. Some of the players have been fighting each other for some 40 or more years now, and those old gamer grudges run deep. This kind of history exists nowhere else on the web. Although there are four teams, most players end up settling into one of two groups, the Federation, also known as The Feds and sometimes as the Minna Feds for Minnesota Feds, and the Orions, referred to by their enemies as the Bugs because of their tiny space ship icon. I know of some other names used for the teams but I'll refrain from having them put in print.

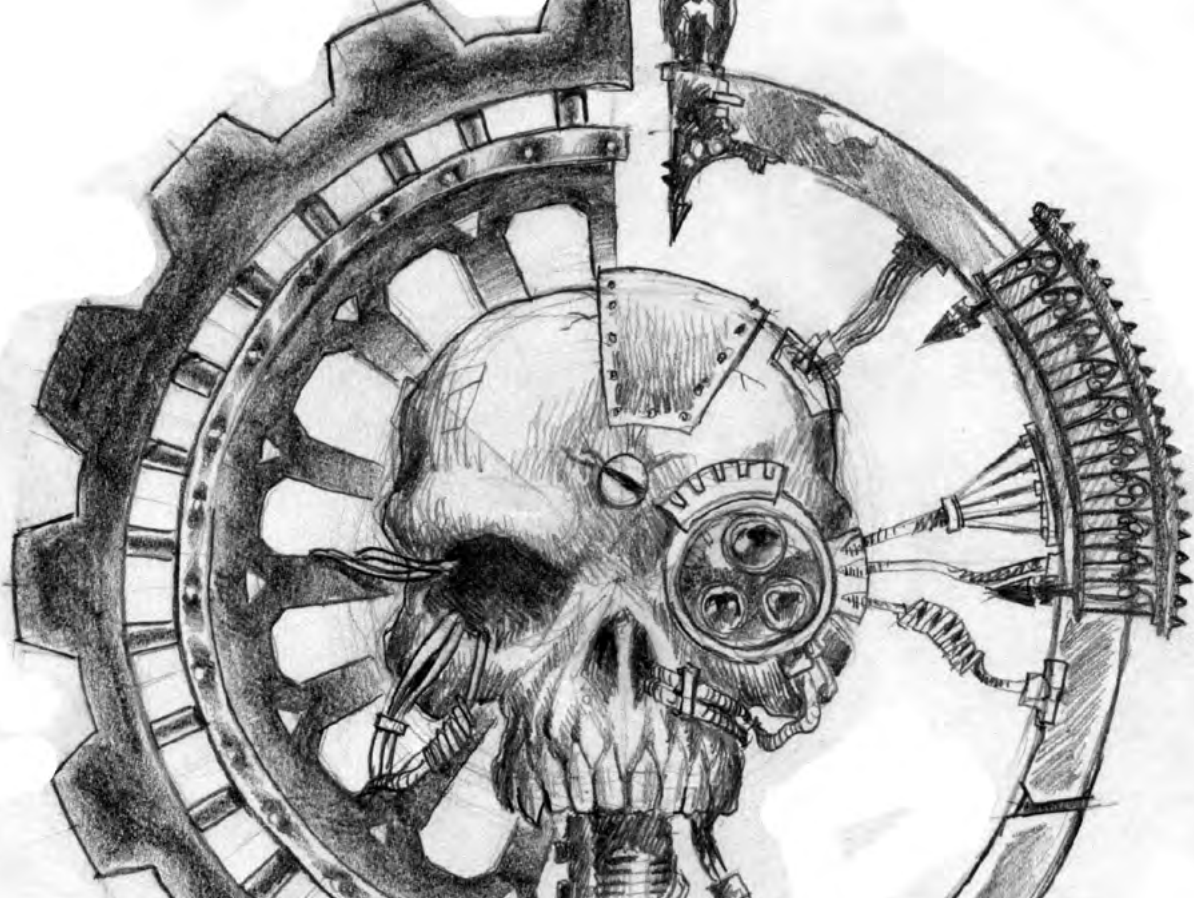
Coming into the game as a new guy I wanted to avoid the feud and decided to play as a Romulan. That meant I was flying the big slow, gas guzzling space ship with heavy weapons. On top of that I was mostly alone fighting both the Feds and the Orions relentlessly. There is a motto amongst the Feds: No one fights alone; yet, I did just that for most of a year. I suspect everyone still wonders why I was so tenacious about it.

Although I tried to stay out of the feud, I finally gave in and am having fun provoking the Orions as a Romulan. But I have to add some of my favorite people are Orions, so for me it's really very tongue in cheek - it is a video game after all. Yet others take their rivalries very seriously, to the extent that some of the anger has spilled over into real life. I heard one story of a player getting so mad at another guy that he drove over to the guy's house and punched him in the face. Of course this kind of behavior is not approved of in the community and he was banned from the system for life.

My one big feud was with an Orion who played with the user name John Deere. It seems he was not very popular with the Feds, and he wasn't fond of the Feds either. I might add that in the Federation notes file, the phrase - Nothing Runs Like a Deere - was posted over every discussion entry for quite some time. He felt that despite my Romulan neutrality, I was favoring the Feds too much. So he started calling me a Fed as if it was a dirty word and attacking me with his ship every chance he could get. I

thought the whole thing was hilarious and we traded barbs in the Empire notes file where everyone could see our rivalry. It was really fun and I looked forward to our lunchtime battles. I think he had fun with it too. Sadly, he is no longer on the system. As a gamer of any kind, it's good to find a rival who is better than you and to challenge him over and over until you get good enough to match him.

PLATO isn't full of glitz and glamour like the rest of the Internet. It is an old system being emulated inside of a terminal program that has to be downloaded to one's desktop for free. Most of the longtime users are middle aged or older. The organization that runs it is dedicated to being a living example of what networked computing was like during the late 60's to 80's. Since I joined there has been a steady decline of players in Empire making it hard to get a really big battle going. I believe the system will be up and running for us older computer users and gamers, but it is disheartening to consider that we may actually end up being the players inside a rarely visited museum display.



## Notables of Flathead's Romance : Heroes and Villains for Traveller RPG

Words: Dave Barker

This article is intended to run alongside the Palm Crossing setting that I wrote about in Irregular Magazine Issue 7 (Winter 2011). I've described some of the more notable heroic and villainous characters from around the world of Flathead's Romance and from the frontier town of Palm Crossing in particular that can be used by Traveller GMs running a campaign or a single adventure set in the world of Flathead's Romance.

These characters are intended to be used as non-player characters (NPCs), perhaps either as patrons or as enemies that the player characters may encounter (or upset!) as they go about their own business. Hairstyles and clothing are of particular cultural importance to most of the people on Flathead's Romance, so each of the characters includes some description of how they like to present themselves to the world.

When creating all of the Palm Crossing pieces I had the Mongoose version of the Traveller RPG in mind, but I hope that it will be of use to any Traveller Referee who wants to pit his or her players against the perils of Flathead's Romance!

Decker Morgan : Antarian Horse Breeder

Decker Morgan is a businessman by trade, but a horse lover by vocation and is the owner of one of the largest Antarian horse breeding ranches on Brazen, the main continent on Flathead's Romance. Morgan's ranch, Stable Investments is about 150km east of Starport and nearly three-quarters of its trade is the offworld sale of premium riding horses. To support this trade, Stable Investments also owns and operates a custom-designed and built 800 ton Jump-2 starship specially outfitted for the transportation of live riding horses.

Morgan is always well turned out, usually in fashionable but hard-wearing trousers and riding boots and always sporting a large silver belt buckle shaped like the Stable Investments company logo. He is almost always bare-chested and likes to wear his long, straight, dark down hair in a neat plait.

Decker Morgan Adventure Hooks

1 .. Someone or something has been killing and mutilating the horses on Morgan's ranch and he'd like the characters to quietly investigate and stop the killings before the news about the problem leaks out.



2 .. Morgan is planning a horse riding expedition into the wild and dangerous northern mountains of the continent of Brazen and needs skilled characters to accompany his small party.

3 .. Morgan's regular Starship crew have all fallen ill with an unexplained outbreak of the Spotted Flux and the next cargo of horses simply must be delivered on schedule. Morgan himself can captain the voyage, but he needs a reliable crew.

Simon von Stamford : Industrialist

Simon von Stamford, or Si, as he prefers people to call him, runs a small but successful firm AstroSmiths, in the industrial district of Starport. Employing about two dozen design engineers and about the same number of technicians, AstroSmiths designs and builds small interplanetary vessels as well as providing parts and services for their customers, most of whom are involved in mining the asteroid belts of the star system.

Si rarely dresses the same two days running, but is fond of bolero jackets and tailored shorts. His hair is long, but usually sculpted and coloured in some way differing from week-to-week. He is also a practicing Dragonist and can often be found in one of the Temple Libraries when not at work or in business meetings.

Simon von Stamford Adventure Hooks

1 .. AstroSmiths is in urgent need of a group of characters to provide security for a shipment of parts for a sea-capable ship's boat that is stranded at Palm Crossing harbour until it can be repaired. The last shipment went missing.

2 .. Si has heard of an obscure Dragonist scroll that can only be read by devotees who make a pilgrimage to a remote mountain-top temple in the wild northern mountains of Brazen. But if he is to go there, he needs the characters to act as his bodyguards on the journey against the many predatory

wild animals in the region.

3 .. Si has a particularly tricky engineering problem that AstroSmiths have simply not been able to solve. He has heard that one of the characters has some experience in this area and he is keen to talk.

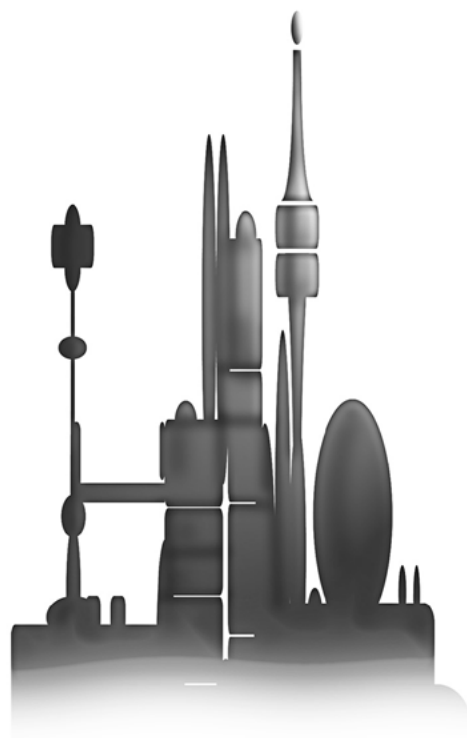
Docent Sasha Chung Singh : Priest of the Church of the Dragon Prophet Incarnate

Docent Chung is a short, broad-shouldered woman with piercing blue eyes. Her hair is usually styled into a 50cm cone pointing straight up from her head and she always wears the loose, light robes of her calling. But far and away the most striking feature of Docent Chung is her keen intellect and desire to learn new things. She has an audiographic memory can recall almost anything she's ever been told.

Sasha's life goal is to contribute to the discovery of The Artefact and she will do everything in her power to improve, even by the slightest margin, the possibility of The Prophecy coming closer to fruition.

Docent Sasha Chung Singh Adventure Hooks

1 .. Docent Chung is concerned that there is an assassin stalking her because she has found out something she was not meant to know. She's likely to hire the characters to guard and protect her until she can make it to the safety of the lesser Dragonist







temple in Brazen's second city, Kopenhagen.

2 .. Docent Chung has an important social event to attend in a few days time and her reputation would be enhanced if she could persuade a group of offworlders to attend with her as her guests. Offworlders such as the characters, perhaps?

3 .. Docent Chung has what she believes is a lead on where The Artefact may be located. She needs the characters to accompany her on a journey to one of the minor asteroid belts in the outer solar system to follow up the lead.

Scout Nelwen Jones : Scout Service Procurement Officer

Nelwen Jones is the planet-side Scout Service representative for the Scout Base on Freya, the only moon of Flathead's Romance. A strikingly handsome woman, she is most notable for her height which is 2m. Invariably to be found dressed in her service uniform, Nelwen wears her hair to a regulation length, but in deference to local customs, colours her hair red and purple.

Her primary role on the planet is the procurement of supplies for the moon base. She is also a point of contact for any Imperial Military personnel that find themselves on Flathead's Romance in need of assistance.

Scout Nelwen Jones Adventure Hooks

1 .. Scout Jones has a problem with a belligerent and paranoid AWOL marine who has holed up in a licensed brothel in town. She needs the characters to help subdue him and get him off-planet before local law enforcement gets involved.

2 .. The moon base need to acquire a small supply of a particularly rare mineral and all of the stocks in Starport are unavailable. Scout Jones needs the characters to travel to Palm Crossing and acquire 10kg of the mineral directly from the one small mine which produces it.

3 .. Scout Jones needs the characters to deliver urgent orders to a retired Navy Commander who lives on the north coast of the continent of Silvan. But he doesn't have any form of electronic communication and the orders need to be delivered in person.

Jennine MacPhee : Mayor and Sheriff of Palm Crossing

Sheriff MacPhee is a middle-aged woman with a huge force-of-will that is intimidating to most people who come into her presence. She has dedicated that force-of-will over her whole career to keep law and order in the town of Palm Crossing and she has been one of the most successful Sheriffs the town has ever had. This success is what has led to her election to Town Mayor six years ago and she has held both positions since then.

Sheriff MacPhee usually wears her law office uniform of a light brown skirt with dark brown leather boots and bandoleer. Attached to the bandoleer at her left shoulder is her blue rank epaulette with its silver star in the middle and she always carries an autopistol holstered on the bandoleer at her right hip.

Jennine MacPhee Adventure Hooks

1 .. Sheriff MacPhee needs to organise a posse to bring in an outlaw who is thought to be holed up in an abandoned mine 15km northwest of Palm Crossing. She's planning to deputise the characters to form this posse.

2 .. Sheriff MacPhee's deputies need some additional training in a skill that she has heard the characters possess and she'd like to hire them to train her law enforcers.

3 .. Sheriff MacPhee is becoming increasingly concerned about the nightly goings on at the warehouse of Julian Flixx but she has no spare manpower. She'd like to hire the characters for a stakeout to discover what is going on.

### Julian Flixx : Palm Crossing Warehouse Owner

Flixx is the owner of a 2000m2 warehouse in the port district of Palm Crossing. This is considered a medium-sized warehouse in the district and Flixx has a burning desire to expand and own more warehouse space in the port district, but it is such a cut-throat and competitive business environment that he has just not been able to raise the resources necessary to take over a rival's operation.

Flixx is also involved in some of the more shady trading activities which the authorities would prefer not to exist. Flixx doesn't get involved in anything he considers to be serious criminal activity, but this still leaves plenty of room in his operation for activities such as small-scale tariff evasion, a bit of smuggling and drug-running and owning a licenced brothel in the entertainment district of the town.

Flixx is also something of a hedonist and a semi-faithful observer of Dragonism. He often wears little more than sleeves and leggings and heavy make-up and he keeps his hair cropped short on the left side and leaves it to grow long on the right.

#### Julian Flixx Adventure Hooks

1 .. Flixx wants to throw a party for all of his employees downtown to celebrate a large contract he has just landed. But that would leave his warehouse

unguarded. He'd like to hire the characters to keep his property secure for the night.

2 .. Flixx needs a smallish package delivered discreetly to a contact in Starport, no questions asked, and he's sure the characters are just the people he needs to help with this delivery.

3 .. When the characters can't find a particular piece of equipment that they really need, Flixx appears able to sell it to them. But can they trust this man?

### Theophilus Monks : Palm Crossing Stevedore Union Boss

Theo is the Union organiser for Flixx's warehouse. However, there is little antagonism between the two men as Flixx treats his workers fairly and Theo is seen as his primary lieutenant. Theo does a lot of the dirty work that Flixx needs to avoid being seen doing and has contacts in law offices that have helped keep him out of too much trouble.

Theo has gone bald early in life and keeps his head shaved, but paints on a different abstract pattern each morning. Like many other stevedores in Palm Crossing, he often wears a simple cotton mawashi, which is a long cotton belt wrapped several times around the waist and groin. It is practical and convenient for labouring.





#### Theophilus Monks Adventure Hooks

- 1 .. Theo has lost something very important to Flixx. He lost it in payment for a foolish bet on a game of chance. What is worse, he lost it to a man who works for one of Flixx's rivals and Theo needs the characters' help to get it back before Flixx finds out it has gone missing!
- 2 .. One of the mine holdings that has a contract to deliver and sell a regular amount of ore to Flixx hasn't been heard from for three weeks and Theo would like to hire the characters to accompany him and help find out what has happened to the mine.
- 3 .. Theo has met a girl and needs to get them both away from the criminal life he's fallen into. He wants to flee in the night, unseen, to Starport and then off-world and he has the funds to do it. He needs help to ensure he disappears without a trace.

#### Alice Hådrada : Hairdresser

Whilst Alice does work during the day as a hairdresser in Palm Crossing, her primary source of income actually comes from her sideline as a dealer of illicit narcotics. She fell into being a dealer a couple of years ago as a consequence of being a bhang user herself and is sufficiently careless in her dealings that she is likely to be picked up by the law within the next couple of years.

Alice is by any standards a very pretty young woman. She is tall, at about 180cm with a full figure which she loves to display and long curly blonde hair that flows down her back.

#### Alice Hådrada Adventure Hooks

- 1 .. Alice and a small group of her friends descend on the characters in a public place, insisting that they know them and that they hang out for the day. They just won't take no for an answer.
- 2 .. As a result of not being half as sober as she should have been, Alice has accidentally ruined the hair of the favourite dolly girl of a local criminal boss and desperately needs the characters' help to disap-



pear for a while.

- 3 .. Alice has an awesome new hair product that she wants to try out and one of the characters looks like they've got the perfect hair. The hairdo will be free, but Alice isn't saying what the product does before she applies it!

#### Captain Victoria Saladana : Passenger Seaplane Pilot

Captain Saladana is a thin, energetic woman who lives to fly. Being the Captain of a passenger seaplane is pretty much her ideal job. Her main annoyances in life are the regular storms that brew up over Lovecraft's Ocean and force her to land her plane at one of the islands. She is at her happiest just after landing from a straight 18 hour flight between Starport and Palm Crossing which hasn't been interrupted by bad weather.

Victoria is seldom seen out of the blue pants and vest of her pilot's uniform and her long brown hair is usually tied back in a practical ponytail. She has friends in every port that she flies to and enjoys being around people.

#### Captain Victoria Saladana Adventure Hooks

- 1 .. On her last solo crossing of Lovecraft's Ocean, Captain Saladana's seaplane was forced to seek sanctuary at the safety lodge on the island of South Silesia. However, in the dark, in the middle of the storm, something dark and terrifying came out of the sea and attacked the lodge. Victoria wants to go back and confront her fears, but would like to take along the characters both for safety and to prove that she is not insane.
- 2 .. Victoria is off duty for a day and is looking to hire a group of experienced adventurers to help her hunt Griffones in the wilds around Palm Crossing.
- 3 .. Captain Saladana has a passenger contract to carry a man she really does not like, or trust, to Starport. She'd like to hire the characters to travel with her to make sure she stays safe.





## Alaric and the Goths

# Alaric and the Goths

Words: Jason Hubbard

Alaric and the Goths played an active part in the downfall of the Western Roman Empire.

The origins of the Goths is still quite a puzzle for modern historians and archaeologists, though some of the written evidence dating from around the second century suggests that they were settled around modern day Poland. It is believed by many that they originated from the Baltic region and possibly from Gotland in Sweden.

The Goths moved south east splitting into two separate distinct groups, Ostrogoths or Eastern Goths and the Visigoths, who settled in Dacia. In 236 AD they made their first contact with the Roman Empire, with incursions across the river Danube. The Goths slowly absorbed Roman culture over a period of time.

Ulfilas, a follower of the Arian God, was the first to convert the pagan Goths to Christianity during the mid fourth century. He is also responsible for the translation of the bible to Gothic, there are some surviving pieces of the text, known as the Codex Argenteus or Silver Bible.

It was the growing power of the Huns that finally displaced the Gothic tribes and pushed them into the Roman empire. The Ostrogoths were pushed westward by the Huns, which in turn pushed the Visigoths into the Romans. Valens allowed the Visigoths to settle in the depopulated regions of

upper Macedonian providence. The aim was that the Goths would act as a buffer zone against the encroaching Huns. Problems were created by corrupt local Roman officials who mistreated the Goths, this mistreatment led to the Goths breaking their treaty with Rome.

The Visigoths rebelled plundering the countryside, which resulted in the attack and siege of Adrianople in August 378 AD. The Goths defeated the last field army of the Roman Empire. They decimated the Roman Military, after this event the empire was forced to rely on mercenaries and the Foederati.

Athanius, Gothic leader, made peace with the Empire and emperor Theodosius. The Goths rejoined the empire, providing troops for the army and again acting as a buffer zone to the barbarian Huns. The Goths also now sent young nobles to Constantinople. These were to act as hostages, but the aim was also to Romanise the young nobles in the hope of fully integrating them into the empire. Whilst there they also received a first class education in the Roman military.

The empire hoped that these future leaders would be more at home with the Roman way of life, and become active members of the Roman Military machine, thus persuading the Goths to become extended members of the Roman Empire. One of these young nobles sent to Constantinople was a young Alaric. Whilst in the Eastern Empire capital

he met another young future leader, Stilicho, who would eventually become the last great defender of the Western Roman Empire.

In 394 AD, both Alaric and Stilicho, accompanied Theodosius along with the Roman army westward to deal with the pretender to the throne Egnatius, who was supported by the Frankish King Arbogast. Alaric and his gothic troops fought against Egnatius and Arbogast in the Eastern Alps. After a hard and furiously fought campaign the pretenders were defeated. Afterward Alaric believed he and his men had been used, that his men had been sacrificed and used as fodder during the campaign.

In 395 AD Theodosius died, the Empire was divided into two between his sons Honorius, who commanded the west, and Arcadius who ruled the eastern half of the empire. Alaric believed he was undervalued as a leader and was extremely bitter towards the ruling elite of the empire because he felt he hadn't been given a position of high command.

The Goths wanted a kingdom of their own to command and Alaric wanted a position of importance and authority. The gothic tribes declared Alaric king of the Goths. He then led his people and army against Constantinople, travelling through and plundering Greece. They conquered several cities, some of which included Sparta, Corinth and Argos, before reaching the Eastern Capital.

During this time the Goths learnt cavalry warfare and tactics. The use of the heavy cavalry horse became the favoured military tactic of the Gothic leaders. The cavalry used a heavy lance called a kontos and carried several light javelins. Many on the Roman infantry units neither had the discipline or the stomach to stand against a Gothic cavalry charge. The Gothic army had the advantage of being highly mobile, due to having a minimal baggage train. Alaric and the Goths terrorised the Greek people for a period of two years, until Stilicho arrived with a Roman army. The Gothic army took to ships and escaped over the Corinthian gulf and moved northwards.

Another Gothic leader Radagaisus built an army which contained a multitude of warriors from different cultures and nations, these included Roman deserters and slaves. They crossed the Danube river and headed down to Italy with 20-40,000 warriors. They marched and plundered their way down to Florence. Stilicho reacted by marching a force of 20,000 Roman troops, which included Alan and Hun



mercenaries against Radagaisus. The Gothic army was driven into the Fiesola Highlands, where they were trapped. Lacking food they started to starve and desertions became common. Once they were at their weakest point Stilicho moved in and annihilated them. They captured thousands of Gothic warriors who were pressed into service with the Roman army, Radagaisus was captured and executed.

In 406 Britain rebelled and proclaimed Constantine Emperor. He led an army from Britain across the channel to the continent. A general named Sarus was sent against him and was unsuccessful. Alaric was paid 4,000 pounds of gold to march against this pretender from Britain. On the 13th August Stilicho was executed because he tried to leave the west on a visit to the east, leaving Alaric in command of the western military. As a result approximately 30,000 allied barbarian soldiers left Italy and joined Alaric. Then in 408 AD Alaric with his warriors invaded Italy, with Stilicho dead there was no competent general to stand against this invasion by Alaric and his Goths.





They captured Rome and managed to cut the supply lines between Rome and North Africa, which was the major supplier of grain to the Roman city. Alaric demanded gold, silver and any other portable treasure such as spice, which could easily be carried. The senate offered Alaric a deal of 5,000 gold, 30,000 silver and much more, but the deal fell through because Honorius withheld the Roman position and land rights which Alaric had demanded and wanted so badly. The siege continued through 409AD, the city rebelled and along with the Goths appointed a new Emperor Attalus, who appointed Alaric Magister Utriusque Militum.

The problem with this new Emperor was he suddenly gained some back bone and displayed a mind of his own, something the Goths hadn't expected. He refused the Goths passage to North Africa. Alaric became angry and frustrated so disposed of Attalus. The Goths then blockaded Rome stopping vital supplies entering the city. On the 24th August the Salarium Gates to the city were opened allowing the Goths into the city. Once inside they plundered the city of its riches before moving southwards.

They tried to cross the sea to Sicily, but were hampered by bad weather. A storm blew in and wrecked the Gothic fleet. This forced them to return to Italy and head northwards. It was during this time that Alaric succumbed to illness and died. Alaric is buried somewhere under the river Buzita, the exact location remains a mystery. The reason for this is because the Goths used slaves to divert the river so he could be buried, once this was completed the slaves were killed and the river allowed to run its course. All those who could have located the exact spot where Alaric was buried were killed.

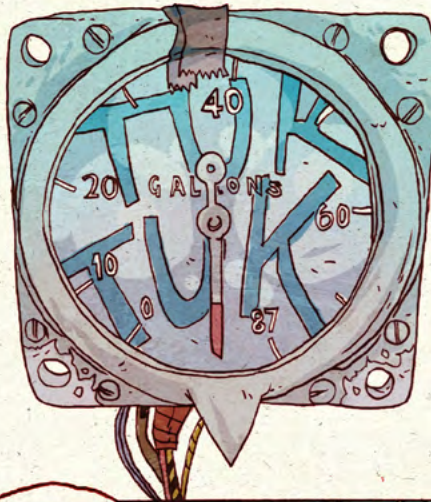
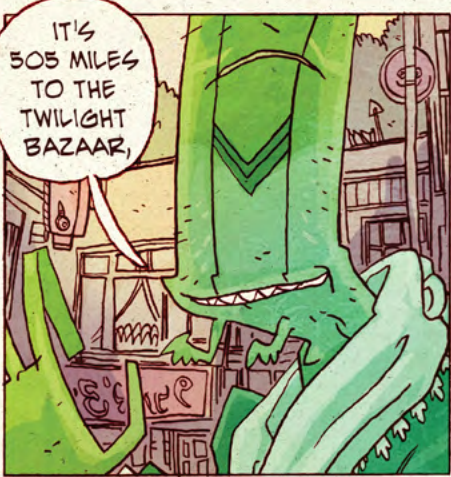
Eventually the Visigoths were settled in southern Gaul as foederati of the Romans, the reasons for which are still subjects for debate among scholars. They soon fell out with their hosts and established their own kingdom with its capital at Toulouse. They slowly extended their authority into Hispania, displacing the Vandals and Alans. Their rule in Gaul was cut short in 507 at the Battle of Vouillé, when they were defeated by the Franks under Clovis I. Thereafter the only territory north of the Pyrenees that the Visigoths held was Septimania and their kingdom was limited to Hispania. This came completely under the control of their small governing elite at the expense of the Byzantine province of Spania and the Suebic Kingdom of Galicia.













Meanwhile on the Floating  
Convent of Lotsamoni  
(Shortly before it was tragically  
burglarised).

SO THE CONDITIONS  
OF EMPLOYMENT  
ARE AGREED?

VERY GOOD  
YOUR LORDSHIP.

YES OF COURSE,  
NO WITNESSES.

YOU CAN BE SURE  
THAT YOU HAVE THE  
WORD OF  
MISS ESME SLADE,  
TUK TUK TRADING  
COMPANY WILL  
FAIL IN THEIR QUEST...





# Community

Artist Showcase  
Ian Garnett  
Leeds Royal Armouries









## Ian Garnett; Artist Showcase

### 1. How did you get interested in illustration?

I've just always drawn. So I guess it's been a natural progression rather than a sudden interest. I'm a self-confessed child in a man's body so robots and monsters and crazy looking things excite me and drawing them seems like the right thing to do. Oh and I wanted to draw like Simon Bisley during his 2000AD hay days. Still got a long, long way to go though.

### 2. What are the most important parts of any image?

I don't think there is one particular important part. I guess it depends on what the image is trying to do and whether it communicates that idea or concept well. Is it scary, does it have movement, is it just meant to look cool for cool's sake?

### 3. What methods do you use in your work?

Outside of the odd sketch in a sketchbook I'm 100% digital. It makes life so much easier when you live in a tiny London flat. No paint, no brushes to clean, no canvases and more room for my ever growing collection of art books and other assorted junk.

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

Any size or any scale suits me. I guess it depends on what I'm working on.





#### 5. Tell us about the character on the cover of issue 11

I wanted to draw something wintery but I also wanted to steer away from a traditional fantasy image. I initially started off with the idea of spirits pulling over a blanket of snow ushering in the winter season. Hopefully I captured something like that in the final image but as long as some people like it then I guess I was successful.

#### 6. Who and what influences you and your work?

Anything that a geek would love. Sci-fi, comics, films, TV and people. I generally enjoy drawing people more than anything else at the moment so I can't help but get some inspiration from everyone around me as well.

#### 7. Do you have a preferred genre - fantasy/historical etc. and why?

I think it would have to be fantasy. It has nothing to do with preferring the genre. I'm just awful at drawing anything technical. I find the organic shapes

much easier to draw. This appeals to my lazy mentality.

#### 8. Are you a gamer? What games and what got you first interested in gaming?

I used to be a wannabe gamer at school. Games workshop and the odd attempt at role-playing took up a lot of my childhood but I could never really afford a full army or the proper books. Now that I'm an adult I have two fully painted blood bowl teams but no one to play against. I also wasted a lot of my student years playing Magic the Gathering competitively. If boasting is allowed then at one point I was even the Type 1 UK Champion for a year. Something I'm very proud of even if few people know what that means.

These days though, my gaming fixes are mainly through PC gaming. I've just finished the first Mass Effect game and I have Skyrim sitting on my hard drive waiting to be loaded up and played to death.



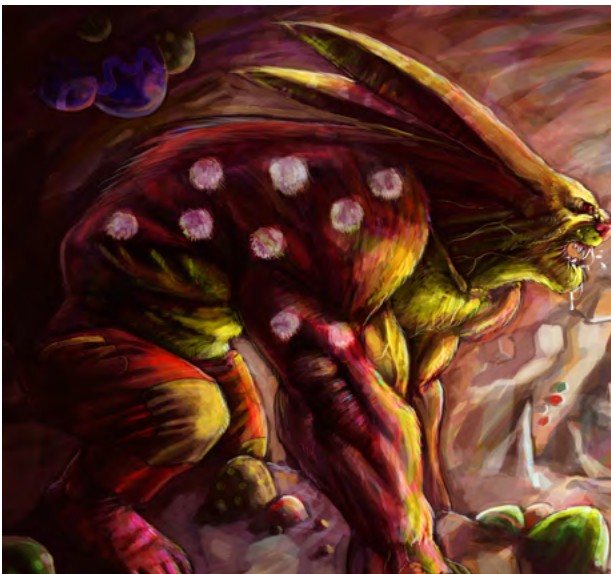


9. Is there anyone you would like to work with or for in the future?

Being a former long term Magic player I would love to see some of my images on their cards. That would be a glorious day for me. If anyone from Wizards is reading this give me a call.

10. Which artists do you find exciting at the moment and why?

I don't know if there is any one artist that excites me specifically. I think what really excites me is the way artists and other creatives can now gain a mass audience because of the internet, like the boom in web comics for example. People are now able to fully own their ideas and produce and distribute their ideas on a mass scale. That's exciting. And magazines like this one possibly wouldn't exist without that power.







Words & Photography: Alex Garbett

A trip to the Royal Armouries in Leeds, England is a must for any wargamer or history enthusiast.

The armouries at Leeds are an overflow from the Tower of London. The Leeds armoury is so chock-a-block full of swords, guns and suits of armour it makes me wonder how much armour and weapons are actually stored in the UK!

As you can expect with any national museum currently in the UK, admission is free though there is a suggested donation of only £3.

The museum covers four floors which feature displays from across the globe in the following sections:

#### WAR - Ancient to Medieval

This includes Greek, Roman, Celtic and Saxon through to medieval warfare. There are huge suits of armour, horse armour and some of the nastiest looking weapons ever devised to inflict maximum damage and pain on the opponent



## Leed Royal Armouries



### PEACE - FAREWELL TO FIREARMS?

This looks at the future of armed conflict and disarmament.

### HUNTING

This covers hunting through the ages, different styles, the sport of hunting along with several displays of big game hunting.

### ORIENTAL

I found this section one of the most impressive. It covers displays from ancient China, Japan, south and south-east Asia, central Asia, India and the Islamic world. It culminates in the hugely impressive elephant armour!

### TOURNAMENT

This shows jousting and combat displays.

### SELF DEFENCE

This shows civilian arms throughout the past and across the western world from cane swords to pistols. It finishes with IMPACT - an exhibition and information with photographs and statements from victims and those affected by gun crime in today's world.

In summer the main museum activities for the year kick in with displays in the Tiltyard where real jousting, falconry, swordplay and equestrian events take place. There is a Menagerie where you can see horses and speak with experts, often the knights you've seen jousting at the Tiltyard. Inside the museum there are live talks and displays on weapons, the soldiers perspective and artefacts/replicas on display for show and tell exercises.

Leeds Armouries is a great day out for all the family and especially great if you're a wargamer. It's very interesting to learn more about the weapons used on your miniatures and also to get photographs of real life objects to use as reference when painting or sculpting.

The Leeds Armouries are easy to access by car or rail and are only a short walk from Leeds train station. More information can be found on their website or via the contact details below.

I've been to Leeds Armouries several times, I always find something new to see or just enjoy checking out that favourite set of armour or sword.

Hope you can get there and enjoy!

### Opening times

Daily 10am - 5pm

The museum is closed 24-26 December.

### Contact details

24hr information: 0113 220 1999

Email: [HYPERLINK "mailto:enquiries@armouries.org.uk"](mailto:enquiries@armouries.org.uk) enquiries@armouries.org.uk

### Admission

Free but some events may be chargeable.





Painting Female Faces

Making Miniature Bases



Making planets, celestial bodies and space stations part 2



# Painting Female Faces

Words & Photography: Lyn Sthal

When I teach classes or give demonstrations about painting faces, the most common question I am asked is: "Is there a difference between painting male and female faces?" The answer is, yes there are a few differences.



Take a look at the pictures above of the male and female face. Notice that the female's features are more rounded, soft and lighter in colour with a more pinkish tone. Notice that the male's face has sharper and chiseled features with a more tan coloured tone. When looking at the pictures, one can also see the comparison in both the shadows and highlights on the faces. The female face has much softer shadows and the male's face has darker shadows. The progression from shadow to highlight on the faces also differs; the female's progression is much softer than the male's. As you can see in the pictures of the miniatures that I have painted below, the male dwarf has darker skin and deeper shadows while the female faces are lighter and brighter.



When painting a miniature, you want to emulate the colours, shadows and highlights either at least somewhat when doing a table top quality paint job or as realistically as possible depending on what level paint job you are doing and what exactly you are looking to achieve. If you are a beginner or intermediate level painter, I find that Reaper's Master Series paints are easy to use because they have different triads (shadow, mid-tone, and highlight). The triads are great, especially for table top quality paint jobs. For Caucasian skinned females, I find that the Rosy Skin triad is best to use most of the time since it has the pink tones that a Caucasian female's skin would typically have. There is a dark skin triad also which mixes very well with the Golden Skin triad in order to get those golden undertones that are typically seen on dark skinned females. When using Privateer Press' P3 line, I like to use Khardic Flesh for the rosy skin tone and Iridian Flesh for darker skin. Here are some tips for painting female faces:

As with painting any other part of the figure, remember to water down your paints or use flow improver if you prefer. This will help the paint go on to the miniature nicely and smoothly. You might need to do a few coats for full coverage, but I promise the results are worth it.

Use flesh wash or a Brown Liner in the eye sockets to make the eyes stand out. I use a size 3/0 (000) brush to line and paint in pupils and colour of the eye. If you have a steady hand and good brush control, you can draw in a thicker line on top of the eye to giving the illusion of eyelashes or eyeliner. If you do not have much experience painting eyes or



if the eyes on the model are very small, you cannot go wrong positioning the eyes as if the character was looking to the side. For more information about painting eyes, there are many articles on sites such as coolminiornot.com and Wamp-forum.com with great ideas and different ways to go about painting eyes on a miniature.

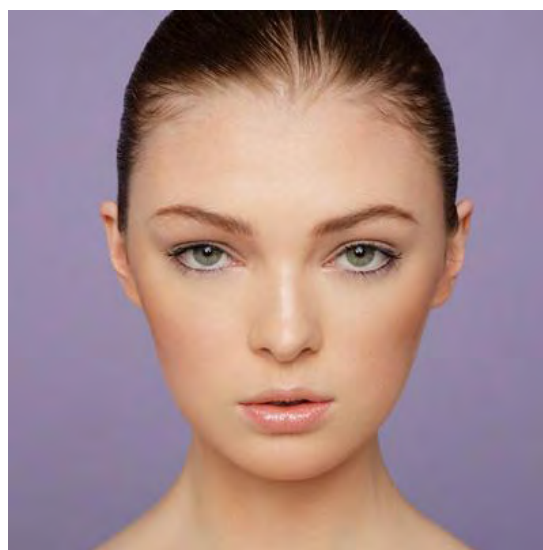
When painting make-up on a female miniature such as eye shadow, there are two techniques that you can use: mix the base skin colour with the makeup colour (the mix ratio actually depends on how bright you want the eye shadow colour) or to water the makeup colour down to almost a glaze and apply multiple coats until you have achieved the colour you want. When painting lipstick colours, you can use the same techniques, just be sure to line where the lips separate with a brown liner and highlight on the bows of the top lip (except if the miniature is looking down) and the center of the bottom lip.

When painting female lips without lipstick colour,



mix a blush pink, peach, or tan to the skin colour in order to achieve a colour that is only about 2-3 shades darker or pinker than the rest of the face to achieve the look that you see in the two pictures below.

Adding a mix of a rose colour and the skin colour to the cheeks to give a 'blushing' effect can give a female miniature's face personality and look beautiful. Be sure to only apply the blush colour on the inside part of the cheeks just like in the photos below.



When painting eyebrows on a female, the best shape to go for is an arch or rounded just like in the pictures above using a size 3/0 (000), 00, or 0 brush. For hair colours such as blonde, it is best to use a medium brown colour, for red hair a dark brown mixed with the red looks good. If it is easier, you can use a dark brown colour for both.

I hope that these tips have helped and answered some questions about the faces of female miniatures. Please feel free to email me at Lyn.Stahl@yahoo.com if you have any additional questions.

Happy Painting!



# Making planets, celestial bodies and space stations - part 2

Words & Photography: Alex Garbett

Continuing my preparation for the release of Mongoose Publishing's *Star Fleet - A Call to Arms*, I'm adding larger planets and space stations to the moons already created in the last issue.

As with the moons, the first part of building the terrain is gathering the materials you need for construction. I needed another larger polystyrene ball for the base, Polyfilla, paints, PVA glue and a flying base and stand.



I ordered, via eBay, a 150mm x 150mm polystyrene ball which arrived a couple of days later in two parts. After raiding several unused drawers at work I found a large, black plastic Christmas bauble. I stashed this with bits and bobs that I gather from work (straws, coffee stirrers, plastic bottle tops, bits of cable etc). You never know when random junk will come in handy!

I decided that as this polystyrene ball was the largest sphere I'd found, I'd make it into a sun.



Like all my ideas everything starts on paper. Not content with a basic yellow ball, I was having trouble figuring out the best way of capturing the swirling mass of flames on the sun so I consulted Google for images of it.

After thinking about it for half a day I settled on the idea of using Polyfilla as a covering base for the sun. I would then swirl patterns and raised areas into the surface to make it more of a living surface.



That evening I sat down with what was going to be the sun. First I stuck both parts of the polystyrene together using PVA glue. Once this had sufficiently dried I added the flying base pushing the flight stand deep into the polystyrene. I finished this off with plenty of PVA glue to secure it.

With the stand and ball glued and assembled now comes the messy part - adding the Polyfilla. I watered down the filler so the polystyrene would partially absorb it but also that it would be slick enough to swirl and mould without it being too dry and thick.

It's best to cover the surface in stages and patches as it is easier to work with. You also won't find yourself caught with filler running down one side and dripping off another! I used a wooden coffee shop stirrer to apply the Polyfilla and in using this avoided any fingerprints.



The next part is the boring one, waiting for it to dry before you can add the next coat. I did mine over several nights after work so it was drying as I slept

I came back the following night and added the second coat covering the areas not done before and by the end of the second night the surface was fully covered and drying well.

Once the filler is dry it is time to paint. As I'd decided that this was going to be a sun/star, I put a half water half chaos black paint mix on to give the base colour but also seal the Polyfilla.

Now that the black was dry and the polystyrene sealed in filler and paint, I used several spray paints from reds to yellows to build up a base coat and depth on the surface.

It looked more like I wanted it to now. After drying it over night again it was time to add the final touches turning this yellow mass into a star.



I dry-brushed skull white over the surface of the star indicating the roaring solar mass, this also helped raise the detail.





At this point I did consider it done but after going back to my Google pictures of the Sun I decided to add a few sunspots across various points to give it a more realistic feel. These sunspots were achieved using chaos black again...now it looked like a star! Parts of the sun are cooler than others though it's still several thousands degrees centigrade!



So with moons and a star ready I've just got to finish a planet or two off and then it's onto the space stations.



# Basic Miniature Basing

Words & Photography: Lyn Sthal

Why base a miniature?

Basing a miniature can be just as important as the miniature itself. The base is what completes the miniature and pulls the whole piece together. This especially holds true in the case of painting competition and display pieces. For gaming pieces, you want to make sure that your base has at least some texture to look nice. In other words, don't just paint the base green and say "Yay! Look! Grass!".

Let's take a second to compare two table top painted pieces that are used for gaming:



As you can see in the pictures, the Wyrd Miniature's Electric Creation that I painted looks a bit plain without a base. Then when I added a resin base that I also painted, notice how the piece looks different and looks like it is brought a little more to life. If you would like more extensive examples, check out sites of painted miniatures such as [Coolminiornot.com](http://Coolminiornot.com), [Reapermini.com](http://Reapermini.com), [ChestofColors.com](http://ChestofColors.com), WAMP forums, or since we are at a convention, you can even check out the amazing competition pieces on display by the paint and take area.



Where do I begin?

Before painting a miniature, we look at it to envision not only what we want it to look like, but also we envision the setting. The following questions may come to mind:

What season is it? Winter, spring, summer, or fall?

Are my character/s on a spaceship?, In a bar?, On a mountain?, Standing on a pile of dirt?, Standing on a pile of debris after escaping a deadly explosion?, Next to a pond or a creek?, In a kitchen making some pie?!

The possibilities are endless!

What supplies will I need?

- Elmer's glue and superglue (such as Zap-A-Gap)
- Old miniature painting brushes used for tasks such as applying glue and spreading it
- Black plastic bases square or circular - these can be purchased from companies such as Reaper) plastic bases come in different sizes such as 30mm, 40mm, and 50mm
- Paints
- Brush on/ spray on primer (for spray on I use Tamiya and for brush-on I use Reaper)
- Brushes such as 2, 1, 0, 000, and dry brushes Tweezers - used to add or remove small pieces from the base such as small rocks or patches of grass
- X-acto knife
- Basing supplies such as grass flock, snow, sand, and dirt - these can be obtained from retailers such as Woodland Scenics, Gale Force Nine, Skullcrafts.com, and Games Workshop. You can also get patch grass that adheres on the base from Armypainter.com.
- Spray on sealer (such as Testor's Dullcoate) to seal any painting done on the base
- There are resin bases (such as the one pictured above) that can also be purchased and all you have to do is paint them. They can be purchased from retailers and manufacturers such as Cool-miniornot.com and Dragonforge.com.
- For more intermediate to advanced techniques, you can use milliput and/or Green Stuff (Kneadatite) to sculpt a base (sculpt rocks, steps, bricks, etc.)
- Clay shapers can be purchased from Dickblick.com

If you would like to add water to your scene (a puddle, a creek, etc.) Water Effects is available through Woodland Scenics and Games Workshop

Is there any way to improvise if I run out of supplies or if I cannot get a certain basing supply in time? Absolutely! There are many items that you can improvise with that are either already in your home or right outside in your yard, in a park, or even on a beach. These items include: sand, tiny twigs, small rocks, gravel, kitty litter (to make small rocks), dry coffee grounds (to make dark coloured dirt or mud), and broken up cork board (to make rocks, rubble, and cliffs).

Here's another idea!

If you need a wooden base for your figure or a diorama there are beautiful wooden bases that can be purchased through sites such as Crookedeyestudios.com, etsy.com, and Pegaso Models. However, if you are short on time and/or money, there are plain wooden plaques that can be purchased from the craft store Michael's for about 69 cents.

Here is a little step by step of how to put together a quick wooden base:

1. Take the wooden plaque and sand it down starting with 220 grit sandpaper to smooth out ridges, 320 grit for further smoothing, and 400 grit for extra fine finishing smoothing.

2. Once you finish sanding out the ridges and smoothing the surfaces, take wood stain with clear lacquer with a sponge brush (also can be purchased at Michael's or Home Depot) and brush on in even strokes being sure to go along with the grain of the wood. If using spray lacquer, be sure to spray 8-12 inches away from the wooden plaque using even spray strokes adding light coats.

In the case that you are using wood stain: apply the wood stain first, allow stain to dry, then seal with spray lacquer.

3. Let it dry.

Ok, I have some supplies, now how do I make a base?

Now that we have discussed the basics, let us put what we have learned to use and make some bases! Putting a basic base together is very easy and fun.



### Grass, Snow, Sand, Gravel and Dirt:

1. Take a plastic base.
2. Apply Elmer's glue (thinned a bit with water) to the surface of the base by spreading around with an old paintbrush.
3. Dip the base in the basing material (grass flock, snow, dirt, etc.) and use the back end of the old paintbrush to gently press the material onto the base to make sure it adheres properly and that the base is fully covered.
4. Put the flock-covered base on a piece of paper to allow the glue to dry. The paper will catch any excess material so that it can be placed back into its container.
5. Once the glue is dried, gently tap the base to remove excess material and put the excess back into its container and you're done!

Here's an idea

To add more to the base you can add accents such as placing rocks in random places on the base or placing patches of grass. When placing rocks and small areas of gravel, it is best to use tweezers so that nothing is ruined in surrounding areas on the base.

Also it is encouraged to dry brush paint onto grass flock in order to add dimension and color to pull your piece together and allow the color scheme to flow better.



### Cork board rocks

Photos were obtained from a Google image search.

As you can see in the pictures, the cork board that is glued on the bases look just like large rocks. This is very easy to do.

1. Simply take the cork board and break off a piece to the size that you want.
2. Use your fingernails or X-acto knife to 'nick' off small pieces all around the piece of cork board since realistically large rocks and cliffs usually have jagged edges.
3. Apply spray on or brush on primer and let t dry.
4. Paint the corkboard to your liking.

### Remember

Always experiment and try new things when putting together a base. It is amazing what kind of ideas you can put together and create an amazing base for your figure/s. Be creative and imaginative! It is your masterpiece so have fun with it!

Also, if you need ideas or inspiration, what I always do is look at landscaping photos from photographers such as Ansel Adams or even by doing a Google image search.



# Reviews

The Masked Witches

Baccus Basing System

Heroes of the Elemental Chaos



## The Masked Witches

### Brotherhood of the Griffon - Volume IV

Published by Wizards of the Coast

Words: Nick Johnson

Diving into an ongoing series after a couple of books is generally not my ideal scenario - you tend to miss key moments of character and plot development, and end up in a position where you're trying to figure out what has gone before, and whether it's relevant to what you're reading now.

This was the situation I found myself dreading when I started *The Masked Witches*, as I hadn't read any of the earlier books in the *Brotherhood of the Griffon* series. In fact, the last *Forgotten Realms* books I'd read were the *Hunter's Blades* trilogy by R.A. Salvatore, before the time jump that accompanied the roleplaying game's shift to fourth edition.

Having said that, *The Masked Witches* did a good job of drawing me in. The opening chapters set a strong hook for why such a diverse range of characters would be converging in this part of the *Realms*. Just enough hints were dropped as to what went before that I understood the characters from the word go.

Equally, Richard Lee Byers did a good job of incorporating some really creepy imagery in the story - as you'd hope for in a story featuring the undead. There's one scene that sticks in my mind describing a group of zombies and ghouls eliminating a peasant village. The treatment described of one child made me shudder. The half-demon baby communication item was unusual and disgusting at the same time.

On the other hand, the way that the action was described did make me feel at times like I was reading the description of someone's roleplaying session. This was particularly apparent during combat sequences featuring the main character, Aoth Fezim, where his array of magical tattoos made me think of the *At Will*, *Encounter* and *Daily* powers of a fourth edition D&D character. While I appreciate that this sort of book is a tie-in to the game and setting, I do feel it could have been a little less blatant.

Overall, I have to say that I enjoyed reading *The Masked Witches*, and I'm seriously considering picking up the three earlier books in this series - the hints given about what has happened earlier were intriguing enough that I want to go back and watch everything unfold. The end has also provided a solid set-up for the next book, with the majority of the core characters in grave peril in one form or another.

*The Masked Witches*  
*Brotherhood of the Griffon - Volume IV*  
 Author: Richard Lee Byers  
 Published by Wizards of the Coast  
 ISBN: 978-0-7869-5982-2  
 RRP: £6.99



## Baccus Basing System

<http://www.baccus6mm.com/>

Words: Nick Johnson

There are quite a lot of basing products available on the market for imprudent wargamers like me to buy. So many, in fact, that I often find it difficult to know which products will work well together to give a nice basing effect. Often I end up having spent a lot of money with an excessively large pile of different bits and pieces left over!

So, whilst browsing the Baccus6mm site a few months ago, I was rather pleased to see that they had put together a product designed for basing their 6mm minis. Since many other products are designed for larger figures I thought this might be a good purchase and quickly put in an order before my wife noticed [Ed: I'm sure she noticed when the parcel arrived, Dave!]

To be honest, despite all my good experience with Baccus6mm so far, my hopes weren't too high as I've bought pre-packed basing systems before and whilst they all work to some extent, I can't honestly say that I've been totally happy with the results.

Also, I haven't painted many smaller figures during the last few months. But since Christmas I've been painting quite a lot of miniatures for Flames of War. I was just starting to wonder what I could use for their bases when I remembered the Baccus Basing System I'd bought and not tried yet.

The kit itself contains a pot of PVA glue, a large pot of brown wash and three colours of tan paint for drybrushing the sand, as well as two different bags of basing material - a fine sand and a short-strand static grass. There are also some printed and well-illustrated instructions on how to use the kit. Extras from the kit are also available for separate purchase.

I found the instructions very easy to follow and the materials easy to apply. The fine sand didn't stick quite as uniformly as I expected, but this only enhanced the final result. Applying the wash was a bit messy too but, it is a wash!



Overall, I'm very pleased with the results. With my Flames of War infantry (in the photo) I've also used some Woodland Scenics Olive Bush to add a little to the bases. That didn't come with the Baccus Basing System, but other than that, everything you can see on the bases is from the kit I bought.

I don't think the sand and the short static grass would work too well on a larger miniature without adding further components to the bases, but I feel that the elements of the kit are perfectly scaled for anything from 15mm and below. So, if you're looking for an out-of-the-box basing system for your small scale minis, I can't recommend anything better!

Baccus Basing System  
<http://www.baccus6mm.com/>  
 RRP: £16.50

# Heroes of the Elemental Chaos

Published by Wizards of the Coast

Words: Richard Henson

Heroes of the Elemental Chaos stands awkwardly in the ranks of its brother and sister source books. In part this is due to the established order of these source books, but at the same time the book doesn't seem to be trying to meet the standards of older publications.

The book is robust and attractive, the illustrations are varied and appropriately epic and understated in equal measure, whereas the wording, tone and layout of the text is at the high quality that followers of D&D have come to expect from Wizards of the Coast. Sticking with the typical layout, the chapters of the book are arranged, explained and categorised in the established 4th edition fashion.

The background that comes with the book is interesting and very well-written. Heroes of the Elemental Chaos embellishes on the history and fate of the Primordials, including those that are dead, sealed or still loose in the cosmos. Any one of these Primordials can be the focal point of a campaign arc, or even the heart of an epic campaign; why not have a bound primordial released? What if the heroes fail and die in the battle against such a being? What are the consequences for such failure, considering we are told that one Primordial is capable of ruining the world?

The new character builds and powers are primarily mage orientated, and succeed in padding out the existing power lists with various flavours of lightning. Some spells from the previous edition make a return to the game, such as Limited Wish and Alter Self, and good old characters are mentioned such as Mordenkainen or Rigby. Themes remain a flexible and valid option for character growth, and the list expands impressively in Heroes of the Elemental Chaos, enough to support many play styles outside of this publication. The flavour of these themes and powers is easy to grasp and are in some parts inspiring, even if the illustration captions leave nothing to the imagination.

Yet Heroes of the Elemental Chaos merely builds on the old. Yes, the Themes are new and exciting, but they are essentially flavour rather than the meal itself. There are neither new classes nor races amongst its pages, and as a result the book cannot be used without other supplements. There are no builds that can stand alone, such as Heroes of Shadow's Blackguard or Executioner. The formulaic pattern of elemental powers becomes tedious to read through without a new class to hang on to. Eventually, these powers become a blur of the words 'push' 'pull' and the letter 'd' which spoils the raw, untamed image of elemental power. As a result, a player would have to own all three Players Handbooks, as well as additional power source supplements to make the best use of these additional features.

Is Heroes of the Elemental Chaos without merit? Certainly not, the ability to control elemental sprites and shatter castles with the sweep of your hand is appropriately melodramatic and epic, which is what the power of Chaos should be. Where the book falls is its unwillingness to jump into new territory; Dark Sun introduced Themes, and Arcane Power introduced Familiars, both of which are exciting and well-constructed methods of character building. Heroes of the Elemental Chaos merely brings us new Themes and Elemental Companions, both of which handle in exactly the same way as the older systems.

If you own the compatible source books, are set on making an element-themed character or are interested in the background behind Chaos and the Primordials, Heroes of the Elemental Chaos will not let you down in any regard. If you are looking for a medium through which to expand your gaming experience, this book is a solid purchase, but contributes little to the depth of 4th edition.





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