

Caverns of Jericho

Inquisitor at Conflict: Edinburgh by Derek Gillespie

The Mists of Time

Inquisitor and Conflict: Edinburgh have a long and distinguished history. Way back in the mists of time, before the Conflict Regional Tournaments were established by Games Workshop, there was an event held in Edinburgh called the Caledonian Conflict, the first Scottish National Gaming Tournament. Inquisitor was about to be unleashed on the expectant public and, as part of the Studio's contribution to the event, Graham McNeill ran a Q&A session regarding the game, and took a few people through the rules system.

The year after that, with the game in the public domain and the Edinburgh store in the grip of our first major campaign, we ran a participation game revolving around the attempts of Inquisitorial warbands to control a seismic stabilisation generator, using models and scenery cobbled together from around the Scottish stores, and it proved a great success indeed. The year after that – last year – we had our first purpose-built board for the game, which saw rival Inquisitors fight over the immediate area

surrounding a Necron waystone hidden in the midst of a deep forest.

And so, several months ago now, we came around to thinking about what to do for Conflict: Edinburgh this year. It had to top what had been done before, tap into the enthusiasm that surrounds Inquisitor in and around Edinburgh, and compete with all of the other excellent participation events being held. This last one was a major consideration – the participation hall would also include an indoor arena, bounce-the-balls-off-the-walls, 54mm Blood Bowl game (Speed Bowl), a huge The Lord of The Rings Helm's Deep and Deeping Wall, as well as numerous excellent games run by local clubs. What could we do to compete?

Flashes of Inspiration

The original idea we ran with was a classic Radical versus Puritan confrontation, as one Inquisitor attempted to summon and bind a Daemon Prince, while the other tried to stop him. A third party was introduced to improve the flow and excitement of the participation game (much



more opportunity for alliance-brokering and backstabbing!), and initially this was envisaged as being a Chaotic warband attempting to save/fight for their daemonic master. The board was to be a 6'x4' mock-up of the summoning cavern, with high sides to provide an extra dimension to the board thanks to numerous ledges cut into the cliff faces, and the summoning circle and sacrificial altar would form the centrepiece of the board.

As with all of the best ideas, this initial plan was modified over time. The board was the first to change. Resident scenery guru (and store manager) Steve wanted to do something more unusual than a rectangular board, so what about a circular board, he suggested? Genius! Instantly, a nice little gimmick to attract attention and, by giving it a 6' diameter, it meant that we had more than enough playing space (sprint across that in a turn then!). The cliff face was to be constructed in semicircular sections that would go around the circumference of the board when completed, and the fact that we had these individual sections led to the obvious method of allowing the third warband to really make an entrance (see the scenario special rules!). The numerous ledges were removed for practicality, but replaced with a huge sweeping stone staircase hewn from the rock, making a focal piece for the wall sections.

The central summoning circle was retained from the original plans, but the raised dais upon which it stood was embellished. The idea of a sacrificial victim mutated from a blood sacrifice to a psychic one, and so Steve constructed what became the psy-phon throne that contained a captured alpha-class psyker. A large and arcane looking control panel was then constructed to provide the workings of the throne, and the entire central piece was surrounded by a series of imposing pillars, with some rock piles providing extra cover on the peripheries of the board.

A few coats of paint, and everything would be ready. Damn good it looked too, even if we did say so ourselves! All we needed now was a workable background, and some rules to make the game work...

Fleshing Out the Storyline

The agri-world of Jericho is an unassuming planetoid floating serenely through the Segmentum Solar. But hidden deep beneath the surface of the world is an ancient temple complex that has been lost to the Imperium in all but local myth for several millennia. This temple was once the base for a cult network dedicated to the service of the Dark Powers, but a hasty Ecclesiarchial purge eradicated the foul practitioners before their despicable acts could plunge the world into Chaos. But the base of their activities was never discovered, and has lain unfound for all these long years. Until now...

Inquisitor Sebastian Tergius of the Ordo Malleus has served the Inquisition for nearly three centuries, and has long since been a devotee of Xanthinism, the utilisation of Chaotic artefacts and lore to combat the Infernal Powers. However, as is always the case, such activities have not gone unnoticed, and Tergius has long since been an outcast from the body of the Inquisition. This does not concern him overly, and he has continued to pursue his goals as he sees fit – though to what end is unknown to all but him. What is well known is that he makes substantial use of daemonic entities in his work – his retinue currently contains a fearsome daemonhost of Tzeentch, with which Tergius has a complicated and intertwined history, to the extent that exactly which one is the master may no longer be apparent.

Following information obtained by the Ordo Malleus that Anaximander, a Daemon Prince of Nurgle, had been released from his psychic prison due to events on Cirian Auxilla, Tergius has made it his mission to bind the notorious Daemon Prince to his will. Anaximander was briefly banished by the actions of one Inquisitor Quincy of the Ordo Malleus, but Tergius plans to use the powers of the warp portal in the old Chaos temple to draw Anaximander back to the mortal plane, using the mental energies of an alpha-class psyker he stole from the Inquisitorial custody of the Ordo Hereticus. (Note: the release and banishment of Anaximander of Nurgle is detailed in the campaign, “Gift of the Heavens”, a Cirian Adventurescape campaign available online from www.Exterminatus.com).

Tergius does not come to Jericho freely. Inquisitor Benedict Saussure of the Ordo Hereticus Terran has long since followed Tergius' trail, and has pursued the rogue Inquisitor to Jericho, hoping to interfere with whatever Tergius has planned, and recover the unimaginably dangerous alpha-class psyker – Jacobus, the Witch of Lathesia. Also on the trail of the rogue is the young firebrand Inquisitor of the Ordo Hereticus, Ludwig Karlsen. A staunch Monodominant, Karlsen knows that capturing and executing Tergius would be the making of his career. He has also had previous arguments in Inquisitorial Conclaves with the aged Saussure, whom he believes has strayed too far from the Inquisitorial fold – the removal by Saussure of the hard-line Imperial government on the hive world of Tigris Bellerophon and their replacement by a more moderate regime of another noble house is all the proof Karlsen needs that Saussure is toodangerously free thinking for a servant of the Ordos.

Three Inquisitors have descended on Jericho, and plunged underground to an ancient Chaos temple. Whether or not all three will emerge from the depths is another matter entirely...

Scenario Special Rules

Presented below are the rules used on the day – some of them have been designed for quick and easy running of a participation game as opposed to more intricate and detailed rules, but they should make for a fast and furious encounter!

Warband Objectives

Puritan (Karlsen): anyone in the chamber is a foul heretic that has transgressed from the Emperor's Light. Purge all that you find.

Undivided (Saussure): to prevent the sacrifice of the alpha-class psyker, and ensure his survival so that he may be taken back into Inquisitorial custody.

Radical (Tergius): to complete the summoning and binding of the Daemon Prince, Anaximander of Nurgle.

Deployment

Tergius and the Radical warband deploy near the centre of the board, with the Inquisitor positioned in front of the control panels. The Undivided warband enter play from the top of the steps, coming onto the board with their first actions. After three game turns, the Puritan warband enters play via a demolition of a section of the cavern wall, and enters play with their first actions.

Explosive Entrances!

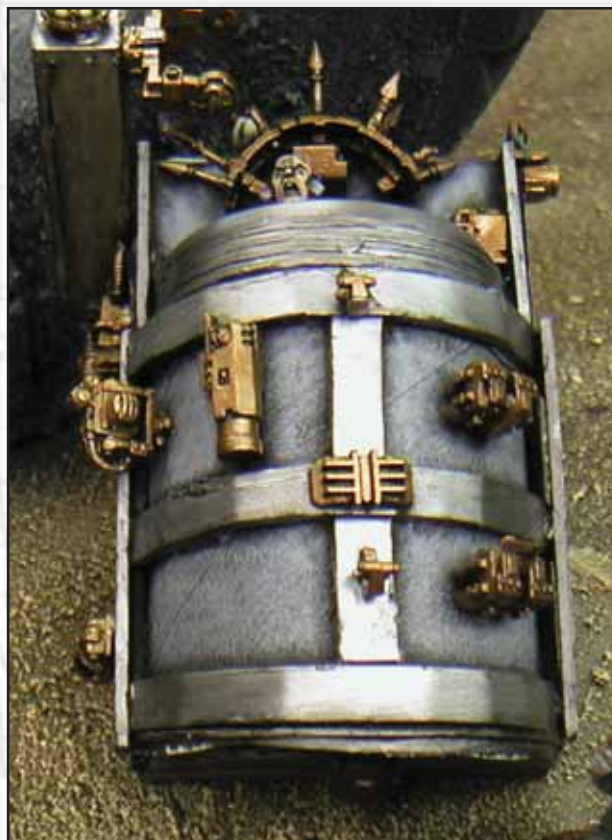
Inquisitor Karlsen's party enter play thanks to a significant amount of blasting powder. Roll a D10 to determine which board edge section is replaced by the collapsed wall section. Treat this as a demolition charge going off from the centre of the section – anyone standing in the blast radius will take damage as usual. Everyone on the board must take a Nerve test when Karlsen arrives, or throw themselves prone.

Consorting with Daemons

Tergius is attempting to summon the Daemon Prince, Anaximander of Nurgle, to bind and question him. To successfully summon the Daemon Prince takes 10 (or D10) game turns during which the alpha-class psyker must still be feeding the warp gate energy, and the daemonhost Tzeen'char must be alive.

If both of these requirements are in place, then Anaximander enters play in the next game turn on the side of the Radical. If the daemonhost is dead but the psyker still functional, then Anaximander is summoned but not bound, in which case he becomes GM-controlled and will attack anyone on the board!

If the psyker is killed or removed from the machinery, then the summoning cannot be completed.



Jacobus, the Witch of Lathesia

The alpha-class psyker is attached to a psy-phon throne, which is draining his prodigious mental powers and using them to feed the summoning portal. If this is allowed to carry on until Anaximander turns up then Jacobus will be dead, and there will be a daemon on the loose!

The throne is protected by a power field at full strength (5D10 force field armour), so is almost invulnerable to shooting. It has an Armour Value of 25. Anyone who reaches the control panel can shut off the link to the summoning portal by passing a Sagacity test. If this is failed then the force field shuts down instead, allowing the mental powers of Jacobus to lash his surroundings – count this as Wyrd-Storm of Lightning (with BS 80) every turn before recovery! Anyone placing body parts inside the field to attack the throne in close combat is subjected to this attack immediately.

Once the link is broken with the summoning portal, the anti-grav units on the throne allow it to be moved at up to 4 yards per action. This is important for the Undivided warband.

The control panel can be used to create a feedback loop to kill the psyker as well – a pass of more than 25% on the Sagacity test will reveal this. This takes three actions to set up, and is probably the easiest way for the Puritans to dispose of Jacobus.



Puritan Warband (left to right): Preacher Commodus Grimm, Rogue Trader Alexis Volkov, Inquisitor Ludwig Karlsen and Cyber-mastiff, Devotee Howgart

shoot them on sight. They may claim to work for the Inquisition – believe not their lies. I hunt a foul traitor who peddles in witch-scum and endangers us all, and he is pursued by another, one whose methods have long since crossed the line. I cannot be sure of his purity. You are not to take the risk. The Emperor may look more favourably on you if you serve me well here.

(Praise be to the Lord of Mankind!
Ludwig Karlsen, Ordo Hereticus)

Puritan Warband

Proctor-Marshall,

Give thanks to the Emperor, Proctor, for the Inquisition has arrived to end all of the woes you have allowed to run unchecked over your supposedly peaceful world. Evil runs deeper than it may appear to your limited mind, and it festers deep in the bowels of your planet. Rest assured, there will be a reckoning once I have dealt with the interlopers that have made a mockery of your security forces.

I have not the time nor the inclination to wait for your forces – my party is to conduct a firesweep of the subterranean catacombs immediately. Have explosives prepared and brought to my apartments. If anyone leaves the complex that has not been cleared by me, you are to



Undivided Warband (left to right): Interrogator Richard Kuerten, Inquisitor Benedict Saussure and Servo-skull, Sergeant Ernst Asimov, Dominesti XXIV

turned – our last encounter ended at the hands of his summoned daemon plaything. That such men wear the rosette fills me with loathing. He must be stopped – for too long have the Ordo Malleus protected this viper in our midst. No more my Lord. The charade stops this day...

(The Emperor Protects,
Benedict Saussure)

Undivided Warband

My esteemed Lord-Inquisitor Augustine,

Finally, I have managed to track the heretic to the agri-world of Jericho, in the Segmentum Solar. It appears that Tergius still has the alpha-class in his possession, though exactly what vile purpose he has in mind for him escapes me as yet. Interrogator Kuerten has spent time pouring over ancient manuscripts held by the Ecclesiarchy – they appear to indicate that a cavern network exists deep within the planetary lithosphere, and that this warren of tunnels has been the centre of cult activities in the past.

If Tergius keeps to his previous Modus Operandi, he will have found some foul way to utilise any Warp-tainted artefacts that remain in the cave network. He has certainly

Lost Property?

The automatic combat shotgun on top of the control panel is fully loaded with solid shells, though the first two rounds are inferno shells! The book is a copy of the Liber Daemonica, and any character reading aloud from it counts as having both Pentagrammic and Hexagrammic Wards in operation, as well as the Word of the Emperor skill against daemons...

Personal Enmities

When in sight of their adversaries, characters must take a Leadership test or be forced to do all in their power to attack their hated foe: Ernst Asimov and Sergeant Warren (and vice versa), Preacher Grimm/Devotee Howgart and Tzeen'char, Rogue Trader Volkov and Interrogator Kuerten (and vice versa).



Radical Warband (left to right): Sergeant Jeremiah Warren, Inquisitor Sebastian Tergius, Daemonhost Tzeen'char, Corporal Clayden Greeves

death of one as young as he is of no consequence – the death of a thousand such as he would be of no consequence. I must begin – I hope your work proceeds fruitfully, brother.

(Tergius.

+++ Coded Transmission Ends +++)

Radical Warband

+++ Coded Transmission Begins +++

It is exactly as I suspected – these caves beneath this insignificant little planetary backwater still contain the relics from the last cult purges, undisturbed for all these centuries. If the rumours I hear from Cirian Auxilla are true, and Anaximander truly has been released from his Warp-bound prison, then the summoning circle can be used to open up a path for him into the material realm. Tzeen'char will be vital for the binding. Emperor knows what would happen if the ritual goes wrong...

The Ordo Hereticus are still on my trail – they seemed to object to the theft of Jacobus, the so-called Witch of Lathesia. Let them come – I need the mental powers of the alpha-class psyker to stimulate the summoning circle into activity once more. The arrogance of this Karlsen is astounding. How dare a whelp such as he try to interfere with my work! If he interrupts he will not survive. The

The Game on the Day

Thanks to the need for other duties on the day – those being tannoy announcements and data entry for everyone in the 40K tournament – I ended up not being able to run the game myself when we finally came to Conflict: Edinburgh! However, I had been aided all the way through the design process by Jez Lowe, a fellow Edinburgh staff member and Inquisitor enthusiast. Jez stepped into the breach and ran the games himself, in his characteristically vocal style! What follows is a short report on the days gaming:



An initial feeling of trepidation (perhaps spawned by our 7am start) had been rapidly dispelled as both I and Derek shared transport to the venue and had gone over the scenario one last time. With an experienced GM, like Derek, in charge, I was confident that we would have few troubles. Unfortunately a last-minute change called Derek to data-entry for the day, leaving me to GM alone. 'This could be interesting,' I thought.

Sure enough, gamers eager to show their mettle rapidly surrounded me. Saussure and his heroic henchmen bargaged the cultists with a hail of rhetoric before striding bravely down the stairs.

Weaving through a hail of lasfire, and a desperately inaccurate heavy stubber, Saussure's band engaged in a close range firefight. Sadly, the best-laid plans of even the Imperium's most loyal servants oft go astray. A deafening explosion rippled through the cavern filling the far side with smoke as the Puritan warband made its dramatic entrance. Several turns of confused gun-fighting and vicious close combat between the Undivided and Puritan warbands ensued. Meanwhile, the

now undisturbed Radicals continued to work. As the battered remains of the two Inquisitorial warbands paused in exhaustion to gather their breath, a pregnant hush filled the cavern.

A joyously evil smile playing across his parody of a face the Daemon Prince Anaximander stepped gracefully through the activated warp portal to behold a world at his mercy...

Apparently the booming cries of, "IMPERIAL INQUISITION, FREEZE!" and, "THE GATE IS OPENING, ALL HAIL THE CAPRICIOUS ANAXIMANDER" had turned a few heads and I found myself positively snowed under with players for the next game.

This one ran far more according to the Imperial script. Although hideously accurate heavy stubber fire mauled first the Undivided warband and then the Puritans (4 headshots!), the Arco-flagellant finally fulfilled its promise in a shower of severed appendages and a veritable drizzle of arterial blood. Sadly, a nasty ricochet taken early on had damaged its pacifier helm and some of the limbs lying on the thirsty cavern floor were those of the Undivided party. Quick to take advantage the Puritans moved in, seized the unfortunate psyker that was the key to the scenario, and legged it.

Despite dealing less damage than the other warbands superior tactical play had secured a win for the Puritans.

Final game: The Arco-flagellant was on form once more (although it was occasionally misled by psychic whispers from the Radical Inquisitor, with embarrassingly nasty consequences for more than one Loyalist henchman). Fortunately, Saussure was made of sterner stuff and he cunningly used the arrival of the Puritans to drop out of the line of fire for a few turns. With time pressing he emerged, mopping up the survivors of a vengeful short-range slugging match that had left neither the Puritans nor the Radicals capable of putting up much resistance to the avatar of Inquisitorial fury.

Twelve hours, three games and a lot of fun later the thought uppermost in my mind was 'I can't wait 'til next year'.



Top: Inquisitor Tergius confronts the towering form of Anaximander as he steps forth from the summoning circle...

Middle: Inquisitors Tergius and Karlsen come face-to-face before the psy-phon throne.

Bottom: Devotee Howgart throws himself towards Interrogator Kuerten.

