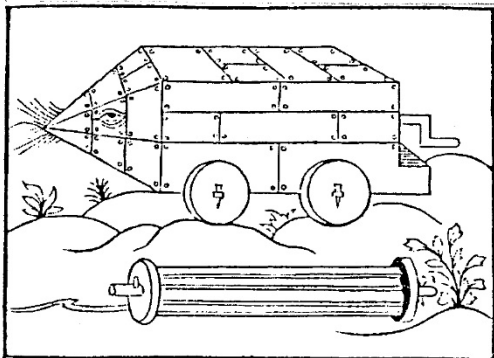


# The Origin of Tree Worship



Issue 4

Being an Occasional WFRP Gazetteer by Tim Eccles

2 Gold Crowns

(Imperial only)

## Editorial

Welcome to **The Origin of Tree Worship** issue 4. This is an issue with a difference for three reasons. Firstly, it is the first 'proper' issue of the fanzine for sale. Issues one and two were simply pamphlets given away with *Warpstone* magazine, whilst issue 3 was effectively a re-printing and re-editing of this material with some extras thrown in. Secondly, it is the first issue with material by someone other than myself. I am pleased to be able to bring the thoughts of Dwarf Book author **Alfred Nuñez Jr.** to the pages of *Tree Worship*. I have also invited a select (in that I selected them!) group of gamers to discuss WFRP and the Hogshead years. Finally, this is not issue 4 either in some ways, since there have also been two **Origin of Tree Worship** 'specials' produced between issues. These are **Curse of the Clan Heirloom** and **The Witch-hunter Cometh** both originally written with Alfred Nuñez Jr. as tournament adventures for Hogshead to run at Conventions. Because I think these are very good adventures, with excellent source material and some neat plot touches, I wanted to bring them to a wider audience post-Hogshead. Alfred kindly agreed and so they were published in fanzine format. At the time of writing this all three fanzines are still available in limited quantities.

I had intended to publish this issue in time for Gen Con, but that failed to materialise. I ran an official adventure (*Witch-hunter Cometh* mentioned above actually) and was also doing a number of other things with my club, Shadow Warriors. No doubt by now the topic of Gen Con, why/ how it was so dire and the cancellation of UK/ European future events has been fully discussed. All I will say here is that - as far as my experiences went - it was indeed as bad (or worse) as they say!

With the completion of this issue, I will be looking to finish the final bits of **Homeward Bound**, the final part of my trilogy (though it will likely have a follow-on and be in four parts like all good works of fantasy!). For those of you unfamiliar with my unofficial WFRP stuff, you could do worse than having a look at my club website <http://www.shadow-warriors.co.uk/> You will find details of my two current campaigns on the Warhammer and Farscape pages - together with details of what (and how) you can purchase from me. Of course, if you are buying this from me in person at a convention, then I will be quite happy to bore you to death with it all! I can be contacted about any of the above by email at [timothyeccles@hotmail.com](mailto:timothyeccles@hotmail.com). I would also like to start a letters page in *Tree Worship* for feedback on articles, alternative ideas, views and thoughts or anything else related to Warhammer FRP. Whilst *Tree Worship* is too irregular for a normal column, I think we can develop some polished arguments over a number of serious issues here. You will find contact alternatives (including mail address) at my website. Please use them.

Anyway, this is not what you bought the fanzine for, and so on with the show!

Tim Eccles  
June 2003

## Warhammer FRP: RIP?

No WFRP fanzine can continue without considering the issue of the 'demise' of Hogshead Publishing and the future of the game. At the same time, however, events will no doubt be moving (or not!) and Games Workshop will be making decisions behind closed doors over the game's future. Equally, we will never know much of what actually happened. This has not stopped a whole mass of hyperbole and argument breaking out amongst fans on the internet. More interesting to my mind is the fact that James Wallis has also been quite forthcoming in his criticism of certain fans - individuals and cliques - who have contributed to his 'burn out' and general disaffection with WFRP and the RPG 'industry'. As an unofficial author, I am probably one of those. I do think that there is an argument that the internet and email makes communication too quick and too easy, so that too little thought is put into producing too many words. I can certainly understand why some writers might get very upset from some of the personal and often unrealistic criticism that gets hurled their way. At the same time, I think that a lot of writing is garbage, untested, unbalanced, poorly cobbled together and expensive - thus deserving criticism.

Rather than simply pronounce my own views, I thought it useful to attempt to hold a debate amongst invited gamers to discuss the issues, as they perceive them. There was nothing particularly scientific about the selection; they are simply people that I know (in some way), play WFRP and who are capable of writing without the need of an editor to solve their inability to use the English language. I attempted to run this in the form of a 'dialogue' and whilst it was far from perfect, I think it did encourage a little interaction and something more than simple statement of 'position pieces'. I did an introductory paragraph to start things off, then sat back and watch the debate unfold. I hope that you enjoy doing the same.

**Tim:** The decision of Hogshead Publishing to wind up their games production and hand back the WFRP licence is clearly an excellent point at which to examine their contribution to the game. Firstly, it must be said that Hogshead brought WFRP back to life after GW had cut the game, and without them there would have been no (commercial) support. Consequently, the game would presumably have withered and died without Hogshead? Added to this, Realms of Sorcery finally made its appearance and Marienburg is usually recognised as a pretty seminal piece of work. On the downside, one of the major disappointments for me (though I am clearly biased) was the lack of new writers, new material and new ideas; WFRP relied increasingly on re-prints and allegedly 'star' writers who seemed to have minimal understanding of the game. I wonder if Dying of the Light scared Hogshead into this strategy, since relying on unknowns (though most of them were not WFRP people either - that I know of) produced a pretty poor piece of work. Whilst other fan efforts were being rewarded - Glorantha is a particular example I am thinking of here - WFRP was becoming very autocratic. I must admit that it also rankled as a WFRPer that Hogshead blatantly referred to the game as its 'cash cow' to subsidise its other efforts. So, a few months after the announcement how do you think Hogshead's contribution to WFRP should be remembered?

**Ryan:** I must say that, despite their failings, I think I'm quite pro-Hogshead. A game like WFRP was always going to have benefits and drawbacks for the business that publishes it - most notably because it was out of print for several years beforehand. This was always going to be a serious problem - in the 'wilderness' years of the early 1990s, most players developed their own extrapolation of the earlier material. The background found online is testament to this. Unfortunately, when a game has been left to the individual GMs for so long, it will inevitably begin to lose coherence as an 'official' setting. I feel that the lukewarm response to some of Hogshead output was not so much a reflection of the quality or 'fit' with WFRP, as a result of the challenge to the WFRP that each individual GM had created for himself. No official publisher could hope to please a stubborn GM as much as he can please himself!

To your first point, I don't think WFRP would have withered and died without Hogshead. It's difficult to guess what *would* have happened - although I suspect that the development of the internet would be instrumental in the ongoing survival (if not health!) of the game. Without Hogshead, I wonder whether the Black Library would have picked up on WFRP far earlier?

I'd completely agree with concerns about new writers and new material. Clearly there were some special circumstances around WFRP (notably GW approval of new material), but this should not have prevented more regular 'small-scale' output. If Hogshead could produce Baron Munchausen and similar low page-count products, I suspect a fairly regular flow of short adventures would have been possible.

I am under no illusions that very few 'new' writers are capable of producing decent material for a broad audience. But the same could be said of many established RPG writers - after all, it is hardly a full-time profession for many and most 'successful' writers are little more than hacks. Given the egotism of some WFRP fans, I suspect that an autocratic approach would actually benefit the game - but that puts a considerable burden on the benign dictator who is in charge to select the right contributors and takes time to edit and scrutinise the input. Someone *outside* of the fan arena would probably be best placed to take that role - which suggests that James Wallis was well positioned at the inception of Hogshead. Sadly the 'considerable burden' proved to be too much ... possibly earlier than many of us suspected.

How should Hogshead's contribution be remembered? Positively ... but I am yet to be persuaded *how* positively.

**Alfred:** In my (rather biased) view, Hogshead did a great service to WFRP by resurrecting it within a few years of Games Workshop terminating Flame Publications and dropping support for the game. The announcement that Hogshead procured the license for the game was greeted by the die-hard fans on the WFRP mailing list with enthusiasm. From the outset, Hogshead's strategy was to release the older material - some

with minor additions foreshadowing future publications - for a newer audience, while developing new material for both new and old fans. I also believed that the strategy of bringing in "named" authors in the industry to write for Hogshead was intended to introduce fans of these writers, who would not otherwise buy the game, to WFRP. Moreover, I believe that Hogshead initially wanted to bring in new writers into the industry. In this area I agree with Tim that Hogshead was less successful as only Anthony Ragan (author of *Marienburg: Sold down the River*) and I (*Dwarfs: Stone and Steel*) were published before they closed their doors.

The quality of Hogshead products varied, though no more than the original releases by GamesWorkshop/ Flame Publications. In retrospect, I think the excellence of the *Enemy Within* campaign - as well as the points raised by Ryan above - made expectations for new WFRP material unrealistically high. The *Marienburg* book was probably the only publication that has been widely viewed as being the equal of the earlier GW releases. Still, Hogshead did release a number of new products that will enhance WFRP. Though opinions of their value span the spectrum, Hogshead did accomplish some of its goals with a number of releases. They released the conclusion of the *Doomstones* campaign with a book that I believe was consistent with the earlier releases of that campaign. The book also provided some much needed tips on GMing as well as describing the methods of staging plot devices. Hogshead also provided a GM screen with table references and a much needed expansion of critical hit descriptions and an index for the main rulebook. Both *Apocrypha* books provided a lot of background information, some from older issues of *White Dwarf*, others were newly developed material. The much discussed *Realms of Sorcery* was also released after nearly 16 years of waiting. Reaction was mixed as elements from the *Battle* game was worked it, but the book did provide a lot of background information from which the seeds of ideas for adventures were planted. Meanwhile, sourcebooks on *Marienburg* and the *Dwarfs* expanded WFRP out of the *Empire* and *Kislev*. In my view, Hogshead did a lot of good for WFRP and should be remembered accordingly.

My one disappointment was that more was not developed and published before Hogshead closed its doors. Various projects, such as the publicized *Skaven* and *Elf* sourcebooks as well as *Empire in Chaos*, were in different stages of development when the end came. The same can be said for the two projects that Anthony Ragan and I were (unofficially) slated to do: the *Chaos* and *Realms of Divine Magic* sourcebooks. I believe that the demise of Hogshead will, in the near term, leave WFRP without a voice. Some fans of the game will see the demise of Hogshead as a good thing since they believe it gives them freedom to take WFRP to whatever direction they please. That might be fine for some, but I cannot see where such an anarchical state is a good thing for the future of the game.

The last time WFRP was cast adrift, the only fan based support was the WFRP mailing list. This was soon followed by the *Warhammer Archives*, which gave the dedicated fan base a place to post their creations. This time around, WFRP is supported by *Warpstone*, an excellent fanzine which was launched around the time of Hogshead, and *Strike-to-Stun*, an e-zine dedicated to *Warhammer Fantasy* and its offsprings. Moreover, *Critical*

Hit provides a valuable forum as does the WFRP mailing list. Furthermore, a plethora of websites is available for the WFRP fan to scan for material to use in their campaigns. Of these, Bergsburg is by far the best and most comprehensive. Given such a wealth of creative work by the WFRP fan-base, I agree with Ryan that the game may well thrive long enough for either Games Workshop to re-enter the fray or a (hopefully) licensed company.

In my view, the future of WFRP really comes down to Games Workshop. The best would be for GW to create a division in the Black Library for the future development of WFRP. There is an upside as well as a downside here. The one advantage GW has is its own chain of retail stores where WFRP can be prominently displayed along with the other Black Library publications. This advantage would also protect WFRP from the problems caused by retail stores only stocking the latest in D20 releases. It also leaves the game less vulnerable to the whims of distributors. The only potential downside is that the game may become more battle-oriented. I'm thinking more in terms of simple game plots which would use monsters rather than the machination of powerful people and evil cults. Continuity with past publications would also be of concern unless GW hires a person to ensure continuity across WFRP products. Should anyone ask, I am available for the job for the right price (including relocation costs). One option available to GW would be to license the game as they did with Hogshead. The concern here, of course, is that GW would need to be more engaged than they have been in the past. One step would be to maintain the same liaison with the licensee over the years rather than reassigning the position in that position in the same manner as in the past.

**Robert:** Hogshead revived WFRP at almost exactly the right moment; it is hard to believe that its revival would have had the same impact today post D&D 3e when it is actually harder to find some property that is not being revived. The Hogshead revival has introduced the game to more people but it was also a one-shot deal. I do not think that you could pull the same trick again.

I see the Hogshead situation as an example of sticking to your plans no matter what. WFRP was meant to be the moneymaker that would allow a stable of new, inventive and innovative games to be published. To achieve this all they had to do was reprint the old material. Unfortunately somewhere along the line something went wrong. Perhaps people started believing their own hype? Now at the end of the Hogshead era we have no WFRP and no new, inventive, innovative games. In short the whole experience yielded pretty much nothing at all. A lot of older WFRP fans wanted new material but I think the problems involved in creating such material should have been a warning to steer clear after the first book and instead release a few token pieces. Tim draws a comparison to Glorantha but the difference is that Greg Stafford has all the rights to Glorantha. WFRP fan material butts its head uselessly against the GW monolith, with Glorantha Stafford is able to say "publish whatever you like and I'll decide what is official and what isn't". When Hogshead bought the license they should have known what the score was on new material. In fact I believe they did, it is just that they may have got caught up in the general excitement of the revival and committed to too many new books.

One interesting effect that Hogshead's reprinting had for me was to remind me that an awful lot of the WFRP material that was released was actually pretty bad. So perhaps I should revise my assessment of the Hogshead era as producing less than nothing as it managed to remove even the sheen of nostalgia.

**John:** I do not believe that WFRP would have died without Hogshead. Someone else would have stepped in at some stage but whoever did so would have come up against most of the same problems. With a game as highly focused on the background, and with outside influences, Hogshead was never going to please everyone. However, I do believe that Hogshead sought to produce high quality books even though the result did not always reach this aim.

Hogshead's most visible failing was its failure to get new books out. *Dying of the Light* came in for a lot of criticism but I think it should be forgiven its failings. It was Hogshead's first attempt at a sourcebook and had some good points. If more scenarios had followed there would have been less focus on it over the years. As Ryan says, low page scenarios, *Fear the Worst* being a good example, could have been easily done. Even collections of shorter scenarios would have kept the output turning over.

The flip side of this is that a low output allows room for the game to breathe. A book a month might have strangled the large vibrant fan side of the game. Robert's point that a lot of the original material was poor is spot on. However, there was enough to give a sense of what the game could become. That this has not happened does not mean that it will not. The WFRP background is strong enough to last and for new ideas to be born from it. WFRP's success is less due to a nostalgic yearning rather than that it is still a good game that has good support. I do not think there is a need to reinvent the game nor to decry it as old-fashioned when it still largely allows solid gaming.

*Realms of Sorcery* will be most influential book for WFRP since *The Enemy Within*. However, I am not convinced that this will be a beneficial influence, with much of the background swinging heavily to WFB. The Dwarf Book will have some lasting influence and *Marienburg* will be seen as Hogshead's finest moment. Overall, their output was of a higher quality than that of Flame Publications.

Hogshead's failure to bring forward new writers was its worst fault. Only Alfred's Dwarf Book was written by someone new to the industry. I do not believe that Hogshead never received material worth publishing – they just never took a risk with someone new. They may have had to work with the author to help them out, but it could have, and should have, been done. Using “star writers”, as Tim says, isn't a bad idea in itself – but they needed to have an understanding of the game.

Overall, Hogshead's tenure was a mixed blessing for WFRP, although tending towards the positive. However, it will be their non-WFRP games that they will be remembered for.

**Arne:** So, what should one think of Hogshead's (HH) efforts regarding WFRP? First of all, it seems to me that making the game available in print again was of critical importance, despite Robert's concerns about the quality of the original books. In order to bring new people to the game, the rules need to be available with some sort of established distribution. Without that, the game will die out, as the current pool of gamers loses interest for whatever reason.

Having said that, I do not think the fact that HH began printing the game is of much importance in evaluating their success as the caretaker of WFRP - no matter who had picked up the license, one sure effect would be its reappearance in the bookstores. Rather, HH should be evaluated on (i) which and how many of the original books they chose to reprint, and (ii) the amount and quality of new material HH added to the game.

Regarding the first item, HH initially claimed that they would not be reprinting the less convincing books of the old series, confirming the opinion of many of us that a good share of the GW material was not that memorable. Indeed, I find it hard to argue with HH's first releases; the rulebook, and the first instalment of the acclaimed and essential Enemy Within (EW) Campaign. On top, I believe that the Apocrypha series with its blend of new and old material was a sound choice and a good addition to the collection of all players of WFRP. However, the constant delays proved problematic; the fact that there are now most likely a good number of new GMs who are missing the conclusion to the EW campaign proves this point excellently. Little does it help that HH was planning what I have little doubt would have been a superior product to GW's original conclusion in Empire in Flames - despite its flaws the latter is so much better than nothing. Further, with the worrying delay of new material, HH felt the need to put out more of the old material than they actually wanted to. At the end of the day, however, I do not think it proved to be much of a problem; HH simply chose to close down before they got to the real stinkers. I do not think that the Doomstones campaign is as bad as some want to make it, even though it is clearly not one of the WFRP treasures.

Let's turn to the second issue, the new material from HH. I agree that the key problem for HH was their failure to release new material, and - especially - to draw on the number of amateur writers who had proven their credentials in Warpstone or the widespread web-based community. Instead, we waited for literally years for the works of industry "stars". We sorely missed new adventures, Old World source books and - most importantly - a sourcebook on Chaos. Amidst constant postponements, we did get some new material, some of which deserve special mentioning. There is general agreement that the Marienburg sourcebook was HH's prime effort, a conclusion I happily support. Realms of Sorcery - the most important of the new releases - was in my eyes a mixed experience; its main weaknesses are the high-fantasy ever-present colleges and the missed opportunity to solve the slow advancement of wizards. Ignoring these, I think it did a fairly good job of bringing magic into the WFRP setting and conceptually aligning the old Battle Magic with the new Colour Magic. Lastly, we got a conclusion to the Doomstones campaign - Robin Law's Heart of Chaos - a fun read, although I have my doubts about its playability.



All in all, I salute Hogshead for reprinting the best of the old stuff, as well as giving us the Apocrypha series and the Marienburg book; one can only be sorry they did not follow up the success of the latter by giving the chance to authors who had shown both skill at writing and a genuine love for WFRP.

**Alfred:** I think HH's stewardship of WFRP will provide an important lesson to GW, or anyone to whom they license WFRP: the need to release material (of some reasonable quality) on a consistent basis. It also points to the need of a line editor who understands the WFRP background. Graeme Davis would be an excellent choice with Anthony Ragan as another possibility.

John mentioned his concern that RoS brought too much of the WFB feel to WFRP. While I share some of his views on this subject, I do believe that GW would introduce more of this should they decide to develop new material in-house. Of course, I think this is less of a concern should the alternative be that WFRP is left to die on the vine.

At the moment, there is no indication that GW will develop WFRP in their Black Library division. Recent comments by Gav Thorpe to Strike to Stun seems to indicate that GW is looking to license WFRP to someone as it did with HH. This could be a blessing if the new licensee does a better job than HH at vetting proposals and responding to those who submitted much more promptly. Then again, such a situation could be a disaster of sorts if they use writers unfamiliar with WFRP as well as whatever GW is doing with Warhammer at the moment.

HH did a good job allowing its writers to blend the old with the new as evident by the Marienburg, RoS, and the Dwarf books. This also proved to be satisfactory to GW as well. Whether this arrangement would continue with another company remains to be seen.

Could WFRP have survived without the intervention of HH? I do not think it could have in any coherent sense. The community was too diverse and contributions were rather inconsistent. Can WFRP thrive without HH now? I think it can for the short time. The efforts of John Foody with Warpstone should be commended as it gave the game more consistency. In fact, the lack of Warpstone due to distribution issues might be more harmful in the short run than HH's absence. One could even say that WS filled the gap of less frequent releases of HH material.

Personally, I'll miss HH's involvement with WFRP. I look forward to the next Warpstone and hope that either GW, one of its divisions, or a new licensee supports WFRP in the next year.

**Robert:** Hogshead's offer to distribute Warpstone was one of its more canny moves as it answered the fan's insatiable desire for new material while removing the burden of actually producing it. While it was a wise move it also displays some of the weakness of Hogshead's approach to WFRP. They were lucky that there was such a high-quality

magazine with a dedicated team behind it and they were sensible enough to seize the opportunity. However they did nothing that would CREATE such an opportunity. Certainly any future licensee of WFRP would be sensible to decide what they would do regarding Warpstone as an early part of their strategy for handling the game.

Trying to move the discussion forward though if GW were to license WFRP again I would have to say that the license might be something of a poisoned chalice. By looking for another licensee GW is making its usual risk-averse conservative decisions. The approach that Hogshead took of literally reviving the game will not work post D&D 3e. Love it or loathe it that game has raised the bar on the design of all games that follow it. Everyone has their own view of what is wrong with WFRP but I will highlight the issues of Careers and Combat. Careers were brilliant when they first came out but now they look just like the warmed up version of AD&D's classes that they always were. With 3e *my* fighter is no longer like *your* fighter but with WFRP my Boatman is exactly like your fucking Boatman regardless of whether they were a Noble or a Pit Fighter before they became a Boatman. Aspects of WFRP's combat, such as critical hit tables, were a joke before the game folded the first time. Now the whole system looks rigid and creaky. Magic has been revitalised by Realms of Sorcery but that book is shot in the arm and not a long-term answer.

I think we can rule out WFRP d20; after all I do not think I could name two companies less likely to share their toys than Hasbro and GW. GW has an excellent little RPG system in Mordheim. It just needs to take the plunge and push it a little bit further so that there is once again a true Warhammer roleplaying system that appeals to both Warhammer Battlers and the more general roleplayer.

GW loves control and the best way to give it that control without crippling a potential licensee is to for GW to drive the rules (and thus align it with their other products) and the licensee to expand the setting. People love the WFRP system but they already own it and will not buy another copy of the main rulebook. Newer gamers might be interested in playing WFRP but there is a lot more choice and the truth is that if you buy *Death on the Reik* you don't need WFRP to take advantage of the setting. This though seems too radical for GW to be a practical outcome of the license negotiations. Not that any of us can be presumed to have special insight into what is happening behind closed doors. WFRP is in a difficult place and while the setting may survive the game as it once was, it is unlikely to without some serious surgery.

As for the possibility of any licensee linking up with fan writers I think that Hogshead made a lot of mistakes here and lessons need to be learned. Most fan material is rubbish to be frank and concentrates on expanding or modifying the system rather than building on a game's core values. WFRP is lucky in this respect in that many great writers have appeared for the system, due mostly I think to the enforced hiatus that required people to step up to the plate or have the system fade away like so many others. The problem is that most of these people have a sense of ownership over WFRP and a strongly developed sense of "what the game is about". Any new licensee needs to link hands with the fan

writers and make it clear to them what the boundaries are with any official material. The writers can then make submissions based on what is practical and if they find the boundaries are not to their liking they can continue to plough their own furrow with out feeling sidelined or misled. Honesty, clarity and open communication should be the watchwords. That said writing for the "industry" is still a mugs game in my view. The best WFRP material I have read recently never came from Hogshead, something James Wallis bizarrely acknowledged as he folded the company.

**John:** Hogshead's reign has left us with large parts of the background wide open for their successor to fill. Over-development is a danger, but it is, as Alfred says, better than none at all. I cannot see any future of the "official" game that is not more influenced by WFB, even if that is only because of Realms of Sorcery. However, this does not mean that WFRP will change out of all recognition. WFRP can move forward, but whoever is in charge needs to understand and respect WFRP and RPGs generally; not a forgone conclusion and they will need to remember WFRP and WFB are different games. WFB background is not bad in itself; it is avoiding slavishly having to follow up the poorer material that is the worry. Warhammer's background will expand whatever WFRP does and this needs to be a strength rather than a weakness.

WFRP is blessed with a solid fanbase, and although there is a bad material out there, there is also lot of good stuff. Harnessing this can only bring benefits. However, any new company can succeed by ignoring the current "establishment" of writers and support, including Warpstone. This is especially true if that company is Games Workshop. There is a need to find the right writers but that is true of any system. Working for the "industry" is not in itself bad but the writing needs to seen as less of a "product", which I accept it always will be.

A worse, but I agree with Robert, more unlikely direction, would be WFRP D20. Such a disastrous re-styling would move even more towards D&D (in its worst sense) than it already is. Its influence is not all bad but the worst elements are generally ignored. If the game is to be updated, the current rules provide a solid framework. Fewer rules would be a worthwhile and improving change.

The WFRP system could do with improvement but it generally it plays smoothly and quickly. As to the Boatman: your Boatman is different than my D&D Warrior. At its best the WFRP careers give the character a place to live, and break out from, in the Warhammer World. At worst it is just another set of skills and advances. The Boatman who was a noble and the one who was a Pit-Fighter will be different if role-played differently - something that applies to all games. Their Careers give an easy definition of who and what they are. The WFRP rules suit the game, whereas D&D rules fail to work with a number of the games out there, something I believe would be true of WFRP.

## Contributors

**Ryan Wileman** is an 8 foot long baby that was raised in the coalfields of Northern England. Interestingly enough, when viewed from a distance he actually appears *larger* than when close up. His WFRP material has been celebrated by Mayfair society since 1923.

**Alfred Nuñez Jr** is the author of *Dwarfs: Stone and Steel*, a number of GenCon WFRP scenarios for Hogshead, articles for *Warpstone* and *Strike-to-Stun*, and was a contributor on other Hogshead WFRP projects. He has been playing WFRP since 1988 and actively developing the world, its background, and other bits since 1994.

**John Foody** is editor of *[the excellent]* *Warpstone* magazine. *[Ed: that is hardly a bio! What he fails to say is that he also GMs a game in which he stitches up his characters by planting evidence, places high fantasy secret caves behind waterfalls and gives minimal experience points awards for cunning roleplaying. As for practising what he preaches in those articles on creative GMing in WS...! And, of course, I would not miss a session for the world.]*

**Robert Rees** is editor of the CARNEL RPG fanzine and a curry-eating roleplaying monkey.

**Arne Dam** was introduced to WFRP around 1990 and has played irregularly since then. He has written articles for *Warpstone Magazine* and *Strike to Stun*, mainly exploring historical and political aspects of the Old World.

Thanks to all the contributors for their thoughts. My current impression in using much of the new WFRP material for my current campaign remains the lack of play testing. It seems to me that, despite the years (in some cases) in development, important parts of sourcebooks - from a playability perspective - were excluded and many rules and other mechanisms simply seem unbalanced. The new Mórr spells have caused me great difficulties in murder-mystery scenarios. I also had a PC play a priest of Mórr, and the new material seemed to completely change the nature of my game. I have found *Dwarfs: Stone and Steel* has proven useful, but unhelpful when trying to design ancient dwarf holds for PCs to explore in that I am still not sure of many cultural aspects (such as burial). Those aspects of dwarf culture are much more interesting to me than the statistics for gyrocopters, but I do realise the marketing balances demanding the latter. *Realms of Sorcery* has little competition from the magic section in the original WFRP, but the many extra spells still seem to leave me without any useful ones - again particularly in my recent adventures where I have been looking for ways to defend old holds. Whilst WFRP might not be about dungeons, most campaigns are likely to involve deserted places, places with burial rites and 'sealed' complexes with inherent defences. I also find that time and again the newer material simply ignores what the rules say and so allowing NPCs advantages over the PCs. I do not mind the occasional fudge, but blatant cheating

is unfair on players. I can only assume that this was either innate laziness or unfamiliarity with the game. I thought Robert's argument about fan writing was spot on. I own my own game and I have moulded material to it, but that does not give me the right to impose that on anyone else. I think that the 'new' owner needs to take a fundamental view of what is good about WFRP and bring a good set of pruning shears to cut away the rest. The problem is whether fan uproar would let them live afterwards! This is probably heresy, but I have to say that WFRP moving towards WFB does not scare me anymore. This is partly because I know that I can cull material to my taste anyway, but mostly that new WFB product is pretty good. For example, the recent **Hordes of Chaos** is very nice at sketching out the greys of belief and the pragmatics required in those living close to Chaos. I have seen very little evidence in recent years to support the notion that GW is a creaking monolith out to dominate the world and I disagree with Robert. Allowing **Warhammer Ancients** to develop is clearly going to hit their own market, sales of their expensive quasi-historical figures and weaken proprietorial ownership on their game mechanics and trademarks. That this might be part of a long-term policy on dominating historical wargaming is possible, but unlikely. I am not convinced that either the margins or market size of ancients/ medieval wargaming hobby is worth the investment, nor could a serious attack be made on the domination at club level of entirely different perspectives on the hobby - including WRG and the need for researching. It would be a peculiar capitalist company that could afford to take such a long term aim, of such doubtful outcome, as its investment strategy. That said, the war with Wargames Foundry might be entertaining! I think the attitude of many WFRP, and other RPG, fans to GW is prejudiced (with some justification) by the past.

Anyway, if this piece does not generate a few letters I think that I might as well give up! Please let me know what you think.

## The Battle of Wolfenburg 2512 IC

The contemporary illustration accompanying this article represents a little known action prior to the more famous main battle. The attack on the Ulrican monastery of the 'Man as Wolf' by an Ulrican army rather serves to illustrate the tangled nature of the civil war. It also further draws into question the tactics of both participants during the civil war - though it offers insight into others, particularly the decision of the Sigmarite army to seek battle rather than await the onset of winter behind the walls of Wolfenburg.

The monastery is (was) located outside Wolfenburg with its own small outbuildings and ancillary peasant shacks. Whilst it was actually a mile or so from the city, it was regarded as an outer defence by both parties. The Ulrican besieging army was particularly concerning about leaving their flank open to a sally by these defenders and determined to make an example of them as a warning to the Sigmarites 'huddled in Wolfenburg'. Thus was the attack on the Ulrican monastery carried out by the nominally Ulrican army. Even more ironically, the Ostland defenders were local Ulrican volunteers and Kislevan soldiers serving as mercenaries in Ostland with their Tsar's approval; these are, of course, traditional allies of the Graf of Middenheim. In effect this battle over an Ulrican monastery was fought Ulrican v Ulrican, Middenheim v Middenheim ally and Imperialist v Kislevan.

The fight for the monastery was terrible, the defenders proclaiming themselves as holy warriors. Early attacks were bloodily repulsed. In an attempt to speed up the slow progress, artillery battered the monastery on three separate occasions, reaping great slaughter on the defenders. However, it was bloody melee that eventually won the day. The Ulrican commanders were appalled at the cost and what they were required to do to their fellow Imperialists and even the most vociferous began to wonder at the right of their cause, given that this was their own temple that they had destroyed. On the other hand, the people of Wolfenburg were horrified by the slaughter and terrified that a similar fate awaited them; they secretly opened negotiations with Ar Ulric. However, the Sigmarites also realised that their safety within the walls was tenuous at best, that provisioning was minimal in any event and that a bold strike whilst their troops were still appalled at what had happened to their allies might win the day. It was because of this now forgotten battle that the main battle was therefore set into motion.

In military terms, the attack on the monastery probably served little real purpose. The decision to defend the monastery might have been valid as a means of threatening upon two fronts, but to allow the 'Ulricans' the freedom to destroy it at leisure was senseless. At the same time, the bloody assault was costly and ultimately of little strategic gain.

Today, the monastery is little more than a ruin but a small shrine still remains dedicated and a small metal plinth, created (allegedly) from the broken swords and armour found at the site, records its valiant defence, but not the nature of those who attacked it.



# Rattus Mutatus

By Alfred Nuñez Jr.

As I worked on the scenario "Conspiracy in Marienburg" (tentatively scheduled to appear in Warpstone #22), I started to work on elements of Skaven society. I worked on other fundamentals for the Hogshead version of the Skaven book, some of which appeared in Realms of Sorcery. Unfortunately, the Skaven book did not get beyond the draft stage before Hogshead closed its doors.

To my mind, Skaven culture is darker and more insidious than the "shadow" parallel to Human society as depicted elsewhere. I also think that playing Skaven characters offer, at best, limited potential if they are used in the manner designed by GW. Like the other chaotic and evil races, Skaven are best suited as NPCs to plot and scheme against Humanity.

## SKAVEN MAGIC

### Cult Description

The following is revised from Realms of Sorcery, page 129, to include Human cultists.

## HORNED RAT- Gnawer of the World

**Description:** The Horned Rat is the Chaos God of the Skaven, a race of bipedal Ratmen who infest the underground world beneath a large portion of the Known World. It is not certain when the Horned Rat came through the collapsed Warp gate, but he made his presence known in spectacular fashion.

In -1700 I.C., a meteor storm rained down on the city of Tylos north of the Tilean Sea. The falling debris was warpstone that originated from the Chaos moon, Mórrslieb. The resulting catastrophe destroyed the land and all its inhabitants except the rats that infested the town and surrounding fields. Constant exposure to the Warpstone in the newly formed marshes mutated the rodents into the children of the Horned Rat.

In a relatively short amount of time, the Skaven dug many tunnels underneath the surrounding mountains and beyond. This poised them to carry forth the Horned Rat's schemes. At first, these plans were simply to overwhelm their opponents with sheer number. Initial success bore these assumptions out, but subsequent events forced the Skaven to redirect their efforts towards a more subtle nature. The growth of Human towns and cities provided the ideal environment for the Skaven to menace the surface



dwellers from the shadowy fringes. In addition, there were always Human dupes who were more than willing to sell out their fellows for promises of riches and power.

The Horned Rat is depicted as a Skaven the size of a giant, holding the world in his hand and gnawing at it. Two sets of horns sprout from its head. The central set are long and straight while the other set curls around its temples. The Horned Rat has long fangs and each hand ends in razor-sharp claws.

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Symbol:** The symbol (and Chaos Rune) of the Horned Rat is essentially three lines that form a rough, upside down triangle (apex pointing downward). Other, lesser used symbols include a rat standing upright and a rat's head or skull with horns growing from it. Only his Skaven followers wear these symbols openly. The Horned Rat's Human cultists generally have a medallion with any of these symbols hidden underneath their clothing, if they carry any at all. These same Humans dress in the same manner as anyone from their same social class, which makes them virtually indistinguishable from the general populace. Human Priests of the Horned Rat may wear dark grey or brown clothing and/or robes.

**Area of Worship:** The Horned Rat is the god of the Skaven, but there are also cults of the Horned Rat among the Human population of the Old World. Human followers of the Horned Rat are usually those who have encountered the Skaven and believe them to be very powerful. These Human agents attempt to ingratiate themselves with the Ratmen in hopes of gaining power at the expense, as well as avoiding the fate, of their fellow Humans. Not surprisingly, the Skaven do not tell their pawns that they and their god can not tell one Human from another (not that it really matters).

**Temples:** Skaven temples of the Horned Rat are always underground in Skaven tunnels and catacombs. They always have a great statue of the Horned Rat and an altar for sacrifice, which is often imbedded with chunks of warpstone. The verminous congregation stand or lie flat on the stone floor during the ceremonies.

Human shrines dedicated to the Horned Rat are well hidden in secret cellars and concealed alcoves in the sewers. A foot tall figurine of an upright rat with two straight horns dominates the altar. Foul rituals and sacrifices are committed before the altars and the bodies of the victims dumped elsewhere.

**Friends and Enemies:** Among the Skaven, the cult of the Horned Rat hates all humanity and their gods. The Human cultists of the Horned Rat know little of this animosity towards them (which make them the perfect dupes), but share in the mistrust of the Human cults. The cult of the Horned Rat also hates all other races and their cults. They will join other Chaos cults if it suits their purpose, although the cult of Slaanesh is very alien to the Skaven mindset. Cults of Tzeentch and Khorne are viewed with suspicions as their goals often conflict with the schemes of the Horned Rat. The only cult in which the followers of the Horned Rat (specifically, the Plague Monks and Priests in their worship of the Horned Rat as the "Harbinger of Disease") have some common ground are of Nurgle.

**Holy Days:** To the Skaven deep underground every day is like every other. In contrast, Human cultists of the Horned Rat honour him whenever Mórrslieb is full (which is a challenge to plan given the Chaos Moon's erratic orbit).

**Cult Requirements:** Among Skaven, only those who wield magic (Grey Seers, Warlock Engineers and few Plague Priests) may serve as clerics of the Horned Rat. They do not generally proselytise among humans, but will recruit anyone foolhardy to join a cult of like-minded Humans. Thus, most large cities have a small cult of the Horned Rat among Humans who seek to gain power and wealth from their association with the Skaven. These may include sewer workers, night watchmen, officials who have some reason to go underground, fools looking for an easy path to influence and power, and friends and relatives of such people.

**Strictures:** The following tenets only apply to Human cultists:

- Always obey Skaven leaders.
- Never reveal the existence of the Skaven or the cult to anyone outside the cult.
- Sabotage all underground work on sewers or anywhere in cities which threaten to expose the Skaven.
- Thwart all investigations into the clandestine activities of the Skaven and Human agents.
- Eliminate any witness do such activities.
- Members must seek warpstone and deliver any that they find into the hands of the cult or their Skaven masters.

**Spell Use:** Grey Seers and Warlock Engineers are able to use any Skaven and Dark Magic spells of the appropriate level, while Plague Priests can only use Skaven spells involving disease. Human Sorcerer-Priests of Horned Rat are limited to the following spells:

1st: Shadow's Companion, Summon Children of the Horned Rat, Vermintide, Warp Lightning

2nd: Infecting Gaze, Scorch, Summon Daemon Rat

3rd: Gnaw, Plague Source

Note: Unlike Skaven spellcasters, Human Sorcerer-Priests are limited to third level and may regain Magic Points by using the Meditation skill in the same manner as Human priests. In addition, Human Sorcerer-Priests may use a Warpstone solution created by Warlock Engineers. The solution allows the imbiber to gain d10 Magic Points (not to exceed the Sorcerer-Priest's limit) at the risk of a 5% chance of receiving a mutation. This chance of mutation is cumulative with each solution drunk.

**Skills:** The Horned Rat does not grant any additional skills to his Skaven servants. He does grant one of the following skills to his Human Sorcerer-Priests for each level achieved: Concealment Urban, Night Vision, Orientation (underground), Silent Move Urban, Speak Additional Language (Queekish), Spot Traps.

**Trials:** Trials of the Horned Rat usually involves some act of sabotage on behalf of the Skaven. Examples include collapsing a sewer line that threatens to uncover a Skaven tunnel or removing evidence of Skaven presence in a city or town.

**Blessings:** Favourable skills include Concealment Urban, Silent Move Urban, and Spot Traps. Moreover, the Horned Rat favours Disease, Fear, Hide, and Poison tests. In some cases, he may grant a temporary increase to Cool and Initiative. The Horned Rat may also grant other "gifts" to those who have excelled in his service. Others may be cursed with random mutations.

### **Magic Spells**

The following are additions to spells that appear in **Realms of Sorcery**, pages 236-238.

#### **Summon Children of the Horned Rat**

Spell Level: First Skaven

Magic Points: 4

Range: Nearby

Duration: 1 hour

This spells grants the caster the ability to summon and control a pack of 2d6+4 Giant Rats to attack their enemies. The Children of the Horned Rat appear within 6 yards of the caster and will follow simple instructions (like "Kill", "Hurt" or "Guard").

### **Summon Servant of the Horned Rat**

Spell Level: First Skaven

Magic Points: 3

Range: Not applicable

Duration: 2 hours per level

This spells grants the caster the ability to summon a Daemonic Servant of the Horned Rat. The Servant takes up the form of a large wolf-rat with flaming eyes and mouth.

Once summoned, the Servant appears within 6 yards of the caster. If the caster successfully controls the Servant (WP test), it will serve for the duration indicated above. Once the spell expires, or the caster is slain, the Servant immediately disappears.

### **Summon Daemon Rat (Lesser Daemon of the Horned Rat)**

Spell Level: Second Skaven

Magic Points: 5

Range: Not applicable

Duration: 1 hour per level

This spells grants the caster the ability to summon Lesser Daemon of the Horned Rat. Once summoned, the Lesser Daemon appears within 6 yards of the caster. If the caster successfully passes a WP test, the Lesser Daemon will serve for the duration indicated above. Once the spell expires, or the caster is slain, the Lesser Daemon immediately disappears.

It should be noted that the caster never really controls the Lesser Daemon as the latter only serves the wishes of the Horned Rat. This could include slaying the summoner if that is the deity's desire.

### **Pestilent Breath**

Spell Level: Third Skaven

Magic Points: 8

Range: 20 foot cone shaped area ending in a 5 foot radius.

Duration: Instantaneous

This spells allows the caster to breathe a noxious cloud of death and disease and cover a cone-shape area that ends 20 feet from the caster in a 5 foot radius. Anyone caught in this area of effect must take an immediate T test. If successful, the victim only sustains a S3 hit (no reduction for T or armour). If the test is failed, then the victim takes 1D3 S4 hits (no reductions) with a 10% chance of catching either Black Plague or Red Pox (WFRP, pg 82-83)

### **Spread Plague**

Spell Level: Third Skaven

Magic Points: 12

Range: Touch

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell can be cast upon any individual whom the caster touches. The form in which the disease manifests can be either Black Plague or Red Pox (**WFRP**, pg 82-83), GM's choice. The victim is allowed a **T** test to resist the effects of the disease. If infected, the victim will feel weak and queasy (-10 to **WS**, **BS**, **Dex**, and **Int**; -1 to **S** and **T**) until the next day when they succumb to the full effects of the disease. There is also a 10% chance that the victim will pass the disease to anyone in contact with them in the first 24 hours of being infected.

### **Summon Daemon Rat Horde**

Spell Level: Third Skaven

Magic Points: 9

Range: Not applicable

Duration: 1 hour per level

This spells grants the caster the ability to summon 2D6 Lesser Daemons of the Horned Rat. Once summoned, the Lesser Daemons appear within 6 yards. If the caster successfully passes a **WP** test, the Lesser Daemons will serve for the duration indicated above. Once the spell expires, or the caster is slain, the Lesser Daemons immediately disappear.

It should be noted that the caster never really controls the Lesser Daemons as the latter only serve the wishes of the Horned Rat. This could include slaying the summoner if that is the deity's desire.

### **Summon Vermin Lord**

Spell Level: Fourth Skaven

Magic Points: 25

Range: Not applicable

Duration: Until task completed

This spells grants the caster the ability to summon a Vermin Lord, Greater Daemon of the Horned Rat. Once summoned, the Vermin Lord appears within 6 yards. If the caster successfully passes a **WP** test, it may give the Vermin Lord one task to complete. The Vermin Lord remains unless its task is completed, it is dispelled or until it or the caster is slain. The danger for the caster is obvious. The Vermin Lord may well decide that the Grey Seer is not worthy of the Horned Rat's favour and slay him before setting about on whatever purposes the Skaven deity has sent it.

## *Refining Warpstone*

The process of refining Warpstone is both gruesome and deadly. In fact, the most effective method of refining warpstone is through the use of unwilling victims.

For every pound of raw warpstone force fed to a Skaven subject, ½ pound of partially-refined warpstone can be retrieved. Unfortunately, the Grey Seer refining the warpstone must first wait for the eruption of mutations to subside before searching the bloody remains to find the partially-refined warpstone. Since the Skaven used in refining the warpstone can only handle one pound of warpstone, a large number of Skaven need to be used to refine a substantial quantity. Thankfully, the ability of the Skaven to breed in large numbers ensures that there is never a shortage of warpstone-refining vessels.

Should the Grey Seer wish to take the final refining step, then a new Skaven "volunteer" must be used. As with the first refining step, half the weight of the warpstone will be lost in the second process. While the outbreak of mutations will also occur the second time, it is only 70% fatal. Thus, in 30% of the cases, the Grey Seer will have to wait for the refined warpstone to pass through whatever is left of the victim's digestive tract. Even though the surviving "volunteer" has been reduced to a Chaos Spawn, they have further uses as experimentation subjects by either Clan Moulder or Clan Skyre.

In a pinch, either Beastmen (including mutants) or humans can be used to refine warpstone. Members of these races are inferior refining vessels, however, and have a lesser chance for converting warpstone to less dangerous states. Beastmen have a base 30% chance of using their digestive tract to refine warpstone with a modifier of +5% of each mutation. Of course, the effects of refining warpstone are just as deadly for them as it is for Skaven and humans.

Humans only have a 5% chance of converting warpstone to any of its refined states. It should be noted that this small chance does not deter determined Grey Seers if they have great need of the refined warpstone.

## CAREER PROFILES

### Clan Eshin

It is rare for humanity to encounter Skaven of Clan Eshin, rarer still to survive any such encounter. For those who study the Skaven (and there are very few), there are two types of Clan Eshin Skaven known.

Gutter Runners scout far ahead of Skaven hordes, seeking the enemy, ensuring the element of surprise, and stirring the rat packs of cities into action. They are also used to spread fear and create havoc to cover Skaven slaving raids. In contrast, Night Runners are the Skaven assassins who are often active at night. Their main role is to slay foes in dark places, infiltrate enemy cities, sow fear in their enemies, and prepare the way...

#### Gutter Runners

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	48	40	3	4	10	55	2	39	34	34	28	39	24

#### Skills:

Concealment Urban

Follow Trail

Scale Sheer Surface

Shadowing

Silent Move Rural

Silent Move Urban

Specialist Weapon-Lasso

Specialist Weapon-Net

Specialist Weapon-Throwing Knife

Strike Mighty Blow

#### Possessions:

Leather Jack (0/1AP body/arms)

Sword with serrated edge (+1 W) coated with poison (+d3 additional W unless Poison test successful)

Garrotte

4 Throwing Knives

Dark Clothing

## Night Runner Assassins

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	63	55	4	4	13	70	4	54	44	44	38	49	34

**Skills** (in addition to those of Gutter Runners):

Ambidextrous

Concealment Rural

Disguise

Marksmanship

Prepare Poisons

Specialist Weapon-Parrying

Specialist Weapons-Throwing Stars

**Possessions:**

Mail Shirt under Dark Clothing

Sword

Weeping Dagger

2 Throwing Stars

2 Throwing Knives

Garrotte

## Clan Pestilens

Disease-ridden followers of the Horned Rat as Harbinger of Disease, Plague Monks are the bane of many races including their own. The few scholars who believe that Skaven still exist have attributed many of the plagues that ravaged civilisation across the centuries to this crazed Skaven Clan.

It is believed to be extremely rare for the Horned Rat to grant a Plague Priest the ability to cast magical spells. For such to occur, the individual Plague Priest had to accomplish a great deed in order to attract the attention of the Horned Rat. Of course, such attention is rarely a good thing. The Skaven deity can as easily (and capriciously) destroy the upstart as reward the Priest for its efforts. When the latter does occur, the Plague Priest becomes a very powerful creature (equal to a Level 3 sorcerer in magical ability).

More details about Plague Priests can be found in **Realms of Sorcery**, page 127.



## Plague Monk

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	33	25	3	3	9	50	1	24	24	34	38	29	14

### Skills:

Herb Lore

Identify Plants

Immunity to Disease

Manufacture Potions

Prepare Poisons

Read/Write (90% chance of Old Worlder, 8% Dark Tongue, 2% any other language such as Khazalid or Elthárin)

Secret Signs- Clan Pestilens

## Plague Priest

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	43	35	4	4	10	60	1	34	34	44	48	39	14

**Magic Points:** 14D4

### Skills:

Arcane Language- Skaven Magic

Cast Spells- Skaven Magic (**special**, see below)

Evaluate

Magical Awareness

Magic Sense

Manufacture Drugs

Manufacture Scrolls

Speak Additional Language (90% chance of Old Worlder, 8% Dark Tongue, 2% any other language such as Khazalid or Elthárin)

### Spells:

1st Level: Shadow's Companion, Summon Children of the Horned Rat (diseased giant rats, 15% chance of infection), Vermintide (diseased rats, 10% chance of infection)

2nd Level: Brittle Bone, Infecting Gaze, Shrivell Tongue

3rd Level: Pestilent Breath, Plague's Source, Spread Plague

## Clan Skryre

Clan Skryre are the mad scientists of the Skaven world. Details about the Warlock Engineers can be found in Realms of Sorcery, pages 126-127.

Following are the only two levels of Clan Skryre warlocks and their attributes (including information for the few who can use magic). It should be noted that the information for the 2<sup>nd</sup> level career is a modification to the sample career that appeared in Realms of Sorcery, page 129.

### Warlock Engineer (Level 1)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	33	25	3	3	9	50	1	24	24	34	38	29	14

**Magic Points:** 6D4

#### **Skills:**

Arcane Language- Skaven Magic\*  
Cast Spells- Skaven Magic- Level 1\*  
Construct  
Identify Plants  
Magic Sense\*  
Metallurgy  
Rune Lore\*  
Scroll Lore\*  
Secret Language-Skaven Engineer  
Secret Signs- Clan Skryre  
Specialist Weapon- Bomb  
Specialist Weapon- Jezail  
Specialist Weapon- Pistol  
Specialist Weapon- Warfire weapons

**Spells:** Any 3 first level Skaven spells.

## Warlock Engineer (Level 2)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	43	35	4	4	10	60	1	34	34	44	28	39	14

**Magic Points:** 10D4

### Skills:

Arcane Language- Dark Magic\*

Cast Spells- Dark Magic- Levels 1 & 2\*

Cast Spells- Skaven Magic- Level 2\*

Chemistry

Engineer

Evaluate

Herb Lore

Magical Awareness\*

Read/Write (90% chance of Old Worlder, 8% Dark Tongue, 2% any other language such as Khazalid or Elthárin)

Smithing

**Spells:** Any 8 Dark and/or Skaven spells of the appropriate level.

\*denotes skills for magic-using Warlock Engineers only

## Grey Seers

Grey Seers are detailed in Realms of Sorcery, pages 126.

### Grey Seer (Level 3)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	43	35	4	4	11	70	1	44	44	57	58	49	14

**Magic Points:** 14D4

#### **Skills:**

Cast Spells- Dark Magic- Level 3

Cast Spells- Skaven Magic- Level 3

Daemon Lore

Identify Magical Artefact

Identify Undead

Immunity to Disease

Prepare Poison

Speak Additional Language (90% chance of Old Worlder, 8% Dark Tongue, 2% any other language such as Khazalid or Elthárin)

**Spells:** Any 15 Dark and/or Skaven spells of the appropriate level.

### Grey Seer (Level 4)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	43	35	4	4	12	40	1	54	54	60	68	59	14

**Magic Points:** 18D4

#### **Skills:**

Arcane Language-Magick

Astronomy

Cast Spells- Dark Magic- Level 4

Cast Spells- Skaven Magic- Level 4

Manufacture Drugs

Manufacture Potions.

Manufacture Scrolls

Secret Language- Classical

**Spells:** Any 24 Dark and/or Skaven spells of the appropriate level.

## BESTIARY

### Clan Moulder Creations

#### Rat Ogres

**Physique:** Rat Ogres are massive creatures standing 12 feet in height. Some are covered with fur just as normal Skaven, while others lack any hair whatsoever. Few Rat Ogres (5%) have other mutations, which betray the manner in which they were bred. Generally, these manifest as an extra arm or prehensile tail (both offering +1A). Other types of mutations are left to GM discretion.

**Profile:**

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
6	33	17	4	5	17	40	2	18	18	14	18	29	10

**Psychological Traits:** Rat Ogres cause *Fear* in all living creatures under 10 feet tall. They are also subject to *Frenzy* when heavily wounded (2 W or less).

**Special Rules:** Rat Ogres generally use *claw* attacks, but some are able to use clubs and chains as weapons.

#### Wolf-Rats

**Physique:** Rat-wolves are generally 6 foot in length and differ from pack wolves by their rat-like head and long, naked tail. The fur is generally dark to medium brown, but black and piebald are not unknown. Rat-wolves have a 20% chance of additional mutations. These are generally bony spikes along the spine, skull-faces, or multiple heads (up to 3, with +1 A for each).

**Profile:**

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
9	33	0	3	3	5	30	1	-	10	14	14	14	-

**Psychological Traits:** Rat-wolves are subject to *Fear* of fire.

**Special Rules:** Rat-wolves attack with one *bite* per round. If successful, there is a 25% chance of causing *infected wounds*.

## Daemons

### Servant of the Horned Rat

**Physique:** Daemonic Servants of the Horned Rat have a similar appearance to Skaven Wolf-rats, but are much larger (6-8 feet in length). If need be, a Grey Seer or Warlock Engineer can ride the Daemonic Servant.

**Profile:**

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
8	33	0	4	3	5	30	1	0	14	14	18	18	0

**Psychological Traits:** Daemonic Servants cause *Fear* in all living creatures under 10 feet tall. They themselves are immune to psychological effects except those created by Lesser Daemons, Greater Daemons or gods.

**Special Rules:** Daemonic Servants are affected by normal weapons, and their attacks are normal, non-magical attacks. They are subject to *Instability*.

### Daemon Rats (Lesser Daemons of the Horned Rat)

**Physique:** Daemon Rats have a similar appearance to a Giant Rat, but are much larger (8 feet plus tail). They could also stand erect and act like normal Skaven. Daemon Rats sport two small, sharp horns on their heads. Some may have sharp spines along their back or spikes at the end of their tail.

**Profile:**

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
6	50	33*	4	3	5	60	2	31*	89	89	89	89	18*

\* assumes Skaven form, otherwise the characteristic is at 0.

**Psychological Traits:** Lesser Daemons cause *Fear* in all living creatures under 10 feet tall. They themselves are immune to psychological effects except those created by Greater Daemons or gods.

**Special Rules:** Lesser Daemons are affected by normal weapons, and their attacks are normal, non-magical attacks. They are subject to *Instability*.

## Vermin Lords

The Vermin Lord is the Horned Rat incarnate, full of hatred and spite, vengeful and ridden with the stench of decay. It is thought that the Vermin Lord is the reincarnation of one or more of ancient Lords of Decay, but this is a semantic point debated by those who care about such matters.

**Physique:** Standing more than 10 feet tall, the Vermin Lord has a skull-like, elongated rat-like head bearing four horns, two of which are curled like those of rams with the other two straight and sharp. The creature walks erect on two legs with black, iron hooves. It's five-fingered hands end in large, sharp claws. The Vermin Lord's bald tail is prehensile and can easily grasp and crush a man.

### Profile:

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
8	90	93	7	7	41	100	6	89	89	89	89	89	15

**Psychological Traits:** Standard rules for Greater Daemons apply.

**Special Rules:** The presence of the daemon causes *Terror* in creatures less than 10 foot in height. The Vermin Lord is usually armed with a Doom Glaive which inflicts 2D6 wounds (plus the daemon's S) rather than the normal 1D6. They are subject to *Instability* and cannot be wounded by normal weapons.

## SKAVEN WEAPONRY

The following are additions to the Skaven weapons detailed in Realms of Sorcery, pages 128 – 129:

### Throwing Stars

Clan Eshin Assassins are usually equipped with throwing stars that are coated with a paralyzing substance that uses warpstone in its manufacture. The intent of using such an agent – rather than something more deadly – is that it gives the Skaven some options. They can still kill any such victims or they can take these to their lair for possible interrogation, sacrifice, or even a meal.

If wounded, victim must make an immediate **Poison** test or be paralysed for a number of hours equal to 1D6+6 minus the victim's **Toughness** and cannot be revived by normal means. Once the effect of paralysis is over, the victim remains Drowsy (see WFRP, page 82) for another 1D6 rounds.

Range (Yds)			ES	Rounds to Load/Fire
S	L	E		
4	8	20	C	1 round to throw

### Warpstone Flintlock

The Warpstone Flintlock is very similar to the pistols used by Humans (WFRP, page 128). The only difference is that the Skaven weapon uses refined warpstone as its ammunition. These flintlocks are favourite weapons of the Warlock Engineers and Grey Seers.

The damage caused by this ammunition is the same as from gunpowder weapons with one notable difference: the risk of mutation. Details of the mutating effects of refined warpstone can be found in Realms of Sorcery, page 128.

Range (Yds)			ES	Rounds to Load/Fire
S	L	E		
8	16	50	3	2 rounds to load, 1 to fire



## Weeping Blade

Clan Eshin Assassins are equipped with either swords or daggers (sometimes both) which are forged using warpstone in its manufacture. The weapon drips with a warpstone induced poison that gives the blades their moniker. Generally, the poison has the effect of paralysis so that the Skaven has several options. They can still kill any such victims or they can take these to their lair for possible interrogation, sacrifice, or some other nefarious purpose. In some cases (15%), the poison is far deadlier and can result in instant death.

If wounded, victim must make an immediate **Poison** test or be paralysed for a number of hours equal to 1D6+6 minus the victim's **Toughness** and cannot be revived by normal means. Once the effect of paralysation is over, the victim remains **Drowsy** (see **WFRP**, page 82) for another 1D6 rounds.

Should the poison be of a deadlier nature, then the victim dies if the **Poison** test is failed.

## Farewell

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

UK copies of Tree Worship 4 can currently be purchased for £2 including P&P. This is the unit cost - three copies cost £6 etc. Please make the cheque payable to Tim Eccles. Tree Worship is available only courtesy of a grant from Nuln University and the gracious support of the Guild of Engineers. Orders should be sent to:

Tim Eccles  
Nuln University  
Knights Park  
Kingston  
Surrey  
KT1 2QJ

You can also email me at [timothyeccles@hotmail.com](mailto:timothyeccles@hotmail.com) but please put Tree Worship in the subject title, so that I do not mistake your mailing for one of the 20+ daily 'spam' mails I get at that address.

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

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

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

Next issue's centrepiece will be an article on Chaos in the Warhammer World by Alfred Nuñez Jr. and Anthony Ragan, who need no introduction. The paper formed the writing sample that accompanied their formal proposal to write the Realms of Chaos sourcebook for Hogshead Publishing.