Out of the Frying Pan!
The dwarves must reach the safety of the trees in a brand new scenario

Cavalry Tactica
The trickiest troops in the game explained
Welcome to the first ever issue of SBG, the result of a long-mooted collaboration to create a magazine for The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game that began in January 2014 and finishes here, at the end of all things, with the Editors’ letter in September.

This first issue has taken us just under nine months to produce (the Battle Report took place way back in February!) but the finish line is in sight at last, some six months later than first anticipated. In retrospect, this delay was perhaps inevitable; the sheer scale of the project and the vast number of hours required only became apparent after we had naively ploughed into the production process. We have carefully selected every word and photograph contained within these pages and agonised over every design-aspect, from the perfect colour palette for each article to the ideal weight of every typeface. Only yesterday, the front cover, long since completed, received a dramatic overhaul in our constant pursuit of ‘perfection’! Once our designs were finalised, we faced the daunting and time-consuming task of developing our own style guide; we did this to ensure that the vast array of complicated wargaming terminology appears consistently throughout the magazine. Discussing the merits of italicising the Barrels out of Bond box set yet not italicising the Barrels out of Bond scenario is hardly the most enthralling way to spend an evening, but we wanted the magazine to appear as professional as possible. The final push to get everything finished over the last few weeks has been particularly challenging, requiring a colossal and sleep-deprived effort that has left both of us looking like Gríma.

SBG simply would not have been possible without the support of all those who have helped us along the way. We would like to extend a huge thank-you to everybody who has contributed towards this first issue, whether by means of providing photographs, writing articles, or simply by being supportive. At times, producing SBG has been infuriating, but it has also been fun, challenging and, ultimately, deeply satisfying. Having now seen the printer’s proofs of the finished magazine, it is gratifying to see that all of our efforts have paid off and we are incredibly proud of the finished product. Once we have written this letter, the magazine will be finished and it is hard to believe that Issue 1 is only a few words away from completion. It is both exciting and nerve-wracking to think that we will finally reach the end of our nine month journey and release our ‘baby’ into the world.

We hope that you enjoy reading SBG as much as we have enjoyed creating it. This has been a remarkable and unexpected journey on which we have learnt an incredible amount and we now feel fully prepared to start working on Issue 2 - after a few weeks’ break of course!

Enjoy the issue,

Damian & Tom
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**HOBBY BLOG**

A brief look into what the **SBG** team have been up to during the production of this issue

**Damian:** I've had great fun lately converting more Grim Hammers into Warriors of Erebor and bolstering the numbers of my Army of Thror (*North Star* spears from eBay, axes from *eBob's* Weapon pack and Warriors of Erebor shields made the perfect wargear). Next, I’m planning to treat myself to painting up Thror and Thrain to lead them - I can’t wait to get them on the table!

**Tom:** Last month’s hobbying involved laying down my paintbrushes and delving into a world made up of various shades of grey... Spurred on by the prospect of playing out various scenarios from the *Hobbit* films (particularly Barrels out of Bond), I assembled and cleaned-up all of my Azog’s Hunters models (around 60 in total!). If only I could paint them all as quickly...

**James:** With my hobby time being mostly restricted to the GBHL Podcast *YouTube* channel of late, I decided to make a start on my eagle army, the rationale being that they are simple models to paint. Along the way I have been experimenting with some different painting tips and aids, rather than simply drybrushing as I did for my first eagle. Coming soon to a bat-rep near you!

**Kieran:** Of late my wargaming has taken me 'there and back again', as my current project is to paint the Fellowship of the Ring. The Fellowship were some of the first models I ever bought for wargaming (in fact some of the models I am painting are from that original kit having been carefully stripped!) and it’s great to return to these iconic figures once again!

**Jamie:** Recently I’ve started collecting specific models and building terrain specifically for *The Fellowship of the Ring* journey book scenarios. This has been my first real foray into terrain building and I’m finding it extremely enjoyable. My project at the moment is to build the Dwarrowdelf, hopefully you’ll see it completed and on the GBHL Podcast *YouTube* channel soon!

**Kev:** I have so many projects on the go at the moment that it’s a little difficult to nail them down. I am currently working on a batch of 24 Grim Hammers, 128 Last Alliance elves, a box of Dwarf Rangers and numerous single miniatures. Upcoming projects include a *Shadow & Flame* converted dead Mûmak piece.
White Horses

Shadow & Flame is a collaboration between avid Middle-Earth enthusiasts Kev Lawrence (Shadow) and Dave Fredericks (Flame). They have been refining their respective crafts since 2001, providing the highest quality custom paint jobs, conversions, and scratch sculpts for all of your wargaming needs. Shadow has painted on commission for two years, during which time he has painted hundreds of miniatures for clients, while Flame’s conversion experience and commission services go back nine years, with his first scratch sculpts dating back to 2007. In this article, Kev talks us through his techniques for painting white horses, a common nightmare for hobbyists.

Head over to www.shadowandflame.co.uk for a view of their galleries, products, and services and receive a quote to sculpt and paint your custom piece of Middle-Earth! Like Shadow & Flame on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ShadowandFlame

PAINTS REQUIRED

Vallejo Model Color (VMC): Burnt Cad, Red
Vallejo Game Color (VGC): Khaki, Leather Brown, Beasty Brown, Cold Grey, Stonewall Grey, Charred Brown, Dead White, Bone White, Earth
Games Workshop (GW): Abbadon Black, Shining Gold, Chainmail, Seraphim Sepia
Army Painter: Strong Tone

1. Decide where you want your model to be situated on its base. Glue some gravel, rocks, sand etc. in place and secure the model to base.

2. Prime the model black. The undercoat colour is, of course, down to individual preference, but I work from black on every model.

3. Basecoat the horse’s mane and tail with VGC Khaki.

4. Make a mix of VGC Leather Brown and water at a ratio of 1 drop of paint to 10 drops of water and wash this over the mane and tail. This will produce a yellowy look. When measuring the drops, dip a Fine Detail Brush deep into your water jar and then allow individual drops of water to drop onto your pallet.

5. Basecoat all of the horse’s fur with VGC Cold Grey.
6. Paint the saddle and straps, along with the horse's headgear, with VGC Beasty Brown. Paint the metal head armour with GW Shining Gold.

7. Wash all of the parts painted in Step 6 with an undiluted brown wash. I use Army Painter Strong Tone but any undiluted brown wash such as GW Agrax Earthshade will do.

8. Make a mix of VGC Stonewall Grey and water in a ratio of 1 drop of paint to 6 drops of water and highlight the horse's fur. When painting using this method, brush the watered down paint towards the area of the model where you want the colour to be strongest. An example of this is on the horse's shoulders - you can see I have brushed the paint up over onto the tops of the shoulder as I wanted the colour to be strongest in this top shoulder area.

9. Paint the saddle cloth. I have chosen to paint it in a chequered pattern. I used a basecoat of VGC Khaki and then painted individual squares of VMC Burnt Cad red over the basecoat.

10. Highlight the horse's mane and tail with VGC Bone White. Drybrushing can be used to do this. However, I have chosen to paint the highlight on with a Fine Detail Brush as I prefer this finish to the effect achieved by drybrushing; which method you use is purely down to your own preference.

11. Pick out the horse's teeth with VGC Bone White and put a small dot of VGC Dead White in each of the horse's eyes. Paint the hooves with VGC Charred Brown. The tongue can be painted with VMC Burnt Cad red and then highlighted by adding VGC Bone White progressively for successive highlights. Spending time on the tongue is optional, as it is often barely visible.

12. Make an equal parts mix of GW Shining Gold and GW Chainmail and paint in the individual squares in the horse's headgear.

13. Paint the metal parts of the horse's harness with GW Chainmail, including the bit between the horse's teeth.
14. Make a mix of VGC Dead White and water in the ratio of 1 drop of paint to 6 drops of water and highlight the horse’s fur again using the same method as before, brushing towards the area you want the fur to be lightest (see Step 8). The paint can be stippled onto the sides of the horse’s neck; stippling is where you tap the point of your brush against the model to achieve a ‘dotted’ effect. Ensure that you knock any blobs of watered down paint off the end of your brush before attempting this, otherwise the paint will run everywhere. This stage can be repeated as many times as you like until you are happy with the lightness of the horse’s fur. The more you repeat this stage, the whiter your horse will be.

15. Add a final highlight of VGC Dead White to your horse’s mane and tail. As before (see Step 10), this can be drybrushed although again I have opted to paint the highlight on with a Fine Detail brush.

16. Wash the metal on the horse’s headgear with GW Seraphim Sepia. Once dry, add a few dots of GW Chainmail to the headgear where the light would catch (around the top of each individual square on the top section of the headgear).

17. Paint a very thin line of VGC Earth along the top edge of the horizontal running straps and a line on each edge of any vertical running straps on the horse’s harness. Highlight the saddle with a mix of VGC Leather Brown and water in the ratio of 1 drop of paint to 10 drops of water.

18. Take an old Drybrush that has seen better days and make a mix of VGC Charred Brown and water in the ratio of 1 drop of paint to 10 drops of water. Use the old Drybrush to stipple flecks of dirt onto the horse’s feet and legs, making sure to knock any excess paint off the brush before touching the model.

19. Your horse is now finished! All that is left is to paint the base, but I have run out of room so we’ll have to leave basing for another time. Hope this helps you out and happy painting!

Want to improve specific aspects of your painting? Write to us at SBGmagazine@gmail.com with suggestions for future Painting Masterclass topics.
One of the most commonly discussed topics within The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game community revolves around which models are the most under-pointed or over-pointed based on their profiles. Generally, competitive tournament players will be drawn towards under-costed models when army list building, just as Gollum is drawn towards The One Ring – it is something that is done without conscious thought, although those not compelled by this kind of army list building may see it as being somewhat sneaky (or cheesy).

Generally, players will be more successful when they choose models that are cheaper than they ‘should be’ relative to when they select models that are too expensive; the latter are often shunned in tournament play despite having redeeming qualities – Théoden being an obvious example. Obviously, ‘fluff’ and theme play a large part in many gamers’ armies (as they should) yet there is something satisfying (to some at least) about finding the most ‘broken’ army list. Of course, such lists are ‘broken’ not only due to under-pointed models but also due to the high levels of synergy that can be achieved between specific models. However, for now I’d like to concentrate solely on the point values assigned to models by Games Workshop – and more specifically, those point values which are, on paper, too low.

This brings us round to the question of how does one determine the point value of a model? For this edition of SBG, I’ll be looking at Warriors (excluding Warriors with multiple Wounds, as their point values do not follow the same rules as those with single Wounds), as these are the easiest to assess. One of the fantastic things about The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game is that the system for determining the point value assigned to each model is so simple (theoretically at least): each additional profile statistic/basic piece of equipment/Special Rule given to a basic Warrior costs one point. One can use a generic Man profile such as a standard Warrior of Rohan as a benchmark and then determine how much every model should, in theory, cost.

Here is a quick summary of the basis for the point values I used when conducting my “research” (all relative to a Warrior of Rohan):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+1 Fight/Strength/Defence/Attack/Courage</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1 Shoot value (e.g. 3+ versus 4+)</td>
<td>1 point*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1” of movement (on foot)</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular item of equipment</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength 3 Bow/ Throwing Weapon/ Crossbow</td>
<td>2 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elven Cloak</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Rule (unless mimicking an Elven Cloak)</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spells (e.g. Spectre, Wood Elf Sentinel)</td>
<td>5 points†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse (based on a Knight of Minas Tirith)</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warg (based on a Warg Rider)</td>
<td>6 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Only counted if the model can be armed with a ranged weapon
† A little arbitrary perhaps; given the same weight as an Elven Cloak

Tom Harrison is a regular on the UK tournament scene, winning two events on his way to finishing 2nd in the Great British Hobbit League in 2013. In this article, Tom takes a close look at the maths behind the game to discover the Top 10 under-costed Warriors in the whole of the The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game!
So, on paper at least, I was able to determine the most under-pointed models in the game. Whilst some will be obvious to experienced tournament gamers, others may come as a surprise.

### The Top 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Undercosted By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Woses Warrior</td>
<td>9 points too cheap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wood Elf Warrior</td>
<td>5 points too cheap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mirkwood Ranger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Watcher of Kârna</td>
<td>4 points too cheap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guard of the Galadhrim Court</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Elf Warrior/Galadhrim Warrior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hobbit Archer</td>
<td>3 points too cheap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rohan Outrider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clansman of Lamedon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Black Númenorean</td>
<td>2 points too cheap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uruk-hai Berserker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abrakhân Merchant Guard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knight of Dol Amroth (on foot)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dwarf Ranger (without bow)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Khazâd Guard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shirriff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rivendell Knight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The champions of the under-pointed models are Woses Warriors. They have an Elven Cloak and the *Woodland Creature* Special Rule. In addition to this, they all have spears, poisoned blowpipes (hitting on a 3+) and add +1 to their dice when rolling To Wound against Orcs, Uruk-hai and Goblins in close combat. At least they can only move 5”… No, wait, the *Free Peoples’ FAQ* comes to their rescue and helps to make them even better [Ed: As if they needed it].

Hobbit Archers have the ability to strike fear into the opposition in spite of their small size. Despite being as cheap as a Moria Goblin, their ranged prowess is superb and, being so cheap, they can be fielded in great numbers. If only the hobbits in the Fellowship could carry a bow…

Hobbit Archers

Rohan Outriders are similar in point value to their Warrior of Rohan cousins, yet point-for-point they are far superior. Being able to use a friendly Hero’s Stand Fast! regardless of range makes them an excellent choice when deciding which models should hold objectives. In addition, their high Courage and an improved Shoot value make these troops an obvious choice for any army of Rohan.

Rohan Outriders

The elves of Middle-Earth, whilst fairly pointed relative to one another, far outstrip the world of men in terms of value per point (clearly, GBHL Jamie was onto something with his tournament winning Woses Warrior and Wood Elf alliance). With their high Courage, impressive Shoot value, the *Woodland Creature* Special Rule and a selection of other Special Rules, elves are formidable opponents and are often seen gracing the top tables at tournaments.

Elves

Woses Warriors

Tom’s Top 10 - Under-costed Warriors
Whilst the models in my Top 10 above are theoretically the cheapest models in the game (speaking in relative terms), that is not to say that they are the best for their point values. The very simple rules that have been applied here don’t quite work when you look at the mechanics of the game. Is the jump from Courage 2 to 3 worth as much as the jump from Defence 6 to 7 or from 1 Attack to 2? Being under-pointed is great, but being under-pointed whilst also being either survivable or having the ability to kill is far more valuable. This is why the Strength 4, Defence 7 Khazâd Guard, and Guards of the Fountain Court (who don’t even make the Top 10 here) are so highly rated; meanwhile those at the top of the list (Wood Elf Warriors and Woses Warriors) aren’t thought of as being ridiculously overpowered as, despite their obvious qualities, they are easily killable if things go badly for them (it only takes one poor dice roll and they’re gone!).

Interestingly, the much maligned Grim Hammers are actually 1 point cheaper than they should be relative to a Warrior of Rohan, but are often overlooked because they lose out on both survivability and killing power when compared to Khazâd Guard.

So which statistics are the most important? Personally, I think that the Attack statistic should be worth more than 1 point as it massively swings the probability of winning Duels in your Warrior’s favour (especially when coupled with a high Fight value), effectively making it more survivable, as well as increasing its killing power. This brings me on to the concept of synergy between the statistics of a single model (not just models
within an army). Whilst the Clansmen of Lamedon clearly get a lot for their points, having Courage 5 and a two-handed weapon are probably not the ‘best’ use of those points – if they dropped to Courage 3 yet had Strength 5, 2 Attacks, and an axe instead of a two-handed own Special Rules? I have already talked about Watchers of Kârna and the potential to take 50% bows but there are many other examples. The new Piercing Strike rule has made low Defence models armed with axes ‘too cheap’ – for no real loss, they gain on average an extra 2 Strength –

“Many people would argue that finding the most cost-effective combinations within an army list is an important part of the game”

weapon (theoretically exactly the same point cost) they would be far more feared. Obviously, some common sense has to come in at some point – the fictitious stat-line above is clearly overpowered. Equally, nobody would take Woses Warriors if they were 9 points more expensive.

There is also synergy that comes from the equipment or Special Rules that accompany a stat-line. Elves can carry Strength 3 missile weapons to accompany their fine shooting prowess, whilst Watchers of Kârna arguably enjoy even greater synergy: they have a good Shoot value in addition to having Poisoned Arrows and, critically, sit within a faction that is able to bring up to 50% bows.

In light of these observations, if we actually take a step back from this formulaic view of determining point values and instead try to assign them to models based on ‘gut feeling’, it does get rather tricky. How do you assign a point value to a single model when it can be placed with other models/ sit within an army list with its this means that Corsair Reavers, who using my above template are actually fairly costed, are often thought of as being ‘broken’.

It also works the other way; whilst Mirkwood Rangers are cheap in relative terms, they are still expensive in real terms and, given the choice, many players would rather not pay for the Elven Cloak upgrade. Expensive Warriors limit your numbers, which in turn has a knock-on effect on your Break Point, especially when there are no cheap Heroes to call on in their army list. Complexities such as this are extremely difficult to quantify in point values, especially as the synergies required to win one scenario may not necessarily work for another. In addition, if we took this almost holistic approach, an ‘appropriate’ points value would vary depending on the size of game in question – but perhaps I’m getting ahead of myself; should models even be costed based on their possible interactions with others? I think that many people would argue that finding the most cost-effective combinations within an army list is an important part of the game.

As for some critical analysis of the test that I have carried out – well, it’s far from fool-proof. Whilst the simple point costs that I have used are a good foundation, there are many inconsistencies in the sourcebooks and there is no guarantee that the statistics and Special Rules I have discussed above are actually worth the values I have assigned to them – should each Special Rule be worth the same for example? Also, some of the Warrior-related upgrades (e.g. Wood Elf Warrior to Mirkwood Guard) cost more than 1 point despite granting a bonus that is ‘worth’ only 1 point (according to the simple metric applied in this article at least). I believe that in the examples where the different statistics/equipment/Special Rules for a Warrior act together to create something worth more than the separate entities, some additional consideration is required to create a happy medium.

So – to some sort of conclusion! Whilst it is clear that some models are not fairly costed, it is certainly less black and white than the Top 10 models determined by the simple method used in this article make out. A multitude of factors need to be considered when assigning a point value to a model, yet doing so you would be overcomplicating what is a beautifully simple system. So, those are my Top 10 under-costed Warriors, what are yours?

Let Tom know your thoughts and opinions by writing to us at: SBGmagazine@gmail.com

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The Dr’s Corner

Dr Grant is a wargaming enigma, a mysterious scoundrel known to haunt The One Ring forums with an unhealthy passion for Feral Uruk-hai and dinosaurs. In this article, he investigates the widespread disdain and contempt that most wargamers will experience at some point.

My first realisation that our wonderful hobby was something to be concealed came sometime in 1994. I was sitting on the bus to school, reading the amazing ‘Gathering of Might’ battle report in White Dwarf issue 181. For anyone who hasn’t been playing long enough to remember bat-reps from 20 years ago [Copy Ed: or for anybody who wasn’t even born that long ago], this was a huge game of Warhammer with about 10,000 points per side which, at the time, was completely unprecedented in White Dwarf. As I sat there naively (as an 11 year-old I didn’t realise the danger I was in), I found my copy of White Dwarf ripped from my hands by the Sixth Formers (17/18 year-olds for our international readers). After repeated cries of ‘loser’, ‘nerd’, and ‘saddo’, my magazine was eventually returned to me with a large blob of chewing gum stuck between the pages of the glamour shot of the Orc and Goblin army. I tried my best to remove it but the gum pulled some of the ink off, forever ruining the image.

There is no denying the clear and permanent impact that this event had on me; I learnt very early on that wargaming was something to be ashamed of and hidden, certainly not embraced and publicised. I maintained this opinion throughout my school years, playing Warhammer at the weekends with an entirely different set of friends to those I went to school with (who, of course, may have been secret wargamers themselves) and I was able to avoid any more chewing gum based disasters. The lesson was clear, if you wanted to survive at school then your wargaming tendencies should be hidden, dark and deep in the vaults, not to be used unless at the uttermost end of need.

Upon entering my late teens I encountered a new problem - girls. I had no doubt that my dirty secret was something to keep hidden for, at the very least, the first few tentative steps of any relationship. My first experience of this was around the age of 17 when, upon enticing a particular young lady to my room for the first time (a formative event in any teen’s life), she gazed across the shelves of Wood Elves and Vampire Counts and remarked, rather despairingly, “Oh, you paint those funny little figures do you?” Suffice to say, the mood was somewhat ruined by my ‘funny’ little figures.

When I went to university in 2002 my paints and models stayed at home, I would still periodically play some games with my old wargaming buddies but it’s safe to say that, as so many do, I fell out of touch with the hobby around the age of 20. Sure, I’d pick up the odd White Dwarf, army book...
or some of those lovely new *The Lord of the Rings* models, but I didn’t get much time for painting.

Fast-forward to January 2011 and a lot had changed. I was engaged to a lovely young lady, hadn’t picked up *White Dwarf* in years and my only hobby-related activity was occasionally playing games of *Man O’War* with my mates when I went home to visit my folks. Then, whilst being dragged around *Hobbycraft* one day, my fiancée told me there was ‘some *Lord of the Rings* book’ in the sale section. I wandered over and discovered it was the old blue rulebook, on sale for only £20. Knowing about my wargaming past, my good lady enquired “Isn’t this those figures you used to paint? - note, no use of ‘funny’ - Is that something you’d want to get back into?”

Quite unexpectedly, I found that the answer was yes. She smiled, picked it up and bought it for me; naturally I assumed this was some sort of trick, after all, the evidence of the last twenty years had taught me that women and society at large were not in favour of this strange hobby. Surely I couldn’t have found someone who not only accepted the hobby but actively encouraged it? Talk about opening Pandora’s Box, the poor little lamb didn’t know what she’d got herself into…

So, after a trip back to my parents’ house to root through my old figure boxes (the original *The Fellowship of the Ring* starter set, the *Ambush at Amon Hen* box set, the nine members of the Fellowship of the Ring (metal of course), and odd bits like the Mouth of Sauron - it was a gold mine!), I dived back into the hobby with gusto, scouring eBay, dusting off old paints, pouring through old *White Dwarfs* and basically finding out everything that had happened in the world of *The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game* in the last ten years. Since then I have become a regular poster on various online wargaming forums, told all my friends (and enrolled some!), attended lots of tournaments, painted about four hundred Middle-Earth miniatures and created this SBG fanzine!

I’m now married, I have good friends and a good job and I’m far more comfortable with myself than the scared little 11 year-old on the bus. All my friends and family know I play and, whilst I endure some good-natured ribbing about it, I never get any sense that the hobby is anything to be ashamed of. Suffice to say I was teased relentlessly about it by my best men at my wedding (“Damian spent a large part of his teenage years alone in his bedroom holding something small and repellent to women”…“he often spends nights on the floor with a bevy of beautiful models, sadly these ones are an inch tall and made out of plastic” etc.) so that ‘helped’ as one hundred of my closest friends and family instantly found out. No-one said a word though. It seemed that, freed from the social cliques of the playground, the modern world was altogether more accepting. And then Facebook reared its ugly head…

The day after returning from the *Throne of Skulls* event last year I was flicking through *Warhammer World*’s photos (which, thankfully, I wasn’t tagged in) and I wrote a few comments about how great the weekend had been. I felt safe in the knowledge that if I wrote comments on photos that I wasn’t tagged in, and that were not uploaded by me, said comments wouldn’t show up on my friends’ Facebook Newsfeed.

Except they do.
A few minutes later I received a notification that one of my wife’s friends had written a comment and there, on Warhammer World’s photo, for all to see, was the word “Geeeeeeeeeek”! I would stress at this point that said friend is a lovely person who always calls me a nerd about such things in good humour, it certainly wasn’t a malicious comment but that wasn’t the point. The point was she had seen the photo of me wargaming away, and if she had seen it, everyone had seen it. This instantly generated a somewhat irrational response from me: I panicked, demanded that my wife checked her Newsfeed to see if she too could see the pics and, upon confirmation that she could, I ran back to the photos and removed all my comments in a desperate attempt to somehow delete history. Of course, as it was, no-one else ever mentioned it, but it did make me have a long sit down with my wife and have a chat about what on Earth just happened. After all, all my friends and family already knew I played so what would it matter if they saw? After a long hard think, I went back onto the photos, added the comments again and then wrote a Facebook status ‘outing’ myself. I sat back, satisfied with my progress: it was on Facebook for all to see, I had made my wargaming pedigree known and I would no longer try and hide it. Or would I?

I’m a member of Titans Wargames Club in Finchley and, over the last year, I’ve twice been sent the link to like the Titans’ Facebook page and I have twice ignored the request in the hope it goes away. Why on Earth have I done that? In a similar vein, I did not confirm my attendance at Slayer Gaming’s tournament in February on their Facebook invite as their Event page is public and all my ‘friends’ would see. It would seem that for some reason Facebook is a big no-go area for me in terms of wargaming. I actively engage in discussions on The Great British Hobbit League’s Facebook page and am glad to be part of that community, perhaps because the group’s privacy setting means that none of this information appears on my Newsfeed.

I don’t think I’m alone in my reticence to publicly embrace the hobby, I know there are several hobbyists who would not be so keen to jump in on the discussion about the best way to equip your Uruk-hai Warriors (clue - it’s to swap them ALL for Ferals) if their comments were published on their Newsfeed. Indeed, I know at least one hobbyist who has constructed an entirely false persona and alternate name/profile so that they can get involved in all sorts of wargaming goodness on Facebook without anyone ever finding out. One of my friends is really into Live Action Roleplay...
and constantly uploads pictures of himself ‘larping’ away dressed like a lunatic and waving a sword around. Surprisingly, I found that I was quite jealous of him, it must be a wonderful feeling to be so comfortable in the things you enjoy that you really don’t care what anyone else thinks.

I’m similarly rather jealous of my wargaming friends who are happy to upload pictures of their models to Facebook; I had a panic-attack when I thought someone might see a photo of me at a wargaming event, clearly I’m not going to be uploading photos of my freshly painted minis anytime soon. I’ve long held the belief that I don’t really care what anyone thinks about me but it seems, when it comes to wargaming, maybe I do.

I ultimately came to the decision that my Facebook reticence was largely to do with work, I’m a university lecturer and am ‘friends’ with a lot of my students on Facebook - apparently I didn’t want them seeing what I was up to. It seems that, deep down somewhere, that 11 year-old is still worried that people are going to stick chewing gum in his sourcebooks. Quite why I’m so freaked out about ‘going public’ I really couldn’t say; I love this hobby, I love Tolkien and I’ve made some really great friends since rediscovering it three years ago. Every day I chip in on multiple online discussions with people from all across the world and I really enjoy it, I’m proud of my painting and I love discussing the finer points of the rules mechanics. Ultimately, you shouldn’t be embarrassed by doing the things you enjoy, particularly not when you’re 31.

And so that leads me to today and this magazine, I have been gradually ‘outing’ myself over the last few years and becoming more and more public about my favourite hobby. An inevitable by-product of creating SBG is that I will suddenly be ever more publicly ‘out’ - my real name is all over it, alongside pictures of myself and I imagine that before long a quick Google search of my name will lead straight to this publication (or indeed, one of several YouTube videos with me publicly displaying my nerdy pedigree). Obviously, as you’re reading this, I’ve decided it isn’t something to worry about; I’ve decided to just suck it up and get on with my life like a grown up.

“\textit{I’ve long held the belief that I don’t really care what anyone thinks about me but when it comes to wargaming, maybe I do}”

Will I start posting pictures of my models on Facebook? No, but that’s largely because I don’t think many of my friends would have the slightest interest in the subtle highlighting on Tauriel’s face and I’ll receive much better feedback/support over on the forums. However, what I will vow to do is to start publicly supporting those clubs and businesses that I enjoy rather than attempting to hide/ignore them. Just this minute I have, at long last, ‘liked’ Titans Wargames Club - North London and joined The Hobbit: Battle of Five Armies Pre-Film Tournament on Slayer Gaming’s Facebook page. What will the fallout be? My guess - no-one will care.

And so I reach the end of my musings around the inexplicable yet incredibly prevalent shame and embarrassment that surrounds wargaming; I hope this may encourage other gamers out there to throw caution to the wind, climb to the top of a mountain and scream “I am a wargamer, DU BEKAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRR!!!!!”

I’m quite proud of my painting these days but you won’t be seeing pictures of my models on my Facebook account anytime soon.

\textbf{The Doctor is in...}

We would love to hear your thoughts on the topic; do you have the same concerns as Dr Grant, or do you not care about what anyone thinks and just embrace the hobby you love?

Contact us at: SBGmagazine@gmail.com
Jamie Giblin and James Clark run the incredibly popular GBHL Podcast YouTube channel. With James as a relatively new player and Jamie as a seasoned pro, they offer excellent counterpoints about the various tactics available to players. In this issue, James discusses how to make the most of cavalry, whilst Jamie reveals the most devious ways to stop a cavalry charge in its tracks!

James: Perhaps the best way to understand how to use cavalry is to first understand its weaknesses. I can remember the conversations I read when first theorising an all-mounted army on The One Ring forum nearly two years ago. Through all of those threads one key point kept cropping up: when a cavalry force loses Priority the turn immediately after it has charged into enemy ranks, it is easily swamped by enemy infantry. This is a huge problem as it robs the mounted models of all their previous bonuses, often leaving them to become the white elephants of the battlefield. Interestingly, when observing these discussions, many of the problems outlined were centred on the size and shape of cavalry bases, with little mention of specific tactics one could actually use on the battlefield. Cavalry have a larger base size than infantry and, being circular in shape, it is difficult for charging cavalry to create one-on-one situations across an entire battle line (and therefore stop opponents from easily counter-charging and swamping them). Once cavalry models are outnumbered, they effectively turn into expensive infantry models. However, it’s not just the bases that are against them…

The “meta” (i.e. the common ‘build’ for armies based on what is perceived to be competitive) for standard armies generally contains a healthy potion of infantry: two ranks lined up with a shield wall supported by a second rank of spears. This essentially negates the extra Attack cavalry gain when charging; charging such a line can often result in up to in excess of four infantry dice from these two ranks facing off against each cavalry model’s two. Clearly, it is not ideal when you’re paying upwards of five points…

Cavalry can look very impressive on the tabletop but, without careful planning, they can be incredibly difficult to use successfully.
for bonuses that are so easily countered - the most brittle of glass hammers. So what can a cavalry general do in the face of such reckless hate?

My first piece of advice concerns your approach play. Despite the effectiveness of bows decreasing following the release of *The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game* rulebook, being shot before you arrive should still be a concern for any budding cavalry general. With horses being Defence 4, even Strength 2 bows kill them with a roll of a 5+. When most standard armies are going to have upwards of a third more troops than you do (they’ve not had to pay for all those horses), each horse or rider [Copy Ed: or warg, or camel...] killed has an exponential impact on the loss to your force. So, ask yourself some simple questions to help prevent losing the battle before it has even begun... Are you in range of enemy bows? Do you have bows of your own? What terrain provides enough cover to get you about the battlefield safely obscured? What part of the enemy line or formation are you making your target priority? Galloping through the open plains shouting “DEEAAATTHH” is more likely to recreate the “Charge of the Light Brigade” than Théoden’s glory beneath the walls of Minas Tirith.

The next and all important consideration is positioning your cavalry in such a way that it can make the greatest impact with its initial charge. You have paid precious points for extra movement and, when charging, an extra Attack and the ability to trap infantry with Knock to the Ground; the last thing you want to do in your eagerness to engage is to finish your movement within range of the infantry you’re gunning for. Should they then charge you (either on that turn, or the next if they win Priority) you will likely have wasted all those extra points on an ability that you’re not getting to use. Sounds straightforward? It is –

“Mastering how and when to position your cavalry for the charge is crucial”

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but there’s more: even moving within 12” of an infantry battle line can be a risky business if the enemy is yet to move on that turn. All it takes is for them to move within 6” of you and win Priority the next turn and again, that glorious charge becomes a pipe dream as your riders are dragged from their mounts into the mud. Mastering how and when to position your cavalry for the charge is crucial. You have to move into range ideally when you have lost Priority as your opponent has already shown his hand by this point and you can react accordingly. This takes practice and patience but is an important piece of the jigsaw if you’re to make your cavalry work.

You’re now in position and you have just won Priority for the next turn. Great! Surely, the chance for glory is yours and there is nothing your opponent can do about it. You’re guaranteed to get those charge bonuses you’ve been setting yourself up for. However, this is only a good situation if you match or outnumber your enemy in the area of your aggression. Should they outnumber you, you will find yourself counter-charged and swamped, placing the advantage back into the hands of ‘Mr Infantry Line’. Your opponent can now pick where they want to throw extra bodies (and thus extra dice) to wrestle away your advantages, leaving your cavalry contingent surrounded and overwhelmed.

In the situation where you are in range of your enemy and he is not in range of you, you want to lose Priority. That’s right, lose Priority! The reason for this is simple. When charging with cavalry in *The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game*, you need to be able to pick your fights; charging into enemies only when you have a clear advantage in order to maximise your potential to deal a blow to your opponent’s army early in the battle. To do this, you need to be able to gang up on their models and hit around the flanks of their battle line (in order to remove any spear supporting models), and generally guarantee that you are rolling more dice than your opponent in the Fight. If you win, you will be rolling double strikes against (now Prone) enemy models, giving you a pretty decent chance of taking

Putting your Heroes on a horse will significantly increase their combat ability; equipping Radagast with Sebastian and a horse will give him 6 chances To Wound when he charges and wins the Fight!
them out. Why is this essential in the first round of combats? The reason is because, typically, your opponent is going to outnumber you and the first charge is your chance to swing those odds back in your favour. A really good way of maximising this initial momentum is to get your ‘beefy’ hero (think Éomer, Knight of the Pelennor!) into combat with a single enemy, preferably helped by a friendly model or two (space permitting). By calling a Heroic Combat from this position, you are all but guaranteed to slingshot these deadly models into more Fights, helping you to deal out the maximum damage early on.

However, a successful first charge is no reason to become complacent. The Priority roll following on from the initial charge is a pivotal moment and, this time, you want to win Priority! Should you lose Priority, you must call a Heroic Move. Having Heroes with Might in range of your charging cavalry models is absolutely essential for this reason. Of course, you are now in a position to be counter-charged by any surplus enemy models (hopefully thinned by your initial charge!), but at least you have your charge bonuses and your models will be positioned how you want them. Unfortunately, your opponent is likely to recognise the danger at this point and will almost certainly call a Heroic Move of their own, placing you firmly into the hands of those cruel six-faced Gods. Surely everything is now down to luck in the form of a roll-off? On the contrary, this is where you earn your Master’s degree in cavalry tactics…

Recreating iconic scenes from *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* is what draws a lot of players towards cavalry. There really are few things as visually impressive on the tabletop as a cavalry charge!
The final, essential ingredient when it comes to playing with cavalry is to resist putting all of your eggs in one basket with your first charge. I’ve heard people argue that you want as many dice as possible to throw against your enemy right from the get go i.e. if you’re going to do the cavalry charge, charge big and hard and hope that the house falls down in one round of combat! But let’s face it, that’s unlikely to happen.

There are two definite outcomes in the turn directly after your initial charge: 1) you move first, get your charge bonuses and pick your combats, only to be counter-charged by any surplus enemy infantry soldiers, or 2) you move second, don’t get your charge bonuses and get swamped by the enemy. Either way, against most conventional armies, the result will be a counter-charge against your (likely outnumbered) cavalry models. So how do you get around this issue? In my experience, it’s essential to leave riders in reserve, out of range of an enemy charge but in position ready to smash into any infantry counter-charge to keep the momentum on your side.

Even with everything mentioned above, mastering cavalry will be a tough journey for many; we have not even begun to consider how to win the various ‘points match’ scenarios, nor how to approach the specifics of each varied army available to Middle-Earth generals. However, what the advice above should do is to help any prospective cavalry general with the basic challenges they will face and how to get around these. There are other devices that can be used to make playing as cavalry easier, such as using models with multiple Attacks (if possible) or throwing a banner in for a more unreliable, but similar effect. Making good use of mounted archery to dictate the pace of play on the battlefield and forcing your opponent to chase the game can also be a useful tactic, as once you have pulled his forces out of position, you can target isolated models thanks to your superior manoeuvrability.

However, ultimately, if you remember these five ‘rules’ then you should see a marked improvement in your cavalry play:

- Approach through cover
- Charge in initially when your opponent has won Priority
- Keep Heroes nearby and use Might for Heroic Moves
- Use Heroic Combats to maximise the damage inflicted by your initial charge
- Keep riders in reserve ready for prospective enemy counter-charges

I hope that this article gives more new players the courage to try out an all-cavalry army. As delicate as these forces are, there is nothing more fun or rewarding than taking an all-mounted army in The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game!

Lances can be invaluable when tackling heavily armoured foes
Jamie: Have you ever found yourself on the wrong end of a cavalry charge? Been bowled over as lances rip through your warriors? Well, I have and I’ve become used to it happening. As many of you may know my regular opponent is ‘Mr Rooohaaan!’ himself, James Clark, so I have had a lot of practice in playing against cavalry. The key to beating cavalry is quite simple... kill the horse. But first, let’s take a brief look at the strengths of cavalry models:

- Large charge range
- Extra Attack when charging
- Double strikes with Knock to the Ground Special Rule
- +1 when rolling To Wound with a lance

These are the key strengths of cavalry and the chances are that you will have to take at least one charge from your opponent before you can take them down. If your opponent knows what he’s doing [Copy Ed: just hope he hasn’t read James’ article!], he’ll charge you when he’s lost Priority so that you can’t counter-charge with your cavalry (if you have any) or with your infantry (to bring your weight of numbers to bear).

So, what tactics can every army employ to try to defeat cavalry before they reach you?

Shooting: Shooting is the most basic way of dealing with cavalry. Assuming that you have taken your allotted 33% bow limit, you can put pressure on your opponent by firing all of your ranged weapons at the enemy cavalry. After a round of shooting, your opponent will usually become wary and defensive with their cavalry, as they won’t want to risk losing their expensive troops to bow fire. The best part about shooting is that you have a chance of hitting the horse; horses tend to be Defence 4 which means that even Strength 2 bows will be killing them on the roll of a 5+. Once dismounted, a cavalry model becomes an incredibly expensive infantry model – at this point you don’t need to worry about it as much.

Terrain: Even before you try to shoot the enemy’s cavalry models, you should look to set yourself up, whenever possible, in a favourable position i.e. within difficult terrain (such as woods or rocky outcrops) or behind a defendable position such as a fence or hedge. The major benefit to being in difficult terrain is that cavalry can only move a quarter of their movement distance and do not gain their charge bonuses, giving you the upper hand. Similarly, being behind a defendable terrain feature means that your opponent has to take ‘In The Way’ rolls when rolling To Wound - this can seriously soften the impact of charging cavalry.

So the cavalry have made it and charged your line. What should you do next?

Spears, pikes and banners: If your army has access to them, take pikes or spears. It’s a fundamental part of army building and will help to even out the fight for you against charging cavalry. If you have a spear or pike wall awaiting them, you’ll be getting you those 2 Attacks, matching a charging cavalry model regardless of whether or not they have support. Finally, if you don’t have spears, pikes, or any multi-Attack infantry (I’m looking at you Rohan!), make sure that you have a banner handy to give you that all-important re-roll which ‘acts’ as a second attack. Failing that, Shield; you just need to survive that first charge, then you can take your revenge once the charge has been stalled.
If you win the Fight: Kill the mounts! You will usually kill horses on the roll of a 5+, whilst their riders will commonly require a 6. If you have the choice, strike the mount - that way you remove the chance of that model charging again - unless, of course, the rider also dies on a 5+, in which case strike him instead as you’ll get rid of the whole model that way.

Have a Hero ready to call a Heroic Move: As mentioned earlier, cavalry models receive their biggest bonuses when charging, so if you can rob them of this then they essentially become expensive infantry models. Typically, when a group of cavalry charge, it will be supported by a nearby Hero who is ready to call a Heroic Move in the following turn; the specific aim of this is to allow the cavalry to charge in again. You need a Hero of your own in range to counter this and bring the chances of a second successful charge down to a 50:50 roll-off.

If you win the roll-off: Life is a little bit better. You can pick and choose your fights and most of the cavalry models will be reduced to having their basic 1 Attack; make sure you have spear or pike support to give you more dice in each Fight.

If you lose the roll-off: It’s bad, but it’s not as bad as last turn. You’ll get the opportunity to counter-charge with your cavalry or your foot troops. You should be able to bring more models into combat (and therefore have more dice) than your opponent in the Fights, although if you lose them you will be knocked over so remember to Shield if you can.

Don’t forget, cavalry only gain their bonuses if they have charged and are exclusively fighting against infantry models. So, if you have a few cavalry models of your own, throw them in where they are needed the most to cancel out the charge bonuses of enemy cavalry models.

So far, we have looked at ways that any force can try to take down cavalry, now we’ll look at some more specific ways of ruining your opponent’s day. These will require you to invest some of your points into them but are a more guaranteed way of dealing with cavalry…

Magic: “Oh, ho, ho. It’s magic, you know. Never believe it’s not so!” [Copy Ed: in future, let’s keep it to The Lord of the Rings music quotes only…] Seriously though, offensive magic can be devastating against...
cavalry. Spells like *Sorcerous Blast*, *Nature’s Wrath*, *Tremor*, and *Panic Steed* all have the ability to give a cavalry general nightmares. Why? All of these spells knock cavalry over! When knocked over, horses will automatically run away; wargs are slightly more durable but will only stick around if they pass a Courage Test. *Nature’s Wrath* is my personal favourite as you can hit multiple cavalry models with a single cast, whilst not requiring your opponent’s models to be in a nice straight line as you do with *Tremor* or *Sorcerous Blast*. Just make sure that there are no models within the spell’s ‘bubble’ that are able to resist it and you’ll soon see the tears rolling down James’...ahem…your opponent’s face.

**Monsters:** “He did the mash. He did the monster mash.” [Copy Ed: I’ve already warned you about music quotes…] Monsters can Hurl enemy models when they win a Fight, so throw these unlucky foes through enemy cavalry models (it’s like ten-pin bowling!) in order to make them all fall over! Unlike Magical Powers, this cannot even be resisted by your opponent. Such fun.

**Take a Shade:** [Copy Ed: Oh come on now, at least be consistent! No reference to “a whiter SHADE of pale?!”] Take a Shade, the -1 modifier applied to your opponent’s dice rolls to win Fights will mean that you beat most things in combat on the roll of a 6, even if you have the lower Fight value. But do you really want to be that guy? It doesn’t take skill to use a Shade, so where’s the challenge?

The list of ideas that I have explored in this article is not an exhaustive one; these are just some of the methods that you can use to help in battles against cavalry. To summarise:

- Set-up in favourable terrain
- Use your ranged firepower to shoot enemy mounts
- Have a Hero ready to counter potential cavalry charges with Heroic Moves
- If you win Fights against cavalry, elect to strike the mount

Depending on your force, you’ll find that these different methods will yield varying degrees of success, but if you stick to the fundamentals that I have explained above, then you won’t go far wrong.

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**SBG’s Best Anti-Cavalry #1 Thranduil**

He’s not as powerful as a Fell Beast but he costs a lot less. He can make all nearby troops cause Terror (to prevent charges), auto-cast a *Nature’s Wrath* that’s hard to resist, and upgrade Wood Elves to a 2+ Shoot value. All of this makes him the perfect anti-cavalry weapon.
**Out of the Frying Pan**

Damian O’Byrne recreates the flight of Thorin’s Company into the trees as shown in the epic climax of *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* in this brand new scenario.

After escaping Goblin Town, Bilbo has been reunited with the dwarves but there is no time for a rest. Azog has caught up with the Company and races down the slopes of the Misty Mountains, determined to tear the dwarves to pieces.

### Layout

This battle takes place on a 4’x4’ board. The gaming area represents the forested slopes of the Misty Mountains, so the board should be covered with trees and rocky outcrops. In addition, place six evenly spaced, clearly identifiable trees 6” away from the South board edge. These are the six Objective Trees that the dwarves are trying to reach.

### Starting Positions

The Good player places his models no more than 12” away from the North table edge.

The Evil force is not deployed at the start of the game. Instead, move all of the Evil models onto the board from the North table edge as Reinforcements at the end of the Evil Movement phase in Turn 1.

The Good side has Priority in the first turn.

Neither side can be Broken in this scenario.

### Participants

**Good Models:**
- Thorin Oakenshield (with Orcrist and the Oakenshield), Dwalin, Balin, Ori, Dori, Nori, Óin, Glóin, Balin, Dwalin, Bifur, Bofur, Bombur, Bilbo Baggins (with Sting and The One Ring), Gandalf the Grey

**Evil models:**
- Azog on the White Warg, Fimbul on Fell Warg, 12 Hunter Orcs on Fell Wargs, 6 Fell Wargs
Objectives

The Good Player wins if he is able to get 8 or more of his models, including Thorin and Bilbo, into any of the Objective Trees by the end of Turn 15. The Evil player wins if he prevents this.

Special rules

RUN! The dwarves are already running at full pelt and nothing they can do will make them any quicker. No Good model may call a Heroic March for the duration of this scenario.

Into the Trees! If a Good model moves into base contact with an Objective Tree he may immediately attempt to climb it. Roll a D6, on a roll of 2-6 the model has successfully climbed to safety - remove the model from play. On a roll of a 1 the model slips, takes a single S3 hit and is placed Prone at the bottom of the tree. Might cannot be used to modify the climb roll and Bombur must re-roll a successful climb roll as normal. A Good model who falls from a tree may stand up and attempt to climb the tree again in the next turn, assuming he’s still alive…

Each of the Objective Trees can hold a maximum of 3 Good models.

The Strength of the Pack Azog has a huge pack of wargs swarming down the slopes of the mountains and casualties mean little to him. Every turn, at the end of the Evil player’s Movement phase, the Evil player can move one Fell Warg and one Hunter Orc on Fell Warg who have been previously killed in the battle onto the battlefield from the North table edge as Reinforcements. Fimbul, Azog, and the White Warg may not re-enter play in this manner, once they’re dead, they’re dead!
So now you’ve read the new Out of the Frying Pan scenario, it’s time to see it in action; can James Clark and Kieran Street’s company of dwarves escape to the safety of the trees or will Tom Harrison’s ruthless Hunter Orcs ride them down? There’s only only one way to find out!

James & Kieran: Our journey from the cold, bleak North of England to the warmer, sun-struck climates of the South reached its conclusion with our arrival at Damian’s Twickenham flat [Ed: I miss that flat - sniff]. We were welcomed with an invigorating brew a Northman would be proud of and details of the brand new scenario written for this fantastic new magazine.

We couldn’t contain our excitement; surely one of the delights of The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game is getting to re-enact the scenes we love the most! But who would we all be playing as? Tom immediately issued the challenge “I want to play as Azog.” Excellent! “So I can beat you.” The gauntlet was thrown down, so Kieran and I scuttled into the next room to discuss our tactics and write down our pre-game thoughts…

Our mission is simple: get eight members of Thorin’s Company into the trees before they can be run down by their Fell Warg-mounted enemies. Our first concern was whether we would have enough of a head start. Of course, being able to deploy up to 12” from the Northern board edge before the arrival of Azog and his followers is clearly going to be important in our bid for freedom.

Obviously, Bilbo and Thorin must escape (easy enough to remember), so they will lead our vanguard. At least six more members of the Company also need to make it to the trees with them. Ruthlessly, we scoured The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game rulebook to select the most combat-handly dwarves – these dwarves will be forced to make a valiant rearguard that is (hopefully) capable of holding up our orcish adversaries. We selected Dwalin and Glóin without a thought (they are combat beasts!), but the two additional (sacrificial) dwarves proved to be much harder to choose. In the end, we opted for Nori thanks to his Weapon Master Special Rule (making him Burly) and for Bifur, who gains a free Heroic Action when Battle Damaged (i.e. reduced to a single Wound).

Our plan is very much to do with the order of battle. Our combat-focused rearguard will try to hold up our foes’ advance, with Gandalf aiding their cause by casting Sorcerous Blast in an attempt to rob the chasing pack of their movement advantages (by blasting them from the saddle!). Meanwhile, Bilbo and Thorin will be ‘pegging’ it [Copy Ed: running very fast… for those who don’t
understand James’ dialect], with Bilbo putting on The One Ring as and when it is necessary. They will be accompanied by Balin, as his ability to use Will points to potentially steal Priority may prove vital when trying to get away or prevent the enemy cavalry from charging. Balin will be partnered with Bombur, who we are hoping can restore some of Balin’s valuable Will so we can do this every turn! Everyone else will make up the middle ground but, ultimately, most of the dwarves will need to make it to the trees unharmed. Let the chase begin!

Tom: I’m really looking forward to recreating the memorable climax to The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey. I’m hoping that this great scene from the film will look as visually stunning on the tabletop as it did on the big screen.

So, onto my pre-battle thoughts: first and foremost, I’m looking forward to killing some dwarves! I know it’s easier to kill the weaker members of the Company, but it would be fitting if Azog the Defiler could take on his bitter enemy Thorin Oakenshield (and bring him down, obviously!). When charging on the White Warg, Azog is possibly the best Hero-killer in the game. However, Gandalf really scares me as he’ll be able to nullify Azog pretty easily with his magical powers. My best bet is to stay far enough away from him in order to avoid those pesky Immobilise spells or (worse) a Sorcerous Blast that could dismount my leader. Easier said than done...

Killing eight dwarves is going to be really tough as I only have two Heroes at my disposal; I’m expecting the relative lack of Might to hurt me as the game goes on. Fimbul the Hunter will attempt to kill off the easier targets (Óin, Ori etc.) whilst Azog charges around, looking to deal out as much damage as possible with the help of Heroic Combats. Reinforcements will be a help, however they will become less effective as the game goes on since they will always arrive from the Northern board edge. I will try my best to isolate some of the dwarves and trap them in order to slow their progress towards the trees. Getting the charge with the Hunter Orcs on Fell Wargs will be really important as it should be much easier to kill the dwarves when they are rolling around on the floor - this will have the added bonus of slowing them down significantly (always keep the scenario objectives in mind!). Not only will this help in terms of how many reinforcements I can get into the dwarves, but it should also help me to whittle down their (frankly ridiculous) stores of Might. The major issue with this tactic is that I will likely have to expend Might on Heroic Moves, which I also need to save for when fighting the tougher dwarves (Thorin, Dwalin, and Glóin). Getting to Bilbo Baggins will likely be tricky given that he can wear The One Ring, but I will try my best to take down the plucky young hobbit.
**Good Tactics**

James and Kieran have a big fight on their hands in this scenario. It may well seem like they have a huge Might and Fight value advantage but the Hunter Orcs on Fell Wargs will almost always be charging and their Knock to the Ground Special Rule can easily kill a dwarf in one Fight. Obviously, the most important thing is to protect Bilbo and Thorin, so they should probably be placed at the front of the force with several dwarves between them and the pursuing orcs to discourage Heroic Combats. The biggest threat to the Good force is Azog on his White Warg, if he gets the charge then he can easily best and kill any Good Heroes in a single round of combat. Gandalf’s magic is a good way to deal with him; *Immobilise* will frustrate Tom whilst the more powerful *Sorcerous Blast* will automatically dismount Azog and rob him of his main advantages (speed and cavalry bonuses). James and Kieran’s main decision is whether to keep their best fighters (Dwalin, Glóin, Nori) at the front to save them for the desperate fighting around the trees or whether to deploy them at the back where their combat prowess will form a formidable rearguard. Either way, make no mistake about it, they will need to sacrifice some dwarves...

**Evil Tactics**

The most important thing for Tom to ensure is that his models maintain their charge bonuses. The dwarves are likely to be packed together and will therefore find it hard to move a full 5” without getting in each other’s way. By placing his Hunter Orcs on Fell Wargs 4” behind the rearmost dwarves, Tom will give James and Kieran a difficult choice; do they push forward and get charged further up the board, or do they negate Tom’s charge bonuses by running backwards and in doing so split the Company and move away from the objective? There is a turn limit on this game; if Tom loses Priority, then rather than charging the dwarves, he shouldn’t be afraid to move his models slightly in front of them as this both blocks their movement in the following turn and prevents any potential Heroic Combats. Sacrificing a Hunter Orc to block the Company’s movement is a perfectly viable decision. Finally, Tom needs to make good use of Azog, a born Hero killer who can ride down most of the dwarves in a single round of combat (realistically anyone but Thorin if he has charged on the White Warg). With this in mind, Tom needs to be ready to call a Heroic Combat in order to catapult the Pale Orc into another Fight!

The Evil Force - Casualties won’t matter to Tom as he gets reinforcements throughout the game; maximising Azog’s devastating potential will be key to ensuring that the dwarves don’t escape!
Battle Report - Out of the Frying Pan

Turn 1

The Good side automatically wins Priority in the first turn of this scenario. Predictably, the Company started the game by running as fast as they could towards the safety of the trees on the Southern board edge. Gandalf successfully cast **Terrifying Aura** after declaring that he would be using the Channelled version of the spell. He used a point of Will from his store alongside the free point he gains every turn from his **Staff of Power** to ‘guarantee’ that the spell succeeded. This was a good start for the Good side as the cowardly Hunter Orcs would now need to pass Courage Tests on 3D6 (discarding their best roll) in order to charge the old wizard! In the Evil Movement phase, Azog and his Hunter Orcs charged onto the table and formed into a long, thin line behind the dwarves, ready to rush forward on both flanks and surround the Company.

A note on proxies

The eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed that we are using Warg Riders and Wild Wargs to represent the mounted Hunter Orcs on Fell Wargs and Fell Wargs respectively. Whilst we try to stay proxy-free as much as possible we simply did not have the Hunter Orc models available for this game and so used these as our stand-ins. There’s nothing wrong with doing this in friendly games with your opponent’s consent, it didn’t remotely spoil our enjoyment of the game and we hope it doesn’t spoil yours either!

Turn 2

Both sides rolled a 3 for Priority so it switched to the Evil side. In an attempt to stop this, Balin used a point of Will to re-roll the Priority dice and, much to Tom’s amusement, rolled a 1! The Good players called a Heroic Move with Kili and Tom, who clearly had a plan for this turn, immediately used Fimbul to call a Heroic Move of his own. With the Fell Warg riders and (more importantly) Azog within charge range, this was already looking like a crucial roll-off and Tom was relieved to see it go his way! Fimbul used his Heroic Move to move up behind Azog, thus ensuring that his master could get to where he needed to be. Azog then charged into both Glóin and Gandalf, laughing off the Grey Pilgrim’s **Terrifying Aura** with a roll of 6, 3, 3! The Good players were looking very worried and seemed to be regretting leaving Gandalf so exposed on the edge of the Company. Thorin was then charged by a Hunter Orc on Fell Warg, blocking his route to Azog. Kili was

The Evil force surges onto the board as Thorin and his dwarves attempt to make good their escape

Azog launches his attack on Gandalf and Glóin!
also charged by a Hunter Orc riding a Fell Warg, which cancelled his Heroic Move and prevented the rest of the Company from charging into Azog and surrounding him. At the rear, Bifur, Nori, and Dwalin were all charged by Fell Wargs, effectively pinning the Company in place. Óin then charged to Nori’s aid, whilst Balin and Bombur ran forward towards the safety of the trees. The Company were beset from all sides, but the Good players had hatched a desperate plan…. Bilbo put on The One Ring and he, along with Bofur, Fili, and Dori, charged into Kili’s combat with the Fell Warg rider. Suddenly the Good side’s plan become clear - they would call a Heroic Combat in both Bilbo and Thorin’s Fights. Thorin should easily be able to kill the single Hunter Orc on Fell Warg facing him and this would free the way for Kili, Fili, Bofur, Dori, and himself to slingshot into Azog following the second Heroic Combat. Most importantly, Bilbo would also enter the Fight, meaning that Azog’s Fight value would be halved thanks to The One Ring’s power - so even if the Pale Orc called a Heroic Strike against Azog, Glóin, and Gandalf only managed to cause a single wound on Azog between them.

Next, the Good players moved to Thorin’s Heroic Combat - even without Glóin’s Attacks, the combination of Thorin, Dori, Fili, Kili, Bofur, and Bilbo would surely be more than enough to kill Azog with his halved Fight value. However, disaster struck when Thorin rolled a 3 highest with his 3 Attacks and the charging Hunter Orc on Fell Warg rolled...
a 5! James and Kieran, not wanting their leader to be knocked down (where he would face four dice needing 6s To Wound, re-rolling 1s for Feinting) and desperate to make their plan to take down Azog work, decided to use Thorin’s last two Might points to win the combat. The Good side’s miserable luck continued as Thorin only managed to kill the Hunter Orc and to Tom’s delight the Fell Warg it was riding passed its Courage Test! As Thorin hadn’t killed all of the enemies in his fight, he was unable to move on as part of his Heroic Combat - he had used all three of his Might points to achieve absolutely nothing! Even worse, the path to Azog was still blocked by the Fell Warg, so the ‘Bilbo and dwarf assassination team’ could not reach Azog following their Heroic Combat regardless of the outcome!

Naturally, Dori, Fili, Bilbo, Bofur and Kili easily dispatched the Hunter Orc and his Fell Warg but, with their plan in tatters, the Good side were forced to re-evaluate their tactics… Dori charged into the Fell Warg that Thorin had failed to take down, whilst the other three dwarves ran towards the trees (forming a protective cage around Bilbo as they went). Dori promptly showed Thorin how it should be done by slaughtering the courageous Fell Warg. Nearby, Nori and Óin easily killed the Hunter Orc they were facing, also killing its mount for good measure. Bifur killed the Hunter Orc he was fighting but its Fell Warg was courageous enough to stay in the Fight. To add insult to injury, Dwalin rolled a 5 highest against the Fell Warg he was fighting who then, of course, rolled a 6! Not wanting to waste more Might this turn (they had already used 6!), the Good side chose to take the hit and thankfully no wounds were scored against the doughy dwarf. You didn’t need to hear Tom’s cackling echoing around the room to see that this had been a fairly disastrous turn for the forces of Good…

### Turn 3

Tom only rolled a 2 for Priority but his good luck continued when the Good players rolled a 1! Balin expended another Will point to re-roll the Priority dice and this time the Good players’ luck held with a roll of a 4. Fimbul called the inevitable Heroic Move, which Nori swiftly countered with one of his own. As it was the Good side’s Priority, James stepped up to make the deciding roll-off and promptly rolled a 2 - Fimbul would move first! It really did seem as if all the important rolls were going the way of Tom’s Evil force at the moment. Fimbul immediately charged Óin, before a Fell Warg charged both Nori and Dwalin to cancel the Good players’ Heroic Move. Another Fell Warg charged Bifur and a third charged into Dori. Azog charged both Glóin and Gandalf once again but this time failed his Courage Test (taken as a result of Gandalf’s Terrifying Aura spell) and had to use a point of Will to pass.

With the end of the Evil Heroic Move, we then turned to the Good Move phase. Things were looking worrying for James and Kieran as there was now no way to rescue Glóin and Gandalf (who couldn’t even cast a spell this turn!). Bilbo, Thorin, Balin, Kili, Bofur, and Bombur all set their sights on the objectives and raced towards the trees. Fili charged to Dori’s aid in his combat against a Fell Warg, whilst Ori moved up to ‘protect’ Dori from the charge of a Hunter Orc on Fell Warg by blocking its path. The young dwarf immediately found himself under attack from two charging Hunter Orcs on Fell Wargs who hadn’t moved as part of Fimbul’s Heroic Move! The remaining seven enemy models on the East side of the board curled round towards the six members of the Company making a break for the trees in an attempt to block their escape route.
In the Fight phase, the Heroic Actions came thick and fast again: Glóin and Azog both called a Heroic Strike in their crucial Duel. Fili called a Heroic Combat, clearly hoping that he and Dori could dispatch the Fell Warg they were facing in order to move again and rescue poor Ori. Similarly, Dwalin called a Heroic Combat to save Óin from the charging Fimbul who, sensing the Dwalin-shaped danger, called a Heroic Strike. The Good players started with Fili and Dori fighting their Fell Warg; from their five combined Attacks they only managed to roll a 5 highest and (to absolutely nobody’s surprise) Tom rolled a 6 with his single dice to win the Duel! Gnashing their teeth in frustration, the Good players had no choice but to burn Dori’s last Might point to ensure that their Heroic Combat was successful. Once they’d killed the Fell Warg, Dori charged one of the Fell Warg riders attacking Ori, whilst Fili sprinted forwards to join the dwarves heading for the trees. Dwalin and Nori slaughtered the Fell Warg they were fighting in the second Heroic Combat. Dwalin, aware of Fimbul’s impending Heroic Strike, then ran into the Fell Warg fighting Ori, whilst Nori spotted a dwarf-shaped gap in the melee and hurtled after Fili.

As it was the Good side’s Priority, James and Kieran split the combats such that Dwalin was up against one Fell Warg rider, leaving brothers Ori and Dori to face the other. The Good side only managed to roll a 5 highest with Dwalin’s 3 Attacks and the charging Hunter Orc on Fell Warg rolled a double 6! Tom’s Fell Wargs were certainly firing on all cylinders today! Knowing that Dwalin would be knocked Prone (where he would face four Attacks needing only 5s To Wound, re-rolling 1s for Feinting), the Good players decided to use his last point of Might to win the Fight. Fortunately, Dwalin at least managed to kill both rider and mount this time. Nearby, Ori and Dori could only manage a 3 highest with their four Attacks but James and Kieran finally got some luck when Tom also fluffed his Duel roll, handing victory to the dwarves. However, the general dismal luck that had been hanging over the forces of Good quickly returned as they then failed to cause any wounds despite rolling four dice! At the rear of the party, Bifur lost his Fight to the Fell Warg but wasn’t wounded, whilst Fimbul easily beat Óin, knocking him to the ground and killing him!

We then reached what was clearly the main event of the turn, Azog vs. Gandalf and Glóin! Glóin and Azog both reached Fight 10 with their Heroic Strikes, so the result of this Fight would almost certainly come down to a 50:50 roll-off! The Good players were relieved to see a 6 with their Duel rolls, especially when Azog could only manage a 5 highest. Without hesitating, Tom used a point of Might to tie the Fight, so we moved to a crucial roll-off that would likely have a huge impact on the course of the game. There was a strange sense of inevitability as the dice bounced across the table; Tom’s woop of joy and the ashen faces of James and Kieran were enough to know what had happened - Evil had won and Gandalf and Glóin were both knocked Prone!

When charging on the White Warg, Azog has four Attacks (doubled to eight chances of wounding when he knocks down his enemies) and always wounds Heroes on a 3+! Throwing the first six dice at Gandalf, Azog managed to cause five wounds! All was not lost - Gandalf still had 3 Wounds and 3 Fate, along with 2 Might to boost his Fate rolls. Also, with Narya allowing him to re-roll failed Fate rolls, Gandalf essentially had six chances of preventing his first three Wounds! We all watched on in wonder as Kieran rolled 2, 1, 2, 4, 1, 1! With some spectacularly bad rolling, Gandalf had only prevented one wound, even with his re-rolls and because he had rolled 1s with two of those re-rolled dice he couldn’t even boost them with Might. With horror, the Good players realised that Gandalf, their best weapon against Azog, had died on Turn 3!
To add insult to injury, Tom still had 2 chances to Wound Glóin and promptly wounded with both rolls - thankfully James passed Glóin’s Fate roll so that the dwarf survived with just a single wound remaining. However, this was little comfort to the Good players who had somehow managed to have an even more horrendous turn than the previous one - Gandalf and Óin dead by Turn 3 - that certainly wasn’t part of the plan!

**Turn 4**

Turn 4 saw the forces of Evil steal back Priority. Kili was well placed to call a Heroic Move, allowing eleven of the remaining thirteen Good models to race towards the trees. Unfortunately, Bifur and Glóin were out of range of Kili’s With Me! and were now left far behind the other dwarves and looking dangerously exposed with enemies all around them. After Kili’s Heroic Move, Tom was free to move his models where he pleased without fear of a counter-attack. Fimbul and two Fell Wargs charged into Bifur, whilst Glóin, who was still knocked Prone, was charged by a Hunter Orc on Fell Warg. Then, with an evil smile, Tom charged Azog into Ori. Meanwhile, all seven of Azog’s minions on the East side of the board closed the gap on the dwarves making a break for the trees - they would be upon them next turn!

Azog, confident of riding down Ori with ease, called a Heroic Combat, prompting plucky young Ori to call a Heroic Strike in response. This was definitely a long-shot, but if Ori could just roll a 5 or more he would have a higher Fight value than Azog - if he could then roll a 6 he would win the Fight and, who knows, maybe even cause a Wound on the Pale Orc! Bifur also called a Heroic Strike; his only chance was to ensure that he had a higher Fight value than Fimbul and win the Fight. We all held our breath and watched as the Good players rolled for Ori’s Heroic Strike, only for the spirited dwarf to roll a 3. James and Kieran groaned as Ori was ground into the dirt by the relentless Azog, who then charged straight into both Dwalin and Nori. As the Fight phase had already begun, Nori could not call a Heroic Strike, so Azog was guaranteed to have the higher Fight value and given that he still had 1 Might point remaining, the Good side would need Tom to roll no higher than a 4 with Azog’s four Duel rolls for the dwarves to stand any chance of surviving!

Bifur’s Heroic Strike successfully gave him a higher Fight value than Fimbul and he managed to win the Fight, but to the frustration of the Good players he couldn’t land a telling blow. Glóin beat the Hunter Orc on Fell Warg he was facing and stood back up. Azog’s fine form continued as he easily won his Fight, knocking both Nori and Dwalin Prone, and added to his murderous rampage by killing Dwalin outright and by causing one wound on Nori! Things were going from bad to worse for the Good players. However, there were still eleven Good models remaining, including Bilbo and Thorin (who were looking relatively safe despite the carnage). Crucially, they were starting to get close to the trees with plenty of turns remaining – the game was by no means over yet!

**Turn 5**

The Good side won Priority (without Balin’s aid) and faced no Heroic Moves to challenge them. Nori bravely charged Azog, it was probably going to be a noble sacrifice but it would prevent the enemy leader from charging, therefore limiting his
combat ability. Fili, Kili, and Bofur each charged a Fell Warg and nearby Dori charged a Hunter Orc on Fell Warg. Balin was charged by both a Fell Warg rider and a Fell Warg, whilst another mounted Hunter Orc charged into Kili's Fight. Far back down the table, Glóin was clearly enraged about being wounded by Azog and charged into a Fell Warg rider, killing its mount with a well-aimed throwing axe before being surrounded by two more Fell Wargs. Fimbul charged Bifur once again and finally a Fell Warg charged into Nori to give Azog some support [Ed: As if he needed it…].

At the start of the Fight phase, Nori used his last Might point to call a Heroic Strike; this certainly gave Tom pause for thought - if Nori rolled a 3+ he would have a higher Fight value than Azog and if he could then win the Fight he would be wounding the Pale Orc on a 4+. Two rolls of 4+ would kill Azog and swing the game again - stranger things have happened, several of them in this battle! Glóin, who was now trapped by two Fell Wargs and a dismounted Hunter Orc, gave the Good players a scare when he rolled a 4 highest using his 3 Attacks; fortunately for them, Tom also fluffed his four dice rolls, so Glóin won the Fight and slew both Fell Wargs. Despite being far away from the bulk of the Company, Glóin was still proving useful to the Good players – having a powerful and angry dwarf attacking the rear of the enemy lines is never a bad thing!

Further towards the trees, Fili lost his Fight to a Fell Warg but wasn’t injured. Nearby, his brother Kili had to use his last remaining Might point to win his Fight (and, perhaps more importantly, avoid being knocked Prone), but was unable to kill the Hunter Orc charging into him. Bofur managed to kill the Hunter Orc he was fighting but once again a now riderless Fell Warg passed its Courage Test (generating more groans from the Good players - Tom was yet to fail a single Courage Test [Ed: Little victories…]). The charging Hunter Orc on Fell Warg and Fell Warg rolled a 6 against Balin, only for the experienced dwarf to pop up with a 6 of his own with his single Attack! Unfortunately for the Good side, he was unable to kill either of his adversaries. Fimbul beat Bifur in combat but was only able to inflict two wounds. The Good players saved one of these with Bifur’s only Fate point, therefore activating his Special Rule - Bifur would now be able to perform a free Heroic Action every turn! Once again we came to Azog’s Fight last, but James and Kieran were rather disappointed when Nori rolled miserably for his Heroic Strike – the dwarf couldn’t even match Azog’s base Fight value. Unsurprisingly, the hapless Nori was cut down mercilessly by the Pale Orc.
Turn 6

The Evil side wrested back Priority for this turn with an unassailable roll of a 6, so Balin was forced to call a Heroic Move (that was uncontested). For the third turn in a row, Bombur tried to give Balin a Will point back and failed miserably. Clearly the dwarves’ spirits were in no mood for raising! Kili, sensing that things were getting desperate, charged headlong into a mounted Hunter Orc and a Fell Warg, whilst his brother Fili charged another Fell Warg. Thorin charged a Fell Warg rider, hoping to make up for his earlier ineptitude. In response, a Fell Warg crashed into Bofur and Dori, whilst a mounted Hunter Orc charged into Fili’s Fight. Glóin was charged by two enemies but still seemed marginally better off than Bifur and poor Kili who were charged by Fimbul and Azog respectively.

In a flurry of Heroic activity, Bofur and Bombur both called a Heroic Combat and the now wounded Bifur used his free point of Might to call a Heroic Strike. In return, Azog used his last point of Might to call a Heroic Combat. Somewhat against the run of play, the Good side won the roll-off to see which Heroic Combat would be resolved first. Bofur and Dori made short work of their Fell Warg opposition and rushed to Kili’s aid, splitting off one of the enemy models that was attacking their friend in order to reduce the number of supporting minions at Azog’s side in that combat. The plan was ultimately futile...

In the Heroic Combat between Azog and Kili, Kili was dead before Azog had even had a chance to strike thanks to the supporting Hunter Orc on Fell Warg who had been agonisingly out of Dori’s reach. Azog and his minion then catapulted into Bofur.

In Bombur’s Heroic Combat, James and Kieran only rolled a 5 against the Fell Warg. Damian immediately voiced the concern of the Good players - “uh-oh, Tom always rolls 6s for his Fell Wargs” - at which point Tom nonchalantly rolled (you guessed it) a 6. The Good players were forced to use Bombur’s last Might point to tie the Fight. Luckily for them, Bombur won the roll-off, killed the Fell Warg and charged into the Fell Warg that was attacking Fili to split up that combat; this meant that Bombur was now 5” closer to the trees – heroic stuff indeed! Somewhat unsurprisingly, Tom’s single Fell Warg rolled (another) 6 against Thorin and whilst Thorin also managed a 6 in return, he somehow failed to kill his (now-bitter!) enemy even with his 3 Attacks despite only needing 4+ To Wound. It really had not been Thorin’s day. Bombur continued his hot streak by killing his second Fell Warg of the turn (he really was showing Thorin how it was done!). Dori also excelled, killing both the Hunter Orc and the Fell Warg he was facing. Fili had some success as he killed the Hunter Orc that he was facing; however Tom, yet again, passed the Courage Test for its mount. Further from the trees, Glóin lost his fight against a Fell Warg and a Hunter Orc on Fell Warg and, having been weakened by Azog earlier in the game, was unexpectedly cut down and killed.

Things then went from bad to worse for James and Kieran. Despite Bifur’s ‘free’ Heroic Strike taking his Fight value above Fimbul’s, he still lost the Fight and, like nearby Glóin, was knocked to the floor and killed. In the final combat of the turn, Azog and his supporting Hunter Orc on Fell Warg slaughtered the unfortunate Bofur (inflicting a massive six wounds). The Good players shook their heads despondently; they had lost four dwarves during this turn alone. Although Thorin and Bilbo were still alive and thus far unscathed, only four other dwarves remained. The Good side could therefore no longer achieve their objective - the Quest for Erebor had failed; Azog and his minions were victorious!

In the dying stages of the game Azog mercilessly cuts down Bofur!
Aftermath

**Tom:** Well, it’s safe to say that Azog is an absolute beast! He had a hand in the death of seven of the Company [*Ed: IN SIX TURNS!!!*] - including Gandalf and Dwalin. After deployment, Kieran and James had left Gandalf exposed towards the end of their defensive line, so I decided that it was worth trying to kill him off straight away (in an attempt to stop his magic early on). With the help of a couple of roll-offs, this move swung things in my favour massively, as Azog was able to run amok for the rest of the game. The scenario was great fun and looked fantastic, although it’s a shame really that the dwarves didn’t quite reach the trees in the end. I think that part of this was due to some very poor rolling on the dwarves’ part early on (especially Thorin!).

Sadly, I couldn’t get near Bilbo or Thorin, although it didn’t matter in the end. A special mention must go to the Fell Wargs who were incredible throughout; they passed every single Courage Test they had to make (which was a huge help as it ensured that my army stayed right on top of the dwarves despite the loss of the Hunter Orcs riding them). They also had a surprising habit of popping up with a 6 in combat. Well done to both James and Keiran for staying upbeat in the face of some appalling luck! All I can say is that it’s a good job this isn’t how things played out in the film…

**James & Kieran:** Wow. That certainly was “into the fire” - what a slaughter! The chase ended as Bifur and Bofur were ridden down by Fimbul and Azog respectively. With only six models remaining, we could no longer fulfil our objective, so, regretfully, we had to reach across the table and give Tom an epic handshake. Well played Mr. Harrison and in particular, Azog! After seeing him in this scenario, it’s hard to make the argument that he isn’t the best Hero killer in the game [*Ed: Tom or Azog?!*].

“**All I can say is that it’s a good job this isn’t how things played out in the film…**”

**Tom**

Losing Gandalf before he could really use his magical abilities was not part of the plan and with Terrifying Aura being useless against a strong-rolling Tom, we were in trouble early on. The worst part is that Gandalf originally started in a relatively safe position surrounded by the rest of the Company. It then occurred to Kieran that our wizard could move faster than the dwarves, so he instead placed Gandalf on the flank so that he could move without the dwarves slowing him down - what a mistake that turned out to be!
We were then unlucky to lose two roll-offs for Heroic Moves early in the game. Had either of these gone our way we could have moved Gandalf away from Azog and used either his *Immobilise* spell (to delay the Pale Orc), or his powerful *Sorcerous Blast* to knock several Hunter Orcs from the saddle in order to slow them down significantly.

“It’s hard to make the argument that Azog isn’t the best Hero killer in the game”

James & Kieran

Despite losing the roll-offs, we still had an unexpected plan that got Tom sweating: Bilbo would put on The One Ring and then Heroic Combat him (and others) into the Azog vs. Gandalf/Glóin fight in order to halve Azog’s Fight value and therefore swing that combat massively in our favour. All Thorin needed to do(!) was kill the Fell Warg rider he was facing and we’d have had Azog in a position where we could easily have taken him down in that single round of combat. However, after burning his last two Might just to win that Fight, Thorin failed to cause the two wounds that were required and was duly punished when Tom’s Fell Warg passed its Courage Test - completely scuppering our golden opportunity to take down the enemy leader. After that, it was one disaster after the other; the standout moment being when Gandalf failed five of six Fate rolls (three of which were with the roll of a 1 meaning they couldn’t be passed using his remaining Might!); with that our best hope of keeping Azog at bay was lost.

After losing Gandalf so early on, it was always going to be an uphill struggle but we kept ploughing away and were successful in pushing the dwarves towards the trees. Our initial plan to leave a rearguard was sound and we were only a turn or two away from reaching the trees when the game ended. The problem we faced as the game went on was the sheer killing ability of Azog as he rode down Hero after Hero. We really needed Gandalf to delay him with magic. We can’t blame everything on luck though; Tom made excellent use of his models to keep the dwarves under constant pressure and made very good calls with his Heroic Actions.

Finally (and most importantly), this scenario was great fun to play, made even more so thanks to the lovely board and beautifully painted miniatures provided by Damian. We would recommend that you all give it a go. We’re looking forward to getting the chance for some revenge in the next instalment ‘Into the Fire’! Happy Strategy Battle Gaming!

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Outside Opinion

Damian: Well that was certainly interesting! Having play-tested this scenario several times, it has always ended on Turn 14 or 15 with some desperate fighting around the trees. Seeing the scenario transformed into an intense, violent bloodbath in the middle of the board was an unexpected journey indeed! Congratulations must go to Tom who played a fantastic game and demonstrated just how powerful Azog can be by singlehandedly killing six members of the Company in only four rounds of combat!

Whilst James and Kieran made a huge mistake early on by placing Gandalf on the edge of the Company, there’s no doubt that bad luck plagued the Good players throughout the game. In the heat of battle, it’s easy to think the dice have turned against you and blame bad luck, whilst in reality these things generally average out over the course of a game. However I think it’s fair to say that this was one of those games where this wasn’t the case! It’s only when you read back over the report that you see how many absolutely vital roll-offs and combats went completely Tom’s way: (1) winning the Heroic Move roll-off in Turns 2 and 3, (2) winning the Heroic Combat roll-off in Turn 2, (3) the Hunter Orc on Fell Warg drawing all three of Thorin’s Might in Turn 3 and then surviving to scupper his Heroic Combat, (4) winning the game-changing roll-off in the tied Fight between Azog and Glóin/Gandalf in Turn 3, (5) Kieran’s frankly appalling Fate rolls for Gandalf, (6) Nori and Ori both fluffing their Heroic Strike when they had an opportunity to beat Azog, (7) Tom not failing a single Courage Test for a Fell Warg that had lost its Hunter Orc rider, (8) the Company having to use at least four points of Might (often with 3 Attack Heroes!) just to beat Tom’s Fell Wargs who kept rolling 6s - I’m sure the list could go on! It was quite tough to watch and I began to feel quite sorry for the Good players who had clearly done something to anger the Dice Gods!

The most important of these misfortunes was clearly Thorin’s failed Heroic Combat in Turn 2 and it’s hard to explain quite how game-changing that was. Had Thorin done what was expected of him, Azog would have found himself trapped by Thorin, Dori, Fili, Bilbo and possibly Kili and Bofur. With Bilbo’s presence guaranteeing that Azog had a lower Fight value, the enemy leader would surely have been killed with ease. As it was, the chance was lost and Azog went on to dominate the game!

It was great to see some unexpected but very shrewd tactical decisions on both sides too. Whilst the primary objective is to save Bilbo, the Good players correctly realised that he could in fact be their best weapon against Azog in combat - guaranteeing them the win in a Duel in a way that Heroic Strike never could. This was a great plan by the Good players and it was a shame that it didn’t come off for them. It was great to imagine Bilbo bravely charging directly towards Azog just like at the climax of the film - very cinematic! On Tom’s part, his best decision was to call a Heroic Combat with Azog in Turn 2 when he was fighting Glóin and Gandalf. Bear in mind that Glóin had already called a Heroic Strike so a less experienced player would have called a Heroic Combat with Azog to counter this. However, Tom correctly realised that if he didn’t call a Heroic Combat then by the time they got to Azog’s Fight he would likely be facing Bilbo and the rest of the Heroic Combatting dwarves, so having a higher Fight value wouldn’t matter. It is rare that you see a player call a Heroic Combat when there is little chance of them winning the Fight, but Tom realised that Azog’s only chance of surviving was to lose the Fight first and thus save himself from being trapped by Glóin’s Attacks too. Making calls like this is truly the sign of a great player and is one of the things that gives the game such great tactical depth.

All in all the game was great fun and it was encouraging to see all three players immediately start to talk about playing it again and the things they would change tactically. I have no doubt that, were they to play the scenario again, James and Kieran would keep Gandalf much safer, making things much harder for Tom and Azog. Who knows, maybe one day they’ll get their chance for revenge!
Name: The Desolation of Stockport 2.0  
Date: Sat 27th - Sun 28th September 2014  
Location: The North-West Gaming Centre, Stockport, SK2 6PT  
Entrance fee: £30  
Details: 600 points, 1 army, 7 games

Name: The Best Event Ever Part II  
Date: Sat 11th October 2014  
Location: The Dorset Arms pub, East Grinstead, RH19 3DE  
Entrance fee: £10  
Details: 750 points, 1 army, 5 games

Name: The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies Pre-Film Tournament  
Date: Sat 1st - Sun 2nd November 2014  
Location: Slayer Gaming, Mansfield, NG19 9BG  
Entrance fee: £20  
Details: 600 points - details TBA

Name: The Scouring of Stirlingshire  
Date: Sat 22nd - Sun 23rd November 2014  
Location: Common Ground Games, Stirling, FK8 1JR  
Entrance fee: £20  
Details: 800 points, 2 armies, 6 games

Name: TBA (GBHL Season Finale)  
Date: Sat 6th - Sun 7th December 2014  
Location: The North-West Gaming Centre, Stockport, SK2 6PT  
Entrance fee: TBA  
Details: TBA

SBG’s Tom Harrison explains exactly what the Great British Hobbit League is all about and just why you should get involved in upcoming events in 2014 and beyond!

At the time of writing, The Great British Hobbit League is deep into an incredibly successful second year. This year, independent tournaments have experienced an increased average attendance (26 players), with many tournaments selling out their capacity. The 2014 Games Workshop Throne of Skulls event sold out so many times that the final capacity was double the initial allocation available (80+ players in all) – proof that the scene in the UK is truly blooming.

Whilst the Great British Hobbit League’s primary aim was (and still is) to promote the hobby by facilitating the coming together of like-minded wargamers, there is, of course, a competitive edge to the tournaments. Not everyone plays to win but with some fantastic prizes on offer there is definitely an incentive to aim for the top spot. It’s not all about winning though and prizes for the Best Painted Army and Most Sporting Opponent at each event help to keep other important aspects of the hobby in high regard.

It goes without saying that attending Great British Hobbit League events will prove to be great fun but, speaking from experience, the best thing about the Great British Hobbit League is that it provides the opportunity to forge new friendships with people you would otherwise never have been fortunate enough to meet.

If you have never attended a tournament, whether it be a Great British Hobbit League event in the UK or one that is closer to home (for our international readers), I would thoroughly recommend making the effort to attend. Once you’ve done it once, you’ll want to attend more and more I assure you!
Over the weekend of the 15-16th February 2014, 22 gamers descended on Slayer Gaming in Mansfield for the second tournament of the 2014 Great British Hobbit League season. Who would emerge triumphant? Damian O’Byrne tells all...

Slayer Gaming’s first ever The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game tournament took place over Valentine’s weekend - that’s right, many hobbyists were on thin ice trying to get weekend passes from abandoned wives and girlfriends - the things we do for our hobby! Awkward dates aside, it was great to get a new venue involved in the independent scene; more venues means more variety which can only be a good thing.

So, one chilly Saturday morning, 22 wargaming enthusiasts piled into Slayer Gaming’s custom-built gaming centre; old friends caught up and introductions were made. After a warm welcome from Tournament Organiser Tom Robinson, the action got underway. Day 1 consisted of three scenarios: To The Death, Domination, and Hold Ground. Battles were played across twelve gorgeous tables including a fantastic Goblin Town board and some sinister lava wastes taken straight from Mordor. After three hard fought games, Owen Wright (on home turf!) and Tom Harrison were leading the way with three victories each. Owen had brought along his ‘Battle of Five Armies’ list consisting of Alfrid with some Laketown Guard, Dwalin on a pony with some Warriors of Erebor, and a King’s Champion with some Khazâd Guard, just like in the book…Tom on the other hand had a pure Easterling force consisting of Amdûr, Lord of Blades leading four Kataphrakts and two Easterling Captains leading some standard Easterling infantry. I think it was fair to say that most people were somewhat surprised by how well Tom’s ‘fluffy’ list was performing at a tournament, Tom most of all!

As the formal gaming finished for the day, fifteen of the group headed out to a local curry house where war stories were swapped and the ‘GBHL Community FAQ’ (which was in use for the first time at this tournament) was discussed and debated. After stuffing ourselves with far too much curry, we headed to a local bar and...
spent the next three hours laughing and chatting about our favourite hobby over a sly pint or two. These evening socials are always a great part of any event and really help to solidify the camaraderie and friendships in what is a relatively small wargaming community.

Slayer Gaming’s near-endless supply of tea (delivered to your table!) soon put paid to any Sunday morning tiredness and the gaming got underway again. Day 2 saw the players battle through Lords Of Battle, Reconnaissance, and The High Ground; it wasn’t too long before the potential winners began to emerge. By the end of game five, Owen and Tom were still in contention but Jamie Giblin and Ed Ball had both moved up the rankings to put themselves into contention; going into the final round, any one of them could end up being crowned as champion...

After an intense hour and a half of battling, the last few dice rolled to a stop and everyone gathered for the awards ceremony. It was great to see a new player, Billy Garland, receive the Most Sporting Award in his first ever tournament. Damian O’Byrne won Best Painted Army for his Desolation of Smaug themed all-Hero army. After a late surge up the rankings, Charles Simms took Third place with his bow-heavy Harad force and Ed claimed Second place with his horde of Hobbits backed up by Malbeth. Ultimately it was Jamie who managed to fight off all opposition with his infamous “Tournament Winning Wood Elves” consisting of Legolas and Rumil leading two Warbands of Wood Elf Warriors backed up by a few Guard of the Galadhrim Court allied with Ghan-buri-Ghan and nine Woses Warriors. Big congrats to Jamie on a much deserved first win of 2014!

With proceedings at an end, everyone thanked Tom and the rest of the team at Slayer Gaming for putting on a fantastic tournament. The whole event ran smoothly, the venue was excellent, the staff were friendly and helpful, and everyone seemed to have had six great games. Slayer Gaming will be hosting more The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game events throughout the year so be sure to check The Great British Hobbit League’s Facebook page for details.
The Best Event Ever

East Grinstead, 2nd March 2014. 1 Army. 500 points. 3 rulebook scenarios, 1 custom scenario

On Sunday 2nd March 2014, 22 gamers descended on The Dorset Arms pub in East Grinstead for the third tournament of the 2014 season. After four intense games, who would emerge triumphant? We sent Tom Harrison to find out...

The first weekend in March brought with it the third Great British Hobbit League tournament of the year. The tournaments have been coming so thick and fast this year that many players who had grand ideas about bringing newly painted armies to each event (myself included) have been forced to scale down their plans. This is not a complaint (far from it) - the more time spent playing our wonderful hobby with like-minded players, the better.

Perhaps the largest attraction of this one-day event was the fact that it was based in a pub! That's right, a far cry from some scout hut with no heating... However, this did mean that tickets were limited to 22 as only so many 4’x4’ gaming boards and Middle-Earth enthusiasts can fit inside the pub’s upstairs function room. Amazingly, such was the demand for tickets, the event sold out within a week - a great sign for the League and this hobby in general. Well done to organisers Sam Page and Joe Horsfall on what was clearly a sterling advertising campaign.

Being a one day event, the tournament had a packed schedule, with four scenarios to be played. There were some interesting armies including Kieran Street’s Angmar army (with four trolls!), Craig Spooner’s Tom Bombadil and High Elf Lords, and Leonardis’ Wose horde led by Treebeard. These more unusual army builds lined up alongside some tried and tested lists - Jamie Giblin was in search of back-to-back tournament victories with his “Tournament Winning Wose-Elves”.

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The first scenario, Wargonation, was a custom scenario created by the organisers - hats off to Joe for the original idea. With Wild Wargs spawning left, right, and centre (literally), this certainly was an action-packed scenario and great fun to boot.

After the slaughter of hundreds of wargs across all of the tables, we moved swiftly on to the second scenario of the day, Hold Ground. This scenario lends itself to scenic boards as armies can turn up on any board edge and therefore have to navigate/fight their way to the centre. The boards at East Grinstead did not disappoint in providing a tactical challenge - they were fantastic, each one unique and full of character.

My personal favourites included a Westfold themed board with partially destroyed barns (burned by Saruman’s Uruk-hai of course), a snow covered board with a treacherous icy lake, and a Mordor themed board with deadly lava flows to jump across - many a model succumbed to a fiery death over the course of the day! A huge thanks must go to Rick Fryer and all of the others involved in making the scenery pieces.
Following the Hold Ground scenario, the group of now hungry wargamers made their way downstairs to enjoy a pub lunch. It was nice to catch up with fellow enthusiasts and friends - once you’ve been to a tournament or two, you’ll soon become very good friends with other members of the community.

After being fed and watered, we returned upstairs to get stuck into Lords Of Battle. With victory points awarded for every wound inflicted, this led to some desperate fighting as everybody threw their armies into combat - with the exception of all-mounted Rohan (no prizes for guessing who had brought this army...) who can’t be blamed for spending the entire game avoiding James Baldwin’s superbly painted Goblin King and Tom the Troll!

The final scenario of the day was Seize the Prize. This is the first time that this new Desolation of Smaug scenario has featured in a Great British Hobbit League tournament so this was new territory even for experienced gamers. It had now become clear that it was a two-horse race for the tournament between Jamie Giblin and Ed Ball, who were paired together on the Top Table. However, the loser of that battle would be pipped to second place by the winner of the game on Table 2 between James Clark and (surprise package) Tom Seccombe.

After all the prizes had been seized, the final scores were totted up so that the actual prizes could be awarded. Best Army went to Mark Boyland and his beautifully converted dwarves including Thorin, Dwalin and Balin all mounted on ponies. Rick Fryers picked up Most Sporting Opponent for which he gained the rather ironic prize of Alfrid - a lovely touch. Third place went to local gamer Keith Goodchild with a Harad & Umbar themed army; his second strong showing at East Grinstead following his Second place last year. James Clark managed to clinch Second place for his all-mounted Rohan. As for first place, would it go to Jamie Giblin or Ed Ball? Everybody expected Ed to take victory as his all-hero army (Aragorn, Elrond’s sons and Glorfindel all on horseback) should easily have outpaced Jamie’s all-infantry list. However, the High Elf Lords clearly did not want to get their hands dirty and refused to pick up the prize despite multiple attempts. This allowed Jamie’s army to swarm around them and ultimately take victory. Take a dwarf along next time to do your digging Ed! So, congratulations to Jamie for winning a second tournament on the trot.

With that, everybody said their goodbyes after a thoroughly enjoyable day - well done to Sam and Joe for putting on a fabulous tournament. Bring on the next Great British Hobbit League event!
On Sunday 23rd March 2014, over 30 gamers arrived at Titans Wargames Club for the 2013 Great British Hobbit League season finale! With the winner of the League hanging in the balance, it was sure to be an exciting event. Regular tournament-goer Tom Harrison was right in the middle of the action!

A record-breaking 32 players made their way to what (at the time) became the largest ever independent Great British Hobbit League tournament. This 350 point event was rather unique in that the results would be counted towards both the 2013 and 2014 Great British Hobbit League. This, coupled with the array of fantastic prizes that were on offer (including individual models from the Barrels out of Bond set), meant there was definitely an incentive to do well at this one-day event.

Low points cost tournaments are great for new players as only a handful of models are required; they also pose challenges for veteran tournament attendees as it makes building an army list that little bit trickier.

The event was organised by Damian Grantham and Chris Young of Titans Wargames Club; the club usually runs two large The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game tournaments every year with a themed rules-pack. Shadow & Sorcery was based on the White Council’s attack on the Necromancer in Dol Guldur. There were 5 scenarios, including To The Death, Domination and a modified version of Reconnoitre.

“Low points cost tournaments are great for new players as only a handful of models are required”

There were also two custom scenarios based upon the Dol Guldur theme. First was the ‘Spawn of Ungoliant’, a scenario in which each side must attempt to slay a giant spider (with a custom profile) that is deployed in the centre of the board. Tournament Organiser Damian did a great job of painting up some toy spiders he found on eBay to ensure every gaming table had its own spider.
For each of the scenarios named above, a single unnamed Hero in a player’s force could carry a ‘magic ring’ which granted them access to a randomly selected spell during each game.

The final scenario was Lords Of Battle with a twist: in addition to their 350 point army, players could add a sorcerer to their ranks! Good players could choose between Gandalf the Grey and Radagast the Brown, whilst Evil players would select either the Necromancer (using Saruman the White’s profile) or the Witch King of Angmar. This scenario was meant to represent the White Council’s final attack on Dol Guldur and it made for an interesting finish to the event, especially since players were not allowed to reveal their choice of sorcerer until the start of the final round of games.

In the end, after a superb day of gaming, Damian O’Byrne and his Feral Uruk-hai/Berserker army emerged victorious after beating Ed Ball’s Hobbit horde in the final scenario. The First place trophy was a replica key to the Mirkwood Gaol, a very cool prize! Callum Edens took Second place with his Mordor force including Shelob, and David Simpson took a well-deserved Third place with members of the Fellowship of the Ring that his young daughters had helped to paint up. Best Army was won by James Baldwin with his beautifully painted Goblin Town army. Most Sporting Opponent went to local player Tom Lee.

The tournament was superb and ensured that a great season finished on a high. Well done to all those involved!
2013 LEAGUE RESULTS

As the final dice came to rest after a fantastic day of gaming at the Shadow & Sorcery tournament in Finchley, the curtain came down on the inaugural season of the Great British Hobbit League. And what a fantastic first season it was: ten tournaments across six different venues covering the length of the UK, from Stirling in (sunny) Scotland to Finchley in the South of England, via Preston, Stockport, Nottingham and East Grinstead.

The adventure started with the first ever Throne of Skulls event for The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game at Warhammer World, which had a total of 52 players. It was fantastic to see that the independent tournaments that followed (eight in all) quickly picked up in attendance as a core group of players became established and the idea of the Great British Hobbit League took hold. These tournaments had an average attendance of 17 players, with the Shadow and Sorcery finale attracting a record 32 players.

Whilst these numbers may seem relatively small compared to recent Games Workshop events, they have provided a superb platform for the Great British Hobbit League to grow in 2014. A huge thank-you must be given to Mikolaj Bakalarz for first conceiving the idea of an organised league, despite not being able to attend all of the events himself. Although, perhaps it is better that way, as when Mik does turn up he usually sweeps aside all who stand before him with his host of Warg Marauders…

Amazingly, until the seventh tournament of the year, there were no repeat event winners, clearly demonstrating that there is a collection of very talented wargamers within the UK scene. This spread of victories meant that there were three players in contention for the inaugural Great British Hobbit League title going into the final event of the season: Thomas Harrison, Ed Ball, and Jamie Giblin (for more information on how the event panned out, see pages 42-43). In the end, it was the Lord of the Fell Beasts, Ed Ball, who took the crown; congratulations to him on becoming our first ever champion! A link to the full League table for 2013 can be found on the Great British Hobbit League’s Facebook page.

Great British Hobbit League 2013 - Top 5

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Dear Readers,

The fundamental idea behind the production of **SBG** was to create an attractive and informative hobby resource for fans of *The Hobbit: Strategy Battle Game*. It has been produced in our own time and is, first and foremost, a non-profit fanzine by the fans, for the fans. We have greatly enjoyed working on this first issue and hope to continue to produce the magazine for a long time to come. If you are reading this, then you will be doing so in one of two ways. The majority of you will be reading the free pdf which is available online. Our pledge is that, as long as we are producing **SBG**, it will be available for free to anyone who wants it; we are not a business, we are not trying to make money out of this, and we will never charge a penny for the pdf download.

However, whilst we won’t ever charge for **SBG**, we would like to give readers a way of contributing towards the running costs of the magazine. So, once you have finished reading the issue, if you feel that you would like to contribute, then we would invite you to make a donation via our PayPal account: SBGmagazine@gmail.com

We would simply ask you to donate whatever you feel that the magazine is worth. Any contributions would be welcome and they will help to ensure that future issues are even better!

As a way to encourage people to donate, we have decided to run a competition! We are delighted to announce that Slayer Gaming has kindly provided a brand new box of *Rivendell Knights* for one lucky **SBG** reader to win.

To be in with a chance of winning this fantastic prize, all you have to do is donate £2 to our PayPal address. As you are making a donation, please ensure that you use the *Send money to friends or family* option. Multiple entries per person are allowed, so, for every full £2 you donate, you will receive another entry into the competition. For example, a donation of £6.50 would give you three chances to win.

The competition will run until **31st December 2014** at which point we will draw a winner. Please ensure that you include your name and contact details in the notes section of the PayPal donation so that we can contact you should you win.

However, the original vision for **SBG** was to place a physical magazine in the hands of gamers. Viewing **SBG** on a computer screen or tablet should provide a satisfactory reading experience but there is something wonderfully comforting about turning the pages of a physical copy. Sitting in your favourite spot and thumbing through the pages of a glossy magazine is an experience that is utterly lost when viewing content on a digital screen.

Our hope is that the majority of our readers will want to read **SBG** in the intended format and start to build a collection of physical issues. Of course, the major hurdle in this step is that we cannot give away physical copies due to the high cost of producing a relatively short print run. However, anyone in the UK who donates £10 or more via PayPal will not only get at least 5 entries into the competition, but will also receive a full colour, A4 physical copy of **SBG**. Please include the address to which you would like us to send the magazine and we will get it out to you as soon as possible. Unfortunately, due to the increased postage costs, those with an address outside of the UK will need to make a donation of £13 or more in order to receive a physical copy.

We hope that you have enjoyed this issue and would like to make a modest donation, therefore enabling us to produce **SBG** for a long time to come.

Thank-you,

Damian & Tom
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Fri  9am – 11pm
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