



# Chapter 1

## The people behind Fantasy Wargaming



Roleplaying games (RPGs) are social activities, so to understand *Fantasy Wargaming* (*FW*) the game one must start with the people responsible for *FW*. The credits in the preliminary pages and acknowledgments of the *FW* book mention a veritable host of people. The copyright holders, obviously, would be the main contributors to the work, but

it's clear from the content of the book that the rules grew out of a larger gaming community. The acknowledgment of the Cambridge University Library and its staff was an important clue in researching them. While a few of the names are familiar as authors of war or roleplaying games, most did not have any other publications in the games world. But the fact that at least some must have been students at Cambridge in the late 1970s or early 1980s, and that a few did write other works, provided more leads. Ultimately, my blogging about the search (Monaco, 2010) led to some more information too. The Cambridge University

Science Fiction Society (CUSFS) student organization was one hub that many of them met through; other hubs appear to be more informal wargaming groups.

### The five authors

Obviously, the five people identified on the copyright page of *FW* bear the greatest responsibility for the work. One of the authors would summarize the main authors as “simply a group of friends – one a book editor, one a university don, one a computer designer, one a schoolteacher and one an insurance salesman – who happen to share common interests.” (Quarrie, 1981, June)<sup>2</sup>.

## Bruce Galloway (1952-1984)

was clearly the ringleader and visionary responsible for *FW*, as well as the Tom Sawyer who convinced his friends to research, write, and illustrate the separate chapters that comprise the book. He was a history student who was working on a Ph.D. at Cambridge University and described as a key figure in the CUSFS club. Bruce seems to have been a very charismatic, if eccentric, personality. Correspondence with contributors and thankees turned up some vivid and touching memories of Bruce, and some still ached a bit at the loss of their friend, who died suddenly at the altogether too young age of 32. It is perhaps a testament to his powers of persuasion that contributor Nick Lowe was really not

*“Bruce was the kind of person who could carry you away on his enthusiasm and make anything seem possible.”*

~ K. Prior

a gamer at the time that he agreed to co-author the book, and that there are no less than thirteen co-conspirators named in the acknowledgments. His friends describe him as full of ideas and plans which he could persuade others to help with. He was married in 1974 to another student and CUSFS member. After the publication of *FW*, he devoted much of his time to writing and campaigning

for equal rights (Galloway & Cohen, 1983; Galloway & the Grass Roots Group, 1983; Galloway & Greaves, 1983; Galloway, 1983b), as well as publishing a history of Cambridgeshire (Galloway, 1983a) and two books on hiking in East Anglia (Galloway, 1981b; Galloway, 1982c), and editing another book of sources on his dissertation topic, the union of England and Scotland (Galloway &

<sup>1</sup> K. Prior, personal communication, September 3, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> This listing appears to be partly sincere, but may equally well be a bit of a joke. The “book editor” was obviously Bruce Quarrie; the “university don” most likely refers to Nick Lowe (who was completing a Ph.D. in classics) or Bruce Galloway (who had just earned his Ph.D. in history, but who had also severed ties with academia); the “schoolteacher” was surely Mike Hodson-Smith; however, the “insurance salesman” would be Paul Sturman (who also may have worked in some administrative capacity with the police, per an informant; my sources do not all agree). None of the authors fits the description “computer designer,” but the possibilities which suggest themselves are (a) Galloway may have impressed Quarrie with his ideas for applying computers to wargaming problems, something he’d discussed with other informants; (b) Quarrie may simply have been mistaken; (c) Quarrie may have been thinking of another collaborator, as several people participated in playtesting and other ways as described below.

Levack, 1985). He was active in politics, recruiting candidates and working on campaigns for the Liberal Party. In May of 1984 he died in a tragic accident, cutting short a promising career as a historian – he wrote in April of that year that he planned to take an appointment at the University of St. Andrews in early Scottish political thought. His dissertation would be published as a book (Galloway, 1986) that was well-received and considered prescient. He was preparing the dissertation for publication as a book around the time of his death. Historian John Morrell lavishes praise on the quality of writing and the importance of Bruce's contribution, noting that his thesis has been confirmed by new scholarship in the intervening years (Morell, 1986). A review of the book in a history journal concludes: "This fine book shows that Galloway was a meticulous scholar who had a powerful mind to formulate new ideas based on the evidence available. This book is a fine monument to a budding scholar." (Stevenson, 1987). Galloway's untimely death

is even more tragic in light of how prolific a writer he was in his last four years.

## Mike Hodson-Smith (1947-1992)

was probably not a student at Cambridge at the time. No thesis or dissertation for him is in their catalog, so he was not enrolled as a graduate student there, or at least did not complete a thesis, and my informants remember him as already in the workforce at the time of the writing of *FW*. He was a gamer in Galloway's circle and a friend of co-author Paul Sturman. Hodson-Smith has a few credits for articles in *White Dwarf* and *Miniatures Wargames* magazines from 1978 to 1983, so he was already engaged in the larger gaming community, perhaps more so than any of the other authors apart from Quarrie. Hodson-Smith (1978) is a review of the board game *Space Marines* by A. Mark Ratner, published by Fantasy Games. Hodson-Smith (1983a) is a description of the wargaming retreat operated by Peter Gilder, which is now called the Wargames Holiday Centre.

Hodson-Smith (1983b) is an article that suggests ways war games might be set up using randomized armies, rather than strict points and army lists, to create scenarios that more realistically reflect the variation in forces that generals could muster. The idea is drawn from something he saw at Peter Gilder's Wargames Centre; Hodson-Smith added variations and a detailed example for American Civil War battles. Outside of gaming, Hodson-Smith was a secondary school teacher, teaching history at Gywood Park High School, and ran after-school games for some of his students into the late 1980s. He co-founded a gaming club in King's Lynn called St. Anne's Garrison (Fitzhorn, 2013). The club exists to this day, but the current officers were unable to provide further information. Hodson-Smith was also an historical reenactor, and is described by Nick Lowe as "the largest human being I had ever encountered."<sup>4</sup> Evidently he was plagued by some health problems – my informants could not provide precise details – and passed away relatively young at about 45.



Image: Nick Lowe, circa 1980

## Nick Lowe

was a graduate student at Cambridge and is now a university Reader in Classics, as well as a highly regarded film critic. He was gracious enough to respond to my inquiries regarding the writing of the book, and some excerpts from his emails are reproduced in the present book. Nick was a couple of years younger

than Bruce and met him through the CUSFS, where they gravitated toward each other as some of the only humanities majors in the club. He could not recall exactly why he was recruited to help with the project, as he was not a gamer. Nick would marry Margaret Welbank, one of the illustrators of *FW*.

Nick's major contribution to the book was writing chapter 3 and text of the bestiary in chapter 7, although the game statistics for his entries were added by others. Lowe's academic works have nothing to do with *FW*, apart from an interest in the concept of narrative, which might tangentially relate to roleplaying. In Lowe (2000),

<sup>3</sup> See the Centre's website for a general history: <https://www.wargameshc.co.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> N. Lowe, personal communication, Sept. 12, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> *Quarrie wrote more than 40 books, in addition to many short articles etc., so I have not attempted to create a comprehensive bibliography of his work. Similarly, the bibliography includes only a few representative works of Lowe and Tamlyn; nor have I attempted to compile bibliographies of the works of Ian and Lawrence Heath.*

dramas are metaphorically described as “games,” but more in the sense of a board game with pieces maneuvering toward a goal. Some of his monographs are included in the bibliography to provide an idea of his interests (Lowe, 1982; Lowe, 2007; Lowe, 2009). His film criticism is regularly published in the science fiction magazine *Interzone*.

## **Bruce Quarrie (1947-2004)**

was a well-known writer on wargaming. He graduated from Cambridge University in 1968 and remained in the area. He worked extensively with the publisher of *FW*, Patrick Stephens Limited (PSL), since 1972, and was responsible for brokering the deal that led to *FW*'s publication both in the UK and USA (by Stein & Day). PSL published a series of wargaming books that contained both descriptive/background chapters and rule sets, including *Barker* (1975), *Featherstone* (1975), *Hague* (1980, 1991), and *Quarrie* (1974, 1976, 1980, 1987, 1988).<sup>5</sup> My initial hunch was that Quarrie sold *FW* on the idea that it would be a general introduction to “fantasy wargaming,” a term which at the time covered both wargames in fantastic settings and RPGs. A book on fantasy wargaming would be a very sensible addition to the PSL catalog, Ian Heath confirmed that Quarrie commissioned and made editorial contributions to the manuscript, which explains his status as a copyright-holder.<sup>6</sup> Nick Lowe confirms that Quarrie's experience and professionalism was crucial to the project, given that none of the other authors were professional writers.

## **Paul Sturman (-2018)**

was an avid wargamer and historical reenactor in the Sealed Knot, an English Civil War reenactment society. He was good friends with Hodson-Smith, and continued gaming throughout his life. He briefly relied on the royalties of *FW* as a newlywed, and contributed both text and illustrations to *FW*,<sup>7</sup> including the chapter on arms and armor and the drawings of weapons and castles in the rules. Sturman is the most mysterious of the authors of *FW*, as he has no other publications and was not well known to most of my informants. What has emerged suggests he was amiable and well-liked. He acquired



<sup>6</sup> I. Heath, *personal communication*, April 1, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> H. Sturman, *personal communication*, May 1, 2020.

Image:  
Paul Sturman on Right



Image: Bruce Quarrie Second from Left

the nickname “Pasta Man” as a pun on P.A. Sturman and because of his fondness for food. One informant describes him as the “comparatively sane” author of the group. He worked in insurance, and possibly for the police in an administrative capacity. Unfortunately, I was not able to track him down for more information before he passed away in 2018.

These five collectively held the copyright to *FW*. Galloway was the creative force and lead writer. Lowe provided additional research. Sturman and Hodson-Smith helped with the rules. Quarrie, as the most experienced author, provided editorial guidance, and wrote the mass combat rules. But several other people played important roles – playtesting, or contributing art, ideas, or moral support – and are called out in the book’s acknowledgements.

## The Acknowledges

It is likely that Galloway selected many of the names mentioned in the acknowledgements for indirect contributions, as none of my informants could place more than a few of the names. My efforts to track them all down had some limits. First, I was committed to respecting the privacy of one individual I’d been advised would have been distressed if asked to recall this period. Secondly, two others preferred not to have their identities too easily connected to the story for private reasons. Lastly, some individuals simply remained elusive – in some case I had pretty good leads on their identities but they did not respond to inquiries; in others, I could never make a positive identification.

**Adrian Palmer** remains the most elusive figure, and is tentatively identified as an active member of the CUSFS.

**Pete Tamlyn** would become famous in the UK gaming scene as the author of RPGs, supplements, and columns in magazines like “Tavern Talk” in TSR UK’s *Imagine* (Tamlyn, 1983-1984). Tamlyn would go on to write *A green & pleasant land* (Tamlyn, 1987), a Call of Cthulhu RPG sourcebook, and co-wrote three rule books for *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* (Gascoigne & Tamlyn, 1989, 1990, 1994). Tamlyn was most likely inspirational to *FW* by way of the columns on RPG design in the fanzine *The Acolyte* (Tamlyn, 1979-1984), as Tamlyn reports not knowing any of *FW*’s authors personally.




**Andy Strangeways**, then a Cambridge student, was a player in both Leigh Cliffs and Tarn Malham, a pair of games run by Galloway and Prior – Leigh Cliffs being cited as the moment of inspiration for *FW* in the introduction (Galloway, 1982b, p. x), and, according to some informants, a playtest of some of the rules that would go into the final game. He's now a computer security expert.

**Gail Smith** was a Cambridge student and a gamer, and also an English Civil War reenactor. Smith and Sturman both participated in Lord Saye and Sealé's regiment of the English Civil War Society.

**Kevin "Igor" Prior**, another Cambridge student, met Galloway through the CUSFS. They became good friends in 1977, and Galloway introduced Kevin to his gaming friends. In fact Kevin briefly lodged with the Galloways in August of 1977, and it was around this time, Kevin recalls, that the idea for a game started to form. He would assist Galloway running Leigh Cliffs and Malham Tarn, and was briefly enlisted as a writer but says he had nothing substantial to contribute to the book.

**Lawrence H. Heath** did the illustrations at the beginning of each chapter of *FW*, as well as the cover painting. Several of these illustrations appear in the present volume. His other illustration work was a series of advertisements in *White Dwarf* from the same period as *FW*. Issues 11-18 all have full-page ads for Tangle Model Workshop, a retail and mail-order business, illustrated by Heath in the recognizable style used in *FW* (Tangle Model Workshop, 1979a-1980c). Indeed issue 13's illustration, a wizard in his study and menaced by a demon emerging from a book illustration, was re-used in *FW* and clearly inspired the cover painting. The PSL edition of *FW* includes an acknowledgement to Tangle for permission to use the illustration, but this statement is not in the American editions. The ads in issues 11 and 12 used science fiction-inspired themes (robots and aliens struggling in 11, and a robot riding a creature that looks like a mastodon with four trunks in 12). Issue 14 has a clever scene of a barbarian woman rescuing a bound man from a two-headed giant, with two scenes from the immediate future shown in a series of mirrors revealing that the would-be rescuer will be captured. Issue 15 shows a pair of barbarians lounging in a middle-class modern home, wearing slippers. Issue 16 has the legend "Peace on Earth" and parodies an Albrecht Durer woodcut of the nativity. Issue 17's ad is described as Heath as 'the Vole at the dungeon door.' Heath and the owner of Tangle Model Shop, Kevin Baker, had a running joke about voles. The vole is dressed in a scarf and overcoat and stands in a doorway as assorted monsters panic and flee.





Issue 18 shows what appears to be a human sacrifice being interrupted at a megalithic circle – which on closer examination forms an optical illusion. Finally, Issue 27 (Patrick Stevens Ltd., 1981) has an advertisement for *FW* on page 5, as a half-page ad. The art is from the frontispiece for chapter VII of *FW*, and the ad includes a mail-in order form.

Heath became a civil servant but remained active in the arts, organizing and promoting folk music clubs and events, as well as illustrating “wargaming almanacs, folk dance manuals, and most recently, Janet Dowling’s *Surrey folk tales*.” (Heath, 2015) The illustrations for Dowling’s book (Dowling, 2013) are striking silhouettes, but not immediately recognizable as the hand of the more comic styled *FW* and *White Dwarf* illustrations. Lawrence Heath is also a writer, having co-founded the folk music magazine *fRoots* and more recently publishing his own original fiction (Heath, 2014).

Lawrence’s brother **Ian Heath** is acknowledged as well. Ian Heath is best known as an author and illustrator of books on history and wargaming, and still lives in Cambridgeshire. Ian Heath was not formally involved in the development of *FW*<sup>8</sup> but helped his friend Quarrie with editing the book. The Heaths were likely brought onto the project by Quarrie.

**Bob Whittaker** was an experienced gamer in Cambridge who helped with the playtesting and played in Leigh Cliffs, as well being a member of the CUSFS. Whittaker and Strangeways both served as GMs in playtests as they were more experienced in that role.

“**Teddy**” was provisionally identified by one informant as a member of the re-enactment and costume scene who uses no surname. As the only name given in scare quotes, I wondered if he might just as likely be a pet, a pseudonym for some other person, or an in-joke. This remains unresolved.

**Maggie** is most likely Bruce Quarrie’s late wife Margaret. However, one informant thought that the name’s proximity to “Teddy” could indicate it was another re-enactment and costuming enthusiast, Maggie Percival. Maggie Percival and “Teddy” competed together in costume contests.

**Margaret** is Margaret Welbank, another CUSFS member, now a commercial artist and illustrator. Her simple but striking illustrations grace several sections of the rules, usually signed with a simple “MW.” They often imitate medieval style (e.g. Galloway, 1982b, page 153, and throughout the bestiary), while others have a cartoonish style reminiscent of Gorey. Welbank illustrated a number of children’s books

<sup>8</sup> I. Heath, personal communication, April 1, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> D. Stein, personal communication, June 18, 2020.

(Atkins, 2017), as well as working as a commercial artist for textbooks (Poulton, 1997; Hadfield & Hadfield, 2000; Wood, 2003), cards, advertisements, and other projects (“Margaret Welbank, London,” n.d.). Around the time of *FW*, she was also doing cartoons for fan zines (for example, Welbank, 1979). She and Nick Lowe would eventually marry.

*Verity* was a member of the CUSFS, and one of the more active female members.

*David Stein* is David Day Stein, son of Sol Stein and Patricia Day of Stein & Day, the American publisher of *FW*. Stein & Day was a family business, and David was the “family expert”<sup>9</sup> on RPGs, so naturally he was assigned to the project. He adapted the text for American audiences, and so appears only in the acknowledgements for the American editions.

The list of authors and contributors is diverse, as were their artistic and academic talents, and because of them *FW* is still a singular achievement in the field of RPGs.

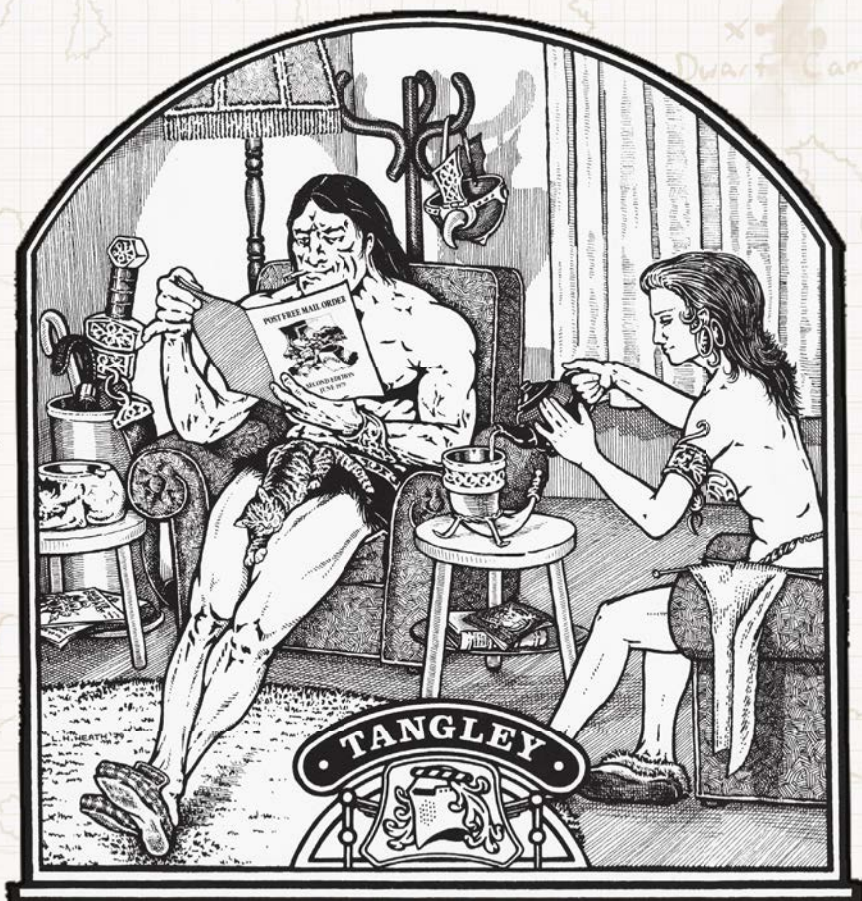


Illustration by Lawrence H. Heath

Full of Sea-giantesses



Illustration  
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Ask and Embla Ask & Embla  
after enchanted by the gods

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