

MAGAZINE REVIEWS

Adventures Unlimited, Issue 2
Quarterly prozine, \$18.00 for 4 issues
Bootstrap Press Inc.
3893 Norfolk Street
Burnaby, B.C.
Canada
V5G 1E6

Review by Matthew Pook

When I was in full-time employment there was not a gaming related magazine that I did not try and buy. Now I'm a student I have to pick and choose what I can afford. So when I came across the second issue of "Adventures Unlimited" that contained Jorune material I had to get a copy.

This 80 page Canadian publication is totally devoted to presenting scenarios (and nothing else). There are seven given here that cover Star Wars, Earthdawn, Whispering Vault, Castle Falkenstein, Toon, Nephilim, and of course Jorune.

The adventure set on Jorune - Profit Margin - written by Mark Frein, is nine pages long (including artwork) and involves the PCs being hired to search for, and excavate, a limilate. Unfortunately the search takes place on Sillipus and their employer wants it all kept secret. Complications arise because another group is excavating some Earth-tec nearby, and they also want that kept secret...

The simplicity of this adventure makes it into an extended encounter. There is no complicated plot here and the rewards from playing it should arise from the roleplaying involved rather than material gain. Like any scenario Profit Margin is going to need a little fleshing out. The basic adventure printed here, with a little spicing up from the Sholari, should take no more than two sessions to complete, but there is plenty of background included to build it as part of any campaign.

Ownership of both the "Sholari Companion" and "The Gire of Sillipus" is recommended, but not mandatory to play Profit Margin. Any good Sholari should have these supplements anyway.

At £2.99 for a single issue "Adventures Unlimited" is a good buy if you play any of the games it covers. Even if you just want it for Jorune material (not all that surprising given the lack of it) it is still good value and I would recommend it.

Shadis, Issue 17
Monthly prozine, \$3.95 single issue
Subscription \$50.00 overseas
17880 Graystone Avenue #203
Chino Hills, CA 91709,
USA

This is the February 1995 issue by the way, which just shows how out of touch I am, or rather how out of touch most RPG retailers seem to be these days. The mag runs to a chunky 110 pages plus (ads included) and is split into three main sections - special features, GMs workshop, and regular departments. It is an independent magazine, which is a relief.

"Shadis" thus covers a wide range of topics under the gaming umbrella, including RPGs, PBM, card games, fanzines, boardgames, miniatures, industry news, and a classified section (which many mags don't have for some odd reason). You should be able to find something to interest you here.

Amongst the regular features are a couple that I heartily approve of: a contacts listing for other zines and mags, the classified section, and the fanzine reviews. All extremely welcome in an era when big companies seem to do their best to squeeze the little guy out of a competitive market. If there is proof of the magazine's independence it is this. I can't think of another mainstream publication that goes out of it's way to encourage contact between players of minority systems (and there are some extremely minor systems on the contacts page).

If I happen to stumble upon a copy of "Shadis" again (probably in the Arctic Circle in 1998) I'll certainly buy it.

The Eye of All-Seeing Wonder, #5
Tékumel fanzine, £2.99 per issue
Steve Foster
26 Western Lane
Balham
London, SW12 8JS

I think everyone interested in fanzines knows about this, an absolutely top-notch zine dealing with MAR Barker's Tékumel. This was the first zine I saw after formulating the idea of BF, and I was daunted by what I had to live up to. In the end I decided that I couldn't match its array of contributors or the style of production, so I won't try.

Issue 5 contains two scenarios, a full campaign setting, Tékumel astrology, rules variants, a recipe or two, and a full review of the latest EPT product "Gardasiyal". Within a few issues you'll almost have enough material to start gaming in Tékumel.

Great stuff; I don't currently own much official EPT material but this zine makes me wish I did. A few copies of issues 3 and 4 are available, and I'm told that issue 6 will be out in February or March of next year (I'd better make that explicitly 1996, just in case I don't get this issue out 'til then).

Tales of the Reaching Moon, Issue 13

RuneQuest 3 fanzine, £3.00

David Hall

21 Stephenson Court

Osborne Street

Slough

Berkshire, SL1 1TN

Another world-specific zine well worth checking out if you're into the world in question. At the risk of sounding increasingly superficial the first thing that strikes you about "Tales.." is the full colour cover. Open it up and you soon realise that this mag is professional in all but name. David Hall has distribution networks in over 12 countries for crying out loud, and material written by the game's original designers. OK, what's inside? A lot actually, arranged thematically for each issue it would seem. This one deals with the West and various aspects of Malkionism and sorcery. There is loads of background material and a meaty scenario to get stuck into.

RuneQuest certainly has changed since I last GMed the game in 1986 or so. So much so that I hardly recognised any of the material in "Tales..". Where was Prax? What was all this about sorcery being the one true magic of Glorantha? This isn't a knock, it's just an indication that RQ survived the bashing Avalon Hill gave it in the 1980s (like trying to turn it into AD&D). I felt like an OAP trying to get to grips with a Sony Playstation after being used to a valve operated radio - too much water has passed under the bridge for me to catch up now. I would recommend this without hesitation to any RQ fan.

Imazine, Issue 23

Paul Mason

101 Green Heights

Shimpo-Cho 4-50

Chikusa-Ku

Nagoya 464, Japan

"Imazine" is a personal zine from Paul Mason, dealing with the issues in rolegaming that he feels need to be discussed. It has an edge that other zines perhaps don't have, a near acidic wit with which to assault the complacent or apathetic in the roleplaying field. It also happens to be very funny, and Paul's writing style is eminently readable.

I have three issues and all are excellent. Issue 23 contains an article on turning pro in the RPG industry (ie. why not to), a look at Chinese RPG systems, and the continuing report on Paul's own system "The Water Margin". Drop Paul a line and see for yourself what a cracking read "Imazine" is, or get a copy from the "Eye..." address above.

Interactive Fantasy

Five Issue Sub £20 UK, \$32 elsewhere

Hogshead Publishing

29a Abbeville Road

London SW4 9LA

This is a digest format 'serious' publication that looks at RPGs and related topics in a quasi-academic way. This and Imazine are the only rolegame mags/zines that my partner Julia reads, ie. that will hold her attention, and that's quite an accomplishment.

IF runs to 160 pages, including 40 pages of in depth reviews; when you read these you realise how skimpy most RPG reviews are in the mainstream mags. Of personal interest to me (in a rather odd way) was the number of people I spotted that were familiar to me from old White Dwarf and other rags of the mid 1980s - Marcus L Rowland, Phil Masters, Allen Varney. It's deja vu all over again.

The articles are a bit hit 'n miss, ranging from the genuinely thought provoking (James Wallis' "Through A Mask, Darkly") to the barely comprehensible ("From these twin hearts of myth unfolds a bridge built from the metaphor of abstract dances interwoven with the basic elements of drama"). As a whole though it definitely gets an 'A' for effort, and a big slap on the back for attempting to be different (listen to *me*, like I could do better!). I'll pick up copies whenever I am able.