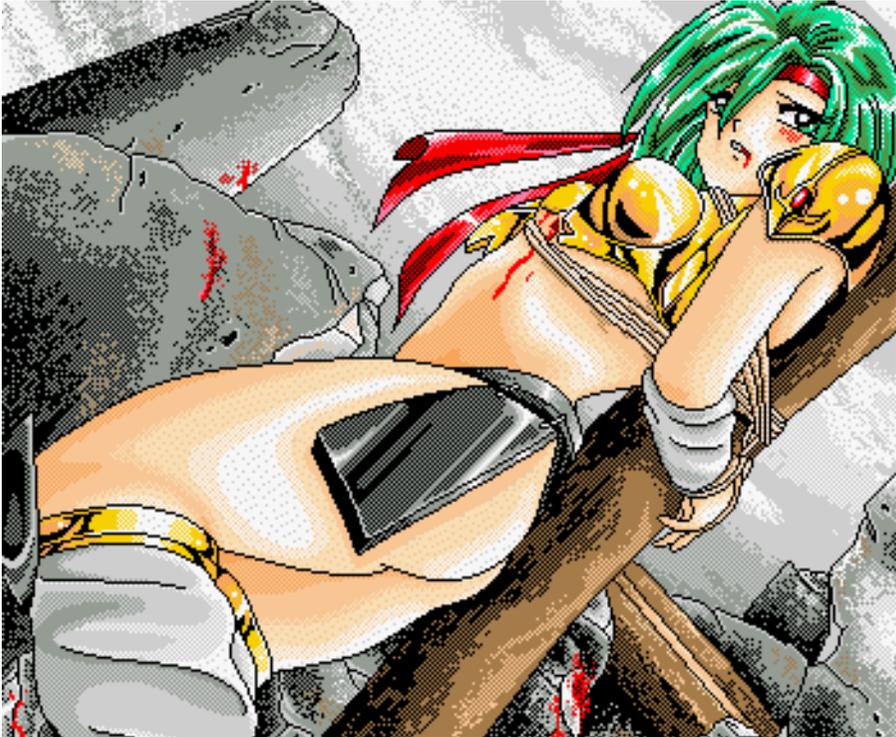


Club News

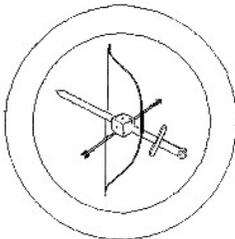
Newsletter of the SASRA Roleplaying
& Wargames Club

Issue 29

September 97



In this issue:



More awards: get up to date with last years prizes

In Brief: Dino Hunt reviewed

Puppet-making made easy

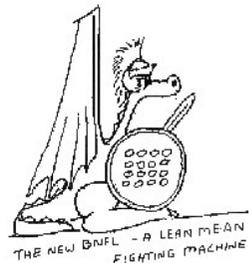
Stormbull cartoon feature

Letters from the Editor

Victorian roleplaying

LRP Cost guidelines

Convention report



SASRA Roleplaying & Wargames Club

The Club holds weekly meetings at the Calder Club, Whitehaven, starting at 7.30pm on Thursdays in the Function Room. Anyone is welcome to turn up and play. If you're really sad, you can just watch, but be warned: roleplaying is a participation hobby and makes dull viewing!

The Club's activities include:

Table Top Roleplaying	Fantasy, Futuristic, Comic Book Super-heroes, Gothic and other genres
Wargames	Table Top Battle re-enactment, Ancient Britons, Napoleonic, Wild West to name a few
Live Role Playing	Using the Club's own FADGES LRP rules system, High Fantasy campaign (Krymsworld), Gritty Fantasy (Tregaron) or Horror (Hatchet).
Play By Mail	Climb the social ladder in the swashbuckling world of 17th Century France

For more information, contact one of the following Club members:

John Graham	01946 590114
Howard Cooper	01946 814295
Ray Casson	01946 861204

CONTRIBUTIONS

To put an article in the Club News, send it to: Ray Casson (Club News Editor), Beck How, Crossgates, Lamplugh, Cumbria, CA14 4TU. Alternatively, e-mail your contribution to: RayCasson@mcm.com or ClubNews@haven.demon.co.uk

If possible, please submit your article on a PC-formatted 3½ inch disk in either Word 6 (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf). Other supported formats include plain Ascii, WordPerfect, MS Works and Word for Mac. We can also accept hand-written material, as long as it is legible! Amiga and Mac disks are also supported.

Artwork can be submitted on disk in any format that is supported by PaintShop Pro, including .bmp .cdr .gif .jpg .pcd .pcx .pct .tif .wmf. If you want to provide hand-drawn artwork, please send originals rather than photocopies (your work *will* be returned) and ensure the drawing has a high contrast by using pen or dark pencil.

EDITORIAL TEAM

The current Editorial Team consists of:

Ray Casson,
Trevor Pearson,
Jacqui Beck,
Mark Regan and
Steve Turner.

If you would like to get involved yourself, contact the Editor.

Thanks to all of this issue's contributors, who are:

Jacqui Beck,
Ray Casson,
Steve Hastewell,
Paul King,
Liz Regan,
Jane Shaw,
Mike Simpson,
Antonia Woodend.

Editorial

I started the concept of Club News in the dim and distant past (yes, there was an Issue 1) to distribute information about certain LRP events that I was organising at the time. I have since had a big hand in improvements to content and layout, although I have never previously been officially appointed as Club News Editor. I decided to take on the role, despite numerous other commitments on my time (not least being a son less than a year old) because I was sick and tired of intermittent publication and slipped issue dates, poor presentation and not having my submissions published. I make no excuse for any increase in the amount of material in this issue from myself; I am merely exerting my editorial control of the content!

I hope you notice some changes and like what you see. The Editorial Team collectively decided that we should save money while improving quality by printing the Club News in-house. Therefore each copy of this issue has been individually printed and carefully compiled. To enable us to do this, we have started to use Microsoft Publisher, which supports "book format" printing, to layout the magazine. In future, it should be easier to incorporate colour pages or high quality paper for some issues if that proves to be popular. However, it also makes it more important for us to be able to transfer files to disk, so please provide a disk copy of your article if at all possible.

It has taken me some time to get this issue together, for which I do apologise. This issue was originally scheduled to be published in August. However, getting the new systems up and running has proved to be more problematic than first thought. If possible, we will make up the time by publishing issue 30 in time for Christmas, so the deadline for inclusion of contributions will be 20th November. In the meantime, take a browse through your new-look Club News. If you like what you see, please let me know.

Ray Casson

This issue was prepared on a Gateway 2000 P4D-66I (486DX2 66MHz) and printed on an Epson Stylus Colour Inkjet Printer. To improve production quality, all copies have been directly printed, not photocopied.

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Your Committee

Who they are and what they do

Those of you who were in attendance at the Annual general Meeting in March (yes, it was that long ago) voted in a new committee. With the danger of boring the pants off you, here are a few important details of what your committee members do on your behalf.

The **Club Chairman** elected was **John Graham**. His responsibilities are to:

1. Chair committee meetings, AGMs, XGMs, etc. as required.
2. Provide a point of contact with external organisations.
3. Ensure that new club members become fully integrated within the club.
4. Act as a 'figurehead' for the club in all its activities.

The **Club Secretary** elected was **Howard Cooper**. His responsibilities are to:

1. Accurately record the minutes of committee meetings, AGMs, XGMs, etc.
2. Maintain an up-to-date list of club members.
3. Correspond with external bodies at the request of the club committee.
4. Maintain an adequate filing system in the club cabinet, which was at Summergrove but will be moved to an accessible place at the Calder Club as soon as someone organises it.
5. Maintain accurate accounts of petty cash expenditure.
6. Ensure that all club members are also members of SASRA.
7. Ensure the views of the Club Membership are brought to the attention of the Committee.
8. Ensure the decisions and opinions of the Committee are passed effectively to the Club Members. This may be by verbal announcement, via the noticeboard or via the Club News magazine, as appropriate to the importance and urgency of the information.
9. Maintain the noticeboard as required (remove out-of-date items and update other notices, such as LRP calendar, games being played, league tables, etc.).

The **Club Treasurer** elected was **Bob Cloudsdale**. His

The Club Chairman provides "direction" for the club. If you think the club should provide something specific for its members, make your suggestions to John, either directly or through Howard. You might want to consider telling him how well (or how badly) the club is being run.

The Secretary is the record keeper (or should that be Dungeon Keeper™?) for the club's important meetings, but is also responsible for letting people know about committee decisions and listening to any suggestions members may have. Of course, you may speak to other committee members directly but they might not always be present on Thursday nights.

The Secretary also maintains the filing system. The cabinet contains (amongst other things):
Club Constitution.
House Rules
Minutes of AGMs, XGMs and Committee Meetings.
Membership List.
Club Equipment List.

The Treasurer takes your money and pisses it against the wall in the nearest bar; no I mean keeps records of what that money is spent on.

The Roleplaying and Wargames Coordinator is the friendly man who organises what game you play in. It therefore helps to stay on good terms with him if you want to consistently play your first choice of game. The alternative is to run a game yourself, as this guarantees your first choice next session.
He also keeps records of club equipment, so is the best person to consult if you want to borrow a certain game system or sourcebook from the club.

The LRP Coordinator does not get involved in the organisation of every LRP, but ensures that events are spaced sufficiently through the year to provide a regular

responsibilities are to:

1. Maintain adequate records of the club's income and expenditure.
2. Manage any accounts held in the club's name.
3. Arrange for the prompt availability of funds to the club when required.
4. Collect subscriptions and record attendance at club meetings.
5. Present club accounts to the AGM and SASRA.

The **Roleplaying and Wargames Coordinator** elected was **Steve Hastewell**. His responsibilities are to:

1. Organise the running of the eight week game sessions, including the games to be played and the people playing them.
2. Co-ordinate the organisation of activities for the changeover week between each session.
3. Ensure the availability of somewhere for club meetings to be held.
4. Co-ordinate other internal club events.
5. Maintain a record of the club's equipment.
6. Co-ordinate the organisation of events involving external groups other than LRP.
7. Organise visits to roleplaying conventions, etc.
8. Co-ordinate the organisation of charity events.

The **LRP Co-ordinator** elected was **Jane Shaw**. Her responsibilities are to:

1. Co-ordinate the organisation of all LRP events.
2. Maintain records of income and expenditure for LRP events as provided by event organisers.
3. Manage the pool of LRP weapons and costume materials.

The **Club News Editor** elected was **Ray Casson**. His responsibilities are to:

1. Co-ordinate all material for the Club News.
2. Edit material for inclusion in the Club News.
3. Organise the production of Club News to coincide with the changeover weeks at the end of every other game session.
4. Send copies of the Club News to people on the mailing list and maintain the mailing list as required.

programme and that participants are charged an appropriate amount.

The Club News Editor is the idiot who took on the role of producing this magazine. If you have any articles you would like to be published, pass them to me via any of the routes listed elsewhere. If you know of anyone who ought to receive a copy, let me know and I will add them to the mailing list.

How (not) to make a puppet !

By Mike Simpson.

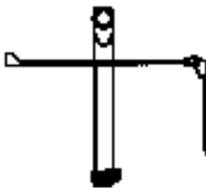
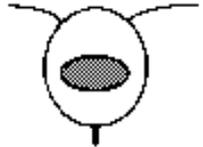
To make this Goblin or Imp style puppet you will need (at least)....

A small, cheap plastic football, a 20/25mm polycarbon tube and four lengths of roughly one foot by 15/20mm dia. wooden dowel rod, an electric drill, six hoop screws, (the ones you screw into the back of picture frames to tie the string onto) a large roofing bolt with a long screw section and a nut and two large washers to fit it. A roll of Gaffa, or Duct sealing tape, superglue and PVA wood glue, Evostick adhesive, tissue paper, a wire coat-hanger, scissors, a craft knife, lots of latex (preferably clear) and cotton wool. Plastizote foam or 'carrymat', several small paintbrushes, either spray paint or acrylic paints, cotton flax or similar wadding and material to make any clothes you wish the puppet to wear, not to mention it's fake fur 'skin'.

Step One.

Figure 1.

Cut a hole in one side of the football large enough to fit all your fingers and thumb of one hand into (see shaded section of fig.1). Open out the wire coathanger and cut it into two equal lengths. Pierce the sides of the ball near the top, as these will form the 'cores' of the puppets ears. Cut a small hole in the bottom and push through the roofing bolt, keeping a washer inside the ball. Now cut a letterbox shaped section out of the lower *front* part of the ball (not shown). This will later form the puppets lower mouth. Carefully tape any edges you may have cut, if they require it, to prevent them from ripping. The sections of the coathanger inside the ball should be bent flat against the sides of the ball and fixed well in place with Gaffa tape.

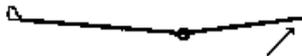


Step Two.

Figure 2.

Glue and/or tape the nut into the mouth of the polycarbon tube. The tube itself should be cut to roughly one foot long, and the opposite end wrapped in Gaffa tape to prevent it splitting or wearing away the inside of the puppet. Drill through the upper part of the rod and insert a dowel, to form a T shape with enough rod above the 'shoulders' to form a neck. The shoulders should be roughly 20 cms wide. Into the ends of these shoulders screw a hoop screw. A second hoop screw should then be fitted through the

first (you may need pliers for this) and screwed into two more lengths of dowel. These form the upper arms. As only one arm will be articulated, the dowel forming the upper part of the other arm can be cut to about 15cms, and Gaffa'd to prevent damage to the wadding.



Step Three.

Tie push rod onto here

Make another hoop screw 'hinge' and fasten the remaining dowels onto the articulated arm, as shown in the diagram directly above.

With the arm securely fixed in place, and attached to the shoulder, glue a section of plastizote around the 'neck', remember to add any recessed detail now. Cut and glue into place a section of foam to run along the top of the shoulder, this is to prevent the dowel sticking out of the costume the puppet will

wear. Make hands of carrymat or plastizote, and glue onto the end of the articulated arm. Latex and then sculpt with latex/cotton wool mix; paint and apply clear latex finish. Do the same for the as yet unattached hand, the neck and the head, leaving the area around the letterbox latexed, but free of obstruction.

Step Four.

At this time you should make up the puppets ears. You have already placed the wire frame into the head, and it should be secure at the base. Using tissue paper soaked through with PVA glue, add layer upon layer of tissue over the wire frame, and allow to hang downwards and dry. This technique gives a semi-translucent ear with convincing ridges and 'veins' running through it. When the paper is almost dry, trim to the required shape with scissors. Paint and clear latex to finish. Use latex/cotton wool mix to help hold the wire by building up the base of the ear on the outside.

Step Five.

Now it is time to make the puppets jaw. Using more foam, make up a lower jaw with teeth or any other detail you like. It is designed to always protrude in front of the puppets upper jaw, so bear this in mind when cutting away at it. Leave a 'tail' on the back so that there is enough foam to be pushed through the letterbox slit at the front of the puppets head for the puppeteer to grasp from inside. Black material can be glued along the inside top of the mouth, and fastened to the top inside section of the lower jaw and tongue, to hide the operators fingers and prevent anyone seeing into the puppets head. It may be necessary to attach some thick cardboard or a piece of plastic to the underside of the jaw handle, if the outer front section is quite heavy.

Step Six.

By now the puppet should be beginning to take on a little personality of it's own, and you should be able to get more of an idea as to what it will eventually look like. Now would be a good time to revise your original thoughts on how you were going to dress or otherwise cover the soft body of the puppet. You may feel that the character of his/her face now no longer fits what you had in mind for the rest of their appearance. It is always best to go with what you think will look more complementary rather than what you first wanted, especially if the face and character the half-complete puppet suggests are no longer suited to that original idea.

The body can be made simply. Start by choosing the fur you want (Tip. Fake fun-fur is a lot easier to work with on puppets than real skins, and has the advantage that you can sprat paint it afterward to great effect), and cut to the required shapes and sizes. Stitch the fur inside out, to hide all seams, then make up the 'tubes' which will cover the arms and legs. Attach the bottom sections to the dowel with glue for the articulated arm, remembering to cover the wrist of the hand which you have already attached, then stuff the arm with wadding to your own preference. Do the same with the other arm and the legs, excepting that you must stitch closed one end of each 'sock' first. The top ends of these three should be then also stitched up, then tied and/or glued to the base of the centre pole and half-arm dowel.

Once the limbs are in place, cut the main body section and stitch it together, leaving holes for the legs and the top open. 'Dress' the puppet in this



main body piece, and stuff it up to the neck. Once full, stitch the neck closed and glue any loose ends underneath. This should give you a fur clad body with a latex head and hands and neck. You may now go on to the feet, either make up a pair of naked feet, using the same techniques as used for the hands, or a cheat is to make cloth or stitched-scrap boots, and stuff these and stitch them onto the ends of the legs.

However you do the feet, it's good idea to put a small lump of plasticine or a pebble in each foot, to weight the legs down. This is not usually needed if you make 'naked' feet, as the weight of the latex should be enough, but will be quite necessary with cloth boots.

Now the puppet is made, it needs to be dressed. This is done in the same way as you would make costume for yourself, but on a much smaller scale, obviously. The only thing to bear in mind is the ease with which you will be able to get the clothes on and off the puppet. It is generally a good idea to make all the puppets costumes with slit backs for anything on the upper torso. These hospital gown style clothes will be much easier to get on and off, and if you put a strip of Velcro along each side, the back will fasten together almost seamlessly. Legs, depending upon the size of the feet, can be covered in normally made trousers, or the velcro trick can be applied again.

Luc Brief

DINO HUNT Price \$29-95 (Don't have UK price yet) OUT NOW
The new game from Steve Jackson Games

This game was play-tested at Contraption 96, and although my first thought was 'dinosaurs - this doesn't look my sort of game at all', I played one game and was hooked! The idea of the game is that you are a modern-day sort of game hunter, trying to bring back live specimens to the zoos of today, literally travelling through time trying to score the maximum number of points.

Each dinosaur is represented by a card featuring colour art work, the period in which the dinosaur lived (important for the game), the energy required to capture it, the score it is worth and the d6 rolls required to capture it. On the reverse is a pronunciation guide and some of the key facts about the dinosaur (educational as well as fun!). The game is played along a time line spanning the five main periods when dinosaurs lived on Earth (Triassic, Early and Late Jurassic, and Early and Late Cretaceous) and there are four cute plastic dino's to mark the relative positions of each player along this time line. At the start of each turn you have 10 points of energy, some of which is used in hunting dinosaurs and some of which is used in moving through time (one point per period). The player then lays out a random (d6) number of dinosaurs in their appropriate time periods and begins their hunt. That's basically the game, just move to where the dinosaurs are, and roll a d6 to hunt them. A 6 always gets the dino, a one always fails (with differing result) while the numbers in between have various effects depending on the individual dinosaur card. It sounds really straightforward, and possibly even a bit boring. Well, this being from the producers of Illuminati!, of course it isn't. There are also special cards, which allow you a 'Lucky Shot', make your opponent 'Misfire' or be 'Timeslip'-ed, or even to 'Supernova' a time period, wiping out all the dinosaurs there. Each player gets one special at the start of each turn, and a bonus one when they capture the last dinosaur in a time period, so they tend to be saved - and then all played at once! There will also be 'Gadget' cards in the full version, but they weren't printed when we played. The games still got very heated, with lots of ganging up and trying to divert the specials onto other players.

The game can also be added to by buying booster packs, which will include gold edged rare cards. Apart from playing the game with Steve Jackson, this is the only way we know to get these cards at present, but the game works fine just as it comes in the basic box set.

I think it also says a lot for the game that Steve Jackson couldn't always win. When you can beat the guy who produces a game it has to be a good sign. It's a simple idea that works really well, and a fun game for players aged about eight upwards. I'll certainly be buying a set when I see it. (Jacqui Beck)

Letters from the Editor

Dear Readers,
I am currently trying to put together a set of correctly manufactured 6mm chainmail for LRP. Knowing how people start off with good intentions, then get fed up with the hard work, there must be small sections of chainmail lying around in people's houses. If you have any sections of chainmail made up, I am prepared to buy them off you at normal commercial going rates (ie. £4 per thousand links). Please note I am only looking for 6mm chainmail, not ringmail.

If you have any sections of chainmail to sell, please contact me as soon as possible. My guarantee is that I promise to wear the finished armour at a club LRP event!

When I was Secretary for our club, I wrote to Procord, who produced Club News issue 26, to complain about the quality of production of that issue. I am

glad to be able to report that they agreed to waive all charges and have apologised for the problems we experienced. I publish this brief letter in this issue to remind our club members (and other readers) that we are continuing to strive for a better quality magazine.

Following the last LRP event that I ran ("Once a Knight" aka "Fallout"), I had two people tell me that they felt belittled during the debrief. I believe that other participants may have felt the same way, but decided not to say anything further about it, so I would like to apologise unreservedly to anyone who felt this way as a result of my comments. As an Event Referee, I am committed to "producing fair, interesting scenarios for use with the FADGES system, which are consistent with the campaign background, and which offer a wide range of challenges to different types of characters"

If you want to write to the Editor in response to any of these subjects, or any other subject of your choice, the address is given on page 2.

(FADGES 95 Handbook). It has always been my intention to stretch players to their limit, but never to try to get one over on them. I sincerely hope that players enjoy my scenarios; if they do not, perhaps it is time I stopped writing them.

I am not a person who regularly eats humble pie, so I would like to address the following issues that I have been accused of following this scenario:

that the scenario was designed to kill certain characters.

that the scenario was “too hard”.

that the actions I took to deal with “cheating” (ie. not declaring hits during battleboarding) were too extreme.

I do not deny that the scenario was extremely hard. For once, the group of adventurers did not have the expertise of a professional healer to call upon. However, the characters were given additional protection and there were ample opportunities for the participants to be healed, but the actions of the players meant that the healing was not received.

The scenario was written as a convergence of characters who

normally would have very little to do with each other. It required them to realise that they needed to work together if they were to get anywhere near achieving their goals. It also played heavily on the fact that inter-party strife was inevitable and had to be dealt with appropriately. Is it asking too much from people to do this? I recognise that players want to be entertained when they participate in an LRP, but does that mean that the plotline has to be transparent and simplistic? I don't think so, which meant that the plotline was quite convoluted and obscure. I have long had a policy that players of my games will only lose their characters if they do something stupid, if another player kills them or another player fails to act to prevent their death. This scenario was no different. I do not write scenarios to kill characters and would have preferred it if the character who died had not done so, as he had far more characterisation than most of the survivors. As the characters involved in the scenario have ongoing issues to resolve, I can not reveal too much about their motives, but I must say that the scenario was achievable; it only became more difficult as a result of the players' own actions.

I have also been slated over my

handling of the “Blood Eagles” encounter. Again, I do not deny that I was extremely annoyed that certain players were failing to report their hits taken, but there seems to be a general problem with many, if not all, players not declaring hits received and energy used, so some lessons do need to be learned. If you think this comment does not apply to you, then think again; it probably does.

I insist that there is a place within a scenario for encounters that are designed to be insuperable by combat and I will stick by the way I handled that concept in the heat of the day. I did temporarily suspend the Knockdown Value rule on the basis that the NPCs were clearly far harder than the PCs and should defeat them easily. If anyone wishes to take issue with this, I challenge them to run a scenario for themselves before they complain about it. In particular, if they had all been 2000 point demons englamoured to look like Blood Eagles, but with a KDV of 200, would there still have been a problem?

I recognise that bad briefing or

bad memory on the part of the NPCs (especially one in particular) made the encounter run somewhat differently from the way it was intended. Having said that, a player has told me that a combat was inevitable there, irrespective of what else happened!

For too long, it seems that many LRP players have held the view that they should be able to win through every encounter by combat, even when some are designed to be overcome by other means. I disagree, and say that some encounters should be *deadly* if combat is entered into so lightly.

I understand that other referees may not agree with my views and methods. If I start further debate as a result of this letter, I may feel vindicated; if all views are against me, at least I have been able to have my say and I will look forward to withdrawing from being a referee and only play or crew in future LRPs (if

Ray Casson

UNBRO

CHASER NIBBLER

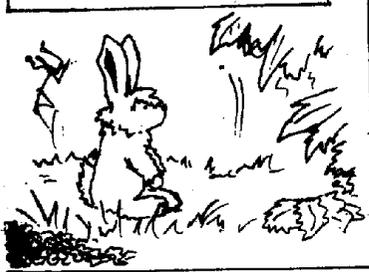
LEGEND OF THE STORMVELL BUNNY

ART: HETEIN

PLOT: SORRY... COULDN'T FIND ONE

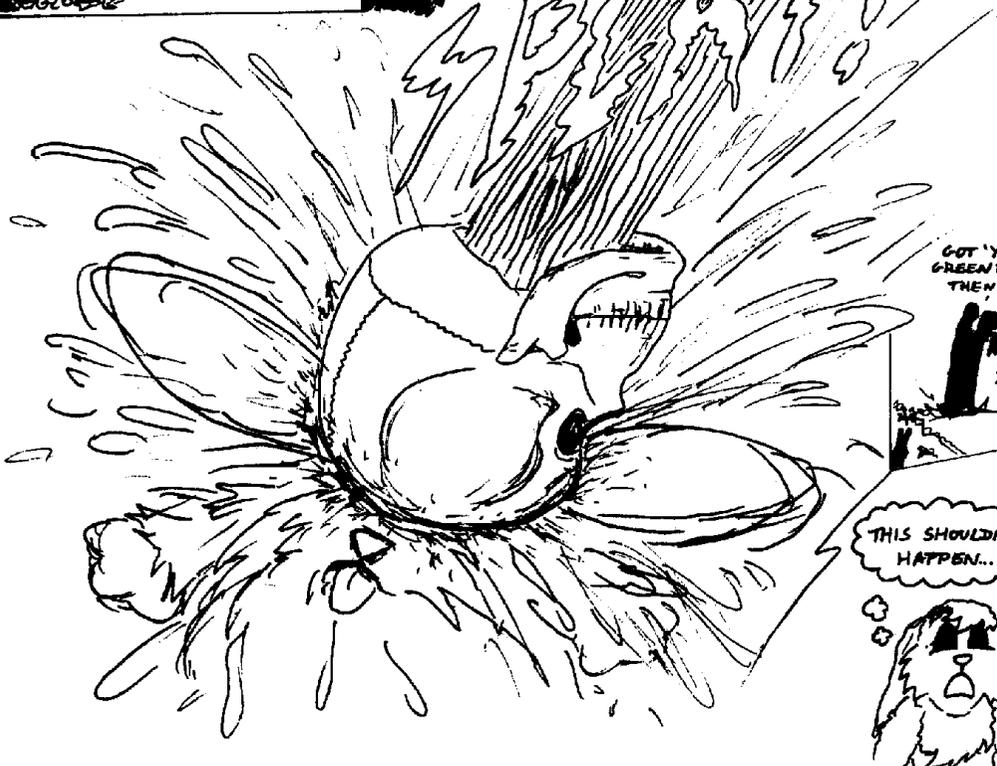
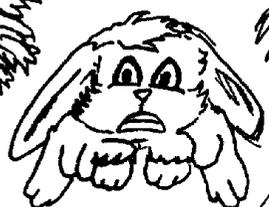
THANKS TO: JAGVI BECK, LIZ REAGAN,
STEVE'S TORNER: UNBRO

IT HAD BEEN A QUIET DAY
IN THE FOREST WHEN...



PERCY?

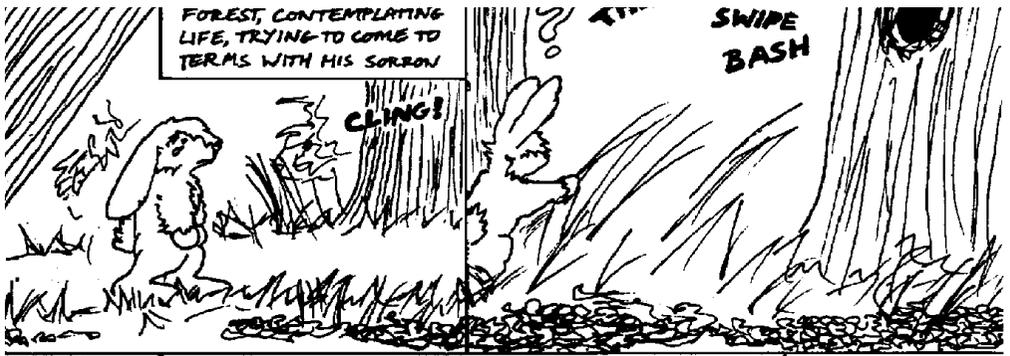
BOB!



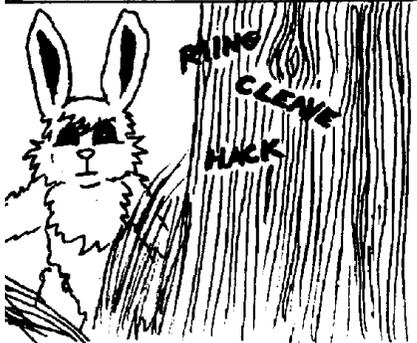
GOT 'YI
GREEN'R
THEN

THIS SHOULDN
HAPPEN...





DIE CHAOS SCUM! I CLEANSE THE WORLD OF YOUR FILTHSOME PRESENCE!



AND AS HE WATCHED THE STORMBULL, BOB BEGAN TO SEE A SENSE OF PURPOSE TO IT ALL, A WAY TO FIGHT AGAINST THE WORLD'S INJUSTICE...
...AND SO BOB'S HEART WAS FILLED WITH HOPE, AND HE RESOLVED TO SET ABOUT RIGHTING WRONGS HIMSELF, TO BRING JUSTICE AND FIGHT EVIL AND CHAOS WHEREVER THEY MAY BE

UNFORTUNATELY, HE WAS THEN TO HIT A SNAG...

SORRY, WE DON'T DO HELMETS FOR RABBITS

NOT WITH HORNS

SORRY, I DON'T DO BATTLEARMS FOR RABBITS

I COULD MAYBE CUSTOM-MAKE ONE FOR YOU

HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU HAVE?

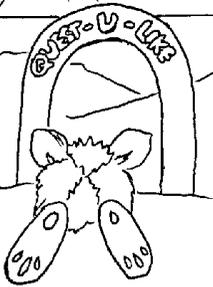
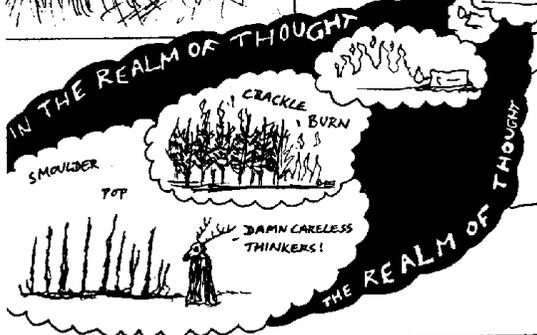
MONEY?

MEN

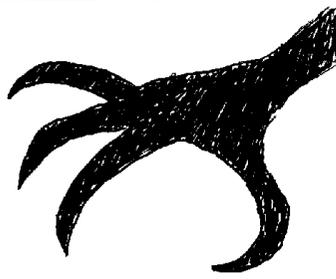
HE HAD A PROBLEM...

WHAT WOULD A STORMBULL DO?

I KNOW - I'LL GO ON A QUEST!



AND SO BOB EMBARKED ON A QUEST...



HE FOUGHT DRAGONS...



... AND KNIGHTS...

...AND DID A LOT OF PRESS UPS...

ANOTHER FIFTY!



UNTIL FINALLY....

I AM. UMBRO BOB CHAOSNIBBLER,
STORMBULL BUNNY, DEFENDER OF
THE GOOD, BANE OF ALL CHAOS!



THE 1996 SASRA ROLEPLAYING AWARDS

Yes, it's that time of year again - the CN awards are out!! This report from the Calder Club award ceremony is once more brought to you by your very own reporters (well, no-one else's would do this job for nothing would they?), so here we are

The first award as always was for the BEST ROLEPLAYED FRP CHARACTER and was, for the second year running won by Jacqui for Bronwyn Silverleaf (aka The Silverblade), the swashbuckler in Trev's on-going Dragonlance. The runners up in this category were Joseph for Rim (his troll in Reg's Shadowrun) and Jim for Solomon (Trev's FUDGE campaign). This award wasn't fixed, before anyone says it is - I didn't even vote for myself!

The second award was for the BEST ROLEPLAYED LRP CHARACTER, and was won (by a resounding majority) by Johnny G, for Vecnar - his Tylean mage in the Tregarron event. Abaddon (his sidekick) played by Reg and Lone/Sir T played by Howard were the well-deserved runners up here.

We came next to the BEST NPC awards, won by Steve H for Lazlo Jr. in his Mechwarrior campaign for FRP and Heather for Fiona (the owner of the Olde Tarred Pot) in the Tregarron campaign for the LRP. Runners up were Harkon Lucas (Reg's ForgottEn Realms) and Sir Mandorallan (Mike at the Tregarron event).

The opposing award for the MOST ANNOYING NPC was won by Reg for Harkon Lucas (FRP), and Andrew Dixon for the slaver in the Tregarron event (LRP). Runners up here were Edals (Steve H, Lankhmar) and David Clarkum (Andrew, Ark) for FRP. There was never really anyone else in the running for the LRP award - sorry Andrew.

Again the award for BEST TABLETOP (ie not Live) was, as last year, very closely fought, with Reg finally emerging as the winner for his Shadowrun game. Runners-up were Rikki for Cthulu and Steve H for both Mechwarrior and Lankhmar.

Not surprisingly then, the much coveted BEST GM award also went to Reg by the narrowest of margins. Very close runners up were Steve H, Trev and Andrew. Good work guys!

The BEST OUT-OF-CLUB game once again went to Andrew, for his ARK campaign - possibly due to the fact he has twice as many players as anyone else as well as being a damn good GM. Runner up was Trev for his Night Below scenario. I think the moral here is that if you want to be in the running for this award, don't run for any of Andrew's Ark players! Seriously Andrew, I think it's a great game too.

The BEST LRP scenario of the year was The Sundering of Tregarron - well done to Mike, Kerri and Jim. Once a Knight was the runner-up here.

The next three awards are all for LRP only - the first being the BEST LRP COSTUME. As always, this was closely fought with Steve Turner's Mumrie (Tregarron) scoring a narrow victory over Johnny for his Vecnar costume on the same event.

The DODGIEST LRP COSTUME went, by quite a majority, to Chris Baker for Tarrin McLeod's kilt at the Council of Twelve event. Too many runners up to mention them all, but I will say that Mitch got a vote for his costume, which seems to appear at every event, regardless of setting or system. (I have to say that I don't think you're entirely alone in that mind!)

The final LRP only award is that of the NASTIEST LRP WEAPON. Yet again this is won by Mark Regan for Mallim's Mallet, which is now back in a "new improved" form. Runners up here were the Darkling (on the Tregarron event) which I'm not sure is strictly a weapon, and the Stormbulls axes.

The next award is that of MOST ANNOYING PC, and the only dispute in the FRP award was **which** of Barry's characters won! In the end the honours went to James Kirkwood, only I don't know which game this was in (but I suspect it might have been my Red Death). The LRP award went by a narrow margin to Jane for Kreysha, with Prince Eldred (Ryan) a close second.

The MOST COWARDLY PC award for FRP went again to Reg for Phoenix (nice to see a bit of consistent roleplaying) with Steve Turner's FUDGE character (The Kid?) a close second. The LRP award was less closely fought, with the two Tyleans (Reg and Johnny) scoring a firm victory over Umbro (Bob).

The MOST UNBELIEVABLE PC awards were again closely fought, but people still have problems with this character/player business! In the final count up, the FRP award goes to Barry - for a combination of actions and characters. Steve Turner was again runner up here for The Kid. The LRP award was very closely fought, with Ryan a narrow victor for Eldred, and the only moral for the runners up is once you've played a particular type of character well, no-one believes in anything different you play after - that's a message to Mark R, Bob and Howard in particular!

I think an explanation of the next category might be required - "shafted" is nothing to do with sex in this context! Yes, it's the MOST SHAFTED PC awards. FRP was won by Barry for Sigmar (in FUDGE I think), with too many runners up to mention. There's a wide range of games and GM's there, so it's nothing personal though. The LRP award had a clear winner, Azalin (Fudge), but the Tyleans (self inflicted!) and Dereck (Mark Dixon) were fairly close runners up.

The MOST PSYCHOTIC PC award was closely fought in the FRP category, with Jezz (LST) a narrow victor. Sigmar (Barry), Perrin (Mark R) and Panzer (LST) were the runners up. In the LRP category, who else could it be but Vecnar (Johnny G)?

There seems to be a lot more fudging of characters and plots going on these days, if the next awards are anything to go by - huge numbers of nominations for these. The FADGIEST CHARACTER award for FRP was won by Jim for Solomon (FUDGE character?) with Fudge a close second for Steve McDonald (ARK). The LRP category was won by Johnny G for Castagir with Andrew (Kael) as runner up.

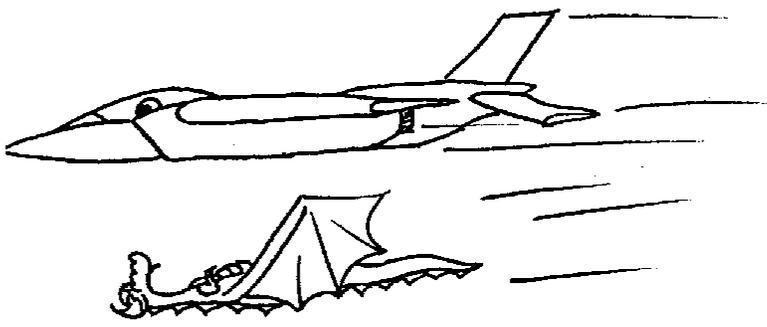
The BIGGEST FADGE for FRP went to Reg for his Shadowrun campaign, where we managed to achieve absolutely **nothing** over the course of the campaign except for getting shot a lot. Good game though! So apparently is Steve H's Lankmar, which was the runner up by the narrowest of margins. The LRP award wasn't a contest at all really - Kael's resurrection swept the board here.

The LEMMING OF THE YEAR award for FRP was quite a close battle, with Barry emerging as the final victor with Sigmar (FUDGE), with his MechWarrior character (nameless!) and Liz as Marianne in Jacqui's Red Death runners up. The LRP award went, again by a narrow margin, to Freya (Jacqui) who now has one-handed edged skill! Barney as the Sheriff in Tregarron was the runner-up here.

The STORMBULL AWARD FOR BRAVERY went to Sir T (Howard), but I'm not sure what incident this was for. Sir Mandorrallan was the runner-up, mainly because he was an NPC and thus fated to die anyway. Sorry Mike.

The STORMBULL AWARD FOR ALCOHOL ABUSE goes to Scoot, with Reg and Bob as runners up. I'm not sure why, but Sloth got a nomination here.

The QUOTE OF THE YEAR was another basically undisputed category - it had to go to Johnny G for those immortal words - "You do know these toilets are Time In don't you?"



The Highs and Lows of Contraptions 96

Highs:

1. Meeting Steve Jackson (as in SJG, GURPS etc). What more can I say really? He's a really nice guy, very chatty and keen to hear what we had to say about our hobby. Opinions included the cost and supply of gaming materials in the UK (see 2), women and sexism in roleplaying and how to deal with awkward players. We also managed to get invited out for pizza with Steve and the committee on the last night. (No, we're not quite sure how; right place, right time I guess.)
2. Hopefully we managed to get more products priced in sterling as well as dollars to stop UK gamers getting ripped off. This originated when we asked Steve J. how much the new Dinohunt game would retail for, and he only had a dollar price (\$29.95). We replied that it would probably retail at £29.95 in that case, to be told that wasn't how the exchange rate worked. "No, but that's how UK distributors and retailers work" he was told. Several shocked moments later this was queried, and we were asked why we stood for it. "Basically because it's no cheaper to mail-order for the US, which is basically the alternative...unless producers give a correct sterling price." So hopefully, all future releases from SJG at least will have a sterling price that represents what the game sells at in the States. And if they do, remember, we had a hand in it.
3. Getting to play and buy new games before they are in the shops. I spent most of the weekend playing the new Dinohunt game (see review), and GURPS Goblins and Knightmare Chess were also on offer. GURPS Goblins sounded hilarious (well, you could hear the laughter across the room), and Knightmare Chess is excellent. We also got a (slightly) cut price set (see reviews), so if anyone wants to borrow it, it will be at the Club most weeks or just ask.
4. Meeting and gaming with other roleplayers from all over the country (including Ireland). Its really nice to spend a weekend with different people with the same interest, compare games, 'house-rules' and characters.

Lows:

1. The fact there were only three or four women there (out of about 50 people) who were 'roleplayers' as opposed to 'partner of roleplayer who will join in, but would rather be somewhere else' (and there weren't many of them).
2. The rail strike (enough said).

8 things you (probably) didn't know about **Steve Jackson**

1. He likes ham and pineapple pizza.
2. He drinks Baileys, no ice.
3. He thinks minis are 'cute' ("kind of like a car, only small")
4. He now thinks your editors have some weird ability to switch off street lights as they walk past them. Us, never. OK, so we were the only people that were there when the lights went funny and not there when they were normal But us, weird? No comments please!
5. He likes Galaxy chocolate, having being introduced to it at Contraptions.
6. Just because you produce a game doesn't mean you're good at it. He lost every game of Dinohunt. And not on purpose (unless he's very good).
7. He was horrified at the mark-ups UK retailers and distributors put on games from the US, so hopefully any new SJG products will have a dollar and sterling price on soon. And when they do, just remember, we had a hand in it!
8. The concept of using money to influence actions in *Illuminati!* came from a Dallas RPG where you could use your influence to get other people to do things.

Roleplaying in Victorian Settings

The inclusion in last months *Arcane* of the "Forgotten Futures" system has prompted me to think about exactly what it is that makes this setting so popular. First there was "Cthulu by Gaslight" then TSR's "Masque of The Red Death", "GURPS Goblins", and now "Forgotten Futures". What is it that draws people to this era as a game genre? Maybe it's that it has something for everyone? Guns are now reliable (even if those using them are not!), there are widespread transport and communication systems, Technology is advancing rapidly - not quite Cyberpunk, but a far cry from the usual fantasy setting. Or is it? There are still wild unexplored areas, Africa, Asia and South America beckon to the more adventurous, even wild areas of Britain still hold secrets. Did Conan-Doyle invent the Hound of the Baskervilles, or is it out on the moors, waiting for a careless traveller? Is Dracula still at large in London, or even Lestat in Paris? This is of course also the Golden Age of Gothic literature - Stoker, Shelley and Poe - invaluable source material for anyone setting a campaign in this era.

There is another advantage in the genre in that almost everyone is familiar with the history of the time; the way people dressed, how they acted, the technology available. This makes it far easier for players to get involved in the game as they don't feel they lack knowledge about the game world that can be so important in other genres.

Game play tends to focus more on interaction than on combat (or maybe that's just my games), since you can't just kill anyone who you feel is suspicious - bodies have to be explained, and justice is usually called for. Carrying guns is not usually encouraged, so players have to rely much more heavily on their wits than their quick-draw skill. Combats however do occur and tend to be quick and bloody.

As a genre I would recommend it to anyone who hasn't yet tried it. It is especially good for horror campaigns, mainly I think due to the Gothic influences, rather than "hack & slash", but there were plenty of wars around the world.

Running a Gothic Campaign

As a genre, the 'Gothic Earth' has a lot going for it, not least that it is the golden Age of Gothic fantasy and horror.

There is source material in abundance, although very few pre-written scenarios for any of the systems set in the period. The lack of scenarios should not stop anyone from running a game or campaign in this era, as many of the books I've suggested below will convert to a scenario with very little effort on the part of the GM. There are also a number of other sources of information and plot-lines available, some of which are very simple to find.

Take houses for example, most players are familiar with the layout of a typical Whitehaven terrace, and the 'backs' on these streets - pure(ish) Victoriana. If your NPC has a modest income, just give him one of these as a residence - you probably don't even need a map if you play in a house like this. At the other end of the spectrum, there are many stately homes and castles around the country, many of which are open to the public and produce good guide books, often with photographs and maps.

Old photographs and postcards can also provide the spark or setting for an adventure. Who sent the old Lord the postcard of Bodmin Moor that caused his fatal heart-attack? Another source of old pictures are the old magic lantern slides (try antique shops/collectors fairs - cost about 50p - £5 depending on subject and condition), these are often contemporary with the setting. If all else fails, try taking

photographs of the location or somewhere similar. It can have a profound effect on your players to actually see where the action is taking place - ask any of my Red Death team about my photos of Beverley Minster if you don't believe me - even better, show them one! The same is true of older maps - any up to about the mid-thirties are OK - it's better if they don't show airfields or the motorway network etc.

Local guide books can also provide inspiration, or extra background. Look in particular for ghost stories - try any Scottish castle - and you can even give the players the source if it (or something similar) would have been available. Again, this can have quite a dramatic effect on their level of involvement in the scenario.

One 'prop' I produced which was very successful was a daily newspaper. This was a single sheet of 'news' produced on the computer to both give the feel of the setting (any good history reference will give you the events of the time) and include possible adventure leads. The first week's worth had about five possible campaign routes embedded in the other news, most of which have now been followed up by the players (there is one though...). Later on I produced occasional issues when circumstances allowed (since we'd cover several days in one session), especially

when the articles had personal relevance to players (eg a theatre review) or to remind them about that other business that they'd forgotten about/ ignored. It's also proved a good way to give them news of NPC activity (both on their side and the other), especially as characters tend to travel quite widely. The Royal Mail and telegraph service are now established, so letters and telegrams can be used both between players as a means of communication and between players and NPC's. It's quite scary when the threatening mail arrives from the bad guy's - it means that they know where you live! It does of course also allow for calling in reinforcements - if your players have any NPC friends to call that is. I've been running in this setting on and off for about two years now, and have enjoyed it immensely. I'm not so sure about the players, but most of the original out of club group are still playing (two years on) and those who have played at the club had

asked if I was planning to run it again. This may be so they are forewarned and sign up for something else though. It's an easy setting to run, as the players know the background (to varying degrees) and the wealth of suitable materials means I'm still ahead of myself with scenarios. Writing my own scenarios mean it's easy to use them again with other groups, and its easier to deal with the players going off at a major tangent, or coming up with some unimagined flange to defeat the baddies or ... any of the other things players do to GM's. Try it - you might enjoy it more than you think!

Possible Source Materials:

Bram Stoker - Dracula (also the Coppola film)
Mary Shelley - Frankenstein
Edgar Allen Poe - Any of his stories are excellent start points
Conan-Doyle - Sherlock Holmes, The Lost World
Wilkie Collins - The Moonstone
Rudyard Kipling - Good for the feel of the Indian Raj
Mrs. Beeton - Not a typical source but good for reference on the society.
Any good guide books - especially those with local legends in.
Kathryn Kurtz - The Adept series (although these are in a contemporary setting, the feel is good - a mix of psychic powers and magic)
Mike Jefferies - Stone Angels (again modern, but again easily converted - as many club members will know!)
Any Victorian Ghost stories (Wordsworth publish a collection)

LRP Cost Guidelines

I have been asked to update the membership with the recent changes to the guidelines applying to the costs of participating in Live Roleplaying (LRP) events run by the Club. These were set up eighteen months ago and I am pleased to say that there has been no need to increase them since (partly due to our successful application to SASRA in respect of LRP insurance). I believe however that there has always been some confusion about the supplements that apply to some players and there have recently been discussions which have changed the guidelines relating to players who are not Standard members of the Club. I think that before I go on I should clarify the position by explaining that the Club has two classes of membership :

A **Standard** member is someone who is a member of SASRA (any class whether full, family or associate) AND EITHER attends the Thursday meeting of the Club on a regular basis OR attended the last AGM. They are entitled to take part in all Club activities and pay standard cost for LRP events.

An **Honorary** member is generally an ex-member of the Club who has moved away to work or study but who returns to play when visiting the area. This class of membership allows them to attend on Thursday evenings without having to pay the annual SASRA membership fee but they still pay the extra supplement when playing LRP.

If you don't fit into either of the above and are attending on a Thursday evening then please see a member of the committee as soon as possible in order that we can regularise your position. The committee can consider applications or nominations for honorary membership at any meeting.

When cost guidelines for LRP were established a supplement was introduced that applies to all PLAYERS who are not Standard members of the Club. The supplement does not apply to crew, monsters, scripted or NPC's so that everyone has a chance to take

part at a very small cost and to encourage non-members to crew for us allowing a maximum of Club Standard members to play. The rationale behind the supplement is twofold :

1) We have a duty to SASRA to ensure that regular participants in the Club's activities are members of SASRA ,

2) Club money comes from two sources. From SASRA for specific capital expenditure such as system books and so on including some LRP equipment and from subscriptions paid on Thursday nights. Although we aim to make LRP self financing this is not always possible at current charging rates. In order to keep our rates as low as possible so that as

many people as possible can take part some Club money is utilised during and in underwriting the events. It is therefore only fair that people who are not Standard members contribute a little extra to the Club's funds by way of the supplement.

To summarise the current guidelines for a linear event are £10 for a player who is a Standard member, £12 for other players and £3 for crew / NPC's. There is no set minimum for other events or interactive scenarios as cost vary considerably depending mainly on the site used, the length of the event and whether or not it is catered. The supplement for any Player who is not a Standard member of the Club is 20% of the standard cost to play the event rounded to the nearest pound. If anyone is considering running an event it is often useful to discuss the costing with me prior to putting out flyers.

I am sure that anyone who has attended or investigated the possibility of attending an outside event can confirm that we are offering LRP events at a very competitive price particularly when you consider the cost of travelling at least half the length of the country and I hope that everybody will support as many future events as possible.



Lonely Hearts Club

Young widowed noblewoman seeks young titled wealthy landowner for friendship and long lasting relationship

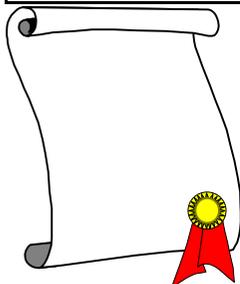
Youngish knight of reputable character seeks pure chaste maiden for blissful matrimony

Young lady, possibly of good family, seeks normal and not too strange young man, hopefully of good family, for possible relationship. Possibly.

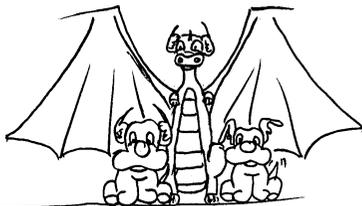
Bullish young man with strong beliefs seeks woman for casual relationship, pref. a tavern keeper's daughter

Bored lonely trader's wife seeks man (must be clean)

Protective earthy male seeks partner who can look after themselves. Any race considered



All replies to be sent care of Commander Vani at the Jezzail Palace



In the next issue of Club News

Review of Concrete Dreaming - a character's perspective
Nagash and the thief (A short story)
LRP Referees and what they do
More mouse and dragon artwork

Club News 30 should be published on December 11th,
so start writing now!