

Editorial

I have decided to discontinue **The Origin of Tree Worship**. I may maintain it as the **TimCon** convention fanzine, provided that TimCon continues and a fanzine is seen as a useful addition to the concept. On the other hand, I might do something completely different. In any event, **Issue 7** was the last in the series of independent productions and this is the TimCon II gazetteer (and so, welcome!). Whilst it is a sad decision, the reason for it is the excellent news that second edition **WFRP** is on the way. Since I have no idea what **WFRP2** is going to do to the rules or the background, I simply cannot write the type of articles that have made the fanzine. Whether I make a return once I have embedded the new game into my own games is still a decision to be made.

I always saw this fanzine as something of a 'WFRP fundamentalist' output, looking at very narrow areas of interest and being very motivated at minor and irrelevant issues to most general gamers. My particular aim was to examine areas of possible expansion and generally deepen the game's colour, milieu and background. Since most of the WFRP background will now be changing, or at least shifting (10 years if nothing else) there really is no need for this sort of discussion at this time. In addition, one of the primary reasons behind fan material over the past decade or so has been to support WFRP in its dark years of neglect. This seems unnecessary now given the large amounts of material that are promised. GW can be relied upon to take over this life support infrastructure - at least until next time! More seriously, we can expect a boom period without the need of fan support as simply a survival mechanism. We fans can add to a vibrant central support.

When I was considering the future for the fanzine I found myself in limbo as a fan writer. Until the publication of the second edition in Spring 2005, then I am going to find it very difficult to write anything. After all, the new WFRP will be set 10 years later then the world we know so well. This means that everything we know is (at best) out of date or (at worst) completely wrong. Dynasties might have fallen or arisen, provinces deleted, even entire cities razed. For example, it is rumoured that both Erengard and Wolfenburg (important cities in my games and writings) have both fallen to Chaos. Another obvious change is that Kislev has a new ruler and this could have serious repercussions for Ice Magic - a major part of my Wheatland Colonies campaign - with a Khan Queen in charge. Then one less obvious issue is the role of the slann (if any). And we will always have the whole contentious issue of the unified WFB Empire compared with the fractious WFRP one. It also means that the technical mechanics are changing - the rules will be different - and I have no idea in what way. I already have articles written, edited and approved

for Warpstone magazine that will now be superseded and will not see print until late 2005 or even 2006, when they will be out of date. Articles that I had planned for here included Verenan templars and language, both currently in need of expansion and repair (respectively) and which the new edition will probably do. On the positive side, this has given me more time to finish the new editions of the rest of the **Private Wars Campaign** and the new **Wheatland Colonies: Farside - A Pass Too Far**. On balance I think these are likely to be more popular anyway.

This is a great time for WFRP and I am looking forward to the new releases. I trust both Anthony Ragan and Graeme Davis (names associated with the new project) to produce material that I will like, and have no reason to distrust Green Ronin. The only real problem area (aside from US English) is likely to be the humour, but that continues a tradition of losing WFRP's funny edge. Since everything is global these days, except humour, I suppose that this is a price that we will have to pay in order to ensure that WFRP becomes a worldwide phenomenon! I have not quite decided what all of this means for me. The campaign that I am currently running will now look to be completed by Spring 2005, and I will hope to start a new campaign with the new rules after that. In real terms, my fan writing will continue as normal for the rest of this year, but there will be no work being done for the next year (or future) at this time. I am just getting ready to play non-stop for the year!

Realistically, I think one also has to have an eye on the new authors and owners and their views upon the use of copyright and trademark material. So far, Black Industries seem very positive about fan material and I cannot see this being an issue. That said, in a worst case scenario I *might* be required to cease publication. This does seem unlikely from the press releases, but I think it is a matter of public record that "A Private War" was only ever published on sufferance and that James Wallis told me that Games Workshop wished to legally enforce a desist order, until he persuaded them not to. Since I am almost out of copies and everything else is pretty much printed to order, the practical effects if such an order were to come are minimal to me now. As a principle, however, it needs to be remembered and I do not wish to become involved in an unpleasant legal situation. What is more is that Tim Con II was unpopular with Black Industries and this might be indicative of deeper problems.

I have also been asked whether I intend to write anything for Black Industries. That is rather the wrong-way around, of course, since the question is rather whether they would publish me! I have no *intention* at this time of writing for them. In the first place, by the looks of things they have output planned for the foreseeable future - the rules, Empire/Brettonia sourcebooks/ a trilogy campaign puts us well into 2006. Will they even do anything beyond there?! I am more minded to write for any

fanzine-Fanatic type of thing that they do, plus keep up for Warpstone. I suppose that I could approach them with something Kislevan, but I am guessing that they will stick to WFRP-old guard (Anthony Ragan, Graeme Davis) and Green Ronin known quantities (presumably Chris Pramas himself and any other staff writers) in the short term. I also suspect that it will become a US-centred thing; even writing in US-English would be a bind for me! In any event, the traditional route into GW seems to be to write fan fiction for them for Inferno - even James Wallis and Pramas himself have done this. I suppose that I would love them to come knocking, but they could not possibly pay me enough for my time and I would be doing it for nothing. That would hardly go down well with professional writers! The bottom line is that I am always afraid that if I have to write to a deadline, to an editor, to a template etc that it would become far too much like work. Then I might start to hate it. Of course, whilst my head says all this, I will no doubt succumb at some point!

I am trying desperately to see WFRP2 as simply a "product" made by a commercial enterprise, which I can then choose to buy or not, play or not. Of course, I have played it for too long to be that rational! As I said in my Correspondent article in **Warpstone 21**, we do need to allow the new authors freedom. Our own campaigns have drifted over 18 years with minimal 'official' material to keep us collectively even within the same game. I do, however, genuinely think playtesting is imperative and will hope to become involved at that stage at the least. I am also open to a shift within **WFRP** towards **WFB**, in that 'we' have to find a middle ground so that **WFB** people can be tempted into the game, and ultimately it can compete with **D&D** for new players; optimistic perhaps! And let us be honest here, the worst of the **WFB** higher fantasy is no worse than the awful Doomstones campaign. There is room for many types of **WFRP**. I would certainly rather stress the low fantasy since that is what differentiates **WFRP** from **D&D** and what it made its name with (**TEW**). Provided the enemy *within* is stressed and the hordes of chaos to the north downplayed, I think **WFRP** can be very flexible

In their place, I would view those like myself as people to keep at arm's length, albeit politely. Those of us who have played the game for two decades are evidently die-hard fans and the old guard; that makes us potential troublemakers to avoid. **WFRP2** really needs a clean sheet. Let's be honest, **WFRP1** is a bunch of contradictions and rules that do not work. We play and love it despite all of this. And over 18 years we have all moved **WFRP** into channels that we assume were written up, but actually we created. What is more, we have probably become conceited with our own importance in this very small world. **Warpstone** sells (say) 1,000, **A Private War** sold 500, and this fanzine's highest seller probably managed 100. GW will sell to (say) 100,000. That makes us irrelevant.

We will also be seen as coming with a baggage. The bottom line is that Green Ronin want writers who can write - to time, to quality, to specification and - certainly with my professional hat on -cheaply. They will thus tend to go to people who have a proven record; I would. Fan authors (by and large) cannot provide this. Given the importance of this work and (I would imagine) their relative sizes, Green Ronin must have their entire business dependent upon the success of WFRP. Therefore, only writers that can be depended upon to produce 'product' to the approved quality are going to get a look in, at least initially. I get the feeling that GR will keep very much to their own people. As I have continuously said, GW's basic philosophy is to keep things in-house. The deal with GR is mostly that, and significantly different than that with Hogshead. I suspect that GW wants GR as the GW people have lost their RPG body of knowledge and market feel. GR also gives them a helping hand into the RPG market with a strong brand name - or so people tell me; I am out of touch with a lot of these firms and what they are doing. GR have the RPG expertise, GW have the brand and the capital. It is a good business move for the pair. GW will get their legs back after a year or two if WFRP is successful and then re-think the position. That might be the time to offer submissions since GW has a very good record of taking up fan material.

Now onto the real purpose of this fanzine, welcome to Tim Con II! The fanzine initially serves as a guide to what games are running, by whom and where - plus reminding you what you are down to play. The other articles will hopefully provide you with a souvenir to help recall what I hope will be fond memories of the day, and provide some thoughts on how to continue to improve our WFRP games.

Enjoy!

The cover illustration is a receipt from the Games Workshop stall at Salute 2004 for a £30 carrying case for figures. I realise that one does not need to be a literary genius to work for GW, but I would at least hope that you could spell what their games are all about.

Tim Eccles
September 2004