



irregular

Spring/Summer Issue 2018

magazine

Interview

Warren Johnston

Big Trouble in
Little China Town

Interview

Chris Batarlis

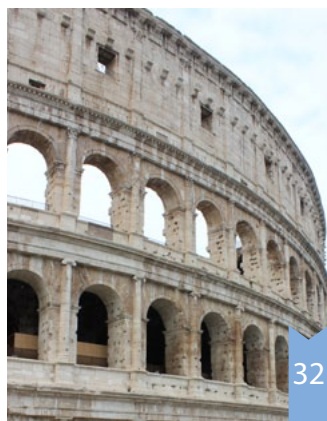
Gangs of Rome
Blood on the Aventine

UK Games Expo Special

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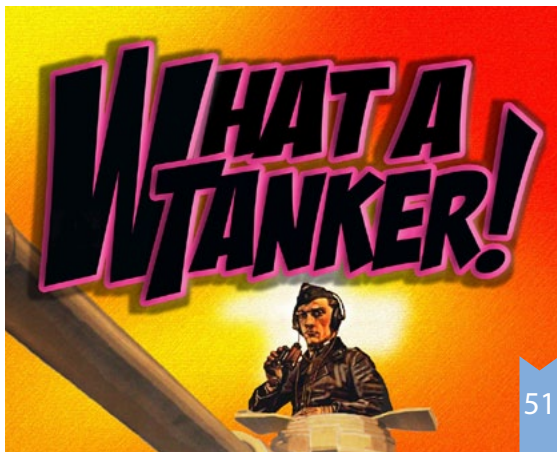
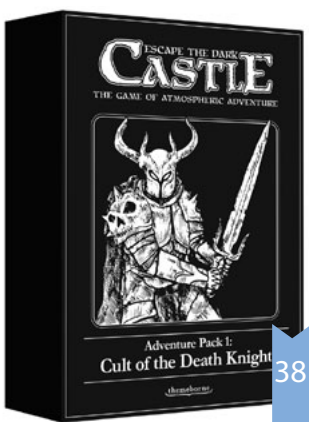
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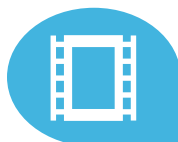
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Spring/Summer Issue 2018

Editorial

Jason Hubbard

Welcome to the Spring/Summer of Irregular Magazine for 2018, this is a UKGE special. We attended the UK Games Expo again this year, and this issue shows some of the games we saw, along with several interviews with industry personnel. This year I decided to attend all three days at the expo, normally I generally only manage to get a day down at the show. The show was much bigger this year than previous years, there was a good mixture of board, card and war games on show. The one game that stood out for me was Big Trouble in Little China by Epic Games, which we have an unboxing article in the magazine. Solomon Kane also stood out, along with Armymals, and Burrows and Badgers 2nd Edition.

I've also started playing Gangs of Rome after playing a demo game at Chillicon show in Sheffield. I decided to set my campaign in Roman Britain, and that my dominus has been sent to Britain for an indiscretion, the aim is to climb the ranks of British society, gaining favour so he can return to Rome.

I've been continuing my task of slowly painting the grey army, as well as trying to paint the miniatures in several board games I own. Recently I started painting the characters from Super Dungeon Explore and I'm really liking the chibi style miniatures. I've also painted a miniature for the painting competition at the Forge World Open Day in July. I'll let you know how I get on in the next issue.

Well that's all for now folks, enjoy the rest of the magazine and I'll see you in the next issue.

ED'S CHALLENGE

JASON HUBBARD



Slowly reducing the grey army

Since the last issue, I've been painting more scenery pieces for The Walking Dead, along with building some generic terrain items for fantasy and modern wargaming. On the board game painting front I started the characters from Super Dungeon Explore. The other painting task I've been working on is a painting entry for the Forge World open day painting competition on July 15th.

Walking Dead

I had some of the cars by Mantic Games that needed painting, having already completed one of the pick-up trucks before Christmas, I now need to start and finish the other three cars. Which comprised of another pick-up truck and two saloon cars. I did think about doing a metallic paint look, but decided that would take too long, so I went with a MAT paint finish.





I made the cars rusty and dirty to make them look beat and weathered. These along with some more barriers mean that I've now completed all the scenic items that I have for Walking dead, this also includes two mini skips.

Super Dungeon Explore

I've never painted figures quite like the Chibi style miniatures that feature in Super Dungeon Explore. When deciding what colours to paint them, normally I'd go for a dark gritty look for dungeon explorers.



These have a more cartoon look to them than my normal 28mm historical and fantasy miniatures, so I decided to go with quite a bright colour scheme. I've really enjoyed painting these guys, it helps that they are really nice sculpts and the plastic is good quality. Next after these will be all the monsters and bad guys for the game. As this game is really for my niece to play, and she wants to learn how to paint, I'll probably teach her using the monster miniatures as they should be quite good for learning to paint on.



Painting Competition Entry

The Forge World open day painting competition requires all entries to be a Forge World miniature. One of the FW minis I had were the Tallarn Snipers, one of whom is kneeling down. This was the guy I decided to paint. I planned to have him kneeling behind some form of terrain, originally, I was thinking remains of a wall and rubble. I then started painting the sniper and decided to go countryside with the base rather than urban. So, I built a small mound for him to hide behind. This was built initially with green stuff, which was then covered with a PVA and grit solution to give it a rougher texture.

The miniature was painted in very thin layers, with the shadows being very dark so that it contrasted much more once I worked up the other areas to a much lighter colour. This has turned out to be one of my best 28mm painted miniatures to date. It's taken far longer than I would take on a gaming miniature,



but it's been good to paint up a mini for a painting comp again. The last time I painted a miniature for a competition would have been 2012, when I entered the Salute painting Competition. I'll let you know how I got on in the next issue, along with a review of the painting competition.

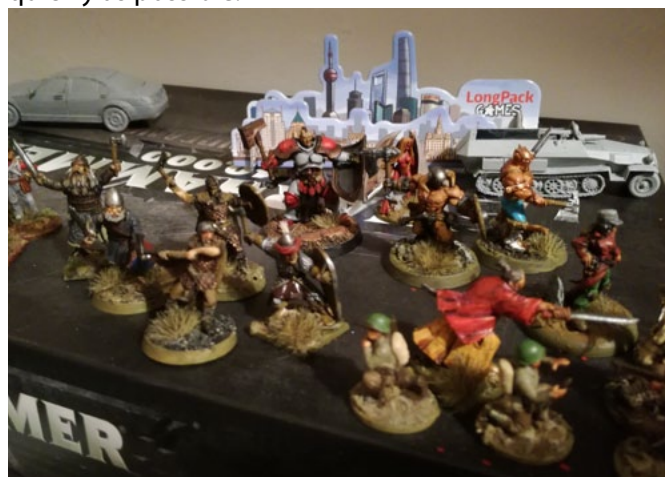
Modular Terrain

A month ago, I decided to make use of the terrain bits and pieces I have in a box. They've been sat in there doing nothing for a few years, so it was a bout time I did something with them. I picked up some small 7x5 painting boards from The Works (a book/gift store in the UK). These came in a pack of 6 for £2, bargain price. I placed the terrain items on the board, gluing them in place using a hot glue gun, the next stage was to cover the floor in a mixture of PVA, grit and stone. I then under coated them before dry brushing appropriate colours on the floor and the terrain pieces. These are quite good to use in a variety of games I play, everything from Sigmar through to Bolt Action and 40K.



Finishing off miniatures

I've had quite a few minis sat on the painting desk at a variety of painting stages, so I been trying to clear this back log off and get them off the table as they're cluttering up the desk. I didn't paint them beyond table top level, as I wanted to get them done and dusted as quickly as possible.



I like many other war gamers have far too many miniatures in my grey army, and I'm really trying to clear through as many as possible. Due to this I'm not buying as many miniatures as I'd normally would have done, in fact for the least 3-5 years I've been reducing the amount I spend on miniatures simply because my grey army has gotten too big. My aim now is to slowly plug away at the pile of unpainted miniatures and get them on the table top fighting battles.

NEWS

IRREGULAR TEAM

COILEDSPRING GAMES'



GAMES' SHOWCASED AT THE UK GAMES EXPO SHOW

Coiledspring Games is delighted to announce that two of its top games were voted best in their categories at this year's UK Games Expo at the NEC in Birmingham.

The UK Games Expo, the UK's largest tabletop games convention, took place from 1st – 3rd June and over 39,000 people attended across the three days.

The award-winning games were:

- Photosynthesis (Blue Orange): Winner of Judges Choice, Best New Board Game (Euro style)
- Queendomino (Blue Orange): Winner of People's Choice, Best New Expansion

Roger Martin, Managing Director, Coiledspring Games:

"We have had a very successful three days at the Expo. Our games provided entertainment and enjoyment for so many people and we are absolutely delighted that Photosynthesis and Queendomino have been voted as favours in their categories.

Photosynthesis was one of the most sought-after games on the floor this year. It is also one of the most visually striking. Queendomino is a wonderful game which is both a standalone game and an expansion of the 2017 Spiel des Jahres recipient, Kingdomino".

Céline Casel, Communications Manager, Blue Orange: "We are so pleased that both the judges and the gamers have chosen Blue Orange games for awards at Expo.

Photosynthesis is a wonderfully unique and creative strategy concept game. Queendomino walks in the path of its predecessor Kingdomino, simple but deep and challenging. Both games promote our value: Hot game, Cool planet. These awards show that our know how is valued and incite us to pursue the development of fun, simple, and smart games!"

In addition, Coiledspring Games had the privilege of showcasing the highly anticipated RAIDS at the UK Games Expo. This was the world premiere of the IELLO game and the inventors, Brett Gilbert and Matthew Dunstan, were there to sign copies and play the game with fans. RAIDS will be out on sale in the UK in August.

Roger Martin, Managing Director, Coiledspring Games:

"We have all been looking forward to exhibiting RAIDS at Expo. The feedback from both retailers and gamers alike is that it is a truly fascinating and exciting game and I'm sure it will become hugely successful upon release".

DIZED SHOWCASED BLOOD RAGE & KINGDOMINO



Dized is a smart device application that is used next to physical board games. It features interactive tutorials that guide players through their first game play allowing the game to start immediately, like how video games do it today. The audience at the expo has a chance to come try out the tutorials first hand; this will also be the first showing of the Blood Rage tutorial that the company has been creating.

"This was the third time we attended the UK Games Expo as Dized. Year after year it's been one of the best events we take part in. We always want to give the audience something special, last year we had a puzzle room, and this year the audience got the chance to try out and learn Blood Rage with the Dized tutorial", states the company CEO Jouni Jussila.

Besides Blood Rage, the attendees had the chance to learn Kingdomino as well. More tutorials are lined up as several famous publishers, such as CMON, Hans im Glück, Steve Jackson, dV Giochi, Horrible Games, Grey Fox Games, Brain Games, IELLO and Looney Labs, to name a few, have partnered up with the company to have their games on Dized.

"Right now, we're still crafting content by hand, so the going is slow. However, we're excited about the toolset we're developing right now: it allows industry operators to create content independently. There are thousands of awesome games released every year, and we can't possibly serve them all. So, this powerful toolset allows any publisher, designer or freelancer to

create tutorials and other content for Dized. We aim to be the one platform that serves everyone in this awesome hobby."

The first tools for Dized, that allow the creation of indexed and searchable game rules, is aimed for release this summer. One of the main features of these rules is the living FAQ, that will enable players to ask questions about the game, such as "who wins if these two cards are played at the same time?"

If the players can't find the answers they're looking for, publishers can update the FAQ immediately, removing any confusion.



"The toolset for Rules is just the first part of what we're building. Besides being an essential feature for any player, the rules part is a great showing of how quickly the content will come to the app when the publishers and creators get their hands on our intuitive tools. We're working hard to build the tutorial tools as well, and we'll have more to say about those in the coming months", finishes Jussila.

Dized is being built by Playmore Games, founded in 2014 by Jouni Jussila and Tomi Vainikka. After a successful release of the Race to the North Pole board game, the company has been developing the smart device application. Dized has been in development since 2015 and is a registered trademark of Playmore Games.

www.dized.com

SUMMONER'S ISLE



With UK Games Expo over I just wanted to take the opportunity to tell you about my first solo project - Summoner's Isle!

This was the first year I ran a stall at UKGE and I must admit I was pretty darn nervous about it. The aim of my presence was to build up an awareness of the game, give people opportunities to play, plus grow the mailing list for the upcoming Kickstarter campaign.

For the convention, there was a limited number of copies available for sale (just 45!) to soft launch the campaign and get the ball rolling, I also had a small number of review copies that I hoped would hit some tables and help raise awareness.

Summoner's Isle is an area control game, pitching equally matched forces against one another across a small, interconnected map. Energy is the only commodity in this game, used to determine the winner and also used for Summoning your magical creatures. Some recent feedback sums of perfectly how the game should play:

"We really enjoyed Summoner's Isle; it was a messy, violent, and chaotic brawl in which we all consistently got caught up in attacking our opponents to our own detriment. There was laughing, swearing, and tension throughout. We had a blast."



<http://www.peculiarity.co.uk/>

THE BIG BOOK OF BATTLE MATS

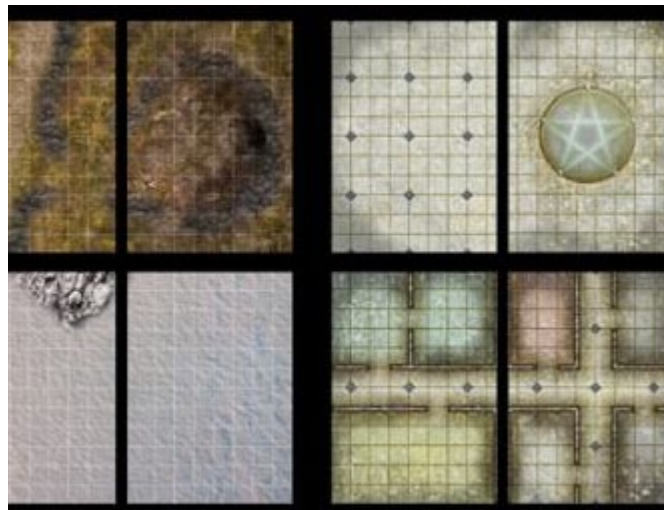


Launched in April 2018, the Big Book of Battle Mats is an innovative product bringing your RPG encounters to life!

The Big Book of Battle Mats has several key features

- 58 A4 pages of Battle Mats for RPG encounters
- Wipe clean format – The big book is fully laminated
- Wire Bound Lay flat format
- Linked designs on opposite pages so option to play on A3 map
- Fantasy Themed
- 1-inch grid throughout

Roleplay has long been catching our imaginations, and Loke BattleMats wanted to launch a product which could not only facilitate a very broad range of RPG encounters, but also add some ideas into the mix as well.



Fantasy based, the Big Book of Battle Mats will lead your party through a world of Dungeons, castle ruins, towns and even puzzle rooms. From the highest castle turret to the darkest dungeon your party can fight, converse and find loot on a manageable 1-inch grid.

Visualising the very spot where the goblin is about to jump out at you has never been easier!

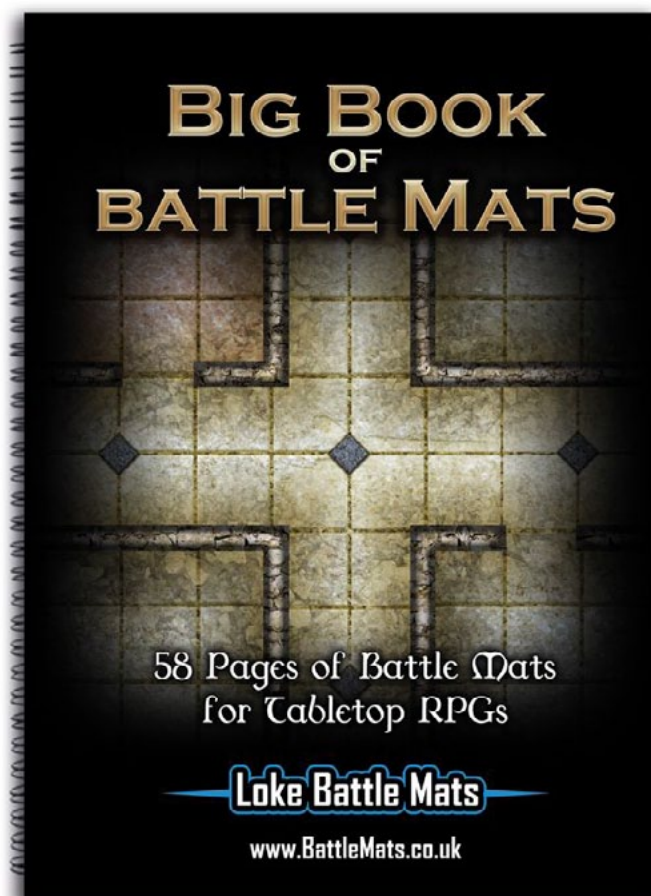
The Big Book of Battle Mats is a very versatile product. Published in A4 format it is portable for the travelling DM and ideal to take to any games night.

Fully laminated throughout it is wipe clean from any non-permanent pen so you can relax about those essential encounter notes and diagrams.

Adding in another layer of versatility by using a wire bound design, the Big Book of Battle Mats can be opened flat allowing Gamers to play the two themed mats on opposing pages as one A3 encounter mat. So suddenly the path now has a suspicious looking lair coming up...

The Big Book of Battle Mats is all you need to really bring your RPG encounters to life and track where each character is, and as a bonus it can travel on your adventures with you.

www.battlemats.co.uk



MASQUEOCA & PEGASUS SPIELE STRENGTHEN THEIR PARTNERSHIP



The Spanish publisher MasQueOca, who releases games under the name Ediciones MasQueOca, and Pegasus Spiele expand their existing strategic partnership and started working together closer from now on.

Since 2013 Ediciones MasQueOca has already published 15 games from Pegasus Spiele in Spanish. Lately Port Royal, Port Royal – Just one more contract and Santo Domingo have been released with the company logo of both publishers.

This expanded partnership does not only show up through the company logos of both publishers on the game boxes, but also through an extensive publication plan. 10 games from Pegasus Spiele are currently announced for 2018 in Spanish and most of them also in Portuguese. Ediciones MasQueOca holds the Spanish rights for publications in Spain, Portugal, Central America and South America with the option for a future extension.

In June 2018 eight titles will be published in a compact box format: Stadt Land Anders (El Buscapalabras), Bücherwurm (Gusabiondo), Candy Match, Kofferpacken extrem (¿Qué llevo en la maleta?), Port Royal Unterwegs, Elements, 4 Seasons and Dragon Master. Further titles are planned and will be announced in due time.

About Ediciones MasQueOca:

Ediciones MasQueOca was founded in 2010 as part of a business group with 100% Spanish capital and headquarters in Madrid (Spain). His vision is to become one of the leaders in the publishing market of board games, card games and war games in Spain, Portugal and Latin America. His mission is to publish in



Spanish and Portuguese international best sellers, re-design and modernize great classics and creation and develop of his own games. The present portfolio of Ediciones MasQueOca includes more than 80 games highly relevant in the boardgames world, awarded with host of prizes, honors and recognitions.

About Pegasus Spiele:

Pegasus Spiele has been active since 1993 with its CEOs and owners Karsten Esser and Andreas Finkernagel in charge. Within the last decade, the German company has established itself not only as a distributor, but also as a publisher of successful board games - which is reflected in the ongoing series of prestigious nominations and awards with the highlight of the double nomination for the Spiel des Jahres 2017 with Kingdomino and Magic Maze and the award for Kingdomino. With more than 5.000 games and toys distributed through strong trading partners, Pegasus Spiele is also known as a successful distributor. 30 permanent employees work in Friedberg near Frankfurt am Main on creating great gaming experiences.

ARMY PAINTER RELEASES D&D PAINT SET



The Army Painter are both excited and proud to announce the upcoming OFFICIAL DUNGEONS & DRAGONS PAINT LINE. Months of hard work will finally - and for the first time ever - bring dedicated colours to the fantastic D&D universe!

The brand-new range of colours for the D&D universe has been thoroughly and painstakingly researched to match the many varied (and indeed colourful) creatures and monsters inhabiting it.



The range will be divided into 2 sets: the ADVENTURERS set (10 paints) and the MONSTERS set (36 paints). All paints will be super high quality and bottled in new 12ml dropper bottles to avoid spill and drying out.

Also, in each paint set there will be a FREE miniature – and lastly, but not least – there will be a cool D&D brush set too to get you going.

So, stay tuned: there will be more information about these miniatures and the sets themselves later!

www.thearmypainter.com



RAVAGE - DUNGEONS OF PLUNDER



Modiphius are pleased to announce the release of an awesome new board game, *Ravage - Dungeons of Plunder*, designed by artist Ian Schofield. In the game you take on the role of one of a series of savage Orcs, raiding and feuding and fighting in the Blackroot Mountains to secure plentiful loot and plunder, oh and 'teef!

High up in the Blackroot Mountains lives a tribe of orcs. They are ultra-competitive with one another and the Chieftain promotes this in his warriors. They occasionally team up in an uneasy alliance to plunder nearby caverns and outposts.

Many times, these raids are purely to plunder them for loot while ridding the nearby area of nasty monsters at the same time. Other times they are formed by the Chieftain to exterminate a specific target.

To keep the peace the Chieftain selects a warrior from each caste of the tribe. The Berserkers, the Shamans, the Headhunters and the Cultists.

In this exciting boardgame from Ian Schofield, you play one of the Blackroot orcs in this chosen raiding party taking on one of the various roles in it and fighting for loot.

Ravage Dungeons of Plunder: also contains three gameplay modes and styles of play:

- Co-operative: Play through quests in this co-op mode.
- Solo: One player against the dungeon. Try to survive the dungeon's many perils...
- Treachery: Versus mode, the first player to kill 6 heroes is the winner!



Here's the Modiphius team trying the game out at UK Games Expo last year. We hope you enjoy this brand-new board game and look out for more great games coming from Modiphius soon.

www.modiphius.net

UK GAMES EXPO

DAY ONE

ALEX GARBETT



A Personal Perspective on the 3 Expo Days

The Games Expo is the largest table top gaming expo and convention held in UK. Taking place over 3 days in June at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre the Expo covers everything from Table Top Miniatures to Trading Card Games, Board Games, Cosplay, Role Playing Games and everything else in-between, very much feeling like a giant convention and trade show as you would find if you were state side.

2018 marked the 12th incarnation of the show and has this year been bigger than ever, taking over a further hall adding to its already impressive main hall with cramming in over 300 exhibitors displaying, selling, demonstrating and showing off their fabulous games and wears along with the many tournaments, bring and buy, stage area and open gaming besides. The Games Expo really is the show of shows in the UK and as with the previous year Irregular Magazine was able to get down to the show. 2018 marked our third year at the Games Expo and NEC giving us yet again it another eye opening and mind blowing experience for the team.

The Expo like the Salute Show has become something of a 'road trip' for the team at the magazine. For us it's our Mecca, our Pilgrimage each year and main event of the gaming calendar and a must so there was no way we were going to miss the show.

To take advantage of the show you need to be getting your 3 day pass to really soak up all that there is to see, do, explore and play.



As like previous years we on the magazine team booked ourselves several hotel rooms situated in central Birmingham, right on the edge of Broadstreet. Located here we had good parking and easy access to those all-important bars for after each day at the show taking advantage of drinks, food and the night life in Birmingham.

On the week leading up to the show there was much packing, planning and prepping for the journey down as well as clearing out camera memory cards and ensuring we had linked to all the game companies who had asked us to pop by as well as getting plenty of spending money put aside of the past month ensuring we could bring back lots of new and shiny toys and games.

An early was in order so we all found ourselves hunkering down nice and early ready for the 3 day marathon ahead!



Day 1 – Expo Fever!

The teams journey started very early at 6am leaving South Yorkshire and getting onto the M1 motorway. The time down to Birmingham was spent with a lot of discussion about what we were looking forward to seeing at the show and particular traders and stands – myself hoping to see Games Workshop and if there would be the new Adeptus Titanicus on show. Star Wars as always is a big theme of the show and half of the team in the car were due to take part in the Fantasy Flight Star Wars Imperial Assault Tournament so as I'm sure you the reader can imagine we spent a good chunk of time down in the car discussing lists, play styles and hopes for the guys winning or coming in the top 10, 20 or 30.

Next and something the team couldn't really avoid at the moment... a large discussion on the latest Star Wars films from Disney.



After an hour or so arguing about Star Wars the Last Jedi we moved onto a good but heated discussion on Solo a Star Wars Story to finally the Force Awakens which took up the remainder of the journey down to the N.E.C.

All 'Star Wars-d' out we found ourselves us arriving down at the N.E.C. for 8:30am. By this point our hunger started taking control so we sought to make our way into the venue, grab our tickets then most importantly chow down on some breakfast.



As the team was queuing up (myself having vanished for a loo break) Justin from On Table Top (Beasts Of War) grabbed the team for a quick interview before we entered and we can be found on one of the early Blogs on their website for the Friday morning. After finishing queuing and grabbed our tickets the team headed for Weatherspoon's and I'll give you the reader 3 guesses on what we went for....Yes, you got it. English Breakfast!

Collectively the team destroyed the English breakfast's we ordered and with clean plates all around we joined the main entry queue to get into the main hall which had grown DRAMATICALLY from the initial time we sat down in Weatherspoon's for something to eat and drink.



On guestimates and from standing amongst and in the shoulder deep crowds, there must have been easily 2000 people at just before 9am waiting to get into the main hall. It was getting hot and being burdened with camera and backpacks

Finally at 9:30 the doors opened to a flood of gamers and like a dam bursting we all flowed into the hall. The Expo had begun!

Our first stop like 2017 was at Games Workshops stand which was located right at the entrance to the main hall and one of the biggest stands at the show. I buzzed through to try and find Adeptus Titanicus but alas....it wasn't present at the show which was abit of a bummer personally but I soon spotted some of the other new miniatures and large scale 3-up's for Warhammer Age of Sigmar 2.0 which looked fantastic. No visit to Games Workshop be it a standard store, Warhammer World or the Expo would be complete without a stop at the Forge World store so I popped around and got a few show models for painting up later.

After leaving Games Workshop which became one of our show landmarks (I always find its easier to pick a big location and work from there at shows) Jason and myself then spent the next few hours trying to get our bearings on the rest of the stalls, stands and stores in Hall 1.



On our first pass around we spotted many of the returning traders and manufacturers on the first lap as we stopped in, said 'Hi' to old friends and spotted games which we liked the look of from afar. We stopped in on TT Combat and I picked up some Dropfleet Commander miniatures for a friend who couldn't make the show and while doing so spotted some discounted resin scenic bases which I thought would be idea for Adeptus Titanicus so grabbed those along with some other bits and bobs.

Our next stop was the giant display and area just across from TT Combat put aside for 'Big Trouble....In Little Chinaaaaaa' (If you know the song released via



John Carpenter's Coup de Villes band) by Everything Epic Games.

Big Trouble In Little China is one of those amazing pulp films you just can't help but watch or if you saw as a kid will be part of your growing up memories as it is for me. The game and miniatures looked incredible and we have an Interview and review to follow down the line so look out for this!



As we continued around Hall 1 without a plan and following our feet we wound up at Themeborne and Escape The Dark Castle. I had previously played this game and its become an instant classic at my local gaming club so it was a fantastic and fun experience catching up with the creators of the game and sharing thoughts, ideas, stories of past games and more long with discussing the new Kickstarter they have planned.

Behind Themeborne was Para Bellum who had a massive display table showing off their range of new models and Fantasy Wargame. Para Bellum had some fantastic miniatures and exciting new core starter box on display which we were shown by one of the designers and got into discussing skirmish rules and combat.

I was also fortunate and able to pick up one of the Art-books from Para Bellum which really drew me into the world they are creating...so keep an eye out for their new Starter Sets and more coming soon!

By this point the team has split and the other half had moved to Hall 2 and the large gaming area which had open gaming but also tournament gaming so they could get some practise in with their Star Wars Imperial Assault lists.



Back near the centre of Hall 1 was Fantasy Flights area....i say area as well it's a huge space they have, and rightly so!

Star Wars Legion featured heavily on the participation tables which were lovely scratch built semi play, semi display tables that focused on a hanger type of scenario with both an Ice Planet Hoth and the Volcano world of Mustafar as the Rebels fought Empire over objectives.

This too was my first real chance to see the Star Wars Legion Miniatures and Vehicles compared with my experience of Imperial Assault and I came away certainly wanting the AT-ST to paint up as the model looks very solid, robust and much bigger than its Imperial Assault counterpart.

Over from Fantasy Flights was Wild West Exodus and Wayland Games who also had some lovely Gaming tables showing off the models for various factions within the game as well as all the products Wayland stock so I took advantage again to pick up some further supplies for my Day 1 stash.



Lunch was taken care of with a Subway feast and getting out of Hall 1 onto the grass surrounding the NEC. Here the group reformed and discuss what we had all seen thus far. Conversation focused on deals or show specials on particular games to someone's aching feet then moved onto the fact I'd not been into the 2nd Hall yet and how there was still waiting for me to see. All in we had a 45 min lunch break and managed to all catch some sun (some more than others), when done it was rubbish in the bin (save the planet!) and back inside for Hall 2 and beyond the bring and buy! The afternoon consisted of wandering round the other traders in Hall 2 just above the stairs and being amazed by the games, products, art and more on sale. There were card games, and plush items, Wargames products, Action figures, Terrain materials, Dice....just everything you could ever need really and I could only take so much of it in before feeling overwhelmed. I needed to get some space and to refocus so foolishly

I chose to find and see the UK Expo Bring and Buy thinking it would be somewhat quiet on the Friday compared to when I have been in previous years..... and OH MAN....was I wrong!

To do the Bring and Buy justice I would need an entire section here as it is a whole topic in itself...almost a show within a show really.

I queued for 30 minutes as I eagerly gazed around one corner, then another to get into the Bring and Buy. Finally I reached the entrance to the Bring and Buy and was blown away again by the sheer throng of people inside and tables chocker block, literally filled one side to the other rammed in Board Games.



The Bring and Buy does take it out of you after you've strained your eyes trying to view the thousands of games on offer to trying to hunt down and spot those deals or limited edition items but after long searching I found some bits I wanted and queued back up again to get to the checkouts and then made my way out of the area with goodies and bargains all bagged up. At this point it must have been mid-afternoon so I wandered around again eyeing up other games and various stalls as I went around seeing old friends and locals from my home city who had also made it down but specifically looking and seeing the people around me and hearing all the difference voices and accents compared with previous years at the show. I can say for sure whether its down to what I heard walking around of the various country team t-shirts and hoodies that the Expo certainly now has a very large international following and attendance from both sides (Europe and US) which is really fantastic to see. Looking back on things now as I write almost a week after the show a lot of the Friday while I can recall a lot seemed a blur for the team and myself. We saw so much....games, stalls, stands, boxes, dice and everything else. It was a long day, almost 10 hours we spent and according to my stepper 22844 steps or almost 9 miles walked that day. I do remember though standing on the steps from Hall 1 going up to Hall 2 and just taking a few minutes to really take in the view....



Certainly the photo doesn't do justice to the scale of it all but wow....

I couldn't help but have a smile on my face (even now too as I type this) but how Awesome our industry is. Games touch so many lives, people from all races and backgrounds to countries and more.

It makes me feel like a tiny cog in the giant machine that is this hobby I love and hold so dearly.

And with a buzz at my pocket and the text from the guys about going and getting food and the drinks after in the centre of Birmingham Day 1 of the show was over for us.

We gathered outside on the grass near the entrance and made our way back to the Car as each of us 'eyed' the others haul of games, bits, models and more from the first day.



Each year we stay at a hotel so once we arrived and checked in it was a case of resting for a little while, then freshening up in preparation to hit the bars for food and drinks. As we were out too I was out for spotting on the necks of many people the shows lanyards and various passes be it 'Three Day' to 'Exhibitor' as the night and drinks progressed. It very much seemed we took over large parts of the City (GAMERS RULE!) I will say though as a word of warning to all....don't get too smashed on Night 1.....you'll regret it the following morning, of which I did in 2017 so I wasn't going to make the same mistake again.

At the end of the night and around 1am we headed back to the hotel and crashed on our beds. I closed my eyes and went straight off to sleep (with earplugs mind as some people snore!).



BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA

EVERYTHING EPIC GAMES

JASON HUBBARD



Big Trouble in little China is a cult film from the 80's starring a rather young Kurt Russell. The film was directed by the horror master John Carpenter, who also made other classics such as The Thing, Halloween and Escape from New York.

Now you can relive the story from the film in the form of this fantastic table top board game from Chris Batarlis and Boris Polonsky of Everything Epic Games. This has been one of the board games I've been waiting for with much anticipation, especially as it centres around one of my favourite action films from the 80's. Its also one of my all time favourite Kurt Russell films, after Escape from New York. The film was an action-packed comedy, filled with Chinese magic and mysticism, featuring great bad guys and cool sidekicks for Kurt.

I recently got my hands on a copy, courtesy of the guys from Epic, I was very excited, the sheer weight of the box suggests it absolutely packed with goodies. Once I got the lid off the box I wasn't disappointed, its packed to the brim with pieces. The artwork on the box is in keeping with the feel of the film which initially suggests that this is going to be a good product.

Big Trouble is a co-operative sandbox adventure game that allows up to 4 players to play through the events from the movie as well as create news ones. The game is played in two parts, and this is emphasised by the double-sided board game. The front side is China Town itself, which players wander around carrying out tasks and quests to try and build up their characters. The second half of the game is set in Lo Pan's lair, so the board is flipped over to reveal the lair.

Players can choose from 6 possible characters, each of whom have unique abilities, with custom dice for actions, tasks and the most important part Combat. After completing quests and upgrading all the characters in play, the game ventures in to the lair of Lo Pan and the final show down.

The most important part of the game for me are the miniatures. The level of detail in these one-piece plastic minis are exceptional. Jack Burton, the hero of the game and film (Kurt) is great, armed with the Machine pistol and knife. Lo Pan is another great miniature,





and both of these are going to look great painted up. I can't wait to start painting the miniatures for this game, and I plan in the next issue of the magazine I plan to take a closer look at them when I start painting the heroes and villains.

The designers have really captured the spirit of the film perfectly in all the artwork and plastic miniatures. All aspects have been beautifully designed, everything from the double side board game through to the counters. You can tell that the guys behind the game are huge fans of the film and this comes across in all aspects of design and mechanics.



I recently decided to re-watch the film again, and it brought back all of the nostalgia for 80's action movies and TV shows such as the A-Team and Airwolf. This made me more excited to get playing this game. When you first set up the game, it does look very complicated and over daunting but once you start playing its very intuitive and the rules are very easy to pick up. I really enjoyed my first gaming experience, it was great fun and had quite a lot of depth.

If you're a fan of the film then this is a definite must have and if you've never seen the game, then this is still worth grabbing for your board game shelf. Though I would recommend watching the film if you haven't seen it. For those in the UK, Asda are currently selling the film for £3.

If you enjoy playing co-operative games then this will really appeal to you, its full of theme, quests and narrative. It also has that replayable element to the game, with enough different characters to play, as well being a sandbox style game that no two games will be alike.

As I said earlier in the next issue I'll be taking a closer look at the miniatures when I paint some of them. I also plan to write up a tutorial on painting Jack Burton.

INTERVIEW WITH CHRIS BATARLIS

EVERYTHING EPIC GAMES

JASON HUBBARD



Big Trouble in Little China Town

Whilst at UK Games Expo we caught with Chris Batarlis from Everything Epic Games to chat about their latest board games release based on the 1980's Kurt Russell movie Big Trouble in Little China Town.

How long have you been a gamer?

I've been a gamer since about 4th grade in school, and been playing games ever since, starting with Magic the Gathering, D&D and then well, I grew up and became a game publisher, so something must have went right or maybe wrong either way its EPIC.

You're showcasing Big Trouble in Little China at the Expo, you're obviously a fan of the film, where did this start, and was this a game you've always wanted to produce?

This is the world premiere of Big Trouble in Little China here at the UK Games Expo. We started this project about two years ago, it was a dream to make an awesome epic game based around Big Trouble in Little China. There hasn't been anything like this done

before for any board game, so we put our hearts and passion into it, myself and Boris Polonsky. We wanted to make the most epic game and make little China Town come to life in the board game world and spare no expense, with full original artwork, its has 40 miniatures in the game to make it what it should be. It has a ninety-page story book because it really needed to capture the film and make the game what we really wanted it to be like. Not just a light game or a quick cash grab but loving the Big Trouble universe and making it more than just what you see in the movie.

How does the film translate into a game, and how does that come across in the mechanics?

I guess the movie really lends itself well for a game because the film is about a quest to save Mao Ling from Lo Pan, so that's the plot driver for the game. Then we're able to veer off and take different paths in getting to that point. The game has two acts, its starts in Little China Town where you're going around the board levelling up your character and going on quests, eventually when you've levelled up enough,



you flip over the board and you enter Lo Pan's Lair. So, it's a double-sided board with Little China on one side and Lo Pan's Lair on the other. So, you go under the Wing Con trading company into his lair, so again it has that awesome core from the movie that makes for a great gaming experience, as well as enough freedom to play within that world whilst sticking to the theme and feel of the film. You can have a lot of fun with it, it's got great characters, a great story and theme. It's got everything you want with monsters.



Did you fund this through Kickstarter?

No, we did not use Kickstarter for this game. This was a direct pre-order from our website, it was up for pre-order for about eight to nine months. We closed it a few months ago after it had sold out on pre-order, so we've pretty much got the games out to the people in the UK, and they're almost out to all the people in America. We're going to have the game for the all the con season, and it'll be coming to retail soon, so it's all very exciting.



Are there any plans to take it beyond Big Trouble in Little China, for new adventures?

Yeah, absolutely, Jack Burton's adventures never stop, he goes in his truck and he's on journey all the time. There's already another expansion completed, it was in the deluxe edition so all those who pre-ordered the game, special edition and deluxe edition were able to get that expansion way earlier than anyone else, because basically they helped us, so we wanted to give them something special. So that extra expansion will be coming out and will be an entire new campaign, a time travel-based campaign where Lo Pan goes back in time to try and take over the world and the team must use a magical artefact to chase him back in time to try and fix things. So, it's a little different type of style of how Big Trouble works, but the mechanics are the same, and it's a full-on campaign. We have a ninety-page story in the core game and the expansion will add another forty-five pages to the story, so it's epic.

MYTHIC BATTLES

SOLOMON KANE

MYTHIC GAMES



Who is Solomon Kane?

Solomon Kane is a dour English Puritan and redresser of wrongs. He roams the world, fighting against the ungodly and evil works of men and foul magic alike. He follows no master save his conscience, though that alone drives him to the ends of the Earth to fulfil his quest.

All his life he has travelled, aiding the weak and fighting oppression. From the bleak moors of England, through the damp forests of Germany, to the sweltering jungles and savannahs of Africa – even to the shores of the distant New World of America. He neither knows nor questions why he is driven to do this. It simply must be done.

To Solomon Kane he is the fulfiller of God's judgment; a vessel of wrath to be emptied onto the souls of the unrighteous. To his enemies he is an implacable fury, armed with flintlock and rapier, and

armoured in unshakeable faith. The knowledge of the rightness of his cause makes him unstoppable and gives him the ability to overcome any fiend or demon.

What is the Solomon Kane board game?

Based upon the stories by Robert E. Howard (creator of Conan), Solomon Kane is a narrative adventure board game featuring exceptional 35mm miniatures. It is a highly innovative co-operative game of storytelling, resource management, and tactical miniatures play. Players take the part of the invisible powers of good and light who aid Solomon Kane in his quest to overcome the forces of Darkness. Each player is one of the four Cardinal Virtues: Courage, Prudence, Temperance, and Justice, each with special powers

that reflect their unique role.

Drawing upon Howard's famous tales of the Puritan avenger, the core box allows players to tell their own versions of the Rattle of Bones, Skulls in the Stars, and Blue Flame of Vengeance. Expansions recreate Howard's other Solomon Kane stories, as well as adding original adventures for the hero, created especially for the game.

In Solomon Kane, each of Howard's tales is told as one or more Acts, with each Act comprising a full game session. Shorter stories like Rattle of Bones can be completed in a single session, whilst longer tales will take multiple sessions to play through.

An Act is broken down into 8-10 Chapters, and each Chapter has multiple possible outcomes depending upon the actions of the players. Some Chapters offer story choices, whereas others see the action play out on the game board as the players work together to aid Solomon Kane in his quest.



Using custom card decks and dice, each Virtue can control Solomon Kane or his allies, moving them around the board, fighting enemies, exploring locations, and interrogating suspects for information. If the odds get too stacked against Solomon Kane, the Virtues can even manifest directly to intervene on the board.

Opposing Solomon Kane and the players is the Darkness. This twisted reflection of the Virtues is controlled by an AI deck which determines the actions of enemy miniatures, thwarts the player's best plans, and competes with them to drive the story in an evil and unholy direction.

The world of Solomon Kane is brought to life through the stunning artistic vision of Guillem H. Pongiluppi and game designer Jake Thornton, whose 'puppet master' game mechanics break new ground in co-operative gameplay. With multiple versions of every single Chapter, Solomon Kane can combine immersive storytelling with abundant replayability for a truly unique gameplay experience.



About Mythic Games

Mythic Games, based in France and Luxembourg, creates premium board games combining great mechanics, spectacular art and finely crafted miniatures from world-renowned designers and artists and with feedback from extensive public playtesting. Mythic Games' first game, Mythic Battles: Pantheon, in which players play a god of Greek Mythology to regain their glory and control Olympus, was funded in late 2016 in a multi-million dollar Kickstarter and released in 2017. The forthcoming Time of Legends: Joan of Arc board game just wrapped a wildly successful crowdfunding campaign, raising more than \$4M.

[http://mythicgames.net./](http://mythicgames.net/)







UK GAMES EXPO

DAY TWO

ALEX GARBETT



RPG and Tournament Day

As the sun rose over Birmingham the team was slowly waking and getting ready for Day 2. I must admit that in previous years the team has....partied hard on the Friday night and someone of us have lost the Saturday or Day 2 of the event at former shows, but this year we 'took it steady' and with no major drinking we all arose, got freshened up and had all you can eat breakfast at the Hotel which worked extremely well and set us up for the long day ahead.

Day 2 historically has been the day of Tournaments and RPG games for the various members of the team as we all break off and do our unique and individual bits.

Half the team this year would be taking part in the Star Wars Imperial Assault Tournament with hopes of coming in the top ranks, while the other half of the team including myself would be taking part in several RPG games.

We arrived back at the NEC and picked a slightly different parking space (one with shade!) as the car had become an oven the previous day in the June heat wave we experienced here in the UK.

The group parted at the entrance to the Expo and we wished each other luck in the various events for the day ahead.

In previous years I have played quite a few of the Expo RPG events and for the price (Usually only £3-£5 depending on length etc) have worked out to be fun, enjoyable, exciting and incredible value. I personally find it a bit of a break too from the hectic nature of the main halls and that it's good to get off your feet for a few hours (I had clocked up around 8 miles of steps on my iPhone for the Friday).

Day 2 was very much built around the Role Playing Games which I had signed up for and this year would be two close to heart: Star Trek – Dagger Of the Mind's Eye and Call Of Cthulhu - Radio Gaga. Star Trek was to be run by Everywhen at 11am to 1pm and Cthulhu was 3pm till 4pm.

RPG games are held at the Hilton hotel at the National Exhibition Centre so I had an hour or so to blow before the first RPG game started for the day, so took a slow walk around the main hall and took in some of the new products which had been brought out for the Saturday on several stands.

It approached 10:30am and wanting to be cordial I left the Main Hall within the NEC and grabbed a cup of tea from Starbucks and made my way over to the Hilton, and after finding the conference room hosting the game I took my place ready for a classic Star Trek adventure.



The game was a follow up story to a classic Star Trek Episode which featured the returning character of Doctor Richard Daystrom who invented the M-5 Computer in the episode. Our story picked up on the USS Excalibur and we had a series of objectives to accomplish. As the story progressed we encountered Romulans disguised as Vulcans and after a space battle wound up stopping the Romulan plans and thwarting a new threat against the federation earning commendations along the way.

It was a fantastic story and was run very well by Nick Riggs. Nick used Everywhen's inhouse system which was D6 based. All in this was a really fun game to play and my Star Trek knowledge came in handy and added to the narrative

Around 1:30 I came out of the conference room brimming with a HUGE smile and enthused to run back to

the main Hall and stop by the Modiphius stand and grabbed a selection of Star Trek stuff.

I was so uplifted after a really great Star Trek game that I wanted to run sessions myself at my local gaming club. My brain was running....literally at warp speed with ideas for campaigns, adventures and missions. I picked up some of the Resin Star Trek Miniatures to go with the Rulebook at home and afterwards begun texting a friend who is also shares a passion for Star Trek and Roleplaying with information on the game, what had happened and in turn what I'd brought and the gaming ideas for the future.



On the come down from the Star Trek RPG session I decided to grab some food and revisit the Bring and Buy in Hall 2 of the main NEC building to see if any other Star Trek items were available but nothing peaked my interests, so afterwards headlined to find some food and go sit in the sun outside while I waited for Cthulhu to begin at 3pm.

I'm a huge Cthulhu fan and love the mythos that HP Lovecraft started, which overtime has grown into a huge franchise with its many tentacles in various industries all the way to Chaosium currently who are issuing the Call Of Cthulhu Role Playing Game. We sat down for Cthulhu at 3pm, again in the Hilton Hotel and learned that this was Part 2 of a 3 Part adventure the Games Master was running over the course of the 3 day weekend using 7th edition Rules. The GM gave the group a rundown of the events in the previous session which were pretty mind blowing and delved into A LOT of Cthulhu mythos while also being very heavy on US history of the time around the elections in the south west of America in the 1920's. Once the re-cap of the previous session was completed characters were issued to the group, whom some had heavily lost lots of luck and sanity already which didn't fill any of the group with confidence on surviving the coming trials!



What followed was an immense journey and evidence building session with clues scattered across various states and locations, finally leading up a mountain in the northern states to the location of the one of the first Radio station which was broadcasting hypnotic messages and suggestions into the local towns folks minds....which on discovery was being powered by a black tentacled un earthly and sanity sapping monstrosity.



After a brief battle and one of the group being crushed under the roof when the facility exploded we managed to prevent the apocalypse that day.... only for us to be told by the GM that this was just one of several installations being set up, and that the US Army of the time were involved in testing the technology, and the third part of the story would focus on this with our characters finally having to journey to Washington to try and stop the wrong man getting into the presidential office who was under control of darker powers.

Radio Gaga Cthulhu was another great roleplaying experience and game at the Expo. I have to give a lot of credit to the Games Master in building such a lovely game for us to have played in along with various people in the group putting on American accents which added to the realism of characters.



With the RPG games finished for the day and the main hall in the NEC closed but with the Star Wars Tournaments ongoing we went for Pizza at one of the restaurants near the Expo and discussed the games played while reflecting on another great day.

Finally with the guys finishing their Star Wars Tournament and not ending up where they wanted we left the Expo and headed back to the Hotel, discussing in the car ride back the various lists used in the Imperial Assault games and events of the Tournament and RPG's.



GANGS OF ROME

BLOOD ON THE AVENTINE UNBOXING

JASON HUBBARD



Welcome, Dominus to ancient Rome. A cruel and deadly city, it takes a cruel and deadly soul to survive and prosper here. As the head of a rich house with ambitions on the senate, you have chosen to do more than survive, more than prosper. You've chosen to recruit, to dominate and to ascend.

Gangs of Rome is a skirmish game set in the ancient city of Rome. You control a small gang of thugs and cut throats trying to dominate the mean cruel streets and back alleyways of the Roman capital.

Blood on the Aventine is the new starter set from War Banner. It provides you with everything you need to get playing this great little game.

This set has been built around a scenario that comes with the box set.

Senator Caius Norbanus Flaccus has not only commissioned a temple to the god Apollo, but he has also provided a beautiful—not to mention expensive—statue of the god to watch over the temple's construction.

Two rivals for Flaccus' position on the Senate have both dispatched small gangs of fighters to sack the temple and steal the statue, the disappearance of which will cause embarrassment to the Senator.

However, Flaccus is not quite as naïve as these Domini would believe, and he has invested in a little insurance for his temple and the statue therein: the imposing—and obstinate—Gaul, Talavus...

Box Contents

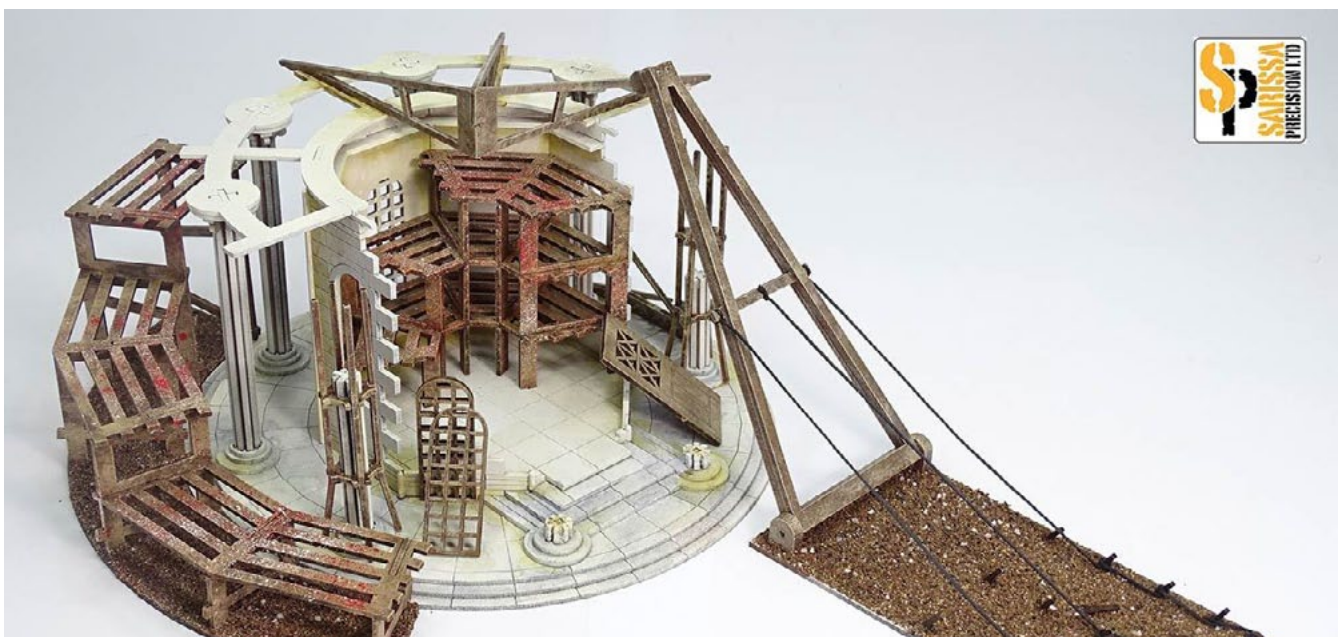
- Gangs of Rome A4 Full Rulebook
- Blood on the Aventine Scenario
- 6 x Single piece fighters
- 6 x Named fighter cards
- 16 x Equipment/Skill Coins and cards featuring four unique coins for this scenario
- 1 Gaul watchman, Incola card and base
- 1 x Personal Influence Marker card
- 6 x Activation pebbles
- 7 Roman numeral dice
- 2 x MDF Movement rulers
- 6 x Jigsaw Base
- 6 x Sets of flesh tokens
- 2 x sets of ID markers
- MDF Temple under construction scenery by Sarissa Precision
- 1 x Objective token



This box set will cost £35 and is definitely worth every penny. The temple building alone is worth the £35.

The building is a laser cut mdf piece of a temple under construction. As with most Sarissa kits they're quite easy to build, so most hobbyists should have no problem constructing this model.

The single piece miniatures are all outstanding, each figure is a separate pose, no two models are the same. They're all nicely sculpted but this is what you'd expect from the sculpting skills of Footsore Miniatures, who are producing the sculpts. There is very minimal flash that needs to be cleaned off the minis before under coating.



The set comes with additional tools such as two measuring rulers which have been designed in the shape of a Roman gladius sword. These are in laser cut MDF and are a nice addition. Other items include a set of six-sided dice with Roman numerals, 6 activation pebbles, 3 white and 3 black. There are also a set of 16 equipment cards and coins, along with four unique coins especially for this scenario.

The scenario is a great introduction to the game, its not overly complicated and introduces the basic rules of the game. After this I would suggest that players purchase some sets of the Roman mob, as these will add an extra dimension to the game. It will allow players to hide gang members in the mob and slip out to strike an opponent before slipping back in and disappearing.

Each miniature comes with a Jigsaw Base and seven red acrylic flesh markers, the flesh markers sit in the indentations of the base, which makes life a lot easier and neater. It's a great idea, other games that require wound markers rely on you using dice or some other inconvenient way to indicate the wounds of a miniature.

This is a great set and worth every penny, I can't recommend this game enough. You don't have to a historical player to enjoy playing Gangs of Rome. It's a perfect introduction into the world of historical gaming for those who have never delved into period gaming. As for all those old hands of period gaming this is a perfect skirmish game that's fun to play. You don't need a mass of ranked infantry, cavalry and artillery to play. It's a small warband size collection of miniatures, which means you get them painted and on the table top in no time.

GANGS OF ROME™

BLOOD ON THE AVENTINE

Welcome, Dominus, to the bloody streets of ancient Rome. As the beating and diseased heart of an equally diseased empire, Rome offers death to the unwary... and fortunes to the cunning. Now is the time to muster your gang and claim those fortunes. Now is the time to gouge your way to the top.

This scenario set for *Gangs of Rome*: *Blood on the Aventine* contains everything you need to play this innovative tabletop skirmish game, including:

- A *Gangs of Rome* rulebook
- Seven *Gangs of Rome* miniatures including Talavus the Gaul, a special miniature unique to this scenario set
- A laser-cut temple created by Sarissa Precision and exclusive to this scenario set
- All the dice, cards, rulers and other accessories you need to begin playing *Gangs of Rome*, including four exclusive new coins.

Packed with all these *Gangs of Rome* essentials and exclusive content, *Blood on the Aventine* is the perfect way to begin or expand your collection. So take your fate in your hands, Dominus, and recruit, dominate, and ascend.

Includes exclusive Gaul Temple Guard miniature and rules card.

WAR BANNER
SARISSA PRECISION LTD
www.sarissa-precision.com

GANGSOFROME.COM

Contents supplied unpainted and unassembled. Paints and glue not included. Contents may vary from those shown.

INTERVIEW WITH WARREN ON TABLE TOP & BEASTS OF WAR

JASON HUBBARD



OnTableTop

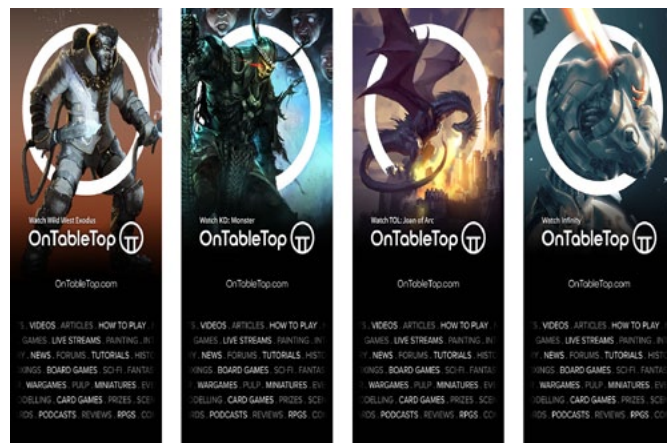
Whilst at UK Games Expo we caught up with Warren from Beasts of War to discuss the new branding and website changes. Recently Beasts of War announced a new brand identity, On Table Top. The idea behind this was to encompass the diversity of games being enjoyed within the gaming community. Being a member of the site for many years now I was keen to find out more regarding the new changes.

You've gone from Beasts of War to On Table Top, what was the process around that?

For the last two years we've been developing the new platform, it's been a long development cycle to create a platform that's much more geared towards user generated content. The new platform allows for a much wider participation and a much wider range of games.

We're looking at introducing and bringing in other outside channels to live on and utilise the platform.

So, Beasts of War itself had become quite a narrow brand in that sense, so what we decided to do was to create a new identity, a new brand and platform, which is On Table Top. On Table Top has been

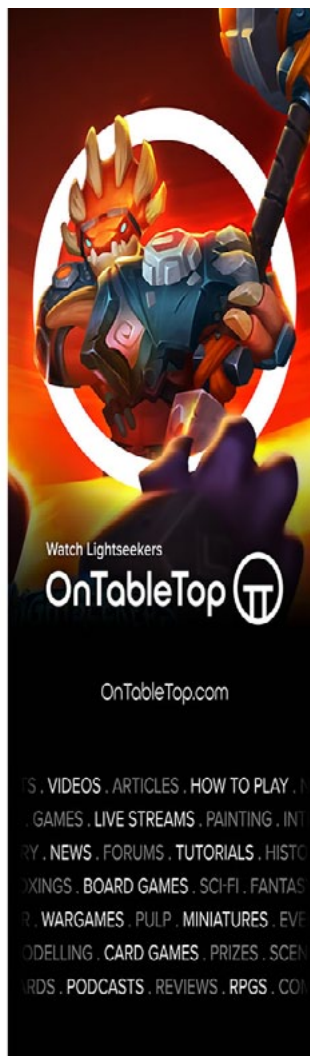


designed from the ground up to be more inclusive of the community across table top gaming, and to include that diversity of games within the hobby, because we were finding more and more war gamers play all sorts of games. The entire industry is becoming gamer agnostic, we just wanna have fun and play lots of different games. So, in order to cater for that we've been content wise trying cover everything, but we decided that it was time that we created an identity that stated exactly what we at Beasts, the platform and the community that engage with it are all about. So, Beasts of War will become one of the channels feeding into the content of that platform.

I'm a member on the site, one of the new features on the site is the projects, so what other functionalities can we expect to see on the platform?

A lot of what's there will be fleshed out a lot more, there's an underline core catalogue that connects games to companies, games to professionals and places. So, we're going to be looking at fleshing out each of those aspects, so the professional profiles will get some extra features, so they can update their profiles, so that when companies are looking for say play testers, they'll be able to check the profiles and CV's of those play testers to see which games they worked on. So, there will be a lot of linking with the industry. Projects itself has several updates on the way and then we also have updates specifically around the idea of demo teams and demonstrators. So, a lot of games have demo networks of demonstrators, so that when you go into a game on the platform, you'll be able to find the local demonstrator for that game. A big part of On Table Top is going to be geared towards helping the community venture into new games.

We have a lot of other interesting systems I just can't talk about them yet because I wanna make sure we can build them first.



You're doing a GW on us Warren.... lol

I really wish I wasn't, I just don't wanna over promise on anything at this stage.

You're looking at bringing more people on as content makers, does mean we may see On Table Top attending more of the smaller shows out there?

So currently we would do Salute, Essen, GenCon and UKGE, along with SteamCon and a few others. So, in answer to your question, yes. We're still a fairly small team behind the scenes with 10 staff. So there are limitations to what we can achieve, but in saying that this weekend we're live blogging from UKGE, one of the features we're looking at opening up is the live blogging platform to other venues and places so they run their own live blogs. So, we don't have to necessarily be everywhere in order to see amazing events of whatever size that take place anywhere in the world.

Can tell me what new video series who guys have planned in the pipeline?

At any one point we have roughly 70 videos in the pipeline that we're working through at the moment. We have more Kingdom of Death which people enjoy, so we have another season coming through where it gets quite horrific in many places.



So, the short answer is yes, we have a lot of new content coming up, so there be some around Solomon Kane and other games. So, stay tuned...

Whilst wandering around the show has anything caught your gamer eye?

I'm very excited by Solomon Kane at the moment. I really like the concept of the game, it looks supremely interesting. I haven't made it much out of the control room yet, so I have a lot of wandering around to do, but Solomon Kane has been the one that's caught my attention so far, it's very much on my radar.



We left a very tired looking Warren to continue live blogging the UKGE, and hopefully he did manage to wander around the show a lot more with his gamer head on rather than in work mode, but we suspect that may have been a luxury he didn't get much of that weekend.

I've been wearing around the site looking at the new changes and some of the new features on the site, and so far, I'm liking what I see. I really like the projects section of the platform, I've even started one of my own, with plans to do more. I like the idea of more engagement with the community, and allowing that community to get stuck in. I'm looking forward to seeing all the new developments that the team have planned.

By the way folks I'm Warhammergrimace on the site if anyone was wondering.



ESCAPE THE DARK CASTLE REVIEW

ALEX GARBETT



A Fantastic Little Game Bringing back early 90's fun

Lurking in a damp cold Dungeon you wait and hear the drip drip drip of freezing and mould ridden water.... screams and echos taunt you as you lay waiting for your chance to escape.

You are a prisoner and you need to escape the Dark castle.

You are not alone in this dungeon. As Prisoners you unite and escape your bonds, breaking free of your cell.

Grabbing your weapons and readying yourselves, you prepare to venture into the Dark Castle beyond....but can you survive the madness and horrors which await you?

The Game Overview

Escape The Dark Castle is a themed Dungeon exploration game by a small company called Themeborne. The game originally debuted on Kickstarter back in 2017 and after successfully funding has gone on to

critical acclaim and being loved by fans across the globe.

Escape The Dark Castle is a simple yet challenging cooperative game of old school retro atmospheric fun as you venture through 15 rooms in the Castle, battling to survive the horrors which await before encountering the Castle Boss before you can reach your freedom.

The game can be played solo but is best with a small group of up to four players working either with or against each other. Each player takes on the role of one of a number of Prisoner cards supplied within the core game who while sharing similar characteristics and stats each have a unique strength of talent which can be used in game to battle through the various encounters you'll meet.

Once each player has decided their character it comes time to dish out each player specific Dice for the encounters ahead. Each players dice is unique and

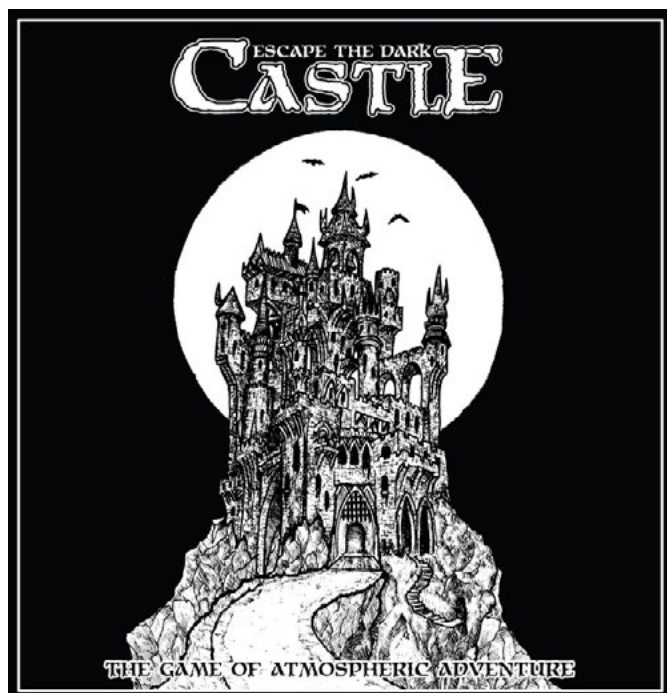
features symbols on each side reflective of their abilities and traits (i.e. more combat symbols for a fighting character). Next comes determining the health or hit points of each character which is dependent on the number of players in the game.

Finally and lastly before you start the game you must randomly pick 15 Room tiles from the deck. These represent you moving through The Dark Castle, and one of the three supplied Boss cards and this is placed at the bottom face down as your finale challenge.

With all the pieces in place you turn over the first Dungeon card which one player reads out to the assembled group... (ideally in a spooky Role Playing Voice – or that's at least how we do it when playing!)

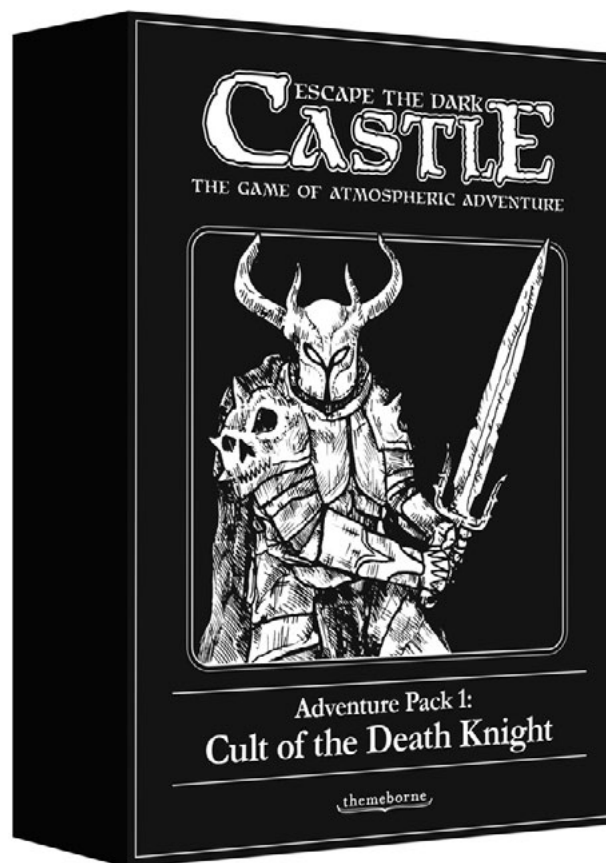
As the players progress you must decide between yourselves who is going to turn the card over each turn as this can have specific consequences for that specific player and represents that player and character (Abbot, Tailor, Smith, Shepard, Miller or Cook)

taking the lead as the group ventures from one room to the next... will they be the first attacked, to come across a trap or worse!



Once you revealed and turn over the card the chosen player reads out the text explaining the situation or encounter you have come across. Each of the 15 room cards represents a mini-game and chapter in your quest to Escape and feature a variety of mechanics or unique challenges, monsters and more which must be overcome to continue.

Each chapter forms an RPG-style skill tests for an individual character, whereby you must outwit, gamble



or combat the challenge with lots of dice rolling as a team, and using any found or acquired item cards collected along the way to upgrade and assist the players.

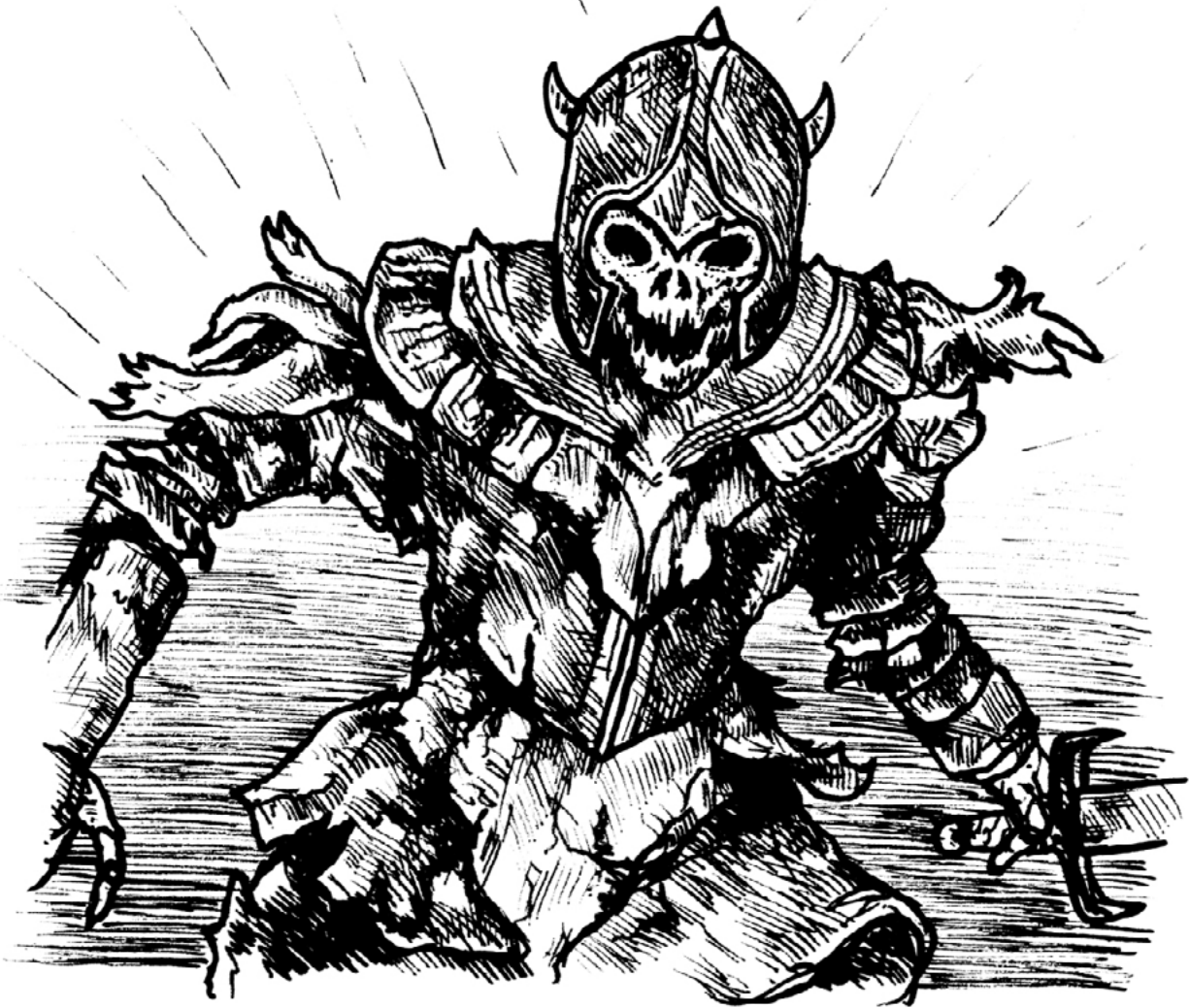
It is essential that players work together as many of the chapters and monsters feature powerful attacks which can severely damage players health and more. Sometimes too players will need to work together allowing one player to rest and recover while others take up the battle and charge in.

The final challenge for the players – if they managed to survive all 15 Rooms - is the Boss chapter which as you can imagine offers the most difficult challenge.

Game Mechanics

The game uses very simple mechanics which are all D6 Dice related that use symbols unique to Escape the Dark Castle which represent Might, Cunning, and Wisdom.

Each Character has his or her allocation of Might, Cunning and Wisdom represented on the character card, in turn having their specific Dice show a higher percentage of these skills on the sides of the dice – I.E. more Might on the Smith character than the Cook. When rolling for combat an enemy card will show a



set ratio of these three core characteristics and it is down to the players to roll their specific character dice and any other bonus dice to match up the specific re

quired number of symbols to defeat that enemy character. Once all the hits have been allocated from the enemy to the characters and vice versa any damage is taken and hit points removed then combat resumes until either or is defeated.

If you succeed in killing the enemy you may gain further equipment which can be drawn from the item card deck, then simply decide on who is venturing first into the next room and reveal by turning over the next chapter card.

The symbol and matching mechanic is used by several games but works very well for simplicity for *Escape the Dark Castle* and many of the older players out there will remember games like *Heroquest* and *Warhammer Quest* using such dice to determine hits and blocks on attacks.

This symbol method of matching dice adds another level of complexity in needing the right characters and

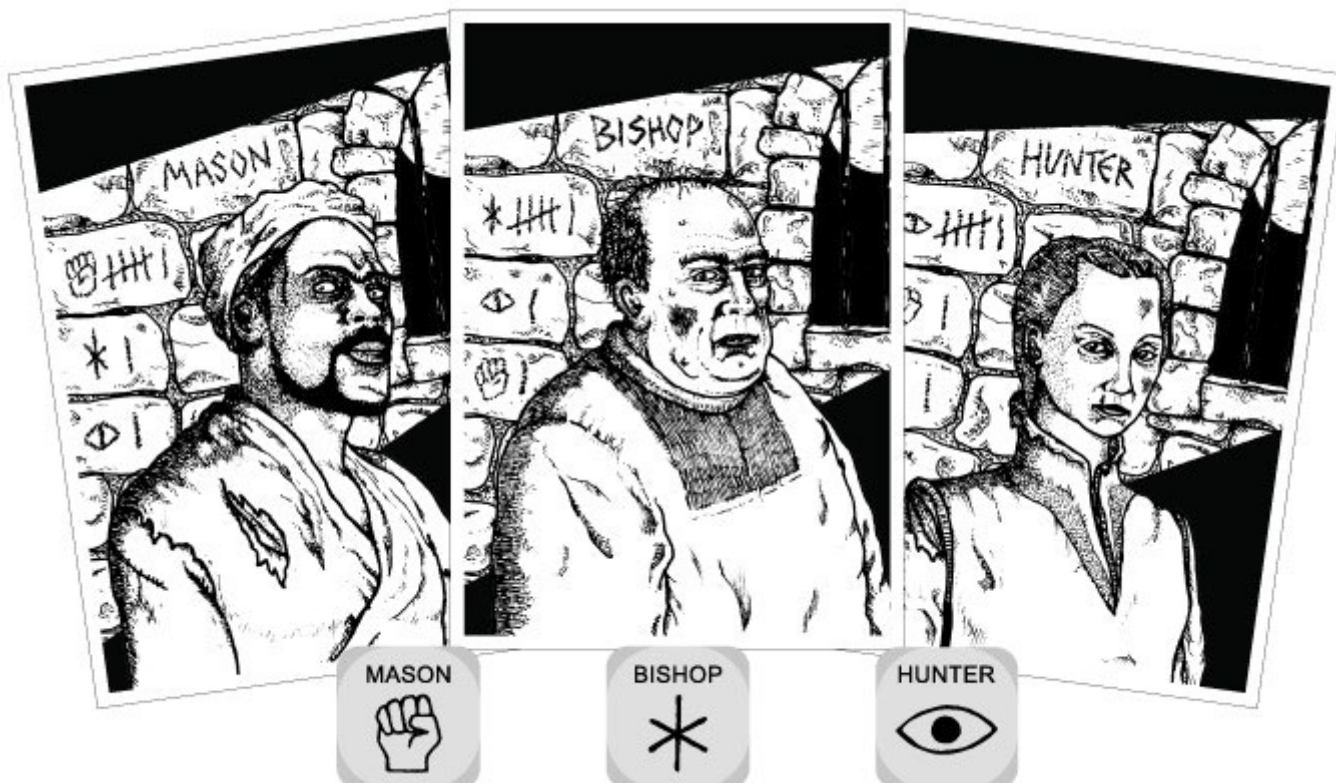
combinations of skills, with the frustration of trying to score specific attack blows against powerful and challenging enemies within the game.

Art & Design

Escape the Dark Castle is unique in that unlike other games the design of the Art and Cards really echo's and harkens back to the glory days of the late 80's and early 90's.

At this time in the UK there was a flood of Dungeon based TV shows and Games which broke into the market and gave an entire generation the first real Dungeon crawler experiences. Whether it's the TV show 'Nightmare', the *Fighting Fantasy* Books by Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone, to table top adventures with *Heroquest* by MB and Games Workshop an entire generation was exposed to the adventures and exploits of daring hero's exploring evil towers or dark dungeons to beat the various monsters and creatures within.

They even did a themed Youtube Trailer for the game based on those classic TV adverts for you to enjoy –



Click here: [Escape the Dark Castle | Official Trailer](#)

This experience left all those who encountered these games back almost 30 years ago with a defining experience and Escape the Dark Tower really channels this into its Art, Design and Atmosphere when playing the game.

I absolutely love and personally adore the black line retro style art by the team at Themeborne which really brings back that nostalgia of youth and early memories in the Hobby.

The Character cards are gritty and hard, the chapter cards are all unique and offer enough of a glimpse into the situation but provide a window for your mind to expand upon the scene, and the item cards really feel like you are re-living those Heroquest days once again.

Overall Feelings

Themeborne have done something very special with Mechanics, Design and product of this game. I believe It truly stands out from the crowd and gives you a unique experience of the present and past at the same time bringing a real threat and fear as you play each chapter and guarding preciously those items you've gained to your valuable health and hit points.

Escape the Dark Castle was introduced to me one Sunday afternoon and within 20 minutes of playing the game I had already ordered it online as it was THAT impressed (I've also customised my copy by adding it to a Chest and adding Glass Gems which adds more of a thematic experience when playing!)

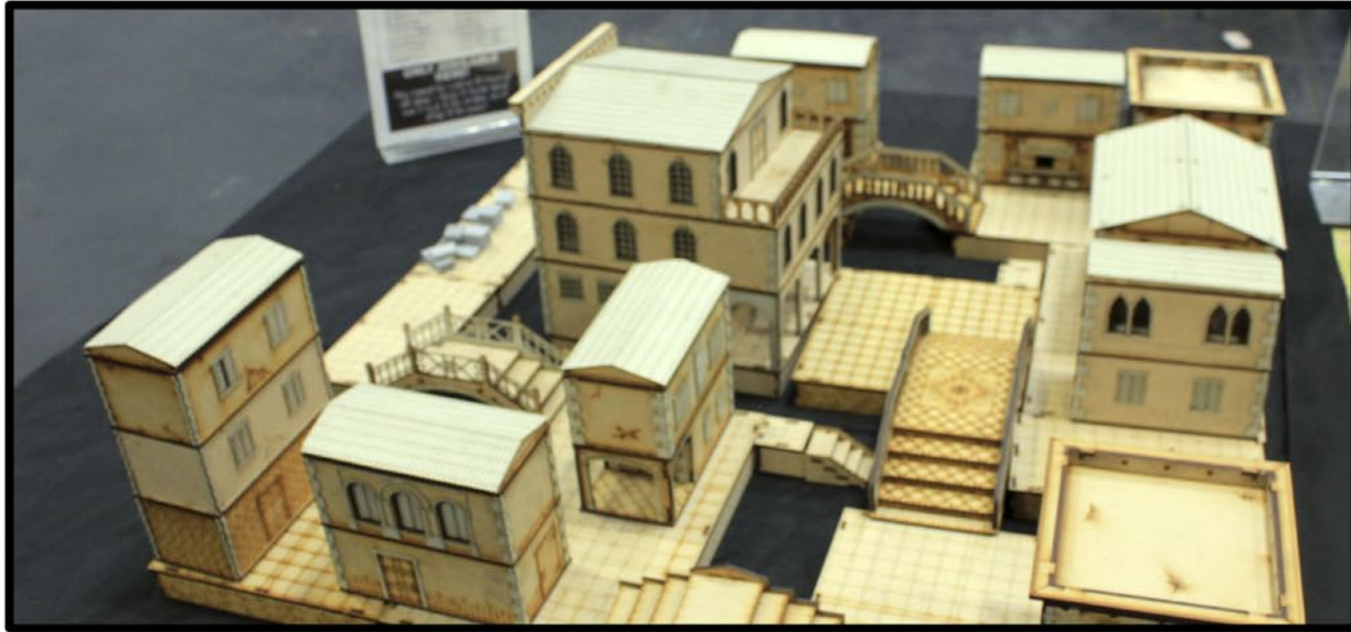
The game has also been so clearly successful with the player base that it was funded on Kickstarter for an initial run and is currently in the process of a second Kickstarter for further expansion packs which feature new player, chapter and equipment cards to adding in new rules for you adventures

Overall with the game and expansions you can sense and feel that this game really, it's a labour of love from the creators and it shows through in every aspect of the product.

Lastly, I was to say Thank you to Themeborne. You have given us something so little, yet so amazing which in turn have generated many exciting, challenging and on edge games of Escape the Dark Castle that we have had in my local Gaming Store.

Enjoy

Alex



UK GAMES EXPO

DAY THREE

ALEX GARBETT



The last day!

The Sunday and Day 3 of the Expo for us has become the day of grabbing bargains and picking up any last final buys.

Out Sunday this year began with the Hotel fire alarm going off around 5am...and from the smoke in reception when we went to enquire about the alarm it most likely burned Toast! With the surprise on the fire alarm forcing us up we chose to not go back to bed and simply started the day at this time and to have an early breakfast, pack our bags and load the car afterwards. We left the hotel and made it to the Expo for the last buys and interviews we'd missed the previous two days.

To say that this was Day 3 of the expo the halls were still very much rammed with people and gamers and this didn't let up till around 3pm in the afternoon.





I grabbed a few more buys in the afternoon from TT Combat and some Dropfleet Commander show exclusive ships, one of the guys in the group got a copy of Big Trouble In Little China while another got himself a Star Saga Show Bundle from Mantic Games.

At around 3:30 we had all pretty much spend up and with that decided that we should call it done and head home back up north. We all crammed ourselves into the car with the many bags and board games, put the air-conditioning on and set off having had a busy, eventful and tiring but amazing weekend!



Conclusion

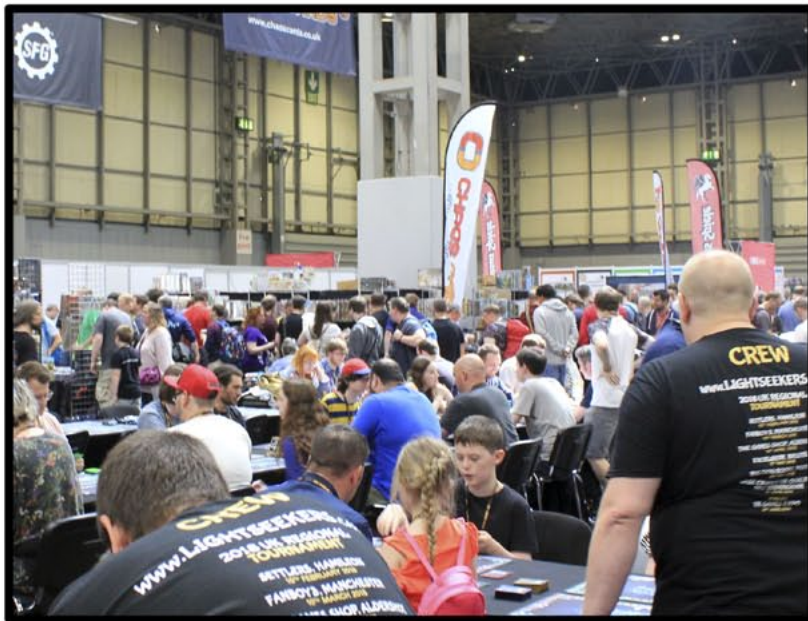
The 2018 Expo proved to be bigger, better and more intense than the 2017 Expo. The organisers had definitely done a smashing job once again in ensuring the hall was laid out well and the addition of the second hall made a huge difference to the expo making it feel twice as big as previous years.

I had a blast at the show and will be coming back again. The UK Expo is the biggest UK show and trumps other shows like Salute enabling you to really dive in deep and get the full experience if you want the 3 day spectacular or simply pop in for a single day.

The dates for Expo 2019 have been announced for the 31st of May to 2nd June

I hope to see you there!
Enjoy





SHANGHAI DETECTIVE

SHORT STORY

JASON HUBBARD



The war's been over for a while now, and somehow I've ended up in the cesspit of the world, how I got here, well that's another story and maybe I'll tell you someday. It seems that every low life scum bag has been drawn to Shanghai, regardless of nationality. There's murder, robbery and intrigue around every corner in this city, it makes London look like an absolute paradise.



After the war I drifted from one job to another, mostly utilising my only skill set, being able to fight. I grew up learning how to box, and this meant I'd find myself in a scrap or two on a regular basis. I became well known in the east end for being a bit of a scrapper. I was slowly without knowing it drifting towards the wrong side of the law, then fortunately for me the war started. It was meant to be the war to end all wars. Being someone who liked a fight it was inevitable I'd walk straight into the recruiting office and sign on the dotted line.

I didn't go to France straight away like many who joined up in 1914. I somehow ended up in Palestine fighting the Turks. I enjoyed my life in the army, and



I even promoted to sergeant, it had become second nature to me. When the war ended I had difficulty returning to normality before long I was using my skills as street a fighter and soldier to make a living. I slowly made my way out to China where I'am now.

Here in Shanghai I was making a good living ducking and diving for various unsavoury characters. I had worked with the green gang, run ins with the Shanghai police, worked with various intelligence agents, though never with the Germans or the Japanese. The Germans for obvious reasons, the Japs, well I never really trusted them, looking back to that time I was right not to. I even did a spell in the Shanghai Police, but it didn't last long, I was too impulsive and aggressive even for them. I also started entering local underground fight contests, winning some and losing some really badly because I didn't know Kung Fu, which made me seek out someone to teach me.



I met a French guy, ex-soldier who fought using a form of boxing that uses kicks called Savate. Now this wasn't Kung Fu, but it gave me an edge, I could hold my own against those Kung Fu lads. Also, being well built and having the ability to break a man's jaw with one punch also helped.

Well I find myself one evening stopping at a corner to try and light a cigarette, it was raining, the rain was streaming off my fedora, yeah, the rain was that heavy



that night. I had given up trying to spark up when I heard a noise coming from around the corner.

I peaked around to see where the commotion was coming from. I leant against the wall and feel the cold metal shape of my Broomhandle Mauser pressing against me. I was soaked to the skin, and starting to slowly feel the cold seeping in. Across the road were two guys beating up on another, in the low light I recognised one of those carrying out the beating, a rather nasty malicious scrot, known locally as Dushe, which is Chinese for viper. I had come across him in my line of work and didn't particularly like the individual. Maybe that was the reason why I suddenly found myself heading across to him, and then planting the hardest left hook I've ever thrown straight on to his jaw. I had taken him by complete surprise, so much so he fell to the floor unconscious. The other guy spun round facing me with a small knife drawn and pointing at me. I pulled the coat of my jacket to one side to reveal my Mauser, this made the guy have second thoughts, he screamed at me in Chinese and fled.

I turned and bent over to take a look at the lad on the floor, he was badly beaten up, blood all over his face though the rain was slowly washing this off. I knew from bitter experience that this lad would have a shiner in the morning, along with a sore jaw and a possible broken nose. I still don't know why I did what I did next, but I dragged him up and walked back to my place to fix him up. He was groggy and semi-conscious. I got him back to my place, plonked him on a chair and set about cleaning him up. I was curious as to why members of the green gang were beating up on a guy who wouldn't have looked out of place in University.

He slowly started to come around, he was rambling in Chinese, now my Chinese wasn't bad, but it wasn't great when that rambling is done two to a dozen.





I was trying to make out what he was saying, but I got frustrated and in a rather terse tone said, bloody English mate, or slow down in English. He stopped, staring at me and said, OK. He spoke to me in English, demanding who the hell I was. I replied, "the dumb arse who just saved your life."

I then demanded why the Green Gang were trying to kill him, it turns out this young lad was, is a detective, and they didn't like him snooping around in their territory. He was apparently investigating a recent murder, and that had taken him into Green territory. I looked at him, dumbfounded, even I knew that snooping around the Green Gang was a dangerous business, these guys didn't mess around and now I was involved. I had ducked and dived, weaving in and around these guys, but I knew not to get involved with them unless they asked you to. Now I had gotten myself well and truly involved.

I suddenly found myself telling this bespectacled studious looking lad that he needed protection, and help. I held out my hand and said, "Jack Thompson, at your service, former soldier, policeman and mercenary, you need my help, I know these streets, and I know my way around the unsavoury side of this city."

He looked, back at me, pushed his glasses back up onto his nose, "I'm not sure, I'm not sure I need protection." At this point I laughed and pointed at his face, "your banged-up mug says different." He stopped, then looked down and before looking back up said, "OK, maybe I need some help", he held out his hand and introduced himself, "Xia Luo Fu Ermosi, Detective and private investigator."

I laughed and said, "Sherlock Holmes, really, that's your name". I know enough Chinese to know what his name translated to in English. He shrugged, and replied, "you can just call me Xia Luo." "

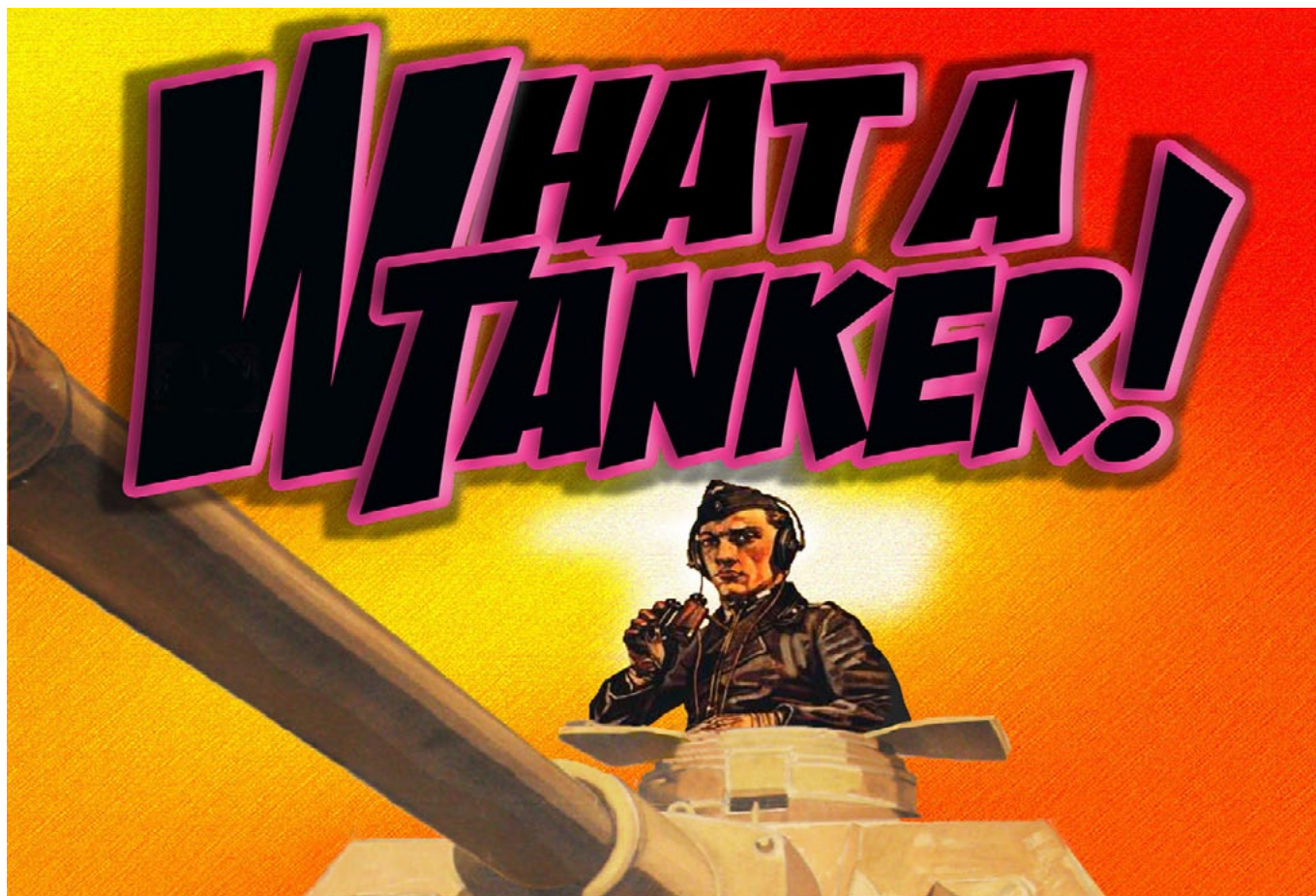
And that's how I first met the Shanghai Detective, Sherlock Holmes..



WHAT A TANKER REVIEW

TOO FAT LARDIES

JASON HUBBARD



World of tanks on the table top

What a Tanker is a new and much awaited set of rules by Too Fat Lardies, it's basically World of Tanks on the table top. In recent years tank combat has become quite popular, especially those set during WW2 which has been made popular by Bolt Action.

These are quite a simple set of rules to learn, and they play really fast, and when I mean fast I mean fast. There are no real scale requirements, you can basically play at any scale, personally I've been playing using 20mm or 1/72. Yet you could play using 28mm or 15 mm tanks, or even as small as 10mm.

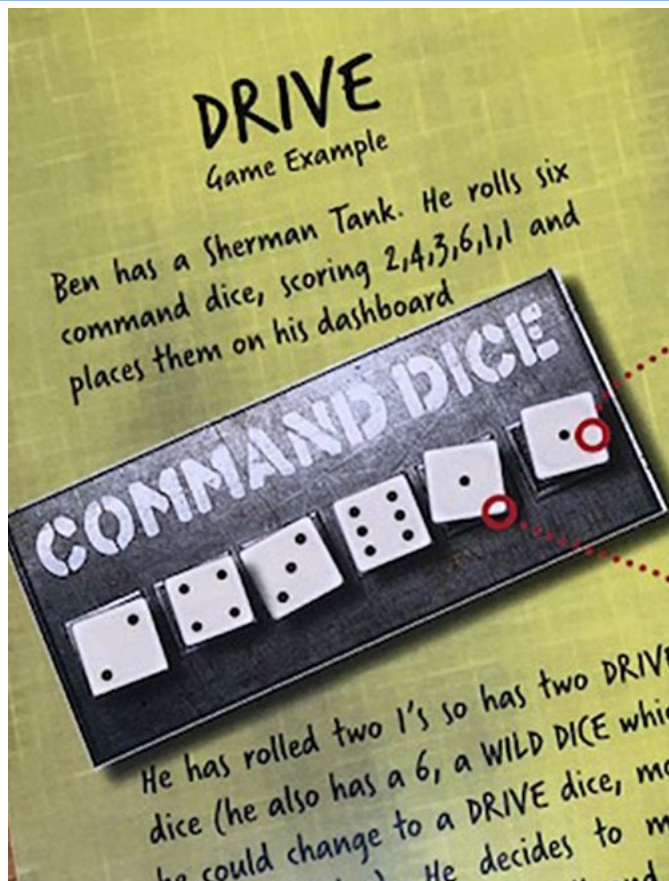
The rulebook comes in size A4, soft cover, full colour and 74 glossy pages. The interior is well laid out, good use of images and no walls of text to contemplate with. This has been designed as an easy to read and learn set of rules. The game is very fast and fun to play,

and I think this is exactly what the guys at Too Fat Lardies were aiming for.

What's required to Play?

- The game rules
- A set of six-sided dice (~10-20 per player)
- Tape Measure
- A model tank of any size/scale you like for each player and a table (6' by 4' is the suggested minimum; for smaller tables 10mm or 6mm models and using centimetres instead of inches is advised)
- A tanker dashboard for each tank (Free to download from Too Fat Lardies website)
- Some sort of tokens (4 per player)
- The Universal Tanker Tool(tm)
- A set of What a Tanker! cards

One of the key features about this game which makes me liken it to the computer game World of Tanks is the



campaign system. As your tank crew gain experience that will allow you to gain bonus abilities. Once your crew have achieved 5 kills, they have the option to upgrade their tank, or stay in the same tank but with the tank ace status. The career ladder breaks down to each year of the war, and all countries start with their weakest tanks and players will need to earn kills to upgrade to the next level of tank.

The only vehicles available in the rules are tracked and armoured, so no wheeled armoured cars, no artillery, no infantry just tanks.



Each tank operates individually, using a now-familiar mechanic: command dice. Each vehicle starts with six command dice, and when rolled the results can be used to try to activate various crew positions:

- 1's allows the driver to move the tank
- 2's the commander can acquire targets
- 3's "aim dice", where the commander directs the gunner onto the target
- 4's activates the gunner to shoot
- 5's activates the loader to stick a fresh one up the spout

Rolling a 6 is a wild dice which allows you to turn it into any other dice, or used to improve rolls to hit and damage, or used to rally disorder off the crew.



It's a great game to play, if you're wanting a more in-depth simulation of tank combat during World War 2 then this isn't the game for you. If you're looking for an excuse to use those tank models you have lying around in a quick armoured skirmish, then these are perfect. I really like these rules, they're quick and easy to play. It's also a great way to run a campaign that doesn't require to much book keeping. Plus every time you upgrade your tank it's a great excuse to go out and buy a new model....;)

It's great as a multiplayer game, especially is you decide to play a death match situation, with last tank standing as the winner. I think this will be winner amongst the WW2 players and possibly those looking to dip their toes into historical gaming without having to buy a large army to play.

WARHAMMER WORLD DIORAMA'S GAMES WORKSHOP

ALEX GARBETT



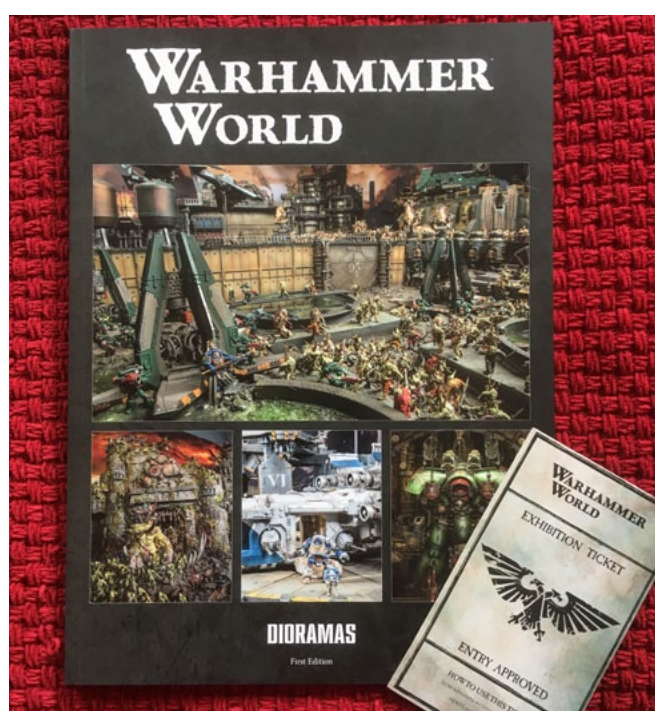
SOUVENIR BOOK REVIEW

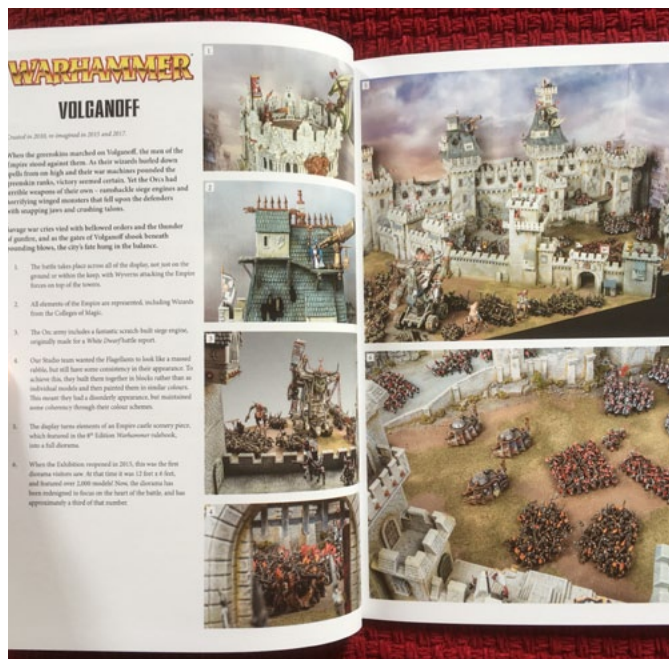
In 1997 Games Workshop relocated from his former headquarters to its current now based in Lenton, Nottingham in the United Kingdom.

Since its relocation Warhammer World has become a 'Mecca' and pilgrimage for many gamers, fans and hobbyists who wish to visit, see and celebrate the Warhammer Universes.

Initially from the beginning and my earliest memories of Warhammer World there has always been a museum and reason to visit be it Bugman's, The factory and Mail ordering the exact parts you were wanting for that conversion to discovering the mega displays from Games Day's in years gone by.

Warhammer World has gone through many changes, transitions and refitting's...these include the store moving from downstairs to upstairs, the Gaming Hall before the Castle went in, the museum before it was a





museum and had the large scale displays and life size displays and props (from all the video game live action trailers) to its newest and current form featuring the Expanded Store and major Forge World presence in the main gaming hall.

As part of the latest major re-opening back in 2016 Games Workshop chose to re-design the existing Citadel museum above the shop from the original format of the wall surround cabinets with the Studio painted armies inside to a brand new configuration, and in turn giving us the Warhammer World Exhibition Centre we know today.

The new Exhibition Centre featured newly commissioned displays and Diorama's focusing on the Age of Sigmar and adding the biggest display I think many of



us will have seen ever – The Warhammer 40,000 Battle of Angelus Prime Featuring the Ultramarines Space Marines Vs the Khorne Forces of Chaos.

I must have been around the museum several times at this stage (I often use my Exhibition Tickets as bookmarks in my novels at home). Its very easy to spend hours in the museum and trying to take in all the armies and displays to the details and phenomenal painting of the miniatures inside – a truly awesome experience as you can see below from some of my pictures during the various visits.

A trip to the museum is something I always relish inside and for the value is worth the admission to enter. The Displays and Diorama's change roughly once



every 6-12 months as various displays are moved or updated with new miniatures to whole new displays coming into the Museum.

To celebrate the museum, the displays and the hard work involved Games Workshop have issues a



Warhammer World Only Diorama's book which goes a long way to help capture the epic scale, size and some of the unique parts of each display with background information on the current pieces within the Museum.

The book focuses on the major Diorama's as of early 2018 and features photographs and information on the Warhammer, Warhammer: Age Of Sigmar, Blood-bowl, The Horus Heresy, Warhammer 40,000 and Necromunda displays in the museum. This is topped off finally with some behind the scenes details on design and building the various displays.

While I wouldn't say this book is very text heavy – by its nature it would never be but as a photography book it is a 10 out of 10 for capturing better than any camera I have used on the day my pictures of the displays.



It is chocked full of high resolution glossy pictures capturing many areas I have missed on the displays and focusing on both the small and large scale elements of the stories told in each diorama. You can skim the book or spend hours looking as I have over the pictures. I certainly find it easier and more accessible than images on the laptop I have taken in previous visits to Warhammer World.

I've personally found the book too something I go back to time and time again... whether I'm waiting for freshly glued miniatures to finish drying, resin I have poured to cure or between layers of filler on terrain pieces and bases to solidify.

It provides me inspiration, scale and scope along with nifty ideas but more so pushes me and my drive within the hobby when I'm producing diorama's or small scale painting projects and terrain pieces to tell a story within the piece. Overall I'm very happy with the book from the Games Workshop Studio.

Yes it can never capture the full breath and feeling fully of being in front of the display but this is the closest and best yet I have seen in printed or online form. I'm hoping the book sells well and becomes something Games Workshop will continue with both updating and releasing a second and third volumes as time goes on and new display pieces are added to the museum.



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