

ISSUE
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A·U·S·T·R·A·L·I·A·N

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REALMS

- AD&D
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- LIZARDS!
- WEREWOLF
POSTER

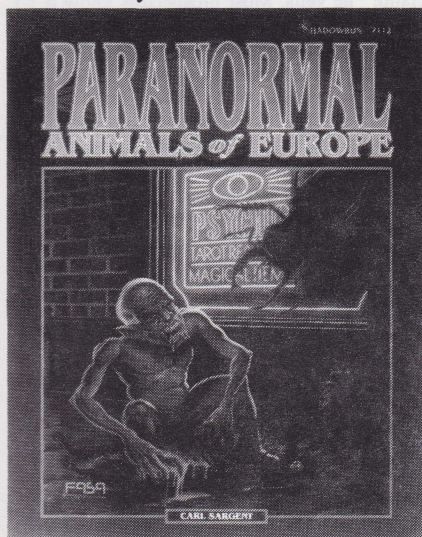


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PARANORMAL ANIMALS of EUROPE

Shadowrun Sourcebook - FASA
RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Malcolm Adler



Hmmm. I am sitting down to write this review, trying to find something negative about this latest release for Shadowrun. What can I say? The book is in my opinion the best sourcebook released to date, perhaps only to be surpassed by the Tir Tairngire Sourcebook due out soon. To inform you why I'll go for a more detailed breakdown.

The book comes as a soft back with 160+ pages, 16 full colour plates and a format which is the best used to date in any RPG. Graphically the book is a work of art, illustrations are of an above standard quality, the colour work does the job well and the page layouts are functionally superb. From Abrams Lobster to the Wyrd Mantis, the sourcebook gives two pages per creature. This is room aplenty for descriptions, notes, a size comparison diagram, a 'range' map showing natural habitats and the famed and much loved *Shadowtalk* where runners leave opinions and rumours.

The research Carl Sargent has put into this book shows; he is a master in the RPG field. The book is very involved including the appendixes at the back which are full of more data that is once again a good read. Captivating.

The bad points of the release are simply the following; the book is concerned solely with

European critters (obviously), but in this attempt to be European, the net has been cast very wide, detailing paranormals that are part of myth, but have no real practical use in game play or are just a waste of space because they are too similar to other previously published critters. Their inclusion makes the book complete, which is not a bad thing.

For Paranormal Animals of Europe to be a worthwhile purchase you would need to be 'running in Europe, to import some of these paranormals to Australia or Seattle would be counter productive (while the rules do give excuses for how you can do this). What I would suggest is that if you look at the book and want to make the purchase either combine it with the London Sourcebook (also by Carl Sargent) and play a European campaign or just steer your group into being a bit more global (enrol the runners on a frequent flyer programme). In this way you can get your Australian or American based campaign into Europe and onto other places.

In summary this is a *very* high quality product, the best since the game's second edition last year.

Paranormal Animals of Europe, not a *normal* release.

INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS HANDBOOK

Battletech & Mechwarrior
Sourcebook by FASA RRP \$30.00

Reviewed by Ron Fielding

The background to FASA's Battletech and Mechwarrior game universe is very detailed, and quite interesting to read; it is a shame more people don't actually 'role play' this system. Most people cannot resist the temptation to role play a bit before finding an excuse to jump back into their 'Mech and blast away on the tabletop.

The Intelligence Operations Handbook expands on previous sourcebooks by focusing on the activities of the various Intelligence agencies maintained by the Great Houses and the emerging rival organisations being set up by the Clans during their invasion of the Inner Sphere. This is a meticulous handbook written from the point of view of Wolfnet who filed this report prior to the invasion.

The Handbook is crammed with information and hundreds of great adventure hooks for referees looking for ways to steer their players away from 'Mechs and into more challenging and exciting low level operations. Tabletoppers can use it too. Recommended.

DREAM PARK GAMEMASTER PACK

by R. Talsorian Games RRP \$25.00

Reviewed by Adam Whitt

The Dream Park role playing game struck me as the perfect game, everything you need to play in one reasonably priced book; an easy game to learn, covering every possible genre and firmly based on the idea of players having fun. The release of the Gamemaster Pack doesn't necessarily change that view but it did make me groan inwardly a bit as I feared the system might be going for over-elaboration. I needn't have worried, however, as there are no new rules to learn in this new product. The Pack consists of a sturdy three panel referee screen with all combat, movement, spells, skills, wounds and powers tables brought together for easy reference, a set of nine new NPC cards, and a 48 page book introducing detailed specs on new weapons (Aztec Dagger to Cruise Missile), armour (Bark Shield to Starship Trooper Powered Armour), vehicles (Sled to Starship), NPCs (Cleopatra to Adolph Hitler) and monsters (Godzilla to Zeus). No-one should ever get bored playing Dream Park; the open ended system ensures that the possibilities for adventure are endless. Try it.

DIRE DOCUMENTS

Call of Cthulhu Accessory

by Chaosium RRP \$18.00

Reviewed by Adam Whitt

What's in a name? I'd say Chaosium left themselves wide open with this one!

Dire Documents is a collection of 31 pieces of stationary, printed in two colour (black and blue) to discourage photocopying, designed for use as clues for Cthulhu Keepers to add realism and atmosphere to their horror campaign. The documents come loose within the shrink wrap packaging and include letterheads from Near East Treasure Imports, Misatonic University, commitment papers to the Arkham Sanatorium, Formal Invitations, and certificates for Meritorious Service and Best Death Awards.

Not a bad idea, but the execution leaves a bit to be desired. If Chaosium had added a few notes giving hints and tips on how best to use these accessories in the game, included more copies of the more useful items (such as the Best Death Award certificates) and done something more interesting and evocative with the actual graphics on the documents themselves (they are of a standard most home computer users could readily produce), the package would have represented more value for money.

SHADOWRUN[®] IN AUSTRALIA

Part V

Marega, the nucleus of the coming Dreamtime nation.

Colin Taber takes a quick look at a phantom file.

Most Australians aren't aware of it.

Most have been kept ignorant of the truth.

Australia in 2054 is dying. Eurasian Australia is seemingly doomed to fall to the Dreaming... in time. How long it takes does not matter to the spirits, what matters is that it will. One day the continent-nation will again be under one rule, that of the Dreamtime and the nation shall be called Marega.

After more than two centuries 'justice' will be done.

The *first battle* in 2011AD saw the Dreaming return, one million Australians died, Canberra nearly fell and the Eurasian nation was pushed back to its urban blights, known now as the 'City States'. The time is approaching for the *Second Battle* and finally the *Third*.

War is to come to Australia.

MAREGA

This organisation is put simply the infrastructure of the coming Dreamtime nation. It is made up of fearless Sorcerers, Shamans, Warriors, Deckers and many more. Its heart is in the Exclusion Zone (EZ), operating mainly from outback ghost towns that are slowly being rebuilt to be more in tune with the Dreamtime. It also has many special places within the city states of modern Australia, the Marega organisation is spreading its base and influence.

The Dreamtime is still increasing in power, so much so that a second Exclusion Zone fence is being built around Australia's cities. The first has slowly been failing and with growing frequency is being penetrated by EZ vermin. This the Australian government tries to hide, but slowly the word is getting out.

Most of Marega's current work is concentrated on destroying the remaining Elven groves in the EZ. Once this has been accomplished the Elven nation itself, Tir Miallae will be struck down and its citizens put to flight. Even now a mighty casting is being prepared, soon it will be called and sung as part of a huge *continental* spell. This spell will bring down the magical veil that keeps the Dreamtime out of Tir Miallae. The collapse of the Elven Veil will herald the beginning of the Second Battle.

THE SECOND BATTLE

These happenings are on a colossal scale, ghost tribes walk the land hunting their killers in the EZ. Bunyips stalk the EZ fence-borders, spirits haunt the alleys and sewers of the crowded, polluted city states. The outback is reclaimed, being regenerated and rebuilt. The Aboriginals of Marega are creating their own, true cities. Settlements that are in touch with both the Dreamtime and technology. Utilising the pilfered tech of AOTC, Optus, a hundred other corps and the federal government, Marega prepares itself for the coming war, a cleansing battle to save the land, the Second Battle.

This will be a battle fought to rid the land of its cancerous blights; not Eurasian Australia, but the twisted ghost tribes who represent the Dreaming's pain and anger at the massacres of its children during European colonisation. The ghost tribes have allies, *the Shamans of Djapana*, the followers of dying totems, once again victims of colonisation. These totems are twisted, retarded by the pain, anger and anguish they have felt through the past two centuries. Now they wish only vengeance and so they ally via their shamans with the bitter ghost tribes. This battle will be Australia's first civil war, pitting Marega against Djapana. It will be fought largely unnoticed by the city states as it will be a war waged with the powers of creation. Marega will be fighting to restore the Dreaming, while Djapana will be fighting to bring about a dark, genocidal terror, to kill



Eurasian Australians and Marega. The city states will see only huge dust, electrical and mana storms, none of which they understand as anything but natural, Dreaming phenomenon.

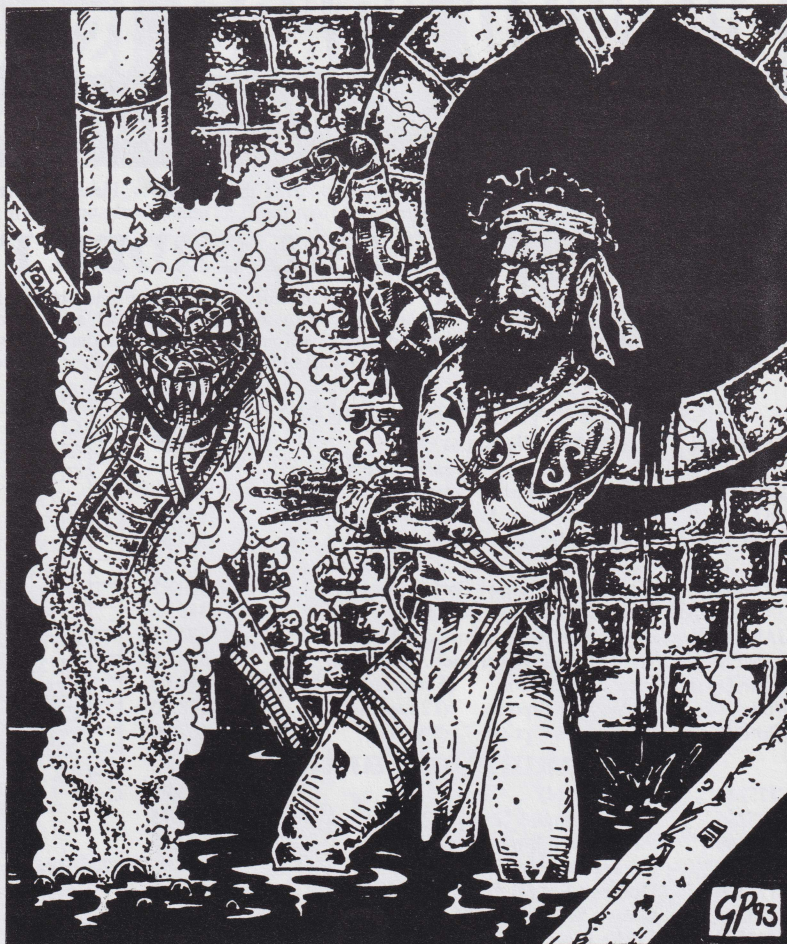
THE THIRD, FINAL BATTLE

The cycles of magic haven't peaked as yet, the peak will occur in the distant future, it is here when finally, well before Canberra is a millennia old that Marega will be a unified nation. It is to this date the organisation works, in tune with the Dreaming, the spirits and the future.

The Dreamtime beckons all Aboriginal runners in the cities, recognising the raw talent they represent. Many such runners eventually work whole heartedly for Marega as part of the organisation or act as part time operatives in the city states. In either case when an Aboriginal receives the Dreaming's call it is hard to refuse, knowing in their hearts it is destiny and an honour.

>>>>> Hey Chummer, don't believe everything you scan. Sure Marega sounds great and full of ideals but I don't know if I would trust all of its members not to ice me as I'm Anglo - **Shadowbreed 01:12:34 01,May,'54** <<<<<

>>>>> Watch what you say Anglo, Marega have some fairly special attitudes and methods. You spread lies and you'll be down for the die. The spirits say that it is the only Dreaming way - **Dream Warrior 01:13:56 01,May'54**<<<<<



WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

It is said by some in Marega that following close on the heels of the second battle will be a short but savage Corp. war with Marega. Many view this as inevitable, a war between the huge communication based Corps. AOTC and Optus among others. These corps are always singled out by Marega due to the fire fights that occur on a regular basis now in the EZ, between Corp. maintenance squads and Marega members. It is assumed by both sides that eventually the battles will escalate and continue to do so until one group can make serious inroads into the other's turf. As the corps have little hope of taking the alien Dreamtime lands of the EZ it is viewed Marega will eventually be the victor.

>>>>> That's great and all but remember the Universal Brotherhood made inroads into the EZ. Correct me if I'm wrong but they **still** have their colony towns just west of the Sydney sprawl don't they? They have also been there for over sixteen months, longer than any other Corp., government or other organisation has been able to stay settled in the EZ by about fourteen months - **Shadowbreed 01:14:14 01,May,'54** <<<<<

>>>>> While it is true Anglo, the spirits say that it is only happening because of the UB's magical base. What magical base you ask? Well just keep asking, and not too loudly, particularly near the Sydney branch - **Dream Warrior 01:15:06 01,May'54**<<<<<

THE OLD WAYS AND THE NEW

The old ways continue, tradition is tradition, and the culture has survived the massacres, plagues and the hundreds of thousands of murders. The culture is alive and growing, but not whole, having lost many of its roots and branches.

Regardless, the core, the heart is still pumping and getting stronger. The new Maregan society is a mix of the old and new, chrome and spear, bark and plasitc. The people of Marega are trying something free of the corruption and vices that Australia and the rest of the globe offers.

>>>>> This is beginning to sound like Alice in Dreaming-land. You guys are human like everyone else (apart from meta's I suppose) and from all I've read in the 'Arnhem files' you're going to eventually end up with the same fragged up society as everyone else. You can't escape it, quit trying - **Shadowbreed 01:17:18 41,May,'54** <<<<<

>>>>> That's your opinion Anglo, if you're being careful enough to back page you'll be pleased to know that us "Dreamtimers" are so disorganised that we have got a tracer on you **now**, just to find out what you **do** know. Ever seen a spirit in the matrix? Look over your shoulder - **Dream Warrior 01:18:46 25,May'54**<<<<<

>>>>> - **Shadowbreed 01:19:37 01,May,'54** <<<<<

THE GHOST TRIBES

The ghost tribes are simply after vengeance, they are against the Maregan vision of the future which is a mesh of the old and the ultra new. While Marega will see Shaman beside Decker and Sorcerer beside Street Sam the ghost tribes want revenge. It was they who murdered the Eurasian residents of outback Australia in 2011 when they returned with the Dreamtime, it is they who are Marega's greatest enemy as the fight nears for the Dreaming's *civil war*.

This is Australia's most frightening, most destructive secret. The very soul of Australia is being bled, slowing the return of the Dreaming is being corrupted into a Nightmare. The Second Battle is the continent's only chance to 'wake up'.

NEWS

AD&D Games Tournament

The Round Table LRP group has recently formed The AD&D Games Society and have organised a gaming tournament sponsored by TSR UK to the tune of \$1000.00 worth of prizes. The tournament is set to happen over the last weekend in June 1993 and will be held at Cryall Castle in Ballarat. The tournament will be run using published TSR modules altered so that players cannot benefit from having played them before. Tournament organiser, Scott Walker tells us that they are also planning a similar event to take place in Queensland around August time. For further information contact Scott on (071) 565 128.

South Australian Games Convention

Another event inaugurated this year is the SA Games Convention. Due to take place mid-June at Adelaide High School, the event is jointly sponsored by **Dragon's Lair** and **Tactics Adelaide**. Convention organisers expect a big turn out; for more information drop into either of the shops.

Arena Games

Perth's war-gaming and rpg convention will again take place at the Subiaco Police & Citizen Hall in July. New this year is the use of independent referees for the rpg sections which should encourage all-comers to participate. Contact for Arena Games is Mike Ward (09) 417 5446.

FASA Corporation

New for Battletech is a scenario pack which follows the events of the *Blood of Heroes* novel (due out in June). Called the *Day of Heroes*, the scenario pack details the battle for Glengary, giving players all the information they need to recreate the battles fought in the Skye March Rebellion. Also coming up are the *Battletech Recognition*

Cards, each featuring full-colour paintings of 'Mechs and the information needed for using those 'Mechs in **Battletech** or **Mechwarrior** scenarios. And for Shadowrun there's *A Killing Glare* an adventure written by Lou Prosperi set in the glittering world of professional sports; Urban Brawl, the sport of heroes. Another **Shadowrun** novel coming up is *Stryper Assassin* continuing Nyx Smith's story of the Stryper character from the *Into the Shadows* anthology.

Next issue *Australian Realms*, as part of our plans to make #12 a 'cyberpunk' special, will be interviewing FASA's Tom Dowd co-creator of **Shadowrun**. Tom will also be writing a **Shadowrun** article for us as soon as he returns from his trip to France where he is Guest of Honour at a convention.

R.Talsorian Games

When invited to participate in our 'cyberpunk' special, Mike Pondsmith (creator of their *Cyberpunk* rpg) had to pass up the pleasure. In his wife, Lisa's own words, "The production staff are so booked here that I cannot get them to do anything that is not product. Michael is the very worst. As he is writing *Cybergeneration*, our expansion of *Cyberpunk* for in July, and all of *Castle Falkenstein*, the new fantasy game due in August, I have to put in a reservation just to eat dinner with him."

Another release due out for RTG's **Cyberpunk** game is *Maximum Metal* which covers military equipment, mil-spec vehicles and powered armours. And for the **Dream Park** fans, look out for *The "Race for El Dorado" Game* a pure thirties jungle pulp adventure with a prehistoric twist.

Mistaken Identity

It has been brought to our attention that some people are telling our readers **Australian Realms** is an American product,

and have used this as an excuse to charge you an extra dollar on the cover price. Please be assured that **Australian Realms** is wholly Australian owned, produced in Australia and printed here.

White Wolf

Due out in May is *The Players Guide to Werewolf* and the 2nd Edition hardback *The Players Guide to Vampire*. Also to be released is an anthology of **Werewolf** short stories, titled *Drums Around the Fire* it is due out in June. Interesting news is that someone in the US is setting up a Vampires fanclub under a White Wolf license called *The Camarilla*. The club is for people with a fascination for vampires in general, but obviously White Wolf's games will be part of their focus. The club will be setting up chapters in various places so if you'd like to be a part of this latest development in the 90's Vampire Boom write to:

The Camarilla
8314 Greenwood Ave North
Box 2850
Seattle Washington 98013 USA

TSR

The AD&D 2nd Edition will be well served by many new releases in the coming weeks - **The New Monstrous Manual**; **2nd Edition Forgotten Realms** (why release second edition of a campaign world is anybody's guess); **Complete Gladiators Handbook** for Dark Sun; **Al-Qadim City of Delights** boxed set looks really good; and **The Ivory Triangle** boxed set for Dark Sun.

Errata

Jedko Games pointed out an error in last issue's review of **Battletech 3rd Edition**. Ron suggested the plastic figures were smaller than the **Ral Partha** metals. This is not correct - in fact the plastic miniatures are cast from moulds taken off the Ral Partha figures. Sorry about that; Ron has been kicked by a Wolverine so he won't make that mistake again!

Final Words

Its a... we don't know, 'cos the baby hasn't arrived yet!

...See ya 'round like a d100!

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